

Malaysian Grand Prix, Kuala Lumpur. March 16th/17th (Part 1)

Alan had been given the all clear by Virgil to take off. Smoothly the plane ascended into the clear blue sky. His thoughts went back to his family. What a splendid birthday present his Mom and Dad had given him. He couldn't wait to arrive. He had hoped that Gordon would have been home to come with him, but Gordon was still in New York, and not expected home until after the memorial service. He felt relaxed for the first time since his birthday, if truth be told.

After he had touched down on the landing strip at the edge of the Grand Prix complex, Alan headed for the Arrivals lounge. Waiting for him was his old friend, Kenny Malone. The two young men embraced.

"It's great seeing you again, Kenny," Alan said.

"Yeah, it's been too long," Kenny, replied.

"Hey, here's someone I think you would like to see again," Kenny said as he waved to a tall, dark-haired young man.

"Well, I'll be," Alan gasped. "If it isn't Tom Jackson! How are you these days?" Tom Jackson had been a racing driver in Alan's early racing days.

"I'm just fine. Say, what are you doing now?" Tom asked.

"Oh, I work for the family firm," Alan replied.

"What? Has your old man let you out for good behaviour?" Tom joked.

"Nope, this is a birthday present." Alan nearly said from Mom and Dad.

"Say, how old are you now?" Tom asked.

"Twenty-four," Alan replied.

"Then you ought to let Kenny take you to the Lotus Flower Night Club," Tom suggested, winking at Kenny.

"Yes, I've already planned to go there," Kenny said, returning Tom's wink.

"So, then Tom, what brings you here? Don't tell me you are still racing!" Alan said.

"Yeah, Tom's racing here tomorrow," Kenny replied.

"I'm just on my way to start the qualifying laps for positions for tomorrow's race," Tom explained.

"Want to come and watch?"

Alan nodded and the three young men headed for the pits and the other contestants. He and Kenny watched as Tom set out on his first lap. Unfortunately Tom didn't do too well and ended up at the end of the session as fifth behind the defending World Champion, who had had a disastrous few laps.

"Tough luck, Tom," Alan said. "Those chicanes are hard to drive around."

"I know," Tom replied. "Coming off the straight and driving through them is tricky. As you could see, a few never made it."

"Say, Tom, is Johnston O'Neill driving this weekend?"

"Yeah, that's his team over there, why?"

"Oh, I promised someone back home I'd try and get his autograph," Alan answered.

"Come, on then. I'll introduce you to him."

"Hey, Johnston," Tom spoke to a tall, thin, dark haired man. "How's things?"

"Oh, so-so, you know, didn't do too well in the qualifying. The car seems to be playing up. The mechanics are working on it at the moment. How did you do?"

"Not too good either," Tom replied. "Say, I have an old racing colleague who would like your autograph for a member of his family."

"Sure," Johnson smiled. "What name?"

"Kat," Alan replied.

"Who's Kat?" Kenny asked.

"Oh, just someone working for the firm," Alan replied.

"To Kat," Johnston wrote, "with all my best wishes, Johnston O'Neill."

"Thanks, Johnston," Alan said. "Kat will really love that."

"Happy to oblige," Johnston said as he walked away.

"Well, I need an early night before tomorrow," Tom said. "See you, guys." And he headed back to the competitors' quarters. Alan and Kenny headed back for the luxury hotel at the far end of the complex.

Once Alan was in his room, he suddenly felt tired. He showered, changed into his pyjamas. and getting a beer from the well-stocked fridge, settled down to enjoy a quiet evening watching the

television. Later he put a call through to Tracy Island to let them know that he had arrived safely.

Post by Tawnyangel22 on 17/11/2004

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