

## **Calamity. Celebration and Chaos**

The three men had now all arrived at the pub. Since their childhood days they had periodically got together to catch up and go over their early years

They would reflect on the paths their lives had taken; the uncertainties, the successes, the failures and always ask whether futures are pre-determined or not.

They would agree that as young boys they had no idea how their lives would develop. Their meet-ups were usually fun, recalling all the sillinesses of youth and the ridiculous exploits they had shared. This time the mood was different. John was in financial trouble, a messy divorce, a business collapse in a world going through massive upheaval. He wasn't in a chatty friendly mood.

Pete and Mike were going to have a hard time lifting the mood. It was tough for Pete as was hoping to share and wallow in his recent success in finally getting that big promotion. He was going to have to keep it low profile so as not to depress his friend

Mike's life had been a steady settled life. Not spectacular but steady. He'd got married early to a sweet girl whose main ambition was to have family and a non-conflicted life after her own childhood had been spoilt by a spectacularly rotten father.

Drinks were ordered and the three sat back facing each other across the table. Mike began by asking how things had gone for the others since their last meet-up. "pretty good" answered Pete; "pretty crap" answered John. A pause then as Mike sought out another opening line.

"We've come a long way since our schooldays, what do you think of how our lives have gone generally"

For John the past had been a series of calamities; bad decisions, bad choices and poor outcomes. It seemed as though life would always be tough for him. He'd like a rerun.

For Pete, everything had come easily, home, family, job - lots of things to celebrate.

Mike was more considered in his analysis. "For all of us, at the outset nothing was certain or pre-determined" Life is pretty chaotic and influenced by many factors. Small events, a slight wrong turn or a missed opportunity can dramatically change our lives and then over time amplify those mishaps and then we are in a downward spiral. Equally, things may have gone well for us in an unexpected way. What were those events/decisions that set the scene? We know what they were. We should also know ourselves by now.

"So let's have another drink to the future and then see if there's something we might help John with." But in their hearts they knew this was unlikely.

Raising his glass "To Calamity, Celebration and Chaos."

**Ron Bennett**

