



BREXIT - Part One **The Great British Break Off**

Chapter One

War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength but BREXIT is just BREXIT

Theresa Dismay, the recently-installed Prime Minister of a deeply fragmented and riven United Kingdom, nursed her aching head in her hands. She had a stonking great headache that, for once, hadn't been induced by her husband Phillip's amorous attentions but by her Cabinet colleague's petty and pretentious political posturing. The scene of her distress was the Cabinet Room in Number 10 Downing Street and she was currently the sole occupant of the normally crowded meeting space. She sought distraction from her seemingly intractable worries by reflecting on the formidable history of her surroundings, her new home of less than a week and the nation's premier address. 'If these walls could speak' she mused 'I'd know for a fact that one of my adversaries has been lacing my tea with hallucinogens.'

Since Sir Robert Walpole moved in on September 22 , 1735 - Number 10, Downing Street had served as the Office of the British Prime Minister. George Downing's eponymous Terrace of jerry-built slum housing was endowed upon Sir Robert by King George II to spare him the inconvenience of commuting from his country pile of Houghton Hall, Norfolk to run the country. Unimpressed by the property Walpole eventually, and tactfully, persuaded the Monarch to bequeath it to future Prime Ministers rather than to him personally. The King was rather taken with the idea of knowing where his Prime Ministers lived, just in case they got ideas above their station and agreed Walpole's suggestion. The last private property-owner in Downing Terrace, the delightfully-named Mr. Chicken, had sold up, fled the coop and emigrated to Kentucky to develop a retail poultry business a few years before Walpole's arrival leaving the street clear to become the hub of domestic government and the epicentre of the British empire.

The previous two-hundred and eighty-six years had seen more than their fair share of history in addition to seventysix Prime Ministerial occupants, many of them repeat tenants. The building's fabric had survived the depredations of Nazi bombs, IRA mortar attacks, 1960's interior designers and Polish plumbers. The building's distinguished occupants had survived similar assaults. Most had been the subject of political and sexual scandals, lurid

allegations or at least innuendo during their time in office. Most, but not all. One recent occupant so coveted the 'street cred' associated with rumours of extramarital activity that he had implored Rupert Murdoch to have his journalists write salacious stories about him to bolster public approval ratings that had flatlined dangerously close to terminal territory. Murdoch refused citing that such reportage would simply 'not be credible'. The desperate PM reminded the media mogul of John Major's unlikely dalliance with Edwina Curry, a tryst so improbable that any punter could have got better odds on a pair of Panda Bears mating in captivity. The wizened Aussie merely scrutinised the unimposing, puny Pommie politico before caustically remarking 'Don't get your hopes up mate, lightning doesn't strike twice.'

The current unhappy tenant, of what amounted to a Government grace and favour dwelling the size of a modest hotel, had barely gotten her kitten heels across the famous threshold. Theresa May had been Prime Minister for a matter of days and had just chaired her first Cabinet Meeting. Now she remained the lone occupant of the Cabinet Room, her aides dismissed and her newly-appointed Ministers of State departed for their new Ministry's if they were able to recall which one was theirs. The situation had been complicated by May's decision to create two new Offices of State – the unimaginatively named Department for Exiting the European Union and the equally prosaic Department for International Trade headed respectively by David Davis and Dr. Liam Fox. As neither had held high office in her predecessor's administration her job creation initiative to benefit native Britons was already a notable success. The Third Musketeer in this unholy Trinity of Ministers, who were collectively responsible for bits of the BREXIT jig saw puzzle, was Ivan Johnson. To the astonishment of diplomats across the planet Mrs May had appointed the cavalier, tousle-haired, shoot-from-the-lip, injudicious, womanising, tactless braggart as Foreign Secretary. On hearing the news most foreign counterparts assumed it was a late April Fools joke or yet another example of Russian disinformation. After all, the buffoon had already ostracised every nation on the planet, except for Benin – simply because he'd never heard of it, with his moronic jingoistic statements while serving as the Mayor of London and now he was going to be allowed to hone his talents for abuse and ridicule through one of Great Britain's Offices of State. The very idea was preposterous.

Her appointments had already created a new deficit; a shortage of the historic and well-worn reddish-brown leather chairs positioned around the Cabinet table prompting Ivan to flop onto a bean-bag left in the corner by her predecessor's children. Dr. Fox had thoughtfully instructed one of the Downing Street minions to bring Ivan a conical Dunces cap to complete the poignant tableau. Having welcomed her new cabinet Mrs May provided a precis of the peroration that she'd delivered to the assembled media a few days earlier before occupying her new home. It was a strange *pot pourri* of beliefs and aspirations

that sought to claim the middle ground as well as both left and right wings as ‘the natural Tory Terrain’. She pledged to listen to and support the JAM’s (those Just About Managing) – who were in that predicament because of the previous Conservative government’s doctrine of ‘Austerity’. She had no such words of encouragement for the MARMALADE’s (those Masses Austerity Really Made Anxious Lethargic Alienated Dysfunctional Eejits) who remained utterly disenfranchised.

‘Austerity’ had been prescribed as strong medicine necessary to cure the ills of a Global Financial Crisis and the profligacy of a Labour government in bailing out the Fat Cat Capitalist Bankers. The irony of the latter point was not lost on Alistair Poppet, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer who, as a young Socialist radical had dreamed of nationalising the banks. Then one fateful day in Bruxelles he was called out of an EU meeting to take an urgent call from Tom McKillop, the Chairman of the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), only to be informed that the bank ‘might just be able to remain solvent for the next two hours, and what was the government going to do about it?’ His Young Socialist dream had been realised in the weirdest of ways, here was the Chairman of one of the world’s largest banks pleading to be nationalised. Lloyds similarly teetered on the edge of the precipice of insolvency. The UK stood on the brink of total social and economic collapse all because of CDO’s. Surprisingly, the acronym didn’t stand for Communist Demonic Operatives but Collateralized Debt Obligations. Or to put it another way CDO’s were a means for unscrupulous bankers to sell mortgages on the most decrepit residential properties located in the extensive ghettos of America’s crumbling urban rustbelt that were owned by the most indigent people in the USA by misrepresenting their unsustainable debt as a AAArated investment.

Paradoxically, ‘Austerity’ was an economic strategy devised not by some mysterious, cabalistic sect of ascetic Franciscan Friars but by multimillionaire Conservative politicians. It was intended to trim the Financial Deficit and, sometime over the next few decades, might even attempt to reduce the National Debt. Few people outside Whitehall’s Office of Budgetary Responsibility understood that ‘trimming the deficit’ was about as purposeful as waxing one’s pubic hairs once a decade – the underlying issue of the rising debt continued to grow like Topsy. Many politicians even failed to grasp the difference between the debt and the deficit. Several times David Cameron himself had been taken to task by claiming ‘we are paying down the debt’ when the debt was increasing faster than an outbreak of acne on an adolescent’s face. The deficit had been cut by a quarter during his government’s tenure but Cameron’s Chancellor spectacularly failed to hit his self imposed target of eliminating it by 2016. ‘Austerity’, it appeared would linger around for decades to come like

an unwelcome party guest intent on draining all the booze before grudgingly consenting to move along.

But, with Mrs Dismay's appointment 'Austerity' suddenly became so very last year. Now there was a clamour to borrow money like a Wonga payday loan customer and blow one's wad like a drunken sailor only on infrastructure projects, not tots of rum. Given the misery created by 'Austerity' many would have preferred the rum, if only for medicinal purposes. The reason for the sudden manic *volte-face* in Conservative strategy, monetary policy and prospectus commitments was, as usual, Europe.

Since the UK joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1972 and had that decision ratified by a referendum conducted in 1975 the Conservative Party had been riven by internal conflict. The battle lines were drawn between those MPs in favour of stronger European political and economic union and the 'Eurosceptics' who simply loathed everything European except their patrician wines and cuisine, some were also old enough to have had 'a thing' for Brigitte Bardot and Sophia Loren. On other matters Europe was simply not British enough for their tastes. Since that time those political fault lines had been widened by the transformation of the EEC into the European Union, a bureaucracy of labyrinthine complexity replete with its own Judiciary, Parliament, Council, Commission, Central Bank, Auditors and currency. Embarrassingly, it also held an interest in a Czech brothel after the European Fund for Rural Development invested €40k in renovating Pension Retro XXX. Strange bedfellows, until you consider that both professions cater for irritating little pricks.

The EU also possessed an illogical belief that the common currency – the Euro (€) could be managed without full supranational financial integration and budgetary planning. Still, the issue that most rankled the Eurosceptics was the EU's compulsion to promulgate tediously dull legislation governing the most arcane and inconsequential aspects of everyday British life. After all, as the elected Members of the British Parliament that was their bloody job. This concern came to be legitimised by the term 'the erosion of National Sovereignty'. This doctrine basically held that legislation written in Bruxelles, voted on in Strasbourg and ratified, again, in Bruxelles was inherently inferior to that produced in Westminster alone. In a flashback to the logic of Environmental Determinism some Eurosceptics argued that Britain's ambivalence to the EU stemmed from 'our unique island heritage' although physical detachment from Continental Europe had never given the Irish or Maltese any such qualms. In truth Euroscepticism was simply the modern-day incarnation of Perfidious Albion mingled with some good old-fashioned xenophobia.

Since 1993 the Conservative Eurosceptic's monopoly on such views had been threatened by the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), a rightwing nationalistic political party offering little substance on most political issues other than its passionate desires to leave the EU and control immigration. Leaving aside their former leader's estranged German wife, French floozy and long-established French ancestry UKIP's policies manifested themselves in curious ways, mainly by vigorously contesting elections for the very European Parliament they sought to destroy. By 2014 UKIP boasted 20 MEP's and were the UK's largest single party in the democratic chamber that they traduced as undemocratic. Their ideological opposition to their employer did nothing to deter them from drawing down the €96,246.36 annual basic salary and the generous perks package that accompanied the job. UKIP MEP's were happy to work in, impugn and attempt to disrupt the work of the Parliament they had been elected to serve despite their ideological objections to its very existence. The inmates were most definitely in control of this political asylum.

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