

Sammy


Author **Brian Cripps**



First Edition 03/16/02
Released for Copyright

Chapter I	New Owner
Chapter II	Homesteading
Chapter III	Business as Usual
Chapter IV	Mission Accomplished
Chapter V	Small Pitch
Chapter VI	Early Development
Chapter VII	A Bonus
Chapter VIII	War Lords
Chapter IX	Progress
Chapter X	Transfer Market
Chapter XI	Premiership Plus
Chapter XII	Homeward Bound
Chapter XIII	Easy Does It
Chapter XIV	English Premiership
Chapter XV	The Bernabeau
Chapter XVI	Politically Correct
Chapter XVII	Referendum

Chapter I

New Owner

December 19th nineteen seventy-six in the town of Beit Bridge Zimbabwe was the reading of the Will of Roger Sutcliff. The Will was quite short, as Mr. Roger Sutcliff had no known direct heirs. The Solicitor General read the last paragraph that stated that the property plat number 682 in the province of Beit Bridge in the Limpopo Valley, bound by the Limpopo River to the south and with the mountains to the west some 50,000 hectares approximately 193 square miles shall be willed to William Sutcliff my nephew living in Hampshire England in the village of Sway located in the New Forrest. On this day, he shall be so informed by this court to take over the operation of said farms, buildings, machines and livestock and bank accounts. This last request will only be honored if William takes ownership in Zimbabwe and works the fields and manages the farm.

William was having his Sunday mid-day meal when his wife remarked, “did you get the registered receipt letter that was to

be certified on arrival at the local post office?” William or Willie as he loved to be called replied with a very convincing way “yes dear”. Well what did it say she asked? The letter basically said that we now own a sizeable farm in Zimbabwe. It will mean relocating to Zimbabwe and settling in. The land if we don’t become immigrant farmers will revert back to the state. His wife was quite excited about the thought of immigrating to Zimbabwe. She said I think that’s what we need to do and prepare ourselves and go as soon as possible for the trip. Willie said, “We have three months to reply and our commitment need not be for a year”. Janet, his wife, had in her mind made plans already thinking what an exciting time lies ahead.

The weather was typical British with it raining and overcast skies it had been that way for several weeks. Sundays Willie would walk in the afternoon to the field and watch the local soccer team play in the county league. Willie at one time had been on the books as they call it, for the only professional team in the South of England Southampton FC. Willie was still very involved in training the local team during the week and was an avid Southampton FC supporter. On this day, it would be no different than those before. After the Sunday mid-day meal,

Janet and Willie would stroll along the lanes to the football ground. They bundled up and with the chilling wind blowing in their faces made their way to the field. This would be the team's tenth home game playing a team from Gosport some forty miles away. They were ranked second in the league Sway was in eleventh place. The season still young the local team still had at least another twenty games to play. Willie hoped the team would improve and end up promoted to division two.

It was a very tough day as the wind blew ferociously and with a slippery surface the football was very hard to control. There was a small stand that gave some form of comfort to the weather. It was not as blustery as standing on the sideline in such poor conditions. The game at half time was tied at 0 - 0. As the referee whistles half time it was a rush to the small concession stand. Hot Bovril was in order and the lady behind the counter lovingly gave two glasses one for Willie the other for Janet as they stood freezing in the rain still pouring down. The Bovril glass as Willie held it felt so good stinging his hands, as they were so cold. They made their way back to the stands and ate their pork pies that had mustard smeared all over them. Willie was in ecstasy even though he was cold as could be. They settled in for the second half and Sway slowly

got on top of the game. A brilliant first goal came in the seventieth minute. The ball was quickly passed from defense to mid-field and then slipped forward to the fast moving striker. It was just one on one with the goalie and that was an easy task as the ball hit the back of the net in the corner. The score remained the same until the final whistle. With happy jesters and remarks the fans left all fifty of them. Janet tugged on Willie's raincoat and said, "let's get moving, I'm pretty soaked and cold". The two of them walked swiftly against the wind and rain as it peppered their faces. One had to walk with your head down as they did so conversation along the way was very limited. The walk back took several minutes longer. They remained silent just battling the wind and rain. Arriving at the neatly kept cottage that had a thatched roof, Willie thought as he entered swinging the gate wide open, and I'm going to leave all this. They entered and the warmth of the room quickly turned their faces bright red. They were both glad to be inside and settled in on the settee at the fireplace. The fire had not extinguished itself so with a little prompting using the poker they were able to stoke the fire once more with coal.

Willie in his own mind had already come to grips with the formidable task of relocating to Zimbabwe. Janet after such a

long afternoon in the cold weather kept reflecting back to Zimbabwe and warmer weather. They both had no idea of the country, people and customs. Glaring into the now raging fire Janet quietly said to Willie” lets do it”. He said “what?” I’m all for going to Zimbabwe, she said. Willie was quite puzzled at such a rash decision so soon. It had only been a few hours since she had found out about the Will. This was not at all like Janet he thought. Willie said, “Tomorrow I’m go down to the library and take out as many books as they will allow on Zimbabwe”.

The librarian was very helpful and gave Willie several references as to where to find information on Zimbabwe. The World Atlas was very explicit as to where they would be living. He stood in amazement as he thumbed through the maps. The land in Beit Bridge that they had inherited was a very large track of land. The inheritance would make the two of them very wealthy. He was quite startled by the fact that he would be quite an influential person in Zimbabwe with such land wealth. He wondered who was looking after the property at this time. The Will did make provision for such a delay in the transfer of ownership. Provision for an interim manager was outlined in the Will. Foreman Sonny Kufa’Kan would continue

these duties until the one-year was up or until Mr. William Sutcliff would take residence.

He arrived home during late afternoon skipping work on this Monday this in and of itself very unusual for him. Janet had not arrived yet as. She would work until three at the local bank as a teller. Her normal arrival was a little after five thirty in the evening. They sat around the fire and Willie unraveled all the information that he had made notes of at the Library. “Janet,” he said “we would be quite wealthy if we decide to go to Zimbabwe”. “The land we will own is enormous. I would suspect that there are at least two hundred workers working the arable lands. The farm produces tobacco, sugar cane, cotton, soybeans, maize, and produce. The mountain boundary in South Africa across the boarder has a small mining community that produces copper and other mineral ores. The temperature is around ninety degrees and low seventies in the mornings quite different than that of yesterday as we froze at the game. There is a small Anglican Church community there so I’m pleased about that. The population is about eleven million of which only one percent is white. The ethnic population is seventy-one percent Shona and sixteen percent Nedbele. The population growth rate is very low as the country

has a large AIDS problem”. Janet was still excited about the future even though the country was in turmoil.

“So Willie what is your decision about leaving England now that you are a land baron?” Janet said. Willie quietly thought and said, “I will send a reply during the week stating that we will set sail in the first month of the New Year. There is a lot of work to be done between now and the New Year” he remarked. First would be to paint the house inside ready for the realtor to come and negotiate a selling price. Their home was very quaint and should sell quite quickly. The gardens were beautifully kept and even though it was winter looked so neat as the beds had been turned ready for the spring. Janet said, “That she would look into sailing accommodations and as to what shipping line serviced Zimbabwe.”

The following week Willie mailed his reply to the Solicitor General indicating their intent. New Year was just around the corner Willie needed to tell the football club of his intentions, as he would need to give up his coaching job. Willie was just thirty years old and could not play as he had a serious injury to his right leg at the knee joint. His playing days were over but he loved to coach. It was a Tuesday night all the club’s teams

trained under the lights on both Tuesdays and Thursdays. It was just a bitterly cold night as Willie ran out onto the small training pitch. He went through the normal warm up so as to loosen up the player's muscles and then went into a strict training routine. There were four teams that trained as the club was represented in several leagues. The player's breath puffed out of their lungs it was to be a rough two hours. The final thirty minutes was a six a side game played with mixed teams. After the session they all showered up and went to the clubhouse. During the end of the evening he called all the board members and players together and announced his retirement from the club. It was a very sad time for him and the club, as he was well liked. Willie did not give a reason to the general membership only to the board members all of whom wished him luck.

Janet in the meantime had been in charge of locating a realtor and having people visit the house as prospective buyers. They had several showings of the house, but thought it would be good to have an open house showing the next week that was December the 12th. The house was made ready and a beautiful aroma of home cooking, a delightful smell around the house. Several visitors attended and seemed very interested in the

property. The following Wednesday they received an offer very close to what they had planned with the real-estate agent. Willie said, “Well it looks like we are on our way to Zimbabwe” as they both were seated at the dining room table. Janet’s eyes lit up as she looked forward to the challenges of the new life style ahead.

It was New Year on Thursday January the eighteenth nineteen seventy-seven they were to set sail on the Transvaal Castle on her last voyage from Southampton to Cape Town South Africa and then on to Durban. The voyage would take approximately three weeks. It was a typical January day at dockside as the stevedores loaded the ship ready for it’s maiden voyage. There was excitement in the air. The ships band played on the boat deck as it was not raining and streamers were strung out all along the decks. The atmosphere was exhilarating and as the two of them boarded using the passengers gang plank Janet just said to Willie “Thanks”. They made their way to the Sun Deck, as their cabins were located at this level. They entered to find a beautiful bouquet of flowers sent by the football club and also a display from Janet’s Bank. With compliments of the captain stood a champagne bottle with two glasses in an ice

bucket. They broke open the bottle and celebrated the New Year and the journey that lay ahead.

Toot Toot on the ships horn and they knew they were about to pull away from the dockside at Pier 104 in the New Docks as it was called by the locals. Janet and Willie made their way to the boat deck holding one another and just with a light squeeze of the hands Willie said, "I love you very much". Janet just smiled Willie knew she was excited about this new adventure in life. The two of them looked at the tugs now pulling and pushing the ship out into Southampton Waters. The turn around took about twenty minutes with a multitude of orders from the captain to the engine room. It's normally panic down their Willie thought, as he had served a short time at sea with Cunard Shipping Line on the Queen Mary as an engineer.

With the ship now facing downstream and heading for the Isle of White located at the entrance to the Southampton Waters. Fawley the large oil refinery passed on the starboard side. On the port side Netley Abbey and Hamble a yachting community. Straight ahead they could see Cowes and Ryde on the Isle of White. Janet strained her neck hoping to see the Sway water tower in the New Forrest. It was to no avail as it was too far

inland. Beaulie and Lord Montague's estate could be seen as the ship slipped slowly out to sea. The needles were not in view as the ship rounded the Isle of White. After two hours they were out to sea heading for the first stop that would be the port of Funchal on the Island of Madeira.

High tide that day was at 2-00pm so it was near supper time when they finally resolved themselves that they had left England may be never to return. Janet said, "It's time to go down to the cabin and rest before supper". They both walked once around the boat deck and then took the stairs up to the Sun Deck. The ship occupancy the ships manifest passenger list indicated that the was around ninety percent full. They were expecting to meet fellow English residence now immigrating or visiting South Africa.

The first sitting of the evening meal they joined up with another couple that was visiting their son in Cape Town. As they were seated by the Maitre d'e they were introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Boswell. "Clive and Silvia" Mr. Boswell said as they pulled the chairs towards the table. The couples chatted during the meal and they appeared to get along quite well. One had no choice, as it was a three-week journey to Cape Town. The

Sutcliff's would then go on to Durban the final port. The evening meal came to a close and they all decided as it was the first night at sea it was time for relaxation. Mr. and Mrs. Boswell adjourned to their cabin while Janet and Willie went to the Library for a quite evening reading before turning in. The weather started to get quite rough as the ship passed through the Bay of Biscay. The ship pitched and rolled all night long ploughing its way through the choppy seas.

Breakfast the next day very few passengers showed up as they were suffering from seasickness. The Boswells did not make it to breakfast.

It was a couple of days before the Boswells once more attended seating at the restaurant. The ship had now passed through the rough weather. Sailing time to Funchal the shipping port for Madeira was just another two days. The couples were quite friendly but spent most of the day doing attending separate events. It was mainly at the meal table that they conversed about the daily routine. Willie did invite the two of them for a day out in Madeira as he had been there before while on the Caronia a cruise ship in the Cunard Line. Willie said "it would be quite an experience and left it at that. Two days later they sailed into Funchal early morning just as the sun was rising.

Janet and Willie walked around the Boat Deck every day to keep fit. The routine would last for about an hour. On this morning the sunrise was just beautiful and the temperature now seventy degrees just perfect. Willie said to Janet, “This has been a great trip so far and today you’re in for a wild treat”.

Tender boats were ready for boarding most of the passengers eagerly waited this moment as it would be their first steps without sea legs. The first launch was announced to be loaded from the crew deck. The passengers made their way down the ships ladder that descended down to the loading platform waved about, as it was quite blustery. The women’s headscarf’s flapped in the breeze and one needed to hold on tightly. The Boswells were ahead and when the boat was fully loaded with forty passengers the life boat engineer shouted for the moorings to be let loose. The boats engines roared and the launch swung away from the ship and headed for the shore. Passengers were flung from side to side as the launch bounced off of the choppy waves. On this day the swell was about ten feet. The spray from the bow constantly pounding the waves drenched everyone. On arriving at the dockside Willie, Janet and the Boswells was wet through. Jumping onto the quay

Willie suggested they find a small café and dry out while sitting in the sun. The foursome found a delightful spot and quietly talked while the sun dried out their clothes. Within a half hour they were ready for the trip. Willie said, "lets walk towards the square there we will find the bus." Mrs. Boswell remarked "what bus?" "The bus that takes us to the top of that mountain" Willie replied. They sauntered along the cobbled roads that led to the town center. In one corner was a canopy with a large sign indicating tickets for sale. The price was five pounds. As they arrived Willie stepped up to the Kiosk and asked for four tickets. The bus was waiting and on board was about twenty other passengers. "O.K." the driver shouted all that's coming jump on as we are on our way. The diesel bus spilling out large amounts of diesel fumes made the passengers cough. The Leyland bus jogged along the mountain road with the driver singing in a very pleasant voice. The trip to the top took about one hour. The view of the harbor was spectacular and the ship out to sea in the bay looked very majestic. As soon as they disembarked from the bus Willie said step over there pointing to a small rest bench. It was quite cool at the top of the mountain quite different to the ninety-degree temperature at dockside.

Willie said, “Wait a few minutes and you will see several toboggans arrived”. Each toboggan looks like a rocking chair and holds two people. Guides ride on the back and operate the braking pads that control the speed during the decent. The toboggans are made very sturdy of wood. The runners are about six inches wide and highly polished with wax. The two guides dressed in a traditional uniform looked immaculate. “They will ride down the mountain with you and control them” the boss man said. The toboggans reach a speed of about thirty to forty miles an hour and they stay close to the inside edge of the road so don’t panic it’s quite a ride. The first to board a unit were the Boswells. They were set up and tied in and waved goodbye. Willie and Janet followed. Janet hung on tight as they started out down the long mountain path back to the town. The roads were all cobblestones and made for quite a fast running surface. There were parts of the road that had water mist from the night before and the toboggan just whisked across these areas. Janet was thrilled at the spectacular view but inwardly felt a little sea sick as they sped down the slopes. It was certainly a worthwhile adventure as Janet left the toboggan on arriving at the end station. Both the Boswells agreed it was a trip you have to take if visiting Funchal on the Island of Madeira. They made their way to a

small bar and relaxed eating a late lunch. The last launch left at about five thirty back to the ship. They all boarded the last one with the engineer stating that all passengers accounted for as he gave the manifest to the purser. The seas had calmed down and the trip back was very relaxing in the evening sun. Willie just let his mind wander, with little or no thoughts about what lay ahead.

Later in the evening as the sun was setting the ship up anchored and sailed on towards Cape Town. The ships log indicated that there was still about ten days of sailing before arriving in South Africa. The days past by with an athletic routine that kept the Sutcliffs fit during the days at sea. On the night before arrival at Cape Town the captain invited all passengers to the Gala Ball after the evening meal. Both couples looked very smart. The men dressed in tuxedos and the ladies with very attractive gowns. As they entered the restaurant for the evening meal, they were introduced to the Captain, Chief Officer, and the Head Purser. The room seating that night had been rearranged so that people would intermingle and meet new passengers. The two couples were assigned to a table with a party of eight. The meal was very delicious. It was an eight-course meal with all the trimmings.

While dining the captain visited each table and had a quiet word with all of his guests. After the meal they all went into the Grand Ballroom and danced the night away it was truly a wonderful evening. At the end of the night the Boswells bid farewell, as they would disembark the next day at Cape Town. They wished the Sutcliffs good luck in their new adventure. The vessel laid over two days so Willie and Janet took a couple of tours of Cape Town and enjoyed the historical sites. The ship bound for Durban on the Wednesday just three days sailing. Both of them were now getting very excited about the final journey.

Durban was a thriving community and is situated in the coastal lands of the Zulu tribes. The port city was typical of South Africa coastal port. The very affluent whites lived in the suburbs and the blacks lived in squalor. They booked into a small hotel on the main street settled in for just a few days while they made arrangements to travel to Johannesburg by rail. The following Monday at 7-00am they stood at the rail siding ready to board the train. They had several trunks of luggage as one could imagine when immigrating. These large pieces were being loaded in to the baggage car at the rear as they passed by. A porter stood on the carriage step as they

approached the first passenger coach. In a very official voice “where to” he asked.

“Johannesburg,” Willie replied. First class he retorted, “Yes” Willie acknowledged in a pleasant voice. “Two coaches up” the porter said pointing towards the front of the train. They boarded making their way to the assigned cabin for the trip. The journey by rail to Johannesburg was approximately four hundred miles. They bundled into the cabin and felt like this journey was going to be a chore not like the voyage on the ship.

All aboard and with a shrieking whistle the conductor announced their departure right on time. Slowly the train chugged out of the station. The steam locomotive seemed to struggle with the load of fifteen carriages and it took several minutes to get up to a traveling speed of forty miles an hour. The scenery was stark and barren. The sun was rising; the day had been cool in the low seventies. It was now warming up rapidly. They had made provision at the hotel for sandwiches and water for the journey as they were expecting little service while traveling. Willie was reading a book that he had purchased in Durban. Reading was the one thing he really enjoyed. Janet was also an avid reader. So the two of them were now each engrossed in a novel. They broke silence with

an occasional “Wow look at that” and pointing to the skyline. Janet was now using a fan to keep cool. They would get little relief from the heat, as the windows of the cabin did not lower. One would have to stretch one’s legs and go into the corridor and open up a window of the compartment door. Janet had done this several times during the journey but it unraveled her hair. She did not have a kerchief to hold it back. The hours passed away as they both kept very quiet. At about one in the afternoon after several stops along the way, Janet asked Willie if he would like a sandwich. She laid out the whole spread of egg salad and cucumber sandwiches, potato crisp, and fruit. The two of them enjoyed the brief break and talked about the trip.

The train approached the station at Johannesburg at 9-00pm. It slowly came a stop with several jerks as the brakes were applied. The station was a buzz with porter’s baggage handlers and vendors trying to sell trinkets and artifacts. They were to check into a hotel overnight. Their connection to Biet Bridge would be the next day. Transportation to Beit Bridge was once a week. The hotel they checked into was immaculate and they loved the view from the balcony that looked over a wonderful garden that was laid out perfectly. Their evening meal was

served in the dining room; as they were the only guests in residence it was just so intimate. Janet was still very up about the whole adventure, but the day of traveling was pretty rough. She knew inwardly that she would need to toughen up a little. This new land was very different to that of England. After the evening meal they sat on the balcony and sipped several glasses of wine and retired at 11-00pm ready for the next day. The last leg of the journey to Beit Bridge was about three hundred miles. The train did not have a first class so she was expecting the worst.

They waited several hours at the station as the train needed repairs and could not be put back in service for several hours. At 2-00pm it was made ready and they boarded the train in economy class. The train was just packed with passengers and the coaches were jamb packed. There were some coaches with bundles hanging on the outside. She realized that the bathrooms would not be so clean and dreaded the thought of having to go. It would be inevitable in the end that she would need to visit the bathroom. The expected journey was to take twenty hours without any unforeseen mechanical problems. The train would be very slow with ten fully loaded coaches. Janet was now starting to wish the journey over although there

was still three hundred miles to travel. This part of the trip would seem to be endless as they had only been traveling for two hours and the heat was just unbearable. The temperature was now approaching ninety degrees. There were several other passengers in their compartment. After a couple of hours of conversing the small talk ended. Second Class compartments had no air-conditioning. They were extremely hot. Janet had sweat pouring down her face. She had learned from the first stage of the journey to use a headscarf. She wore it as a bandana to absorb some of the sweat. The heat of the day was increasingly uncomfortable but she knew she could not complain. Willie just read as the train chugged along. There were several stops along the way and as the evening sun went down they came to an abrupt stop just outside Pretoria that was scheduled to be a lay over. Janet looked at Willie she said, "What's this all about?" Willie stepped down from the train to find out the problem. He came back to the coach they were several hundred passengers all milling about in desperation. Willie did find out the problem, it appeared that the steam engine had just about run out of wood to stoke the fire. Additional fuel wood was needed so that the train could reach Pretoria that was only five miles away. The delay would put them in Pretoria about 1-00am.

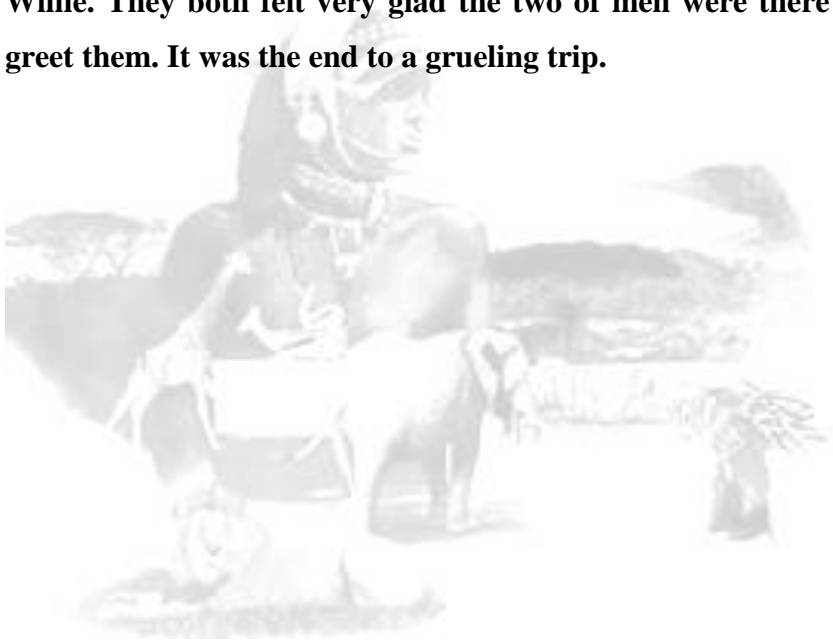
They arrived extremely tired and just wanting a bath before retiring to bed. The hotel accommodations were very good. Each of the bedrooms came with a changing area and shower. After cleaning up they both found the pillows inviting and slipped into a deep sleep. At 9-00 am a slight knock on the door startled Janet. Jumping out of bed she opened the door. The maid said “Paper mom and when would you like your breakfast served?” Janet replied, “In about a half an hour”. She returned to the bed and nudged Willie, as it was time to get ready for the departure at 2-00pm. The connection had been delayed. Within the hour, breakfast was served in the room and Willie had his usual eggs bacon and sausage Willie thought that this most probably would be his last one for some time. Janet had a light breakfast of just toast and tea.

With a resounding horn and whistles blowing the train to Beit Bridge, pulled out of the station. The train was quite full as it was approaching the Easter Holiday. Forty-five percent of the Zimbabwe men work out of the country. The train was loaded with a great number of men returning home for the religious holiday. The first part of the journey was very boring as it was savanna lands with very little vegetation. As the evening

approached the pass through the Soutpansberg mountain range it was spectacular. Janet would keep prompting Willie look at that and saying, “Isn’t it pretty?” Willie by now was at the end of his tether as the journey was now on it’s fifth day. He would reply cordially but then fall back to sleep. The movement of the train had a rocking affect as it struggled to weave its way through the rugged terrain of the mountain. Early morning, they arrived at Messina. Messina is the furthest most city in South Africa about ten miles from the Zimbabwe border. Willie said to Janet, “We own mines here”. They were certainly glad the trip was coming to an end. Within thirty minutes they would be in Beit Bridge.

Slowly the engine came to a stop. It was the last station on the railway system north of Pretoria. Willie was looking out of the window and could see the local reverend Doctor John Black waiting for their arrival. Beside him standing very erect in stature, with a smile on his face was Sonny Kufa’Kan the foreman in charge of the ranch. Sonny stood about six feet four tall and dressed in safari attire the spats on his boots immaculately shined. Willie waved and the two of them walked towards the compartment that they were standing outside of. By now the whole station was full of families and friends all

awaiting arrival of the men of various villages. It was kayos, children running to meet their fathers, women crying in joy and babies just squealing due to the total confusion. First to step forward was Reverend Black kindly saying “Welcome Mr. and Mrs. Sutcliff to your new home”. Then he introduced Mr. Sonny as he was always called to first Mrs. Sutcliff and then Willie. They both felt very glad the two of men were there to greet them. It was the end to a grueling trip.



Chapter II

Homesteading

Mr. and Mrs. Sutcliff sat in the rear seats. Sonny drove the jeep and reverend Black talked the majority of the time. As they approached the main entrance to the ranch the logo on top of two elephant tusks read. "For those who enter we have room" Willie thought that it was so appropriate that his uncle had such a sign at the entrance. His uncle as far as he could remember when he was six years old was a very kind man. Willie thought that he hoped he could keep the family tradition alive. The circular driveway was lined with cycads trees. The flowerbeds were very colorful with English roses. Special orchids were placed in hanging baskets around the verandah. "It all looked like a picture book," Janet remarked to Willie while placing her head lightly on his shoulder with a slight tug on his shirt.

Mrs. Kufa Kan Sonny's wife ran out shouting "Mr. Governor I'm glad you're here and you mam! "as she rushed up to the jeep. Several young children all appeared at the open door of one of the huts on the side of the main building. Janet noticed

their bright white teeth as they smiled at them in a shy way. Sonny unloaded all of the trunks and put them in the entranceway to the main hall. Reverend Black by this time had dismissed himself cordially and said he would stop by during the week. Janet and Willie just stood on the verandah held hands and looked out into the immense space of the savanna. As they dreamed of what was to come a quiet voice said, "Mr. Governor your tea is ready". Janet and Willie settled down in the shady part of the verandah to have their first high tea at the Messina Valley ranch as it was named. As they sat a small boy worked the bamboo fan that was the size of a window and the breeze was enough to make it quite pleasant. Janet said, "Well Governor Willie what are we to do tomorrow just joking?" Willie said, "I kind of like my new title he said with a smile on his face". Janet replied "I like it to so I will continue in the same manner as the hands" she said. They had a lot of adjusting of their life style to do now that they were now in residence.

Sonny's wife was already preparing the evening meal in the kitchen. As she did not know the new owners taste, she had made a meal of fish on a typical bead of maize. Fruit sauces were set out and dessert would be custard with rhubarb. The

table was set up with a very white starched cloth. Doilies were placed under the settings and a small vase of roses in the middle. Lawanda came to the front door after they had been on the verandah for a couple of hours. "Governor Willie and mam your meal is ready," she said. Janet was first to rise entering the hallway she noticed the table so finely prepared for the evening meal. It was laid out in a large dining area on the eastside, as the sun would have already set in the west. It was much cooler on this side of the house. The wide hallway had been cleared of all the trunks this gave access to the rear of the building. One could walk through the Great Room and on the backside were the living quarters with four bedrooms with individually attached bathrooms. The service area was on the eastside this included a washing room kitchen, pantry and a shoe room where boots and garments were stored and hung on walls. A gun rack straddled the wall with several Winchester rifles. Outside the back entrance about fifty yards away was about a twenty-thousand-gallon water tank mounted about forty feet in the air. The Great Room had several trophies of animals hung on the walls. The huge fireplace had a fine specimen of a Gazelle mounted on a black ebony backboard. The rooms were decorated in very manly colors with animal

furs strewn around in a random pattern. Janet as she passed through, thought this would need to be changed.

The meal was delightful and Janet dare not ask about the contents, as she might get upset. Willie was now settling in as they sat at the dining table just looked at Janet with such loving eyes and said, "I love you very much". With the next breath he said, "We will need to make a great deal of changes in our lifestyle and blend in as quickly as possible". Janet agreed, but added to Willie's statement with "I need to make a few changes around here to make this place a little more attractive and not as manly." Willie in a kind voice said, "First I need to find out what the finances and yields of the farm are. When I received the letter of acceptance from the Solicitor General's office I was also informed that we have a substantial bank account in Messina. About one million, two thousand pounds will be transferred to a new account". Our account locally has about twenty thousand additional pounds for running the farms payroll." Janet was astounded she said, "You didn't tell me that little gem". "Holding back on me Governor with a smile." Willie said. "It came in the final collection of the mail at Lymington post office and I opened it and just forgot". "Forgot!" She exclaimed and I have been

worried the whole trip as to how we would make out starting from scratch.” By the way we also have an account in Messina South Africa that has fifty thousand pounds. This was used for payroll at the Sutcliff mines. Willie said that he would be very busy in the forth-coming weeks just getting around the farm and straightening the financial end out with solicitors and banks.

After the evening meal they went back on to the verandah and sat in the rocking chairs. The evening was now quite dark but with a clear sky. The stars sparkled and the horizon was silhouetted with a silver lining. There were many strange noises that they had never heard before. Janet was a little apprehensive as she sank into the rocking chair but thought I must not show my apprehension. They read their books while Governor Willie smoked his pipe as he occasionally did. This habit he would enjoy normally when he was feeling smug with himself or his soccer team a had beaten a formidable opponent. It was approaching eleven o'clock Willie said, “It’s time for bed. I’m sure in the morning we will be up early like six o'clock”. Sonny seems to be a very bright and astute person and will make sure I’m up at the crack of dawn to start the new day. The bedrooms were spacious and even had a dressing

area mirrored. There were mosquito nets over each bed as they were only six miles from the Limpopo River. The season had just started and swarms of mosquitos would migrate into the ranch area. Willie was very susceptible to the poisons and would break out in large bumps so it was important for him to keep covered up. Janet on the other hand, they avoided it must have been her body aroma or skin oils that kept them away. Willie when he saw the nets knew this was one thing that he would adjust to. They kissed said a prayer and fell asleep in a very short time after such a long trip.

Willie was right. At five o'clock a knock on the door it was one of Sony's children aged about seven years old. "Sir it's time to rise", he said in a very commanding voice. Willie knew that Janet would just roll over and go back to sleep as she always loved to sleep late, whether it was a work day or not. Willie had showered. He dressed in his safari type clothes with shorts long socks a kaki color and boots. He went to the boot room and fitted himself with boots his uncle wore, as they were the same size. Willie had come unprepared for some of the things he was experiencing but laughed to himself at his vulnerability. Lawanda bade him good morning with "Governor Willie your breakfast is ready." Willie sat down to eggs, bacon, sausages,

and fried tomato's and fried bread a typical English meal. The teapot with a beautifully decorated cozy stood in the middle of the table. Marmalade preserve for the toast was placed in a small silver container. The morning was going like clockwork everyone seemed to be busy about their chores without orders or arguing. Willie sat down and enjoyed, much to his surprise, the breakfast in front of him. Lawanda at times would just quietly pass into the room to see if he needed any further assistance. During the course of the meal Willie stopped Lawanda asking, "Who is the young lad who so diligently works around here?" "That's Sonny's young boy" she replied and left it at that as she slipped back into the kitchen.

The day had started with such secrecy with people coming in and out with very little noise. Sonny arrived at seven o'clock with a light knock on the back door and entered as he usually did with, "Good morning Governor Willie". Willie indicated for him to sit down at the table Sonny shied away as it was not his place to be at the table. Willie could see that he had broken another rule around these parts. Rising he said, "Let's go to the Den and sit together at the table and talk about the ranch and mine". The two of them walked into the Den and sat at the large Cyprus wood table that had a glass inlay. Sonny took his

hat and hung it on the hat rack and pulled a chair towards the table. First Willie said, “Do you have the inventory list from the solicitor’s office. Sonny replied “Yes Sir”. “Let’s go over the whole thing as we sit here it may take several hours but we have time unless you feel otherwise Sonny.” First the house staff Willie said. Sony outlined the whole staff. Lawanda my wife, is head of household services she has six people working for her. Two cleaning ladies, two that prepare the food and purchase it at the local market in town and two that do all the wash. The wash is for the whole compound including my family. Your uncle set it up that way. If you feel differently we will make adjustments but it works really well. “Who is that young boy that floats around here?” Willie asked. “He is my first son sir” Sonny replied. Does he go to school? No was his answer. Willie just left it at that thought. He would touch on the subject at some later date.

“How is the ranch broken down as far as farming and service Sonny?” Willie asked next. As you know there are fifty thousand hectares that is approximately one hundred and twenty-five thousand acres on land. The southern boundary of your property borders onto the Limpopo River. The land is very fertile alongside of the river. About thirty thousand acres

of sugar cane is grown there and is a very profitable crop. My sub foreman works about one hundred workers on this land. By the way, I have a sub-foreman for each crop. That's how we maximize the production, as they are experts at just one crop. Along the road that crosses the lower land towards the communal farm is about five hundred acres of maize that is the staple crop for farms to sow. Going back to the river we also have about thirty thousand acres irrigated and on that land we grow such crops as cabbage, carrots, beets and onions that are very profitable crop and shipped to the Tanzania market. The sub-foreman for vegetables is obviously responsible for more than one type of crop. The land that stretches around the ranch house is not that arable so I have left that just for tobacco very profitable at this time especially on the export market. The annual rainfall in this area is usually very low around four hundred milli-meters a year. We have had droughts in the past that last several years and you should be aware of this situation. There are several storage bins for maize and it will support the ranch and farmers if needed for about three years. We normally export it every year depending on crop yield. As you have noticed the water tank is backed up with a small pumping station down at the riverbed. We do have a rain collection system and tanks when it rains. No water

is wasted I can assure you. Willie next asked, “How do you purify the water?” May be you did not notice but there is a small water purification plant out the back also. The chemicals are hard to come by and I have to order them six months in advance. “Continue”, Willie said

The land to the north of the ranch running east to west some thirty thousand acres we have divided up into soybean and cotton farming. Cotton farming in the drought years is very profitable, but soybean is not. The stretch from the northern border to behind the compound is cotton farming as its pretty dry land. From the compound south and towards the river we grow tobacco. This again is very profitable. The farm overall production yields about fifty-five thousand pounds’ revenue from all crops. The operating cost is about twelve thousand pounds so it is quite a profitable ranch. Willie was amazed at the efficiency of Sonny’s operation and the revenue stream. “And on a bad year of drought?” Willie asked. Normally we break even or close to it. Does that include the operation of the ranch itself? “Yes” Sonny replied. “From what you tell me the farm revenue is about ten pounds a hectare that is very good I assume”. “Yes sir” he replied.

Now tell me about the mining in Messina in South Africa. Well your uncle purchased the mine several years ago it was in disrepair. The purchase price was a very nominal fee. He hired a foreman who has done a fantastic job over the years and brought the mine back to a very profitable one. It took about three years to get all of the equipment up and running in good order. We have now plenty of spare parts and the equipment is well maintained. Your uncle paid him very well twice what a normal family income would be, so he's very happy at his work. By the way Sonny how many do we have on the ranch payroll?" Willie said. "About two hundred fifty with a payroll of around ten thousand pounds a year. "Where does the other two thousand cost come from?" Willie asked. He had the math down pat and knew what the whole operation was running. Sonny replied, "That's for new seed stock and planting. Good answer he thought to himself. Willie was convinced that there was no outlay that he was not now familiar with. "Go back to the mining operation please" he said. The mine now produces about five to six thousand tons of copper ore a year and that's quite a lot for a small mine operated by just one hundred people. Production revenue is around seventy thousand pounds. Payroll cost around twenty thousand pound that is expensive but it's mining and in line with other forms of

excavating and processing. The net income is around fifty thousand pounds a year “Very good,” said Willie. Sonny it’s now lunch time would you like to eat with us. No Sir it’s not my place to eat with the Governor. I will take lunch in the kitchen. Willie felt bad about him not eating with him but understood somewhat his station in life. This was Africa and Willie would need to understand customs and understand the cultural changes.

Sonny rejoined Willie in the early part of the afternoon and they both went over to the garage building. There were several jeeps garaged each one was in good shape. Sonny pointed to the first one on the right that’s the foreman’s jeep the other two are for your transportation. Each vehicle was fairly new maybe four years old. The tractors and harvesters are for the local farm work around the ranch. Diesel fuel is stored outside at the back and we get refills every two months. The oil also is used for heating the domestic hot water. Kerosene is used for all of the farm huts and fuel for starting fires in case we have to control the spreading of fire to protect the house and compound. Willie could see that Sonny had it all under control and well thought out. Nothing was left to chance each item had a place and function. Willie was very glad that he had such a

wonderful person to deal with. His uncle had made a wise choice several years ago when promoting Sonny as a young lad of twenty to the post of General Foreman. He was now in his early thirties. Zimbabwe has a very low longevity rate about thirty-seven years on an average. Sonny was very fit and healthy. Willie asked him how he kept fit. Sonny replied, “Sammy and I run eight miles every day of the week so as to keep fit. Sammy is a great runner I find it hard to keep up with him”. This statement was just embedded in Willies mind for later use.

Janet had joined the two of them as they sauntered towards the house. “Well Janet have you got things organized in the kitchen?” Willie said, “No need to Lawanda has done a fantastic job,” Janet said. I will just leave well enough alone as it’s so efficiently run. “Thank you mam”, Sonny said, “That she would be happy to hear that”. My days are going to be quite different as I’m used to running around and getting meals prepared. He said Lawanda wouldn’t mind if you would like to help on new dishes. She loves to learn about foods and the preparation of them. Janet said, “I have reviewed the menu for the week and it’s very nutritional, with minimal fat grams. Sonny I did notice, although Lawanda does not show it too

much is she pregnant? Janet asked. Sonny replied, "about four months we are having our fifth child." I'm happy for you both and left it at that. Sonny said, "I will pull the jeep around and we will go into town for a short visit just to get your bearings." Janet sat once more in the back seat the two men up front the Beit Bridge was about a thirty-minute ride into town. It was now two in the afternoon and extremely hot. The back seat was a little better as the wind would blow across ones' face. The air, although warm gave the passenger in the back some relief Janet was glad about that. Sonny pointed out Mr. Sinclair's property on the way as it joined Mr. Sutcliff's at the north end. Mr. Sinclair was the local solicitor. Willie knew he would be talking to him in the very near future. They arrived on the outskirts of the town. Willie was quite taken aback as it was much larger than he expected. The train station was on the very south end so they had not seen the whole town on arrival. It was a hive of activity Sonny said, "It is not normally like this only all the men are home for Easter holiday next Sunday." The jeep pulled up next to the main convenience store with a sign above in red numerals five and ten. They jumped down from the jeep Sonny said, "He had chores to do. Meet me back here in an hour". Dismissing himself he walked quickly down the main street-flagging people he knew as he went. Janet

beckoned Willie to walk towards the hosiery shop. They both stood outside looking in when Mrs. White appeared at the door come in she said. Mrs. White was the unofficial Town Mayor. She was always up to date with the local news. “Mr. and Mrs. Sutcliff I presume?” “Yes Janet replied who did you know?” “I have ways”, she said. And left it at that. “Take your time look around we have lovely imports from all around the world”. Janet could see that the store had some very expensive items but very tasteful. They strolled around and eventually turned around and were about to leave. Mrs. White said, “See you on Wednesday at Mrs. Sinclair’s I hope”. Janet wondered what that was all about as they left. The doorbell clang several times as they exited the store. Willie felt a little uncomfortable about Mrs. White on the other hand he thought I doubt I have to deal with her in the future. Janet said, “What a strange person” and walked on down the main street. It had no sidewalks just bare dirt. It was pretty obvious she would need to purchase some boots and change her attire. The typical British outfit she wore stuck out a mile. She knew better and would change for the next visit into town. Along the way they passed a pub that was crowded with locals all celebrating their time off from work. They were not rowdy but sang colloquial songs and smoked up a storm. Smoke bellowed out of the

saloon. Janet stepped out into the road further just as a jeep was passing she jumped back immediately as a toot of the horn several times alerted her of its presence. Mr. Black the local reverend shouted, "Be careful mam" as he came to a stop. "Well this is not the way to meet up again", he said to Janet. She was quite ashamed and blushed a little at her mistake. Tomorrow my wife will have a small gathering at two in the afternoon she would love you to join in the afternoon tea party. Janet said, "She would certainly love to" and asked directions. Easy the reverend said, "See the small spire of the church over there pointing to the East. The rectory is right behind it you can't get lost." Janet thanked him and he went on his way. Willie held her hand as they walked back to the arranged meeting place outside the five and ten as it was named. Willie was beginning to get the hang of things around this part of the world. Most establishments and business premises took on familiar names outside of the continent they now lived in. It appeared to him that it was a way of just hanging on to the old ways. Even the pub was called the Cricketers Arms. Sonny was waiting with his supplies already loaded in the one of the back seats. Janet hopped up into the spare one and they took off for the compound.

Time had flown by well at least the first five months Willie thought to himself. It was in the evening when all hell let loose. Come quickly Mrs. Janet come to the hut. Sammy was in a panic. His father and Willie were out on a mission visiting the northern territory communal farms. Janet rushed into the Hut to find Lawanda breathing heavily and in great pain. "Sammy get some hot water on quickly," she screamed. Sammy went right away to the compound kitchen. Lawanda said mam the baby is in the channel and on its way. Lawanda pushed and pushed as the pains got increasingly more prominent. Sammy could not bear to see his mother in such pain. He himself had not seen the birth of his other brothers and sisters. Janet had not delivered a bay and it was to be her first experience. She stayed calm and gave orders to both Sammy and Lawanda strictly out of fear. Beads of sweat were pouring down Lawanda's face. Sammy would gently help his mother by mopping her brow, each time he would say it's alright mama it's alright. After three hours the baby's head appeared. Janet with sterilized hands held the baby's head and assisted in the delivery while Lawanda pushed and screamed. At last the struggle was over the baby finally was ejected along with the placenta. Sammy turned his head aside as it all looked too messy. Janet placed the baby aside on the clean towels after

giving it a good smack to make it cry. Lawanda directed her to cut the umbilical cord and tie it off. She did but before proceeding she dipped the scissors in hot boiling water to sterilize them. She carefully did as Wanda explained. The baby was free Janet said to Sammy you now have another brother. Sammy's eyes lit up. Several hours later Willie and Sonny arrived at the ranch to find out that they had missed the event of the day. Mrs. Janet rush over to him and out of fear, frustration, and just being scared stiff gave Sonny a big hug. "What's all that about Mrs. Janet?" he said. "You have a wonderful new son." Janet explained as tears streamed down her cheeks. Willie stepped in and congratulated Sonny and they all walked to the hut to see how Lawanda was resting. She lay there with the baby in her arms. As they approached she awoke just to say, Sonny the Lord has given us another wonderful gift a baby boy. With that she fell into a deep sleep. Janet with Willie at her side strolled back to the main compound without words.

Chapter III

Business as Usual

The morning routine was up at the crack of dawn for Willie as Sammy once more quietly knocked on his door as a reminder. Sammy had just returned from his eight mile run with his father on weekdays. On Sundays they would run fifteen as his father had less chores to do and they would attend church as a family. Willie thought to himself one morning I'm going to surprise him and get up a quarter of an hour earlier than his knock on the door. Willie liked to keep people on guard at all times and to anticipate the unknown. Today was the first Tuesday that Janet would attend the afternoon tea party at the reverend's home as she had missed last week purposely. It was kind of eerie as everyone knew what was happening in the community but no words were spoken. The underground intelligence was pretty alarming to her. Mrs. White she thought must be awfully disappointed with her not showing up at the Sinclair's on Wednesday afternoon. Janet did not like the fact that everyone knew her business. Janet made ready for the afternoon tea at Mrs. Black's home the rectory. She was in a quandary as to what to wear for such an occasion, as she had

not attended such functions in the past in England. There was a reluctance to attend due the fact that she worked all of her life. She was not a home housewife even though they did not have any children and could have easily become one. She thought this time, much against her will, she would wear an English business dress attire and hoped she guessed right.

Crossing the compound, she jumped up into the jeep. With the key in the ignition she was off. One thing she had never driven a stick shift car so this was to be her first. She looked for “R” on the stick shift and let the clutch out without enough gas; the jeep jumped six feet and stalled out. She thought I have to get this down pat otherwise my life is going to be stuck in the compound awaiting Willie every time to take me some place. Her thoughts were clutch down, gas sufficient; gear in reverse let the clutch out slowly. It worked this time she was moving back a quite a reasonable speed. Clutch she said to herself move into first gear. That was a problem as the stick handle was worn and she could not see the position so she guessed. Placing the jeep in second she took off after increasing the gas. As the jeep increased speed she was frightened but determined. Second gear, next third finally top speed fourth gear. It was about five miles to the main road. A dust trail followed as she

moved out along the straight road towards the main highway. She was happy, but realized she would need to slow down at some point and turn onto the highway. She tried a practice run long before the main road and she was successful. Now she thought how am I going to do in city traffic as she entered the highway and turned north towards Beit Bridge.

Approaching the city, she was a little nervous but kept her cool. There were no lights only stop signs at junctions. This she was not aware of the intersections only being posted with stop signs and not signal lights until today as she reached town. The first intersection was just a few blocks away. Down shifting but missing one of the gears with a groaning sound she came to a stop. Not bad as she pulled away. The rectory lay ahead after several right and left turns. It had a white wooden picketed fence very neatly intermingled were roses. The flowerbeds were kept immaculate. She could just see herself ploughing into the fence and making a fool of herself so she immediately looked for a space for parking the jeep. The jeep slowly entered the parking space; she clutched and came to a stop. Boy that wasn't so hard after all she thought Willie would be proud of me. Janet made her way towards the Rectory. The knocker was a very bright brass quite large so it made a

resounding noise as she hit the base several times. A ladies' voice from inside said O.K. O.K. hold your horses I will be there. "Oh!" she exclaimed as she opens the door, your Mrs. Sutcliff I presume. Welcome to the afternoon tea party. Mrs. Sutcliff was introduced to at least ten other ladies all dress in afternoon lacy attire. She felt a little out of place but knew how to carry the situation off. Mrs. Black informed Janet by whispering in her ear that this was the total extent of all the white ladies living within two hundred miles. Janet was appalled at such a statement but thought that it was most probably true. This fact gave Janet a lone feeling as she sat down at one of the open chairs placed around the room. There was complete silence and they all looked a Janet as if to say you first. Janet had not realized that she was extremely rich and they all needed to know all her business. She opened up by thanking the hostess for inviting her but under her breath said, "It would be the last." Before she could even finish her first sentence questions were flying from all directions. Like what school was she from? What ancestry? Janet knew how to handle this and started a story that was untrue but she knew they were all gullible at this moment in time. It would take them forever to substantiate all of the facts so on she went. It started I grew up in Hampshire and was schooled in

Switzerland at boarding school attended Oxford University. After completing the wild story, she inwardly smiled to herself. She knew they had all fallen for the story line. Tea was served with scones and cream and with cucumber finger sandwiches. At the end Mrs. White now enthralled in the whole charade was quick to realize that she needed to get closer to Mrs. Sutcliff as she was so rich and would be powerful in these parts. After two hours Mrs. Sutcliff excused herself and left the tea party. As she walked back to the jeep with a smile on her face and felt better that she was out of that pen. The challenge now was to get back to the compound safely.

She arrived at about five thirty pulling into the compound she could see that Willie was worried. She jumped out of the jeep with a smirk on her face saying I told you I could do it. "What" was Willie's reply? Drive a stick shift jeep. Did it myself to and from town. "No" Willie retorted. Janet folding her arm in his. They went inside Janet told Willie the whole story about the terrible lie she had told, Willie said, "Do you feel good about it?" Somewhat" she said. They were all stuck up and with no reason to be that way. I guess they will not invite me again when they find out the real truth someday. Janet knew the events of that day would ostracize her from the in crowd. It

was what she wanted if they were the representation of Christian people. Willie said, “So what are you going to do with your time now that you’re not in social graces with the elite?” Janet said, “I have been thinking of starting an animal compound for injured animals. My father at one time was a veterinarian and it gave him such pleasure to help animals. I believe this will be my calling while in Africa”. Willie was very excited about the project Janet would undertake.

“So how did your day go Willie?” “This morning Sonny and myself headed for the northern frontier of our property, as it’s the least productive due to the lack of water. The fencing is in good shape and the foreman who lives in a small communal farm was very interesting person. The smaller communal farms, at least on our lands do quite well and support the six or seven families who work the lands. There are about twenty workers for this part of the ranch. They farm about 30 acres and they are self-sustaining. It was well worth the trip”. Sonny informs me that the foreman gather at the compound every two weeks to have a staff meeting. The next meeting is within the week so I’m hoping to see all of them before they muster here. I was pretty amazed as there were about ten children of

all ages playing football on a bare patch of land with so much enthusiasm.

The evening meal was laid out ready. The two of them washed up and sat down quietly said a prayer and ate heartedly. Janet kept filling in some of her afternoon while Willie would elaborate on his trip north. During supper Willie kept hearing a faint knock knock. "What's that?" he would say to Janet. "Don't hear a thing," she said. After supper on his way out onto the verandah he heard it again it seemed to come from behind the garage. He made his way around the back. As he slowly peered around the corner he saw Sammy playing football all by himself. Time and time again he would kick ball against the back of the garage. The ball was made of an animal's bladder and would bounce off the face of the garage very quickly. As the garage surface was not level it would come off at all angles. Sammy was able with his quick reflexes to keep the ball moving at a very rapid pace. His athleticism was amazing. Willie just moved away not even making Sammy aware of his presence. As he strolled back to the verandah he thought that boy has exceptional skills and dexterity. As he settled in for the evening of reading the lamps were lit by one of the house workers. Again in the evening as the sun went

down the view was just majestic. Janet remarked. "Well what was the noise?" Willie answered, "Just nothing but my imagination. Tomorrow I'm heading for the low lands or Limpopo Valley section to talk to each of the sub-foreman in that area," Willie said. Janet said, "She had plenty to do around the compound". "Next week is payroll so I will need to get all the accounts straightened out before the Friday deadline Willie remarked? After the exchange they both delved into their books and were silent for quite some time. They retired to bed this day at ten o'clock.

Knock, knock time to rise said in a quiet voice. Willie had showered early and was waiting in the Great Room. He knew Sammy would pass this way to his bedroom. Yes, young man what do you want? Sammy jumped out of his skin leaping back at least four feet. "Sorry sir I came to wake you up," was Sammy's reply. "Come over here", Willie remarked. "Yes Mr. Governor," as Sammy moved quietly across the Great Room. "Sit down next to me," Willie said. Sammy said, "That he would rather stand". I have watched you practice out the back yesterday evening. Sammy dropped his head as if to say he was sorry. "No, No," Willie said I want you to continue. You have a lot of talent. When I come back tonight meet me after supper

in the back and I will watch you play some more. Sammy was so excited as he dismissed himself with a “Yes Sir”. Sammy could not read or write. Schooling was not compulsory. Willie did not know this at the time. Most boys did not attend school until they were in their early teens.

Willie was waiting on the verandah when Sonny pulled the jeep around to the front of the house. As Willie jumped up into the jeep Sonny said, “Mr. Governor you sure have my son excited about tonight”. Willie tipped his hat and just smiled. Sonny turned onto the main highway and they headed south towards the Limpopo River the southernmost boundary of his property. Sonny was in a very good mood as this was his favorite group of foreman to meet up with. First he was happy because they produced the most revenue for the ranch. Secondly they owned communal farms that were well run also. The majority of communal farms were worked on the weekends when they were not totally occupied with work for the main ranch. As the journey was about half an hour Sonny would sing happily as they went.

They exited the main road about one mile before the Limpopo River and headed west. The trail into the heart of the sugar

cane crops was pretty rugged with major potholes. “Willie said could we do something about the state of these roads?” “We have tried but the gravel or fill we have used in the past is stolen. Not by our communal farmers but those from the neighboring village of Messina,” Sonny said.

Willie accepted the answer but held on tight as the jeep rock and rolled along the rural dirt road. The sugar cane crop was just planted on 30,000 acres so it was not very high and in the distance Willie could see the communal village it was quite large. The village supported one hundred families. A village this size would have at least three hundred children. Most of the children did not have any formal education. Willie was upset about the fact that they were not being educated. Willie put the thought on the back burner inwardly he said I must do something about this problem. This particular communal farm was very self-sufficient about five hundred acres. The yield was excellent the locals even exported maize to the government program in Harare. As they pulled into the village, about twenty children of all ages ran out to greet them. Because the farm was so well run most of the men stayed home and worked the ranch. This was not the case for most families in the South section of Zimbabwe. Fathers in this area worked either in Pretoria or as far away as Johannesburg. They came home

only on holidays. Willie was touched and prodded as he jumped down from the jeep. Each young child wanted to feel him as if to say now I know you. By now several of the sub-foreman were assembled in one hut. Sonny and Willie were advised to walk towards the furthest one at the edge of the sugar cane crop.

The communal meeting would last for couple of hours each sub-foreman trying to outdo the other as far as the production and yield of the acres he was responsible for. Willie thought that this was healthy as they were in a way competing. Obviously some crops were less revenue producers than others but the ranch was broken up into proportionate sizes. The revenue stream was very close to being equal from all crops. The one exception was tobacco. The export of tobacco was extremely good on the foreign market exchange due to the fact that tobacco smoking in the United States of America was booming. Produce was the next big producer as it was broken down into tubular or ground vegetables and those such as lettuce and cabbage above ground. These crops needed a lot of irrigation. The Limpopo River was a great resource and the pumping station and irrigation system they were using was very efficient. Willie advised all of the sub-foreman that he

would like their opinions on how to streamline the farming. This should include recommendations on planting to gain greater yield by the next meeting at the ranch compound. Willie left with Sonny with a trail of children running behind the jeep for several yards. Willie was now rather taken back by the amount of land and crops that were farmed.

That evening after the sit down meal Willie was very edgy and Janet asked, “What’s wrong Willie you seem impatient or on edge?” Willie just replied, “I’m just thinking about the young children that reside on our lands. It’s a crying shame that they do not have any schooling”. Janet said, “I wonder why your uncle never got involved in the subject matter?” Willie just nodded his head and shrugged his shoulders as if to say I don’t know why. He waited about another thirty minutes and then he heard the quite thud, thud again and again. Jumping up as if he was startled Janet said, “What is it Willie?” “I will go and find out,” Willie said scampering to his feet. As he made his way to the back of the garage shed he could see Sammy once more pounding the bladder ball against the back wall. As Willie approached Sammy stopped and looked quite excited that Mr. Governor had shown up, as he was not expecting it. Willie said, “Come here Sammy we need to get you into a

training program so that your skills improve.” Sammy just smiled and said, “how?” Willie had noticed that there were several tree limbs quite sturdy. “Get me ten of those Sammy,” he said. While Sammy collected them saplings lying around they were actually sugar cane. Willie went to the garage and pulled out an axe from the draw. “Give me one of them saplings,” he said. Sammy obliged and Willie sharpened the one to a point and then paced off thirty yards and drove the first stake into the ground. Now cut ten more to a point and place them six yards apart. He then said as Sammy finished the first one. “Please give it to me the first one.” Willie paced off a further six yards from the original in a straight line heading directly away from the back of the garage. Now you do it for all those you have left in your arms. Sammy did what Governor Willie wanted. Willie then took the bladder and went to the far end. Willie knew he was going to get involved that night so he had worn just his training shoes and shorts and a bare top.

He took the bladder and weaved in and out of the stakes and then pounded the bladder against the back wall. It came off at an angle Willie quickly collected it and sent it flying back to Sammy at the far end of the stakes. Sammy immediately

copied Willie. The two of them interchanged position. Willie was ready for the return pass, and set out again through the stakes. Sammy interchanged after sending the bladder to Sammy. Janet by now was wondering why Willie had not returned to the verandah. She could here quite a noise now with little chuckles once in a while and the sound of Sammy's voice. As she approached the corner of the building she just peered around it. Delight went through her body as Willie was sharing his wonderful knowledge and skills he had mastered as a professional with Sammy. She was so happy that he had found another occupation other than farming.

Janet did not go further but went back to her rocking chair. Willie came back about an hour later just as the sun went down. "Boy you worked up some kind of a sweat how come?" she remarked. Willie was reluctant to tell her but in a very kind way said. "I have found a solution to my problem of restlessness". "What's that," she said. Training and coaching Sammy he is so talented and dexterous with that bladder. You know last night when I went to find out the noise. Well it was him, Sammy hitting a bladder against the back of the garage. So that was it and now you're in deep with training and all that. "It was my life years ago," he said. Willie she said, "You

still have a lot to offer even though we are thousands of miles from home”. Willie excused himself, as he left he said he was going to bed early that night. Janet stayed for quite a while just reading.

Willie knew that to keep up with Sammy he would need to train. He arose at five just in time to catch up with Sammy and Sonny as they left the far western side of the compound. At first he was about fifty yards behind them. Both father and son could run very fast and Willie was having a little trouble. He became quickly out of breath after only about two miles. He shouted to them to hold on. Sonny looked back in amazement to see the Governor running about a hundred yards behind them. “Mr. Governor Willie what you doing?” Sonny exclaimed. I wanted to get fit so that I could train Sammy he said. Sonny said, “This is not right you running with us Mr. Governor Willie you stay here at the next bend we will pick you up on the way back in about an hour.” Willie looked a little scarred so far away from the house without a firearm. Sonny assured him it was safe and the two of them took off. Exactly as they said Sonny and Sammy came jogging quite fast around the bend one hour later. “Now Mr. Governor Willie you will have to train around the five acres close to the ranch

until you get up to our speed.” Sonny thought he will never get up to their speed so the position he was in of running with a white man would never occur again. Sammy was made aware of their position and station with respect to the Governor. Sammy told his father about the night before and asked should he continue on with the training Mr. Governor Willie had in mind for him. Sonny thought for a while and said that it was O.K. as long as it stayed on the ranch compound he saw no problem with it. Sammy was delighted with his father’s decision. Running into the hut he was soon bedded down on the sugar cane leaves. He fell asleep for one hour dreaming that someday he would be a great football player for his country.

Sonny was at the door of the hut within the hour saying, “Sammy what you doing you are late for your chores”. Sammy said, “I just fell asleep I’m tired”. “No more nonsense get to those chores son” Sonny would never use the word boy, as it was too derogatory.

Chapter IV

Mission Accomplished

Janet during her daily routine would spend several hours overseeing one of the sub-foreman and his farm helpers building holding pens. The pens under construction were to be used for the animals that she would tenderly care for in the near future. Each pen was laid out with habitat that looked just like their natural environment on the savanna plains. Plants and trees indigenous to the area were harvested and transplanted. For the larger animals they had special slide gate with narrow entrances to ensure the animals had no choice but to go forward and enter the pen. The botany and rock formations were deliberate in placement. Old trunks and limbs of trees cleverly positioned so that the monkey species and or those of the cat family would feel quite at home in during their rehabilitation. A watering hole and waterfall where arranged so that the animals would come together to drink as would be in the wild. A small sign Messina Valley Zoo was placed at the entrance to the walkways that went around the whole pen.

After the pens were completed, it was only about a month later that the first animal arrived. On this occasion a female Gazelle had been trapped and had one of its leg was broken. The animal came from the northern frontier on the west boundary. The truck pulled into the compound with a lot of confusion. The farmers that were resident around the outskirts of the compound all came running to see the new arrival. Sammy and his two sisters and brother were amongst the crowd that gathered. Janet gave directions and the farm gang assembled portable guide rails and the Gazelle was marshaled down the ramp of the truck and into the walkway leading to the pen. The Gazelle jumped and threw back its hind legs awkwardly several times, but eventually gave in and slowly made its way into the open spaces of the pen limping. Janet was not aware of the normal grazing foods but through Sonny as interpreter was able to find out the proper foods. There was a veterinarian in Messina and she would need to talk to him. The phone service was very good in the Limpopo Valley as a considerable number of colloquial people lived in this area. Most of the sub-foreman had phone service gratis of the ranch. She would use Sonny as her spokesperson as he knew the local dialects. The ranch had two groups of resettlement farmers. Those farmers

located on the northern frontier where mainly Ndebele the southern group were Shona.

That evening Janet at the meal table just felt good inside and at last had plenty to do looking after the new member of their family. Willie said, "Janet you look like you just ate a canary. Well I feel like I have a purpose for being here now and left it at that. Willie after the meal went to his den and sat and wrote a letter to the editor of the Daily Echo in Southampton England.

Dear Sir,

It would be of great assistance if you could advertise in the local paper for a teacher to relocate to Zimbabwe. The area has no schools and the children are in dire need of a formal education. We have approximately three hundred children of all ages on our ranch. The selected person must set up a whole curriculum for ages five through fourteen. The recommended books and materials should accompany your reply with budgetary cost. In the event this project goes forward, I will mail a check for the supplies to be flown to Harare the capital. If the successful candidate is married, we can accommodate this arrangement also.

**Yours Sincerely,
Willie Sutcliff.**

PS: Please call 011-262-345-7856 if you have news.

Janet had entered the room and moved quietly towards Willie. Placing her head on his shoulder she said. I knew there was a deep concern in your soul for you to rectify the problem. She kissed him on the cheek and said boy that letter was short and to the point. She said I'm going to bed now and left the den.

Willie put on his training shoes and shorts and went to the back of the garage. Sammy was weaving in and out of the stakes and having so much fun. Willie called for him to halt. Sammy came to an abrupt stop as the bladder crashed against the back wall. The bladder spun off in a direction away from him and it came to a stop. Willie went to the end of the line of stakes and brought them all closer an equal spacing was just four yards. The dribbling through them would need a lot more coordination and touch on the ball. He took off on the first run and hammered the bladder against the back of the garage. Picked it up on the rebound and sent it flying to the other end Sammy was awaiting its return. Sammy would start out

dribbling through the first two stakes, but realized it was not so easy. Each space between stakes was a lot tighter and the ball harder to control. After the third the ball ran out of control Willie just laughed and said, "Now you have a challenge for a while." He left Sammy in a state of bewilderment wondering how to control the ball with speed and yet pass through all the stakes without stumbling or cutting corners and leaving one out. In the interim Willie had gone to the front of the garage. Retrieving a can of white paint and brush he proceeded around the back to find Sammy still puzzled but trying his best to accomplish the new routine. Willie painted a full size goal on the backside of the garage. He then made several circles at strategic locations. These locations were where goals would always be scored as they were out of the reach of a goalkeeper. Willie took the bladder to the far end of the stakes. He proceeded to dribble through the stakes and then hit a ball with all his might at one of the designated circles. Smack in the middle it hit. Sammy stood in amazement. Willie just smiled walking back to the house without anything further to say. The Governor knew in his heart that it would not take long for Sammy to hit each circle at the finish of his dribbling through the stakes in succession.

Wednesday was approaching Willie needed to go into town to talk to the solicitor Mr. Sinclair. After his morning fitness run of about five miles around the cotton crops closer to the house he showered up ready for breakfast. Mrs. Lawanda had prepared his usual eggs and bacon with all the trimmings. Janet was already at the table when he sat down. Well I will ride in with you today if you don't mind I need to do some shopping in town. "Good" He replied hoping that Janet might meet up with Mrs. Sinclair who was about her age. Mrs. Sinclair the day that Janet went to the tea party was not in attendance. Willie thought maybe she might hit it off with her. Willie said, "You really need to make friends with someone so that you have an outreach from this island we have created at Messina Valley Ranch". I know it's only been a few months, but you have had no contact with another white person for some time. She just laughed and shrugged her shoulders.

Janet full of confidence strolled towards the garage and stated up the jeep and pulled around the front of the compound. She handled it with ease. Willie stood on the lower step that lead up to the verandah waiting for her to pick him up. The jeep came to a very timely stop just in front of him. He jumped into the jeep with a kind word, Janet you must have been practicing.

Janet was feeling pretty smug inside, as it was quite true she had been. Willie looked at her as she sat so upright and with her pith and scarf on she certainly could carry off their new status. They proceeded to the Town of Beit Bridge. Janet along the way concentrated on her driving and Willie was not about to distract her. They approached the Town outskirts to find the local police captain stopping all vehicles. Janet came to a stop. Mr. Rogers came up to them and said, "Sorry mam but we have had a robbery at the bank in town and are checking all traffic in and out of the city. Trackers are following leads but to make sure we will need to look at your jeep." Both Janet with Willie following got down and stood aside so that the captain could search the jeep. "O.K. you can carry on your journey. Have a good day in the town, he shouted."

Willie thought this was not a common occurrence for someone to break into the bank. Around these parts the law was very strict and the consequences brutal. Jail time in Zimbabwe was pretty harsh on an individual. The jeep finally came to a halt outside the solicitor's office. It was now ten thirty on the clock in the city center tower. "We are right on time," Willie said to Janet. The two of them went inside. The black secretary introduced herself as Mrs. Susan. "I'm expecting a Mr. Sutcliff

I assume you are that gentleman.” Willie cordially replied, “Pleasure to meet you also.” Turning slightly, he said, “This is my wife Janet.” Mr. Sinclare will be just a short time as he is on the phone at present. But please be seated it should only take a few minutes.

After about ten minutes a shout from a small office come on in the both of you. Janet and Willie entered Janet could see paper work everywhere. Legal books were strewn around on various shelves, papers stacked high in a pile on one of the only seats in the room. Mr. Sinclare called Susan to bring in an additional chair for Mrs. Sutcliff. While Susan brought in the additional chair Willie removed the pile of papers and sat them on the floor. Good job Mr. Sinclare replied looking under his spectacles. Been here thirty years, seen a lot of changes he said. You new comers will need time to settle in and find out about the politics in this area. Willie said, “That he was not interested in politics”. Mr. Sinclare said, “At some point you will be I can assure you. Let’s get down to business then”. Your uncle was a very shrewd man and had made arrangements for the future of the ranch and its viability. First the payroll last month was debited from an escrow account that was set up for one year in the event you did not wish to continue the farming. Sonny has

sole signature until such time as you elected to come and change those arrangements. I guess immediately you will want to change that. Willie said, "Yes although Sonny is very trustworthy and the changing the account is no reflection on his character". The escrow account today has about forty thousand pounds. Your income per year is around five hundred thousand pounds. Willie said to Janet, "That is a lot more than expected based on Sammy's numbers." "Sammy did not know about the revenue from your stocks and bonds," said Mr. Sinclair. Expenses for the ranch runs about one hundred thousand pounds. The ranch is very profitable in a good year. Drought years it actually loses a small amount. Sonny had indicated that it might be about even or close to it. "He's right," Mr. Sinclair replied. Your uncles personal account has one point two million pounds it's in a bank in Messina. The reason for that is he always thought the banking system in Zimbabwe; the government would take over someday forcibly. He has a large portion of his wealth in stock in England all of this you have inherited. The stock alone is worth about four million pound. I will need to write a letters to the various agencies and get the stocks transferred to your name. The main account will also be transferred this week after you sign the papers I have in front of you. The mining account in

Messina will be transferred to you also and that should take place within the month. The balance in the local account is always kept at around twenty thousand pounds one year's payroll. You know, I guessed from Sonny that it is very profitable. Willie replied, "Yes Sir". I'm intending to attend a legal meeting in about a week in Messina and I will take care of your business on that trip. In front of Willie there was an enormous amount of paper work. Both Janet and Willie would need to sign. By the way, I will provide you within the next two weeks Wills for your review. They are only preliminary and open for discussion. The Wills will give you guidance as to what to think about, as the estate is quite sizable to say the least. Susan was called to notarize all of the signatures. As she entered Mr. Sinclair's stated I could not get along without her, she was schooled at London University and is very talented at legal proceedings. Susan is my backbone keeps my calendar in order and court appearances. I'm not organized he said. Janet felt the same way when they entered the room. They spent at least the next hour reviewing documents and signing as the slowly went down. At the end Mr. Sinclair brought out a small bottle of brandy and a cigar and he toasted the new owners of Messina Valley Ranch. I will take care of everything; stop by in about three weeks and you can get the final documents. "Janet

I would like you to meet Mrs. Sinclare some time we will arrange an evening together. No even better next week one evening we both will visit and bring the Wills," he said.

They left the solicitors office. It was late into the morning. Janet gesturing with her hand said to Willie, "I need to go over to Mrs. White store to purchase a few things". Arm in arm they walked towards the store Janet could see the front door curtain slightly drawn. "She's looking at us", Janet said. Willie said "Who?" Mrs. White from behind the curtain. Willie laughed and they both stopped outside the store. Willie said, "I need to go to the general store and order some pipe." They parted and Willie could hear the clanging of the doorbell as Janet entered the store. Mrs. White immediately rushed to Janet's side. Well your back at last we have missed you at the tea meetings on Tuesdays. Janet in a very snippy voice said, "You most probably will miss me a lot more". Mrs. White looked stunned. She stepped back a little from Janet as though she now had a plaque. Janet inwardly thought good I put her in her place. She browsed around the store for quite some time selecting feminine linens that would enhance the ranch. The clock in the corner struck eleven thirty this alerted Janet that she had been in the store one hour. With her arms full of

merchandise, she went to the front. These selections she thought will make it not so manly around the home. Mrs. White was delighted at her purchase it came to about five hundred pound. This amount was twice what she would take in a month. Janet thanked her politely and left the store. It was very hot around ninety degrees so she removed her pith. Janet walked swiftly towards Willie who was now leaving the general utility store. He said, “Let’s get the jeep”. I have several pieces of pipe to load up into it. They strolled back to the jeep and drove it to the store. Four or five hands loaded the pipe Janet was puzzled as to what it was for.

The jeep pulled into the ranch compound Janet could sense that Willie seemed excited about something. She jumped down from the jeep and went inside. Lawanda was preparing supper in the kitchen as Janet quickly drew a nice cool glass of milk.

“Mam you look tired out,” Lawanda said. Janet replied, “Not really it was a very gratifying day”. She left the kitchen and started placing some of the knick-knacks around the formal Great Room. After completing the arranging, she went out on the verandah to rest in her rocking chair. Sammy was there right away working the large fan keeping Mrs. Sutcliff cool.

After two hours Willie stepped up onto the verandah and signaled to Sammy that he could be excused. Willie said, "Follow me". Sammy ran behind Willie as he paced quickly towards the back of the garage. Turning the corner Sammy broke out ahead of Willie as he could see what Willie had erected. Standing upright and painted white was a football goal. Sammy ran into the middle of the goal. With several jumps he was able to touch the cross bar. He only stood four feet six so it was quite an accomplishment. Willie stood in amazement but knew he had made Sammy very happy. Willie said, "I need to get netting for the back. Next week I will send a letter to England for four sets of nets." Sets of nets were very expensive around ninety pounds a set. Willie thought of two sets as he had other plans that he did not disclose to Sammy. Willie left Sammy behind the garage and went back to Janet now a little uncomfortable saying, "You took away my operator and I'm pretty hot." Willie said, "I will go and get him back". "No," she replied I'm O.K. he is most probably having some fun. Within half an hour Sammy came running to the front of the ranch saying, "Mr. Governor Willie come see". Both of them walked swiftly to the back of the garage to find out that Sammy had laid out one end of a soccer field with corner flags. The goal lines and penalty area he had marked in

the dirt. He had erected stakes that represented hurdles about two feet high. The bladder was out on the field of play. Sammy ran out into the center and started his drills running between stakes and passing the ball under the hurdles and then shooting at the goal from all angles. The bladder would bounce off the back of the garage and he would race out to the start point to start over again. This he completed several times and then halted close to the two of them. Willie stood and just clapped. Janet put her arms around him and said, "Sammy some day you are going to be famous." "The exhibition you just gave at only seven years old is spectacular." Sammy stood and said to Mr. Governor Willie, "Is that good?" in a young boyish voice. Willie said, "Remarkable for your age Sammy." Janet said to Willie, "So that was what the pipe was for" as they walked back to the ranch leaving Sammy to practice. "He is something special" Janet said, as they settled into their rocking chairs once more.

Chapter V

Small Pitch

Willie wrote a letter to Toomers in Southampton England. Enclosed was a check for one thousand pounds. The manager of the store when he received the check was very surprised to receive an order from Zimbabwe. He talked it over with the owner saying that the list of items would be slightly over the amount sent. The owner just said send the person the order we will absorb the rest as it's for a very good cause. Toomers at that time supported the Southampton Football Club and supplied all their football kits. It took several months for Willie to get the order, as there was a delay in the store getting all the items together. Shipping was to the port of Durban and then by railroad to Beit Bridge. One Sunday after the weekly train from Johannesburg arrived, He received a package from England. It was quite bulky so he had the delivery jeep go straight into the garage. The hands unloaded the crates storing them in one corner. Willie did not let on as to what they were.

It was now late October and Willie decided it was time to sow seed for a temporary training field behind the garage. The hands cleared an area of about one hundred twenty yards by one hundred. The land was tilled filtered and then made ready for sowing. They were lucky as the pipeline to the water tank could be extended so they rerouted the lines and made it ready for a portable sprinkler system. Sammy would have to train on a much small field for a while until the grass grew. Willie had ordered several bushels of Bermuda grass from the USA. The sacks of seed had arrived about a month earlier. The playing surface was about to be laid. The following weekend it was all hands to the tiller. Sonny and several work crews from both the Northern and Southern farms came to work on the field. It was back breaking work but after three days of continuous labor the field had been laid and fertilized ready for growing. Sammy after his run in the mornings would then start the sprinkler system. After twenty minutes at one location he would move it along until by late morning all the area had been soaked with water.

One morning Sammy came running towards the ranch Mr. Governor Willie come see. The field was now taking shape after about two weeks. There was a green sheen of young grass

roots taking place, across the whole field. He was so pleased as it would be around Christmas for the first cut. The mowing equipment he had been ordered from Johannesburg and was to be delivered in late November. The football field should be ready for practice in the New Year. Young Sammy was getting very excited about playing on a real surface of grass. Willie had experimented with a mix of both local grass and Bermuda and it looked like he was about to succeed.

December came around and it was time for the ranch to celebrate the festive season. Both of them had been negligent in not attending church since they first started ranching. It was time for them to start attending. Christmas Eve service was very important to all the local farmers and the church in Beit Bridge was jamb packed. Willie and Janet were late arriving so they sat in the last row of the all-white section. Sonny, Lawanda and family sat just behind them. The choir was magnificent and sung with such gusto. The whole service was uplifting and the nativity play reenactment was very well done but very simple and pointed. After midnight they left for the ranch after the Reverend Black welcomed them back to the flock. Willie was very edgy that night and when they arrived back at the ranch went straight to the garage. He opened up

one of the larger crates that had been sent by Toomers. Inside were several football balls and a pair of football shoes. He took one and blew it up with air from the tire inflator outside of the garage. Taking the new football ball with the pair of shoes he went indoors. He placed both items on the corner lamp stand and went to bed. He knew Sammy would not miss his early morning run with his father even though it was Christmas Day. Sammy that morning came to wake up Mr. Governor Willie as he was calling from the door. Appearing from the kitchen he said, "Sammy come over hear." It was in the opposite corner to the two items placed on the corner lamps during the night. Now this is a special present for someone who has worked so hard. Willie pointed to the other corner. Sammy those are for you. Tears streamed down Sammy's face in delight. He was so shy but moved towards the two items. Hugging the shoes with both arms Sammy said, "Mr. Governor Willie are these for me?" Willie said, "Yes also the football. You will need to train properly if you are to be a great player." Sammy just broke down crying. He left taking the presents to the family hut. Sonny his father was just washing up when Sammy ran into the hut saying, "Father look what Mr. Willie the Governor gave me for Christmas." Sonny was so happy for his son. At about ten in the morning Sonny

walked into Mr. Governor Willies office. “What you trying to do my young son with all those presents?” Sonny said. Willie calmed him down and after a long discussion Sonny agreed that his son could keep the presents but only if they hung in the garage and not kept in his house as it would not be fair on his other children. Willie thought that it was a good compromise and apologized for not considering the feelings of the other family siblings.

Sammy’s birthday had past. He was now eight years old but very mature. Willie kept thinking that the best present he could give him along with all the other children on his ranch would be an education. He once more made inquiries to the Daily Echo in Southampton but this time used the phone. After talking to the advertising manager he found out that from his original add that three separate inquiries had arrived but his mailing address had been lost so no one contacted him. The names and phone numbers were given to him. Willie was a little upset but thanked the advertising manager and went about his business. The first response was a lady who was in her forties with very strong credentials. The second inquiry was a young couple both recent graduates of Edinburgh University and looking for a totally different challenge in

education. Willie thought they would be ideal and spent a great deal of time on the phone with them. After several phone calls both of them agreed to come to Messina Ranch in Zimbabwe. Willie had arranged for them to ship all the supplies necessary for first grade through sixth grade for now. The package arrived just before Christmas also.

The farm hands had constructed one new home for the couple along with two buildings to be used as classrooms. They were of basic mud, wood and with sugar cane leaves for the roof. They were painted white inside and looked very smart using limited resources. The couple would arrive early in the New Year. Janet was so pleased and looking forward to have someone young around the compound.

Christmas had passed the work crews had started to other fields one in the Northern territories the other in the Southern territory. The fields were taking shape and in the spring would be ready for their first cut. The northern field was not in as good shape as the southern field as it did not have irrigation. The field was very patchy and would need further seeding in the fall season. Willie instructed the local sub foreman to keep the young children off of the field. Early usage would only set it

back further he thought. The field close to the compound was ready for final dressing up. Willie called Sonny with a work crew to meet him on the back lot as he called it behind the garage. The field was now looking very good the grass had taken and the mixture of two types of grass did the trick. Willie called for part of the team to the garage. Once inside they were asked to transport the large boxes to one end of the field closest to the ranch compound. The crates were opened up and to Sonny's surprise, goal nets, corner flags and a liner for marking the field and several footballs. Willie said. "Take those pipes in the corner over there and put them at the top end of the pitch. All the equipment was laid out at both ends of the field. The temporary goal close to the garage that Sammy had used for practice was relocated onto the pitch. The far end goal was erected and finished in place by adding the net. Corner flags were placed. The near end was completed while the grass was being cut. Willie had a layout of a football field on a large sheet of paper. He addressed Sonny saying, "Lay it out using the liner and white wash paint as you see it on the plan." Sammy had been with Janet that day on chores in the town of Beit Bridge.

The zoo had grown quite rapidly and they now had about seven different species in residence. Some animals others birds indigenous to the Limpopo Valley and the Savanna to the north. Willie could see from a distance the dust bowl created by the jeep so he knew they were close at hand. About three minutes later they arrived. Willie was on the verandah when Janet returned with the jeep fully loaded with food for the animals in the zoo. Most of Sammy's time around the ranch was spent assisting Janet with the zoo animals as he had a great affection for them all and passionately cared for them. Sammy jumped out and went about his work unloading the food in storing it in the barn close to the zoo. Janet strolled over to the steps of the verandah and kissed Willie on the cheek. "Well how did your day go?" she said. Willie replied, "Very constructive". Janet was curious as he was in such a great mood. After a while could not keep the secret any longer. They had finished their lemonade and lime juice Willie said, "Come with me." They both went towards the back of the garage as they passed the barn Janet called Sammy to join them. He ran quickly from the barn and within a few seconds was by the side of both of them. As they cornered the end of the garage Janet stopped in amazement, "Sammy look at this!" She exclaimed. Sammy peered around the corner to see a

dream that he had always imagined. A beautiful football field laid out all white lined new nets and corner flags. Willie said, “It’s your job to look after this new field also”. Sammy, “Yes Sir Mr. Governor Willie I will try.” Sammy just stood there for over twenty minutes wondering and dreaming of the future.

Willie received a phone call late January that the Rogers would be departing from Heathrow Airport on the twenty seventh of January and arrive in Johannesburg on the twenty-eight. They were to stay over two days and catch the weekly train that ran between Johannesburg and Beit Bridge. Tuesday from Johannesburg and arrive late Friday afternoon if the train was on schedule. Their rooms were made ready for them both. Janet and Willie were now looking forward to the two teachers arriving. The schoolrooms were ready but would require about two weeks to work out schedules and transportation for the children that would travel from the Southern territory and from the Northern. Willie would leave it all up to the Rogers to do all of the formulation of classes and books. Their curriculum had been worked out in advanced as the books and supplies were stacked in crates in the garage ready to unwrap.

February the fourth was a very special day the Sutcliff's were joined with Mr. Black the Reverends wife Mrs. Sinclare. The train could be heard several miles away chugging along the tracks towards Beit Bridge. In the far distance small puffs of smoke gave an indication that the arrival was not far away. At three twenty in the afternoon the train slowly came to a halt at the end of the railroad. The whole entourage eagerly awaited the Rogers. From one of the carriage windows a young lady was waving a kerchief with a wonderful smile on her face. They all approached the compartment as the two new arrivals jumped down from the train. Reverend Black was the first to introduce himself after he cordially introduced Mrs. Sinclare and last the Sutcliff's their new benefactors. There was a lot of small talk as they walked towards the Jeep. Sonny had already loaded their belongings in the second jeep. Mrs. Rogers sat in the back with Janet and Mr. Rogers in the front with Willie. They all waved goodbye to the remaining greeting committee as he drove away from the platform. It was about four thirty when they arrived at the compound. The compound farmers and children where all there to welcome them. Sally and Clive Rogers could not have asked for a better welcome so warm and friendly. They jumped down from the jeep and went onto the verandah. Willie said to both of them put your feet up rest a

while. Lawanda appeared with a cool drink and young Sammy would, as always, work the fan. The Rogers did not take long to settle in. That evening they all had a meal together one specially prepared by Lawanda. It was a delicious meal and with a little wine they all celebrated the arrival and future of the Rogers family.

During the evenings discussions, Willie indicated that in about two days he would like a conference to see the couples plans for the future education of the farm children. At present he just wanted them to feel comfortable with the routine of the ranch compound. Clive he welcomed to his morning run. Clive was quite happy to see that the ranch farm hands were health conscious also. He himself trained on a regular basis while at University. I will have Sammy knock you up tomorrow at five o'clock in the morning. The heat of the day is so brutal that it's the best time to run. "Sally if she wishes can join us," Willie said. Sally listening to both conversations that with Janet and the fellows replied, "I don't think so." After about two hours Sally excused herself saying I need to get some rest after the exhausting trip from Johannesburg. It was not long after that Clive also went to bed. As he left he thanked both of them for the fine accommodations they had built. Sally was very

impressed with the annex you have built for us. We have all the conveniences of home being so far away we really appreciate it thanks again in a quiet tone as he stepped down from the verandah.

Arrangements to visit Messina the following day had been made in advance, as it was time for the monthly visit. While the two of them were jogging around the cotton fields Willie asked Clive if he would like to join him on the trip. Clive was very surprised but declined, as he would need to start setting up the school classrooms. By the way Clive breakfast will be served in the communal brake room in the main ranch house. Lawanda will cook whatever you need. Sally may want a lighter breakfast, as do all women. Lawanda has a weekly menu if Sally needs to add to it please tell her. Willie explained that the school supplies were in the back of the garage. He left with Sonny early morning heading south towards Messina.

The journey to Messina took about one and a half hours as they were traveling on the main road Willie spotted the gasoline delivery truck he waved him down and said that soon he would need to make an additional delivery during the month. Willie said I should let you know when to start. Sonny

looked bemused as to why they should need an additional delivery. Mr. Willie Governor what was that all about?" Sonny asked. Sonny while we are at Messina last time I noticed several buses that must have been used in the past for transporting miners to and from the marshalling compound. They looked a little in disrepair but salvageable. The Foreman at Messina is so talented I bet he can get them in working order in a month. Sonny just shook his head saying, "And then what?" These buses will be used to transport the children from both the northern and southern farms. School for them will start within the month on a voluntary basis. Mr. Rogers and Mrs. Rogers will visit each communal farm and interview children that are interested in starting school. That may be quite a handful Sonny replied. I have not heard their plans yet but will by the end of the week. They crossed over the Limpopo River. From the border crossing directly in front of them were the Spoutsberg Mountain range about thirty miles away. Today would be quite hot as it was already approaching eighty degrees Willie thought. Messina is a little cooler at the bottom of the mountains.

They arrived at Messina late morning. Mr. Tonomi the general foreman greeted them with, " Mr. Governor Willie so glad to

have you visit.” The next two hours were spent reviewing the budgets for the next half year. He was expecting the revenue stream would be increased. Mr. Tonomi talked directly to Sonny and explained that the production this next year should increase by about one thousand metric tones. The reason is that on one shift and additional machine would be used as a new seam had been discovered and it was very rich in copper ore. Willie knew that the net revenue from the mine would increase. After cost it would go up at least thirty percent. He was extremely happy with the discovery of the new seam as it could last several years and really help out in the drought seasons. After they talked about refurbishing the old buses that were abandoned on the perimeter road. Willie said, “They were quite an eye sore but asked if they were salvageable and at what expense?” Mr. Tonomi replied to Sonny, “He would need parts from Pretoria.” He also indicated that Willie’s uncle was not willing to spend the additional money to resurrect them. Willie answered, “Well how much and at what price?” Mr. Tonomi indicated that it might take about five thousand pounds to get them in good working order. “Please do it and make sure they are painted also in new colors your choice. No use the national flag colors,” he said.

They left with him feeling that his mission had been completed. The return journey to the ranch compound was very uneventful. They pulled into the compound early in the evening. Janet was still attending the animals. He made his way to the zoo area to find out that a new member had arrived a small hippo that had been caught in a trap and its leg badly damaged. Janet beckoned, "Willie come over here and see our new addition." Walking calmly over he could clearly see that the young hippo was in really bad shape. "Who brought it in?" Willie asked. "The southern farmers found it on the banks of the Limpopo River at a water hole. They were lucky to rescue it as a lion was prowling in the area. Firing their rifles, they were able to frighten the lion away from the poor animal in trouble," Janet said. He looked on as Janet tried to look at the wound and put some form of bandage on it with the help of the farm hands whom had it tied down with rope.

Have you seen the Rogers today he asked? I only saw Sally for a short time when all the commotion started on arrival of the hippo. Sally came over to see what was happening and then went back to the school huts. Willie walked over to the school huts to find both Sally and Clive working hard at a makeshift table. Willie said you both can use my office inside the main

house if you wish to do your research and discovery work. “We are both O.K. here,” Clive said. You are certainly welcome to use it the room is always open. It has a large conference table that may help you. It’s all up to you. How did your day go? “Quite well, we should have a presentation for you by Friday she said.” It would be beneficial if we have a meeting with each of the territory leaders and mothers to see who is healthy and also what type of numbers we are talking about. At present we believe the work schedule will allow for two groups to come to the schoolhouses, but we will go over it later with you. Willie thanked them both and walked towards the ranch. You can join us for an evening meal or have yours later in the room off of the kitchen where we all have breakfast. They declined the immediate invitation for dinner saying that there was still a lot of work to do in the evening. Sally said, “They preferred to have sandwiches sent over if Lawanda would not mind.” Willie said, “That he would make arrangements to do that.” Passing by the kitchen after entering from the back door, He asked Lawanda if she could you please send some sandwiches over to the Rogers in the classrooms they want to work through the evening. “Yes Sir Mr. Governor Willie” she replied. Willie washed up and joined Janet on the verandah. This section of the verandah was screened in so as to keep out the mosquitos.

The two of them normally ate their evening meal in the porch, as it was very pleasant watching the evening sun going down. Listening to the various animals crying out loud in the late evening sun Janet could distinguish each animal's cry. He knew that she was enjoying the time spent caring for the animals. The caring gave her a lot of satisfaction.

After the evening meal he decided, as it had been several weeks to see how young Sammy was doing with the training. He went to the back of the garage. Sammy was practicing corner kicks only at a shorter distance than that at the corner. He was trying to make the ball bounce on top of the goal cross bar and skip several times before bouncing off the other end. Silently he stood there and just watched as Sammy went from side to side. This drill required a great deal of skill and just the right touch with both feet. His new shoes were broken in but he wore his socks very low around his ankles without shin guards. Willie called to him, "Sammy where are your shin guards?" "I don't like to wear them." he said. You must wear them otherwise when it comes to a real game you will get injuries to your ankles. I would wear them from now on he advised. Sammy looked down in disappointment but knew Willie was right. They both spent about an hour playing one on one.

Sammy was becoming very good at shooting at the goalmouth. Most shots would end up in the far corners. The Governor had taught him to shoot at those positions from all angles when they had used the painted goal on the back of the garage. Sammy could now cross a football from the corners really well. His training was starting to show promises. Willie would play as a goalie and have Sammy shoot about a hundred shots at him nearly every one ended up in the back of the net out of Willies reach. Willie knew that he needed to introduce Clive to this exceptional young athlete.

The following evening after the meal he invited Clive to come and shoot a few balls with him on the new field that was laid out so beautifully. They both met up at about an hour later. Sammy was still training. He would dribble through the stakes and slam the ball into the net. Sammy had constructed people on stakes that represented players and had them positioned in very awkward places so as to make his shooting difficult. Clive stood and just shook his head. Let's give it a go I will mark him and also yourself and see if he can still score. They took away the stakes with the dummies on them and now would play for real. Sammy was to have a lot of fun. First he took on the Governor then quickly moved around Clive and hammered the

ball into the back of the net. He made sure it was always at an extremely accurate spot not just anywhere. He had hung small targets in the places he needed to shoot at. Clive after several attempts to stop him said. "O.K. now it's my turn Sammy you try to stop me." As Clive approached Sammy stood very intent but was reading every move Clive was making with his body but never once did he not look at the ball. He came in close and Sammy calmly stole the ball away from him. They continued the one on one drill. Sammy stole the ball ninety percent of the time. Clive in the end gave up and said to Willie, "it's now your turn." Willie continued the drill but was a little more resourceful with feints and quick turns. Sammy was beaten several times but then started to read the body moves and soon had Willie beaten also. They both called for an end to the session completely out of breath with the running they were doing in an exasperating attempt to stop Sammy scoring or defending. Clive just put his arm around Sammy saying, "Son you are just fantastic." He himself had played football for Edinburgh University and was quite good. Sammy playing against both Clive and Willie at the age of eight was very good. Sammy cleaned up the field while Clive and Willie went back to the verandah. Clive approached the steps saying to Sally,

“You should see that young son of Sonny’s play football just marvelous to watch him.”

They all sat in the porch section of the verandah that was screened in as the mosquitos were starting to swarm. “Late evening it is pretty bad around here,” Willie said. Sally indicated that Clive and herself were just about ready for a presentation on how the school was to be run. “Tomorrow if you wish we will meet in your den and use the conference room,” she said. Do you have any form of easel? “Yes, I ordered four of them they should be in the garage I just happened to open that box first when they arrived. They are stacked against the back wall,” Willie said. “Great,” Sally said. The evening was quite pleasant as the Rogers were really settling in and were now into a good routine. Janet and Sally got along really well. Willie was very happy with how the ranch was starting to take shape as it was now over a year since they first arrived. He thought to himself once the school is up and running I will be much happier.

The following day Sally and Clive met with both of them after breakfast in the morning. Janet had completed her early morning feeding of the animals and left Sammy to do his

chores. They all sat around the conference table and Sally set out four books. Each had an outline of the school curriculum also the bus schedules. There was a graphic depicting the school classroom loading. "This is the way I see it she said. "Clive will teach the upper years in let's say hut "A" That would be ages nine thru fourteen to start off with. I will teach in hut "B" ages six through nine. I'm expecting that we will have more children in the lower groups. The buses will need to make two runs a day. This will be required so that we can teach from eight thirty to twelve and from one thirty to four thirty. I'm hoping we get two buses for the southern children. The northern children will attend in the morning from Ten o'clock until two. This will give one of the buses a chance to do both a south and a north run. Both buses will end up on the south farms overnight. We will be able to teach on group with split sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays the other groups of children on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This will give accommodate around eighty each session. The classrooms will be crowded but we will be able to manage forty at a time. The total attendance expected will be around one hundred and sixty if my calculations are correct. We have plenty of reference books and materials but will need to keep on top of it so that we order well in advance for next year. School will be

all year long with just short breaks on holidays. This way the children will be home when the rest of the children are having fun with their families. I assume some fathers do work in remote cities.” “Very few but you have taken care of that and it’s fine,” Willie said. The session lasted late into mid-day and they all adjourned for lunch. The table was set up in the room off of the kitchen and it was quite cool relatively speaking. Mid-day temperature is always around ninety degrees. Lawanda had prepared a very light lunch with cool drinks. They talked about the school and it’s set up it was more of a working lunch. After the lunch was over it was back into the room for more reviewing of the actual curriculum. At the end of the day, Willie was very satisfied and told Lawanda to bring out several glasses and a good wine so that they could celebrate the event. As they toasted he was anxious to find out about the buses. He asked Sonny to find out how far along they were in retrofitting them ready for school duty. “I believe they are quite far along and just need painting the last time I talked to Mr. Tonomi.”

The next day as they all went about their daily routines in the early morning Willie shouted to Janet what the heck is causing all that dust coming up the road from the highway. Janet and

Willie stood on the verandah steps for about ten minutes and then appeared coming into the compound was not two but three well painted buses. They were, as Willie wanted them painted in yellow and green with a red stripe and a black top. What a site to behold as Clive and Sally ran out into the compound to see what the commotion was. "Are these the buses you renovated from the mine?" Willie said as Mr. Tonomi stepped down from the first one. "Mr. Governor Willie I'm proud to present to you this fine convoy of buses," he said. The men have worked weekends and evenings so that we could get them to you quicker. "I'm proud of you all," said Willie. This is quite a day for all the children on the farms both north and south. Clive and Sally would now need to rearrange the bus schedule but they were happy to do so. Next week we will sign up those children wanting to start school. Sonny was so advised to put the word out to the families of school children ages six through fourteen. Make a note they will need to bring their own lunches. We will visit the northern territory on Tuesday and the southern territory on Thursday.

The week passed very quickly and they were all on a bus visiting the northern territory. When they arrived they were invited into the elder's hut and sat down. The sub foreman

gave Sally the list of children names. They were all in Ndebele Sonny would need to translate the names. Sally was a little disappointed as there were only ten names on the list. Sonny she said, “Can you questioned why?” The answer he got was the fact that they were the only ones interested as it was not compulsory. For now, they would need to accept the answer. Maybe in the future she thought they might come to school. It was not the time to press the issue. The school could start even with only a low count from the Northern territory.

On Thursday they visited the Southern Territory Sonny knew that Sally was a little disappointed at the turn out from the north. He himself had visited the communal farms on the weekend to see if he could muster up more support to attend school. The early indication from the farmers was that it was good for the younger children to attend school, but felt the older ones were needed to work around the farm. Sonny needed to convince them otherwise. The time away from the farms would be for five hours at a time. With this news he thought they would muster more children than the north. The communal farms to the south are much larger about one hundred and twenty families. There were about four hundred children that could possibly attend school. They assembled in

the main hut and the sub-foreman gave the list to Sonny. To his surprise it was quite long about one hundred had enlisted for the school program. Sally was delighted with the results. They left after explaining that they would all start in about one week after they had things organized. Sonny would bring the list as to who was going to be on the first bus and those assigned to the second one for each session. Sonny explained that there would be two sessions. The drivers would work with the compound hands until they needed to drive again. All was under control. It did take a lot of organizing but Sally and Clive had it all arranged very skillfully. Willie could tell they were really enjoying the challenge. The community service was invaluable and Willie appreciated their dedication to their profession.

Sonny had arranged the following week on Saturday to have all the sub-foreman attend their monthly meeting at the ranch. Willie had other plans and when they arrived lead them all out onto the football field. Sammy had built a small bleacher section just enough to sit twenty people. The farmers were all delighted at the beautiful condition of the soccer field. As they all sat on the bleachers they were advised that the two territories would need to form teams of young boys to compete

on weekends in a league. Sonny explained that each team should consist of a mixed age group six to nine and nine to eleven. Sonny said, "If possible and older boys team would be from twelve to fourteen." The first season they would limit the teams to one per age group from each sub-foreman. This would result in total of six teams in each age group. From the south would be about four teams and the north two teams. Willie could see this developing into quite a competitive situation. The enthusiasm shown by the sub-foreman was quite a surprise. The schedule would be posted the following week after Sonny had received all of the registrations. Each sub-foreman had about fifty registration forms to fill out.

The first football games of the season at the beginning of fall were to be played on the new field at the ranch. There were enough players from the ranch hands to field a twelve to fourteen team. This team Willie would coach. Of course Sammy would be on that team even though he was much younger. He stood about five feet and growing every month so there was no problem with him competing physically with the older boys. His skills were quite superior to most of the young boys. Sammy needed to get involved in one on one in a game situation and that was the main reason for forming the leagues.

It was the first day of the season the six games were all scheduled at the ranch. It was a little cooler during the latter part of the year. Mid-day temperature would be around the high seventies. The three buses arrived with the teams onboard. The young ones were first off the bus. Willie was startled as each boy was wearing his team's colors. The women on the farms had made uniforms for each boy they all looked so smart. The older boys would assemble on the sidelines. They would become the cheerleaders for each sub-foreman's team. The first game was played on a half size field with portable goals that Willie and Sonny had made in the evenings while Sammy trained. There was tremendous excitement in the air. Willie would referee the games. The young ones much to his amazement were very good and kept their assigned positions relatively well. It was a very long day; Willie was eager to see the twelve to fourteens play.

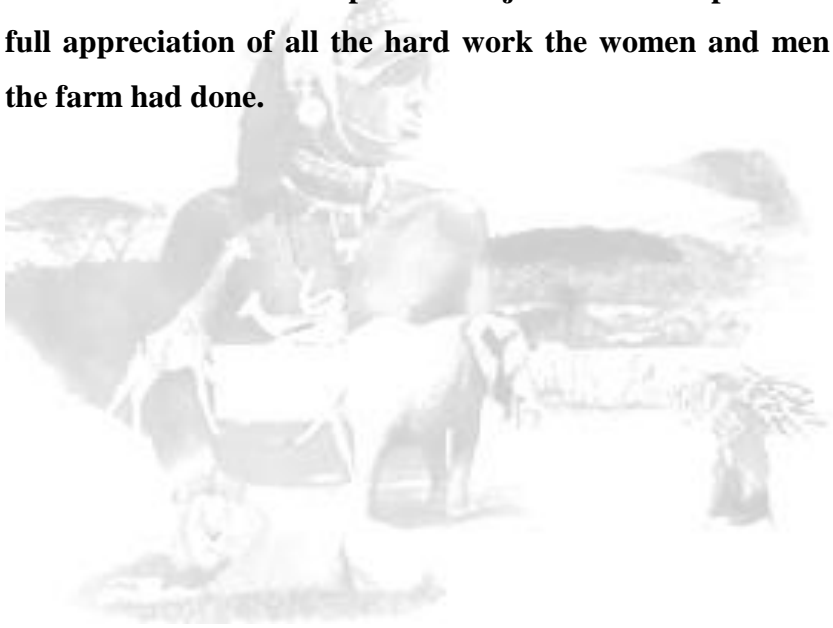
Early in the afternoon the final game the ranch verses the northern territories. The players took the field. They all looked so smart in their uniforms. Unexpectedly he thought the field had held up really well from the all day's event. It was not long before the first goal had been scored Sammy had dribbled

through the whole field from the half way line and scored a great goal right in the upper corner of the net. His skillful movements through the other players with his feints and magical footwork keeping the football so close to his body was just magnificent. A star is born on this day he remarked to Clive as they set up to restart the game at the halfway line. The game was very good for youngsters who had not played on a regular size field. The weekly games went on for several months. Willie had ordered medals and trophies from Toomers in Southampton for the awards ceremony. So as not to be bias each Sub-foreman would name player of the year and also the most improved player. Trophies would be awarded to the team showing good sportsmanship.

It was late October Janet and Sally were busy setting up tables for the big awards afternoon party. The buses arrived late afternoon each team sat with the sub-foreman. They were all in uniform the adrenaline was flowing in each child. Sonny had organized the awards taking into consideration the voting of each Sub-foreman.

The first award went to the southern sugar cane under nine league champions. Each award was presented to the team there was cheers all around and clapping and chanting. There

was some rivalry between the two tribes Ndebele and Shona. So the awards took on quite a competitive but festive occasion. The player of the year went to Sammy he had scored forty-three goals and assisted in sixteen others. The sportsmanship award went to the Ndebele team under twelves from the Northern territories. What a sight to see the large cloud of dust as the buses left the compound. He just took a deep breath in full appreciation of all the hard work the women and men of the farm had done.



Chapter VI

Early Development

Over the past six years the ranch had developed into quite a community. Both the educational and sports programs were appreciated by each of the communal farms. The Rogers with great determination successfully integrated the majority of the children from each of the territories into the school system. Willie had developed the sports program and the leagues were now getting quite large to handle. With this accomplished the only drawback to the life on the ranch was the two years of drought that followed in the early eighties. This setback did not change their financial position. Janet was deeply involved in the Zoo and helping Doctor Savage.

Willie sat in the rocking chair dreaming that it was time to have Sammy move on in his football career. He thought to himself a friend from Southampton Football Club John Osgood was now a sports commentator for Sky Sports TV in Johannesburg. John had played at Southampton during the same time Willie had played. He was a great player who also played for the English national side. Willie thought that he

would contact him to see how Sammy would fit into the South African Football in Johannesburg. Sammy was an “A” minus student and very keen to learn. Sally had given him extra time during the past two years so that he would be on a fast track learning curve. Willie felt very confident that Sammy could handle himself in the adult world of football. Obviously his emotions were not that of a man, but he was very mature for his age. Sonny, his father, had raised him well. Sammy had a deep conviction to church and religion. He was developing into a very respectable young man. He was exciting to be around and showed compassion to others needing his help. Willie saw several great things in his character. Feeling quite confident about the next step Willie thought it was time to make connections and forward his career.

The next day he picked up the phone and called Johannesburg. John Osgood was not at the TV station. Willie left a message for him to call. Three days later John called and explained his delay. “Willie it has been a long time since we have talked,” John said. “The last time was back at the Dell” he replied. Willie and John talked for about an hour on the phone about old times and players they both knew. John in the end said, “So why do I have the pleasure of your phone call? “John I

have been coaching a young lad at the ranch for the last six years he has developed into a fantastic striker. He needs to go on from here and start a career with a professional club.”

“That good, you have been there so you should be a good judge of talent,” John said. Willie said, “I would like you to take a look at him in Johannesburg if you can arrange it.” John said, “That he was coaching the South African national side, but obviously could pull some strings. “I used to coach the Kaizer Chiefs and I’m sure they would be interested in at least looking at the young lad. John said that he would get back to Willie within the next two weeks.

Willie in the interim told Sonny of his intensions. Sonny was extremely happy for the young lad. His heart sank a little, as he knew his son would move on. The loss to the family would be hard felt. “Shall I tell Lawanda his mother yet?” Willie said “No wait until I get confirmation of the pending trip to Johannesburg.” I don’t want to announce it to Sammy just in case it does not come off. His father agreed and left the verandah. Willie had established a small hospital on the ranch about two years earlier. It was well received by the Messina Valley Ranch community. Mr. Savage M.D. was an American. He worked in well with all of the communal farms and visited

them all on a weekly basis. Cases needing some form of minor surgery were performed on the ranch. Janet would assist if he needed help when performing these operations.

Willie was concerned about the political situation in Zimbabwe. The black majority of farmers were starting to up-rise against some of the white farmers in the Northern parts of the country around Marondera. The political leader of the ZUFA now in power was having quite a problem holding back the revolt. Willie in the very Southern tip did not feel threatened at this time. He would need to keep an eye on the situation. He had talked to Sonny about the political climate. Sonny had made him feel quite comfortable, as he had treated all of his farmers with respect. Willie had provided so many services to the farmers that he felt there would no problems on this ranch. All these thoughts were going through his head and he felt uncomfortable about them. He would not alarm Janet so the subject was never brought up in their normal daily conversations.

After three weeks, Willie did receive a call from John Osgood. “Willie I have made arrangements for your young lad to try-out in Johannesburg with the Kaizer Chiefs as I had indicated

during our last conversation. He will need to be in Johannesburg two weeks' time. I will make arrangements for him to have accommodations for a two-week period at the communal sports complex." Willie told John that he would accompany him to Johannesburg this way they could get together and have a few beers. Hanging up the phone, he walked to the back of the garage to see if Sammy was still practicing as it was late evening. After watching him practice for about fifteen minutes he decided to walk to Sonny's hut and talk to him first. He gave Sonny the good news and the two of them discussed how to proceed to tell Sammy. They both agreed that after his training had finished and he came back to the ranch to finish his nightly chores they would take him aside and give him the news.

The fields were so immaculately kept it was a delight to practice on such a great surface. Sammy continued for about twenty minutes. Sweat was pouring down his back and face when finally stopped his practice routines. He then cleaned up all the stakes and props he used for his drills. He strolled back to the ranch passed the verandah. Willie called to him to approach the steps and come into the porch area. Sonny looked a little puzzled but when he saw his father inside also knew

something was wrong. He bowed his head as if to say I'm sorry. Willie interjected and said Sammy we have some great news for you. His father said, "Son Mr. Governor Willie has arranged for you to have a tryout with a professional team in Johannesburg. They will need you to report to the club two weeks' time." Sammy's face lit up in total surprise. How, when, why, were his questions all wrapped into one. Willie calmed him down and said, "Sammy I have a friend I used to play with at Southampton Football Club. John is now a TV sports caster in Johannesburg. I called him and he made arrangements for you to have a tryout. This could be the start of your football career. You will need to really train in the next two weeks to get all drills and skills honed in." Sammy was just astounded and stood silent for some time. After several seconds he just quietly said, "Thank you Mr. Governor Willie."

The train from Pretoria arrived late Friday afternoon the turnaround would be a day so Willie and Sammy's departure would be on Saturday. It was now late December. Sonny, Lawanda and family stood on the platform waving goodbye as the train chugged its way out of the station. Lawanda knew in her heart that her son would not be returning for quite some time. She held her head on Sonny's shoulder. Tears rolled

down her cheeks as the train disappeared into the horizon. Each of the siblings was quiet as they all left the station to return to the ranch. Sonny said, “Now all of you get yourselves together we have work to do. Sammy is in good hands with Mr. Governor Willie.”

Pretoria was an overnight journey. Sammy had never ventured out from the ranch except to visit with his father the Messina mines. This was to be a new experience that he would have to get used to. Mr. Willie Governor would sit in the white section while he was just one coach back in an economy class coach. He just laid his head on the window rail and dreamed of what was about to take place. The weather was a little cooler this time of the year so the compartment was not as stuffy as one would expect. Messina station they had stopped at some time ago. Sonny was now in new surroundings. He was getting apprehensive about the journey into the unknown. Mountains of Soutpansberg in the distance were just mystical as they wound their way through the rugged pass. Willie himself was excited for Sammy. The overnight journey through the Mountain pass would take over seven hours as the locomotive struggled to climb the rugged terrain. Sammy awoke several times straining through his eyes he could see the daylight

starting to show as the sunrise took shape. A red ball of the sun appeared on the horizon as he looked out to the East. His mind could not stop from wandering and dreaming what his future would be. Willie in the next coach up was preparing to get ready for the arrival in Pretoria only a couple of hours away. The train schedule called for a two-hour layover. Willie intended to have breakfast and spruce up a little in a hotel.

The train pulled in to the station late morning, Willie met Sammy outside on the platform and they both walked into town. Their main luggage was in the luggage hold so it was secured with the conductor. They strolled around town Sammy was always just a slight step behind Willie. It was quite a walk to Main Street about a half a mile away. Daily activity in this major city was very robust. Traffic horns were a constant noise source. Police standing in the middle of the intersection directing traffic was very new to him. He thought what are traffic lights for no one pays attention to them. There were sidewalks for pedestrians to walk on this again new. As he walked he would comment to Mr. Governor Willie “Am I safe here?” he would ask. Willie assured him that where he was taking him it would be safe. “The club, if you are signed will take really good care of you.” They found a restaurant Willie

sat in the white section and Sonny the black. Willie was delighted as he could have his eggs bacon and sausages with fried bread with a delightful cup of good English tea. Heaven he thought after such a long journey. Willie had not let to any one at the ranch not even Janet, but this trip would serve two purposes one for Sammy the other was to make contact with a mercenary force colonel.

After breakfast they both wandered back to the train. As they both boarded the train. Willie said, “Sammy when we arrive at Johannesburg I want you to stay close to me as it’s a very large city.” Yes, sir,” Sammy replied. The train puffed a few clouds of smoke out of its chimney and with the conductor’s whistle gave the engineer the O.K. to proceed. The engine puffed away as it slowly approached its maximum speed of about forty miles an hour. Johannesburg was about four hours away and they were scheduled to arrive late afternoon. The temperature was starting to climb and the coach once more was very hot and stuffy. Sammy was able to get a little draft from the window that was left open. This was little consolation he thought, as it was extremely hot after mid-day. Conductors checked his ticket twice during the trip and he wondered why. It appeared to them, that what would a young lad be doing all

by himself on a trip to Johannesburg. The second time he was questioned. Sammy explained that he was traveling with Mr. Governor Willie in the next compartment. The conductors thinking it was lies confirmed that it was true with Willie. They then formally apologized to him after the conversation with Willie. It was a long four hours, but as the train pulled into the station at Johannesburg the adrenaline flowed through his body.

John Osgood had made prior arrangements to meet them both at the train station. Willie collected Sammy right away He said, “Stay close to me.” “What about the luggage?” Sammy cried out, “Don’t worry it will be at the other end of the platform I have the tickets to collect it.” As they approached the end of the platform one of the conductors was distributing the luggage after checking its tags. They put theirs on a trolley and wheeled it through the main entrance into the main platform area. John Osgood arrived just a short time after. Apologizing that he was late Willie introduced young Sammy to him. “Well you’re the new super star I have been hearing about.” Sammy just bowed his head and with a shy acknowledgement said, “I hope so sir.” John said that he had arranged an evening appointment with management at the Kaiser Chiefs Club. This

was to be held at Ellis Park. To Sammy this did not mean a thing. To those who follow football Ellis Park is a national stadium where major tournaments are played. The car weaved around the traffic. John honked the horn on numerous occasions because of the jaywalkers. Sammy in the back seat took it all in as this was a very large city. His eyes were wide open at the various scenes taken place right in front of him. He felt a little apprehensive but knew he must not show it. On the other hand, he was excited about the opportunity now unfolding. After about a half hour they pulled into a great parking lot and sped straight across to the stadium entrance. They pulled into a spot that was reserved for the press. John had press privileges so the attendant signaled him into the parking spot. With a pleasing smile said, "Welcome home Mr. Osgood." John had coached the national team at this very ground so he was well recognized around the City of Johannesburg. John walked in front of them both leading them up to the manager's office. John first introduced Willie saying that they had played together at the Dell for Southampton. Willie cordially shook hands. Sammy now standing six foot and weighing about ten stone looked immense next to both John and Willie. The manager said, "Well that leaves the young lad Sammy," as he arose from his seat. He shook

Sammy's hand it was so hard he felt it sting just a little. Young man we have some heavy training sessions for you in the next week. They talked for quite some time with Willie giving the manager Mr. Dundee all the details of Sammy's condition and training in the past. Mr. Dundee called for the trainer Mr. Croucher to come to the office. As he entered Mr. Dundee said, "We need to give this young lad a tryout for a week and let's see what he can do. He's now in your hands. "Mr. Sutcliff I assume you have accommodations in the city?" "Yes" Willie replied. Young man you will stay at our new youth hostel for our academy. You will meet several boys that are here on tryouts also. Mr. Croucher took Sammy aside. He was a little reluctant to move away from Willie. Willie settled his apprehension by affirming that he would be there every day to see him train. Mr. Dundee said, "He needs to harden up a bit," as they left. "Wait until you see him play on the field he's quite different," Willie said. "We will see," said Mr. Dundee. John thanked Mr. Croucher for the chance to see young Sammy. "It's my pleasure John." Willie was as I said before at the Dell I trust him as a scout and I'm sure he has him well prepared for the training. They both left and John drove Willie to his hotel.

Chapter VII

A Bonus

The first test of Sammy's ability would be on Tuesday. Willie was advised to show up around eight o'clock. After his normal breakfast at the Heatherdale Guest Cottages on the outskirts of the city it was time to take a taxi into the training ground. He arrived at eight thirty and once more was greeted by the parking attendant who opened the taxi door. Showing his visitors pass Willie went out on to the terraces. Ellis Park was huge. In one corner he could see the teams going through drills so making his way around the field he ended up close to where they were all in practice.

The drills seemed to be same as when Willie had played professionally. Square formations for tight control. Breaking out into various drills of heading and one on one with opponents. Sammy was showing some signs of frustration with his work out. It was intense and demanding. The coach would call out certain orders and drills and teams would automatically assemble in various areas. Each time Sammy

needed some form of assistance to understand his appropriate station. Mostly the players were helping him along. Willie heard the coach say now son I'm going to tell you once and only once where to go. Drills are for you to understand directions from the coaching staff. After about an hour of drills it then came to three on three drills. Two on three drills on the next section over defined by flags. Sammy now started to shine as his dribbling shielding and feinting skills were extremely good. The manager was watching from the side line and seeing Willie in the stands came and sat beside him with a good morning "Willie how's your day going?" "Fine." Willie replied. They both sat quite for some time until the manager said. Boy he really is starting to shine on these drills. Sammy could hold the ball and even the seasoned pro's had difficulty taking the ball away. "I need to see him in a short six verses six game," he shouted to the trainer. Small goals were placed about fifty yards apart. The game started and Sammy showed his dexterity and skills and pace. Sammy was very quick off the mark with the ball always at his feet and tantalizing players to come at him. "That's wonderful," Mr. Dundee said to himself. Willie caught the comment and was feeling good about things. "That boy is really strong for his age I think we could play him in an under eighteen match during the week

against the Orlando Pirates.” Willie would watch for about another hour before it was lunchtime. The players would all rest for about an hour and half and report back ready for the afternoon session. Before the brake Mr. Dundee remarked, “How old is this young man?” turning towards Willie. “Just fourteen,” Willie replied. Amazing what he can do with a ball. I need to watch him in a real game setup. They both left the stadium and went to the lounge area for a break.

Sammy was able to join Willie at the lunch table and looked happy with himself. “How did I do this morning?” Mr. Governor Willie. “Not bad but you must listen to directions,” as the coach said. Sammy informed him that he was having trouble hearing the coach because his accent is quite different to yours that I’m used to. Good point Willie thought. I need to talk to Mr. Croucher about the problem. I thought your one on one, feinting and shielding went really well as we have done it a million times. You shined in the six asides. The manager has indicted to me that he would like you to play you in the youth team on Thursday night against the under eighteen Orlando Pirates from Durban. Sammy looked quite surprised that they might give him this opportunity to play in such an important game.

The afternoon session was mostly weight training and fitness awareness. There were a great number of sprints and team enhancement drills. The conclusion of the day was a game played on a full size pitch. Sammy was held out for some time. As he stood on the sideline he wondered why. The coach eventually called him to play striker for the team with the green bibs on. The team defending was the first string so he was about to have his first real test. Taking the green bib from the first string striker he went on in his position. Time after time he made them all look a little silly with his feinting skill and speed. As a result, he scored four goals each one placed well out of reach of the goalie. The manager Mr. Dundee invited both Willie and Sammy to his office late in the afternoon.

“Well Mr. Governor Willie from what I see so far we have a gem here. Sammy has the makings even at this young age to become a great player. John Osgood warned me that may be the case having known you from the past. I must say he has a lot of talent. Those goals today were exceptional. The one with the head the way he raised up leagues above any of the other players to head it into the net was superb.” Accolades from

Mr. Dundee and the coach who sat in the corner went on and on. “We still need to see him in a full game. Thursday will be the test; he will need to report for the game at five o’clock at the Huntsville hotel where we all meet for the big games. Tomorrow I want him to train in the morning only and then get mentally prepared for the game on Thursday. It’s a very important game for this club. The under eighteens, if they win, will go into the African Nations cup for the under eighteens to be played in Angola. Just one club team from each country will be there.” “Kafu Kahn what do you want to be called? Your real name is too long for a football name,” Mr. Dundee said. Sammy said, “How about Sammy Cheetah just like the cat. “How apropos” “That’s it, the announcers will use that name,” Mr. Dundee remarked. Willie left the sports ground with a little smile on his face as things were starting to move in the right direction.

That night he gave John Osgood a call to let him know what was going on, only after one day at training. “Good, matter of fact I’m commentator during that game for Sky Sports TV. It’s a very big game for the club and for South Africa,” said John. He realized that Sammy was now on stage he was hoping he would not fall down on his face. Tomorrow he thought in

the afternoon he would spend some quiet time with Sammy just to get him psychologically ready.

Willie had purposely signed into the Guesthouse, as he needed a secluded place to hold negotiations with the mercenary force colonel Bryan Higgins. Willie sat at the bar looking at the sports program announcer on TV. While doing so the big game on Thursday was announced between the Kaizer Chief as and The Orlando Pirates The expected crowd would be around forty thousand strong. Not a packed house, but a good crowd for an under eighteen game he thought. Just after the announcement Colonel Higgins walked up to the bar. “Higgins old boy” the colonel said as he shook hands with Willie almost breaking it. Willie put his hand in his pocket, as it was hurting from the initial introduction. “Well what can I do for you Sir?” he asked. Willie said, “let’s move away from the bar and talk.”

Willie explained the political unrest going on in Zimbabwe. The Colonel was quite aware of the situation and said, “Well how do I fit into the scheme of things?” “I have a very good relationship with all the farmers on both the Southern and Northern Territory. It’s conceivable that the farmers would

rather stay on my side than fight for the ZUAF front. The resettlement program will mean them losing great wages and also their capacity to export a great majority of their maize crop. Droughts would be extremely hard on the families. I take care of them no matter what happens to the farm produce during a major drought. With this in mind, I need you to formulate a plan so that we would have our own vigilante or mercenary force made up from the farmers and equipped with the latest armaments to fight back.” “Would training be required?” the colonel asked. “Of course,” Willie said. The women of the territories, I’m sure will volunteer to be trained, as they are very family oriented. As you know, this is all to be on the Q.T.” “I’m your man, Higgins to the rescue,” he remarked. “First give me some indication of you up front money your organization will need,” Willie asked “O.K. My salary would be around One Hundred Thousand pound for two years. We will need at intervals around six to ten others to train the numbers you have told me about. Instruments such as AK 45’s and munitions will cost about fifty thousand pounds. This will include several stockpiles of additional ammunitions.” “When I get back we will start this whole process, as I need to feel safe during the periods I’m away from the farm. Send me a detailed plan in the mail it to the Messina

mine address this way it does not go through the Zimbabwe mail. Your Money will be transferred to your account in Messina within the next month. In your letter give me your account number and I will take care of it. We can't be too secretive about this whole thing can we," Willie said. "You've got the right person to handle it Mr. Sutcliff." Higgins shook his hand and left with a bounce in his step like a sergeant major on parade. Willie was quite pleased that he had made the initial steps to secure the land and protect the farmers his work force.

Wednesday Willie started out visiting Ellis Park to watch the early morning workout. He sat in the stands close to the training section behind one of the goals. Sammy was out earlier than the rest of the players. Sammy sensed that today would be different now that the regular players had seen him play. They were all professionals and knew how to protect their jobs. Sammy would be in for a rough ride today Willie thought. Sammy had already been to the gym. He was currently working out so as to build up his body strength. Most professionals were in their twenties their bodies were fully developed. Sammy still had a lot of growing to do. His six-foot stature would most probably end up six foot six. At that height

he would be a formidable figure on the field. His body was very agile with a fluent running motion. Willie just looked on watching him in the various drills. The tackles on this day were quite vicious. He would just smile stepping out of the way. The coach realized the meanness' shown by the other players. With a shout he told them all to calm down we don't need the young lad injured today as he is going to play tomorrow night in the South African under eighteen final. The mature members of the first team seemed to understand a new boy on the block routine. It was the younger players causing the problems. Jukuna, a veteran took him aside for a while and sat him down. Jukuna was the team captain, he himself many years ago went through the same gauntlet. "Sammy he," said "I want you to continue just as you were doing yesterday. Don't worry about the players you have a great ability. Your speed and ball control, they are envious of. Don't give up stay strong." This little bit of advice was enough to give Sammy moral support. The morning drills ended about eleven thirty. Willie met up with him as they walked towards the canteen for a light lunch.

"How do think I'm doing? Mr. Governor Willie," he asked as they sat down to a meal well prepared. You are showing well in the drills and short games. You will need to learn the tactical

side of the professional game, but that will come with playing with better players as you progress in your career. Your overlapping you need to work on right away. Some times in a game just moving into the overlap position opens up other areas of the field for your side. You may not receive a pass; it's just the threat that draws another player in defense to you. Each team has a different strategy and formation when playing you will need to adapt to each one. We will talk during the next day about some of these obstacles that you need to think about while on the pitch. I will explain them to you with diagrams.”

While sitting at the table Mr. Dundee came over and said, “Don't forget no training this afternoon I want you to get psyched up for the game its extremely important for the club.”

“Willie,” he said “It looks so far very good with the young lad but a lot rides on tomorrow night as you can well imagine.”

Willie replied, “Mr. Dundee he will come through he a tough individual with a great passion for the game.” Mr. Dundee was called over to the coach Mr. Croucher. He excused himself saying, “See you tomorrow at five. “Where at?” as he spoke to Sammy directly testing him. “The Huntsville Hotel” Sammy replied. “That's a boy” as he left.

We will visit this afternoon some of the historical parts of the city. The Anglican Church is very famous. There is a small museum on the history of mining that should be interesting for you to see, as you are familiar with Messina Mine. They left hailing a cab outside the stadium. They entered with Willie giving directions to the museum. Willie had been locked up for a couple of days and it was a different sensation being free from the club routine. It was a long afternoon the final stop was the Church. Willie knew that Sammy needed time alone. He sat outside while Sammy went in. It was about a half hour and Willie was getting worried, as he had not returned. Willie made his way inside knelt and prayed for a while and then sat down in the pew to see where Sammy was. Far over on the right side of the nave was Sammy in a deep conversation with the Reverend John Wilcox. Willie decided to intercede as it was now running close to the time when Sammy needed to be back at the dormitories. He approached the Reverend Wilcox as he sat in the pew behind saying, "I really need to get the young man back to his dormitories as there was a curfew." The reverend apologized for keeping him so long. "Sammy," he said as they all walked down the nave into the narthex. "You can come here any time and talk to me my door is always open." Willie thanked him, as he knew that Sammy would

have someone to go to if things were bothering him. Sammy said to Willie as they got into the cab, "What a lovely man." They arrived in time for Sammy to have a light snack before going to bed. Willie said, "That he would pick him up at about ten o'clock in the morning" and they parted company. Sammy sat in the corner of the canteen room by himself just reflecting on the past several days. He was glad that he had spent time at the church with the Reverend Wilcox. Some of his fears had gone away. He now felt that he could somewhat control his destiny without influences from those whom would seek his downfall. He felt lonely with no family around and missed his father immensely. Sonny was always his sounding board for questions on life and his inner feelings. As he daydreamed Mr. Dundee was passing through the canteen just checking on things at the end of the day. "Sammy what you doing here?" he said. Sammy quietly replied, "Just getting my thoughts organized for tomorrow." "Well done boy." Sammy did not feel belittled by Mr. Dundee using "Boy" although his father or Mr. Governor Willie would never use that word at all. Mr. Dundee left saying, "Have a good night's rest."

Sammy arose the next day and immediately he could feel butterflies in his stomach.

He wondered if this was normal. The pain was not great, but just enough to be annoying. He decided that before Mr. Governor Willie arrived to pick him up that he would watch the training program. This he thought would help in where to go when the coach called for the various drills to be performed. He watched intently from the stands the coach's whistle at times blocked out the commands. At times he would just stare and guess where to move next if he was right a smile would appear on his face. Different if he failed to understand the command he would shake his head saying to himself, Sammy you have to do better. Each day would be the same drills for several hours and as he watched he could see how to interject his own technique into the drill and maybe confuse some of the players. His mind never stopped thinking of the game and how to improve. The mid-day sun was now starting to sting his back as Willie approached him from the clubroom. He waved to acknowledge Willies presence. Willie joined him with a, "How are you doing today." "Well I have butterflies in my stomach other than that feeling great."

John Osgood called me late last night and has put together a TV showing with you and the manager along with the coach for three o'clock this afternoon. It's what they call P.R. All

four of us are to show up at Sky Sports TV studios for the filming. “Do you have a suit and tie?” Willie asked. “No Mr. Governor Willie.” I suspected not so we need to get your fitted out right now at Abercrombie & Fitch in town. I did notice a store on Main Street yesterday. The two of them went by taxi to the store. As they entered a portly gentleman arrived at the front with a “How can I help you sir?” The young man needs a nice suite, shirt, tie and shoes. That’s what we are here for, step this way young man. The tropics or close to them are always hot so a light color was selected. Nice white shirt and a dark yellow and black and white striped tie. Sammy said, “Why the tie colors? Mr. Governor Willie.” “Those are the clubs colors it would be nice to see you on TV with at least a tie in the club colors,” Willie said. The manager of the store took all the necessary measurements. After which he said, “I can have it ready tomorrow.” Willie said, “No good we are going to be on TV within two hours it’s needed today.” “Extra fifty pounds for that,” he retorted. Willie leaving said, “We will be back in an hour take care of it.” Willie was a little indignant, but was calm to the store manager. His temper very rarely showed, it was this time at a boiling point though. He stepped outside the store and took a deep breath. “Sometimes Sammy you just

have to be pushy with people otherwise they walk all over you,” Willie said. Lesson learned Sammy thought to himself.

After a sandwich in the park about five blocks away they both made their way back to the store. The clothes were ready. Sammy changed into the complete outfit. He looked pretty smart even the store manager remarked what a handsome young man. Sammy needed a slight adjustment to the length of the pants that was quickly taken care of. Mr. Governor Willie paid the bill. Sammy thanked him for his kindness and said, “He would never let him or his family down I promise you that until I die.” Willie acknowledged his statement with a kind smile. They both left the store quite satisfied that he would look good on TV. Willie said, “We have to stop by the Guest House so that he could change for the show.” At about two thirty the taxi pulled up outside the TV studio. This was all new to Sammy, but as he entered the building he let Mr. Willie Governor go through the turnstile gate first. Willie approached the front desk in the Foyer. Announcing that he was there to see John Osgood. The receptionist was very helpful and said, “Sir take the elevator to the sixth floor and then to your right.” They went towards the elevator just as the manager Mr. Dundee was arriving. They all proceeded to the sixth floor

exiting to find that John was already waiting for them. Mr. Croucher is already here so we will go to Studio Three today for the interview. Once inside they all calmly sat down. Sammy was now feeling some of the pressure of this day. John could see that there was some apprehension showing on Sammy's face so he went over to him and talked for about five minutes with him just to calm him down. "Sammy when I was a young lad just like you my first experience with the press or TV was when I played for England so I know what you're going through. I'm going to address the majority of the questions to Mr. Dundee and coach Mr. Croucher," he said. Willie I will bring into the conversation about how you got hear. Finally, we will develop a rapport with you so that the filming tonight of the game will focus at times on your ability." With this said John had the cameras roll as they were all sat down in comfortable seats with the Kaizer Chiefs logo behind them. The show started with introductions. Mr. Dundee was interviewed and along with coach Croucher gave rave reviews about the young lad and his future with the club. Willie was asked all about his earlier coaching and how he came to discover the young lad. Finally, Sammy was interviewed about the last three days and how he thought he might fit into the club as a player. "First, we have not talked about my playing

for the club on a permanent basis. I'm quite honored that I have been selected to play tonight. It is my full intension to prove to the club that I am capable of performing at the professional level. As a young man I have a lot to learn but with such men as Mr. Dundee and Mr. Croucher I am positive they will bring the best out in me." John concluded the interview with a plug about tonight's game and the interview ended. "Great job Sammy" Mr. Dundee said. Sammy thanked them all for making him feel quiet at home. The foursome left with John showing them to the elevator. Willie left the building by himself as Sammy would go to the Huntsville Hotel for the pre-evening meal together and discuss team tactics. The game was scheduled at eight. All the players selected for the game were already in the lobby awaiting the management team. Sammy entered and there was a little cheering going on amongst the players welcoming him to the team tonight. This made him feel part of the team and not isolated as he had been feeling out on the training field.

The meal was light and after desert the projector was turned on and the team went over the movies of the opposing team's prior games. Sky Sports supplied some of the movies, others the staff of the Chiefs had put together. Each player was to

note each of the opponent's team that he would be playing against. The coach had a lot of dialog commenting on several of the players to watch this or that. Pausing several times, he would address either the good or bad about the opponents. After all was said and done the team felt fairly confident that they were going to win. "Just go out and play with the same enthusiasm you have shown here. Cheer for one another on the field don't put down a player on your own team. Lift him up if he's made an error. I'm not expecting this game to go easy," he said as they were all leaving for the bus. Sammy was so proud to be part of this fine assembly of young men. They were all now in the team colors and wore matching track suites and looked very smart.

They arrived at the ground one hour before kickoff. Cheers from the throngs of people that lined the road into the stadium. This was very scary for Sammy, as he had never seen so many enthusiastic fans. He thought this is only an under eighteen game what is it like for a first team game. Sky Sports were there with cameras in multiple locations just to capture the arrival. Sammy being on TV during the early evening show was now very popular amongst the staunch supporters of the Chiefs. He was quiet taken back by the response to his

interview. They were all calling Cheetah, Cheetah, and Cheetah! as he disembarked from the coach. Again he sensed the isolation from people as the police escort made a passageway through the crowd. Sammy had not been inside the main dressing room that the first team used during its scheduled games. The team was all lead down the walkway alongside the tunnel that ran out onto the pitch. The team dressing room door was open and they all filed in. Each member had his name identifying his dressing position. He looked around and saw Cheetah on one of them. What a thrill just to see your name where so many other great stars had sat and put on their uniforms. There was a small weight room next door for warm up exercises. First he needed to try out the seat. He just sat on the edge of the bench and stared into space. Coach was busy getting all the team members lined up for the rub down. After twenty minutes Coach called to Sammy do you want to play tonight or not put your gear on? Sammy jumped out of his skin saying, "Yes sir." He realized that he better get moving as the others were all smelling of liniment oil a smell he was not used to. He thought I would have to get use to it though. He was ready in short order making sure his jersey was tucked in properly his socks neatly turned down and the side tassels of yellow and black correctly placed. Coach

said, “Up on the bench Sammy for your rub down.” Sammy was up on it in no time. The physiotherapist rubbed him down with liniment oil after a few minutes he went inside the Exercise room for a briefing. The coach read out the starting lineup. He was quite surprised not to be out on the pitch at the beginning. Sammy dropped his head as he always did if concerned. The coach noticed as they all went out on to the pitch to warm up. Sammy passed by as he did the coach stopped him and said you will get your chance when I feel you’re ready to go in. With that and a pat on the back he felt a little better it was not like he would not be playing tonight after all the hype with the TV studio.

Willie was late arriving and the game had started. He was shown the directors box and sat close to Mr. Dundee who had other guests. With a slight nod of the head Mr. Dundee recognized Willie and he waved back. The game was very fast. Both sides were making several mistakes. Willie could tell that the youngsters were trying just a tad too hard. The game flowed really well. The Chiefs created a few more chances than their opponents. It wasn’t until the closing minutes of the first half that the Orlando Pirates scored just before half time. Sammy was not out on the field as of yet. Willie was feeling

sorry for the young lad. Half time while in the dressing room resulted in one substitution for the Chiefs, but still no Sammy. Willie caught on to what the coach was doing. It looked as though he was waiting for the opponents to start running out of steam. About sixty minutes into the game the crowd were all calling Cheetah, Cheetah, the coach was getting a little impatient with the crowd but knew it was time to bring on his new player. From the sideline he indicated for the substitution number 7 for number 9. Sammy was now on the field. He had warmed up sufficiently so his initial touches were superb. Within five minutes a great cross from the left side Sammy sprung up as high as possible and with a neat flick of the head the ball sailed into the net. He just stood and watched the crowd as they went mad. The Chanting increased with every move he made. He was outshining the whole field with his brilliant moves and feints. Six minutes later a fast break away from the halfway line gave him the opportunity to be one on one with the goalie. He had noticed that the goalie was just out too far and with a beautiful chip the ball landed in the net once more. Mr. Dundee was ecstatic and shouted at Willie "That's our new boy wonder right?" Willie was now moved; he knew Sammy was on his way; it was just a matter of contract signing. As this thought finished Sammy performed a scissor

kick that left everyone in amazement the ball smashed into the back of the net at such a speed even the goalie just stood and watched. Sammy had shown some of his talents during this match but more would follow Willie said to himself.

It was now Friday and Willie needed to return to Beit Bridge. He stopped by early morning to talk to the manager as he had left a message at the hotel for him to be at contract signing. Willie had a long conversation about the contract and he would need to review it before he left. He had several morning papers under his arm as he strolled into the managers office. Mr. Dundee he said as they sat down we have a super star in the making so let's talk about the deal. The management would like to offer Sammy at least a five year contract The starting salary would be a thousand pound a week. That sounds reasonable based on current player's wages. "What about a bonus?" Willie said. Five thousand pounds' bonus Mr. Dundee explained we are not a very rich club. Not enough Willie said. How about twenty thousand pounds for openers paid over two years. O.K. Not finished yet a car rental and an apartment when he is eighteen. Boy you are hard to bargain with Mr. Sutcliff. "No the young lad is a steal if this was Europe you would have to pay at least four times that. Your investment as

a club may be the best you have ever made. This young lad will be a super star I predict. Your investment will be well worth it.” Write down the terms we agreed upon on the side of the contract we both initial them along with Sammy and I will be happy to leave today. It’s imperative that he comes home after year-end for a brief time as he is still young. Make a note of that also. Mr. Dundee knew Willie drove a hard bargain, but realized what a find they had in their club. By the way look at those reports in the news media today as he placed the newspapers on his desk.

Mr. Dundee announced over the speaker system for Sammy to come to the office. He entered sheepishly as if something must be wrong. “Sammy I have reviewed your contract with Mr. Dundee as your acting agent. My recommendation is that you sign it and they will give you a copy. I will receive one at the Messina office. Your bank account will start next week. The club will deposit money in your account. I’m afraid that you cannot write your own checks until your eighteen. I will manage your account and send you money for normal living expenses.” They all agreed on the contract Sammy signed with Mr. Dundee and Willie verifying the contract. The secretary will witness the whole thing, as she is a notary. Well son you

are the property of the Kaizer Chiefs as of right now. Sammy smiled and was so delighted at the outcome. No reporting about salary or contract to the press if questioned. If anyone needs to know it to be given out only through your agent Mr. Sutcliff understand “Yes” Sir Mr. Governor Willie. There is to be a press release this afternoon Mr. Dundee will handle that as my train is scheduled to leave at four thirty.



Chapter VIII

War Lords

On the Tuesday the train from Pretoria pulled into the station at Messina. There was a tremendous commotion going on all along the tracks and throughout the town. Willie stepped down to the platform level as several other passengers rushed by. He was bumped from side to side in the melee. The conductor was announcing that the train would go no further. Willie was caught by surprise as to what was happening. The conductor he approached screaming above the noise of the crowd. Conductor, "What's the problem?" Willie exclaimed. There is a band of marauders on the Zimbabwe side that have attacked the farmers along the Limpopo River. He immediately knew it was his farm hands and families. He pulled his from the lock up coach and went directly to the mine by taxi.

He went directly to the office and talked to Mr. Tonomi who was already in contact with Sonny at Messina Valley ranch. Mr. Sonny informs me that the main ranch is safe and they are all aware of the problem to the South. It appears the strike was

lead from the Limpopo River. The marauders came from way up the river and claimed to be from the ZUAF party as they left inscriptions on the walls of the huts. It appears that twenty were killed including children. Several huts were burnt to the ground. It happened during the night at about two o'clock in the morning. Willie informed Mr. Tonomi that they would go immediately to the Southern Territories so see the farmers. Willie said that he needed to access the immediate needs of the families to assure the farmers and families of his support. They jumped into a jeep. They were in a hurry. Willie had lying beside him quite an arsenal. To him the mine always seemed vulnerable so it was well stocked with ammunition and instruments such as AK45's. He was aware that the situation at the farms might still be dangerous so they were to be very cautious on their approach.

They were within a mile and he could see the huts still smoldering. His heart saddened as they continued on into the compound. Women were crying, children hugging on to their dresses looking bewildered as to what was happening. As luck would have it, Sonny had arrived just an hour before him. He was able to get a good grip of the situation. When Willie arrived Sonny immediately brought Willie up to speed with all

the information he could gather. It was necessary to tabulate the total damage even though it was a very sad situation. As the jeep stopped, Sonny rushed over. "Mr. Governor Willie it's not a good place to be right now down here." "Sonny this is my place I am part of these people and I'm here to share their grief and help in any way I can." With that they walked directly towards one of the huts. Inside were several of the bodies of the farmers. It was not a nice site. Some of them were dismembered; others had machete cuts clear across their bodies. The fire had burned several of the young children who were forced to stay in the huts. Sonny informed Willie that five of the young boys were abducted only one had a mother alive. All the others had no mother or father. Willie thought how are we to get them back. Sonny informed him that it would be virtually impossible as the group of marauders came down the river and would leave no tracks on their way back to the Nedeble encampment. This was the first indication to Willie as to what tribe had done the vicious damage to the farmer families. The stench of body parts and burnt skin was making Willie feel pretty sick. He thought to himself I must show complete control of myself. He forced his stomach to stop heaving. He said, "Sonny is there any water that I can drink." One of the small children heard the Governor and ran to help.

A jug was produced with drinking water in it after a few swigs of the water Willie felt that his stomach had settled down. Willie tried to attend all of the families and through Sonny reassure them that this will never happen again. The villages and farmers will be prepared next time. The evening soon came around and it was time for Willie to go back to the ranch. Janet he thought would be very concerned as to his safety. Willie took one of the jeeps that had not been torched and drove quickly to Messina Valley Ranch. Janet was on the verandah looking out towards the main highway. She was delighted to see the dust trail that was rising up on the horizon.

Willie arrived and jumping out of the jeep the two of them met halfway across the compound. She hugged him so tight and with a great sigh of relieve said, "Willie I'm so glad your safe and home with us all. You know you are missed around here when your gone." Willie was quite shaken up with the events of the day. He smiled and they both hooked arms and strolled over to the verandah. The porch looked so inviting after this disastrous day. After a cool drink of juice that had been placed on the table they sat and stared. Lawanda entered showing a sad face asked if there was anything she could do to help. Willie knew this was not the time to give her the good news or

bad about her son Sammy. He excused her for the evening and Janet and himself moved over to the rocking chairs and just rocked backwards and forwards. There was little to say as they both admire the setting sun. The beauty of the land had been stripped away on this day by a savage group of individuals. Willie just thought what a shame that all the good that is done sometimes is devastated by a small act of the devil.

The following day Willie would arise early to start his running routine. It would be different on this day, as he would invite Sonny to. The bond between the two of them had grown to such an extent that Willie now considered Sonny as his brother. The gesture as they both met outside at the back of the barn gave Sonny a sense that the wall he had put between them was now broken. He smiled and said, "Let's get going it's quite a way to run." Willie after all these years was an accomplished runner and the pace was not out of reach for him. The course they took was very hard with a lot of undulations. He never did once get out of breath. Sonny at times would look at him and smile as if to say is you O.K. Mr. Governor Willie. They both kept up a steady pace and within the hour they turned the last corner at the edge of the football field. Sonny now tried to upstage Willie and sprinted across the

field to the back of the barn. He knew that Willie at some point would get him back for the outburst of speed. Maybe not today but at some point in time. The two of them sat on the bleacher that had been constructed alongside the field. Sonny was now slightly out of breath. They soaked their towels in a water bucket and cooled off.

It was now time for Willie to first give Sonny the good news about their son. Sonny he said, "I am well pleased with what has happened with your son in Johannesburg. He is now a member of the famous football team the Kaizer Chiefs. I did not want to tell you until it was the appropriate time. Obviously yesterday was too confusing for us all. Well this is how it all came about. Willie explained to Sonny the details and finished with saying," I believe in my heart he is going to be a great super star. "The monetary rewards have already started. He was signed on for one thousand pounds a week." Sonny's eyes lit up. "His signing bonus I negotiated was twenty thousand pounds over two years to be paid monthly. Your son's escrow account I will look after until he is eighteen. The account will be in the bank at Messina. I will make arrangements so that a small stipend is released every two weeks to another account that he can draw money from."

Sonny said, “Mr. Governor Willie thank you for all your help with my son.” He shook Willie’s hand and went away with tears streaming down his cheek. “I will tell his mother Mrs. Lawanda, you need not be concerned for her, as I know in her heart she will be happy.”

Willie had just finished his usual breakfast when he walked Mrs. Lawanda. With an apology she turned to exit as she did Willie said, “Your son is in good hands.” “Mr. Governor Willie thank you for your kindness,” she said and disappeared.

Sunday would be a day of mourning. The church bells as they rang out stung the mind with the thoughts of the massacre that had been committed on the farmers of the Southern Territories. There was a long line of people all with their heads bowed low as each of the coffins were assembled in the nave and narthex of the small church. Some even were on the outside under temporary tents. The families of the deceased on this day took all of the front pews. This was not the case on a normal Sunday. Willie was situated up front on one side with his small family. The Ndebele farmers from the Northern territories were there also. Willie was convinced that Sonny had something to do with that. The small choir sang with such

grace and with a solemn tone in remembrance for the fallen victims. Reverend Mr. Black gave a wonderful speech.

Willie was so inspired by it that out of character for him he insisted that he say a eulogy to the families. “My deepest sympathy goes out to all of the families that have suffered the loss of love ones. To the mothers that are left behind and the children that are orphaned. On this day as long as I live it is my duty to take care of you all. I’m sure it will take time for us all to heal but in the process we will all become stronger. The Lord will make us strong and this evil we will be rooted out in time. Those who have been abducted we hope the lord protects. They in turn will be found and brought back to their families I’m convinced.” Tears were streaming down his face as Willie was very sensitive and felt the emotions so strongly as he left the lecture stand. The Reverend Black had chosen the recessional hymn

“THERE IS GREEN HILL FAR AWAY

Chapter IX

Progress

The aftermath of the uprising left Willie with a lot to think about the safety of the ranch and Janet. He was glad that the initial steps had been taken to secure the services of a mercenary training force and armaments. It was time to tell only Sonny of his intentions. After their morning run together while sitting on the bleachers he said to Sonny, "I need to talk to you about security." Sonny was not alarmed at the statement, as he knew in his heart that the Governor would take care of the problem facing them in the future. Willie told him all about the meeting in Pretoria with Colonel Higgins. Sonny was not surprised at all. "How do you want me to participate in this effort?" Willie said, "I would like you in a clandestine way to rally the sub-foreman and inform them that there will be secret training sessions on combat and in defense of the ranch and farms, strategic planning and the distribution and storage of arms. I'm not going to have the farmers subjected to the same infiltration and slaughter as they have suffered recently." Sonny thought that it was a good idea. He was quite willing to work with Colonel Higgins to obtain the

safety of the Messina Valley ranch. Willie told Sonny to stop by the office during the day and he would give him the phone number of Mr. Higgins.

During the morning Willie called Colonel Higgins to let him know what went on recently at the ranch. Mr. Higgins. "This is Higgins," as he answered the phone. "Mr. Sutcliff it's nice to hear from you." Willie replied, "Like wise." "I see you had a small problem on your farms not so long ago Higgins said." Willie told him the story. Higgins with his boisterous way said. "Well when do we start? "It looks like it should be eminent to me." Willie said. "My top foreman will be contacting you and he will start the first dialog. We are very close so when he talks it's as though I am talking as far as decision making. He practically runs the ranch and communal farms." Good show Mr. Sutcliff. "Call me Governor Willie because that's my handle bar around here," Willie said. "Yes Governor Willie" and Higgins hung up.

Willie thought that he was starting to come to grips with his feelings about making the farm a much safer place to live. He had only been off the phone two minutes and it rang again. Most unusual he thought two calls so close together. It was

John Osgood. “Willie the boy is turning out to be sensation the fans love him already. The club put on a great party for him on his fifteenth birthday. In addition, he will be traveling to Angola with the under seventeen’s this month to play in the all Africa Cup. I needed to call you earlier, but I have been away with the national side on tour to the Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Seri Lanka. It’s been very hectic but I’m now home for quite a while. The young lad played one game for the first team a league fixture scored a goal. He was sensational. Willie if you get a chance to come to Johannesburg by the end of the season I would like to meet up with you and spend some time together as last time it was pretty hard to find time together.” Willie first asked, “When is the Africa Cup was? “In late March,” John replied. John did not know the circumstances that befell the ranch. Willie briefly told him the story and John was taken back about the whole problem. He also indicated that steps were under way to correct the situation and left it at that. It was also in the best of interest for Sammy that it should be kept from him as some of his friends were involved in the tragic event.

Several weeks later Sonny took Willie aside after their usual run in the morning. “Mr. Governor Willie I have had several

conversations with Colonel Higgins. The mercenary force of ten will assemble at the Messina Mine. For strategic reasons we felt as it was so isolated that training up in the mountains. For clandestine reasons we thought the mine would be the right place to conduct or advanced training for the farmers. Ammunition, at present, will be stored also at the mine. Mr. Higgins will arrive next week and I will meet with the advance party of four and go over their strategy profile.” Willie thought that it was a good idea but still had confidence in Sonny?” Willie said, “That he need not get involved as of yet.” “Have you heard from Sammy of late?” He asked. Sonny was a little disappointed that he had not heard a word. Willie said, “That he knew he was playing in Angola about this time.” “This may be the reason he had not called for a month as the team would have gone away on tour.” Sonny accepted the reasoning but felt upset inside as his son should have called before he left.

It was only about two days later while Willie and Janet were on the porch just finishing their evening meal the phone rang. “Mr. Governor Willie it’s Sammy calling.” Willie was excited to hear his voice. He immediately asked Janet to get Sonny and Lawanda to come to the porch. Sammy was all excited as he talked to Willie. “Mr. Governor Willie you won’t believe it, but

we have just beaten a team from Nigeria to go into the semifinals against the Zimbabwe team from Harare.” Willie asked how he was doing mentally and physically. Sammy said he was feeling a little home sick, but that after this tournament he would try and get home. As the conversation was coming to an end, Sonny and Lawanda were both able to talk for a short time to him. After a while Willie could tell from Lawanda’s voice that she was so pleased to hear from him. Lawanda handed the phone back to Willie and he had the final conversation with Sammy. “Play your heart out we will be praying for you to get into the finals.” Sonny and Lawanda were very appreciative of Willie allowing them to listen to Sammy.

Sammy was happy and thanked Mr. Dundee for allowing him to call his home. Mr. Dundee had sensed that Sammy was feeling a little home sick. His football was not affected in any way. It was emotional response to certain things would indicate that he needed a respite from the game. Sammy had played several games for the first team. His contribution to the team had put them now in second place in the league. Sammy had scored fifteen goals while playing only ten games. This was quite outstanding for a young boy of fifteen. Sammy after the

phone call just quietly sat in the foyer of the hotel they were staying at people watched. Obviously no one knew him here he thought so the constant strain of being under the scrutiny of the press was different in Angola. During the tournament Sammy had scored six goals and assisted in four so he was starting to be picked out by the opponents as one to watch and mark very tight. The day of the Semi's was tomorrow he thought I need to get some sleep, as the game they had just finished with Nigeria was quite a thriller and it was only a one-goal game. Sammy had scored the winner in the last minute to put the Chiefs into the Semi's.

As he sat in a stuffed lounge chair he was daydreaming with his eyes half closed a slight nudge on the arm. Who was standing next to him was John Osgood from Johannesburg Sky Sports TV. "Sammy I'm glad I caught up with you. What a game it was today you played extremely well. Hard fought, is what I saw from the press box." Sammy invited John to sit in the adjacent chair. Sammy now knew whatever he said would be on TV at some point during the next two days. Sammy replied with "Yes it was hard fought game but I feel we deserved to win as we controlled the football well. I would think seventy percent of the game." "Your right", John said.

“What do you think of your opponents two days hence? Sammy said, “I took a good look at them when they played the Congo team they are a very useful side the defense is very stubborn and very quick. We will need to do a lot of extra work upfront to beat them.” John concurred with Sammy as he had watched every game of the tournament. In John’s mind Sammy was the outstanding player so far in the tournament, but he would not indicate it to him as of yet. The press votes on the most valuable player at the end of the tournament and Sammy was certainly in the running John thought. John asked Sammy if he had talked to Willie. Sammy replied, “Yes we talked about an hour ago. Mr. Dundee was kind enough to let me make a phone call to home. I’m going to try to get home after the African Cup is over.” “I think that would be a good idea as you have not been home for almost a year and half to my recollection. John as he left Sammy almost asleep in the lounge chair said, “Keep up the good work Sammy.”

On the second day the team met in the lobby at five o’clock, as it was a night game. During the day the team had watched movies of the other team. Coach Croucher was very thorough and walked the team through every move of the opponents. He explained how each player needed to play against his

counterpart. Tactical stratagem was discussed between players and coach. Sammy knew his assignment well. He was to play just off of the shoulder of Tiatoo the other striker. This was just a little different to what he had been playing. Realizing that he would need to be very creative during the game gave him confidence as he had the skill to be effective in playing in that position. The stadium was not as well kept as Ellis Park in Johannesburg. The changing room facilities were run down with no modern equipment or a weight room. Like most of the players on the team they had come from hard knocks so it did not matter as to the surroundings. It was the game that counted. Sammy sat quietly in the corner. Tiatoo was next to him as they had established a friendship during this tour. Tiatoo was the first team striker the two of them interchanged positions during the first team games. Sammy already had scored more goals than his friend. Sammy took this very lightly as he was focused on the future. His dream was to achieve to play in Europe or England. They were all oiled with liniment and ready to run out on the field. The club had a tradition that a prayer was said before each game in the locker room. There was a silence for two minutes. The coach said a short prayer and they all proceeded out onto the field there was a huge crowd of about forty thousand. Most had come to see Sammy

play the new super star in the making. The Zimbabwe team had a lot of resentment as the crowd just kept chanting Cheetah Cheetah. Sammy just clapped his hands over his head in a gesture of appreciation as he ran out on to the pitch.

The game started with great passion on both sides. Neither was giving an inch of space or giving the ball away. When one side or the other got it back it seemed quite some time before it transferred to the other. Mostly after a mistake or a poor pass the ball would end up with the Chiefs in possession. The team from Harare was very dirty at times with very late tackles. During the game, one of the defensive players said to his counterpart in defense “Go get that Cheetah and show him who’s boss out here.” He said it in Ndebele. Sammy spoke up and replied in Ndebele “You just try it.” The two defensive players were taken back. “How come this kid talks our language?” Sammy just smiled as he took the ball away from both of them. It was twenty minutes into the game Sammy received a ball on the right and he was away just like a Cheetah. Within seconds he was one on one with the goalie. A feint to the left then right left the goalie on the ground. Sammy was facing an open net from about sixteen yards out. He just hammered the ball as hard as he could into the goal. What a

roar from the crowd. Cheetah, Cheetah. John Osgood in the press box reporting on the game was just amazed at the superb goal, “It was well taken,” he said. Sammy that day scored a hatrick. Tiatoo his friend scored a goal also. The score was four to one. This put the Chiefs into the finals. Their opponents were Botswana. The final would be played on the following Saturday.

As Sammy left the field, the coach of the Harare team came over and congratulated him on such a great display of talent and skill. He also addressed the subject about Sammy knowing Ndebele. Sammy replied saying that he grew up on a ranch in Beit Bridge. The coach of the Zimbabwe team wished him the best of luck in the final. I will need to talk to you at some point in the future he said to Sammy. As they parted he said, “How can I contact you?” he asked. Sammy said, “Call Mr. Dundee at the Kaizer team headquarters’ in Johannesburg.” Sammy wondered what that was all about as he went into the teams’ dressing room. He immediately took Mr. Dundee aside and told him what had transpired out on the pitch. Mr. Dundee assured Sammy that he would look into it when the team returned to Johannesburg.

The final game of the tournament was a sensational two, two draw with overtime and penalty shootout. The Chiefs took the trophy. Sammy was voted player of the tournament by the press. He received the trophy from the president of the African Nations Football Association. Sammy was very honored to have received such a coveted trophy. He knew in his heart that it would change things in the near future. John Osgood interviewed him right after the game for Sky Sports. He was on the national news and had tremendous write ups in the newspapers. “New Wonder Boy” in South African Soccer section of the Daily Herald Johannesburg. This was all going a little too fast for him. Sammy felt he needed to get back to grass roots at home for a while. On arriving back at the Chiefs training center Sonny confronted Mr. Dundee. Entering the office of Mr. Dundee, he said, “Sir I would like to talk to you.” Sit down Mr. Dundee gestured as he pointed to the chair in front of his desk. “Well Sammy you have been doing exceptionally well. You have made tremendous strides in your profession so far. The club has come a long way since you started with us. We won’t win this year but I’m sure next year we will take the South African Cup and also the league,” he said. “Thank you, but I have a request Sir.” “How can I help you?” I would like to take two months off with my family on

the ranch at Beit Bridge. “This would be a little inconvenient right now as we have three more games to play in the league. Could it wait until then and I will make it three months this way you will report back here just in time for the first team training? They normally start two weeks after the youth teams and reserves,” Mr. Dundee said. “We need you for those last three games.” Sammy was quite content with those arrangements. Mr. Dundee said, “That he could use the club’s driver to take him home it’s straight up the N1. By the way the coach from Harare called me up two days ago and we had a long talk. They are very interested in you playing for the Zimbabwe National side this year in the preliminary rounds for the World Cup in 1986.” “What does that mean to the club and me? “Well first for you it would further your professional status. For the club we will have to do without you on about four occasions during the games you would play away for your country. This would not be of a grate hardship. The reason is that I already have looked at our schedule and it would mean that only on one occasion would it conflict with a game one of the stronger clubs in the league. I have given them permission to call you during the break if that’s Okay with you.” Sammy thanked him for his total support.

Three weeks later after the last game of the year the night was very hard on Sammy, as he had made a lot of friends at the club. The farewells with all the players were very emotional. John Osgood was there also wishing him the best of luck. John was following Sammy's professional career with great interest. He seemed to be everywhere Sammy thought. Sammy had the Mercedes' car loaded up and ready at two in the morning. The driver was happy to take him on the four-hundred-mile trip to Beit Bridge. The journey home would be a lot more comfortable than the railway that he used a year ago to go to Johannesburg.

As the car turned off the main N1 on to Messina Valley Ranch, Sammy's stomach sank. He was now very excited but nervous about coming home. About one mile from the ranch compound the car was waved down to stop. This outpost now had two gates with sentries posted on a permanent basis. They were questioned and the car searched. After this interrogation they were allowed to pass through. Sammy thought it very strange because from here on in the road and boundaries were all fenced with barbed wire it looked like a fortress. He knew that something had gone wrong. He was eager to arrive at the compound to find out. Mr. Sutcliff had alerted Lawanda that

her son was on his way to the ranch. The entire farms Sub foreman had walkie-talkies now, so that everyone knew what was going on at all times. Sonny had left the back of the garage where he was doing some odd jobs. Just as he entered the compound the car pulled up in front of the verandah. His face lit up Lawanda rushed to hold her firstborn Sammy. His father stood back just a short pace and shook hands over Lawanda's shoulder. It was very emotional, Willie and Janet by stood in the background. After the initial hugs and tears. Sammy presented himself to Mr. Governor Willie and Janet. They were all shocked as he now was at least six foot two tall with a wonderful physique. He was looking so fit and healthy. Lawanda remarked, "I won't have to feed you much you look so good."

Willie invited the group to the porch. Sammy was a little surprised at that but followed his father. They all sat around talking about the past year and what went on. Lawanda made cool drinks and put out an assortment of cakes and biscuits. The driver after about an hour excused himself, as he needed to rest that night for the next day he would tackle the homeward bound journey.

Mr. Governor Willie was very interested in the development of Sammy but knew it could all wait for the next day. The gathering broke up early as the ranch still had to get ready for the routine of next day. Janet still had to feed some of the animals. Sammy asked if he could accompany her while she fed them. They both went to the back of the barn and shoveled out the feed for the various animals. Sammy felt now at home doing some of his chores he was used to do. Janet explained to Sammy how the new members had arrived at the Zoo. Sammy saw that Janet had now increased the capacity of the Zoo to about thirty members. There was a large mixture of cats in the savanna she had created. In the bird Avery she had at least twenty different species. As they went about their business, Janet asked Sammy if he was really happy with the profession he had chosen. Sammy replied, "Yes it has been very rewarding so far. I'm about to play for Zimbabwe I'm told by my coach and manager." Sammy thought it would be a good time to approach Janet about the high security now very evident around the ranch. Janet was about to tell him but refrained from discussing the subject any further. She said, "Sammy I think it's in your best interest that your father answers you. He will, I'm sure, tell the truth about what happened last year when Mr. Governor came home from the

trip that he went to Johannesburg with you.” Sammy and Janet finished their rounds in about an hour. Time had passed quite quickly. Sammy joined his family in one of the newly constructed huts. Janet would bed down for the evening. Sammy did notice guards now posted around the compound. They were inconspicuous to the untrained eye. It was quite apparent to him that something major had occurred while he was away.

Early morning Sonny and Sammy met up with Mr. Governor Willie. “Good morning,” Sammy said as they approached the football field. Sammy was not expecting Mr. Governor Willie to run with them both. He was delighted to have him along for the one hour run. There was little talk as they made out for the far post about four miles away. Sammy as he ran could see clearly that the ranch was now outlined with barbed wire and strategic posts were built at points around the entire ranch. He thought he was now inside a prison. As they approached the final mile Sammy was to take off and show them both how he trained at the club. By the time they got back to the football field Sammy was already sat on a bench waiting. “Show Off,” Mr., Governor Willie shouted as they sat down next to him soaking wet. Sammy thought it was time to ask his father

about why so much security around the compound. While Willie listened, Sonny told Sammy about the tragic event that took place about eighteen months ago. Several of your close friends were killed mainly in the Southern Territories. The cause of this problem is that the Prime Minister is so corrupt that the laws have been changed to suite his new election coming up next year. I'm afraid the Resettlement program is a land grab program. Bands of marauders are roaming the entire country burning down the white man's homes and taking back the land they feel is theirs. It happened here, but we were lucky to some extent the majority of farmers were all on the side of Mr. Governor Willie. This ranch was saved. Five young sons of farmers were dragged off and by morning we could not track them. It was too late. Sonny only touched on the subject enough to satisfy Sammy's curiosity. Sammy just put his head between his legs and cried to himself. After several minutes Sonny was able to hold him close and saying. Its O.K. to cry don't worry you're still a young man and you will, I'm sure, face many more of these feelings. Mr. Governor Willie had already stepped away from the situation and walked back to have breakfast at the ranch. The situation weighed very deeply on young Sammy's soul throughout the whole

three months he was home. He was advised to keep the security of the farm secret.

It was the second month of Sammy's sabbatical from the club. Sonny needed to go to the mine so after breakfast he asked Sammy if he would like to go to the mine in Messina. Mr. Governor Willie was not to join them on this day it was to be a father son type of day just together. The whole time Sammy was home he was involved in some of his old chores and helped all day with the ranch. The two of them set out early. They arrived at the Messina Mine at ten o'clock. As they entered the mine he was once again reminded of the security as there were several guards posted all around the perimeter. Sammy asked, "Why in South Africa such measures?" Sonny explained that the reason was that the mine had abandoned tunnels that the ammunition was stored in. He said to his father, "Are we at war?" "No" Sonny replied. "Mr. Governor has vowed that the ranch will never come under attack again whereby we lose so many people." As Sammy looked back at the entrance gate he could see two busloads of women unloading from the bus. "What are they doing here?" Sonny explained that each week teams of women come and are trained by the mercenaries how to defend the farm. They are very skilled at shooting the

AK45's. In the future, if the ranch is attacked we will be very prepared. Sammy saw a great sadness to the whole thing. Why should this wonderful land be torn apart by a government that is so adamant about abolishing the farms of the white settlers. Sammy knew his father brought him here so that he would not worry about his mother and father and all the other siblings. Rage was inside his heart. He said to himself someday this will all change back to the way it was he promised himself.

Sammy's stay at the compound would come to an end. The clubs Mercedes arrived on July 28th. It was now time for Sammy to return to Johannesburg for the start of the second season. This would be a very sad occasion for the family. Having Sammy around for just a few short weeks was so thrilling. Lawanda gave him a hug and said, "My son look after yourself." Sonny just hugged him without words. The warmth of the hug went straight through Sammy's clothes and he knew his father's feelings. Each of his brothers and sisters wished him well. The youngest brother was now turning into quite a useful player himself. He admired Sammy, so he stayed away from the farewells as it was too wrenching a situation. "Mr. Governor Willie thank you for a wonderful stay." "Mrs.

Janet I will always think of you and the care you give to the animals you are special in my life.” He slid into the front seat and waved goodbye as the car circled around the compound and sped off towards the main road. There was a cloud of dust trailing behind them. Sammy took in the surroundings. He knew it would be a long time before he would come home again.



Chapter X

Transfer Market

Arriving back at the football complex in Johannesburg Sammy went straight to his room and just laid on the bed and wept for what, he did not know but he was feeling depressed. Tomorrow he thought would be the first day of training so he needed to get his equipment ready for the weeks ahead. That evening he did not go down to the commissary for the evening meal. After about an hour Mr. Dundee knocked on his door. “Sammy are you O.K.? Sammy opening the door said, “Yes sir I’m just need space and to be alone to get my thoughts together.” He let Mr. Dundee into to his suite. They both sat down with the TV on the local sports program. John Osgood was commenting on the upcoming season for the Kaizer Chiefs. Cheetah was mentioned time and time again. “You see Sammy you are now part of this city everyone loves you,” Mr. Dundee said. Sammy calmly said, “I just hope I live up to all those expectations.” Mr. Dundee then talked to Sammy about the season that was to follow in detail. You will have several games to play for Zimbabwe and as I said before we have released you for those games. The games are the lead up to qualifying for the World

cup very important for your country. More importantly is the club, “I’m sure you will play well,” as he rose from his seat and let himself out of the suite.

Sammy showed up for breakfast along with all the club members. All the teams were now in residence at the complex. There was quite a lot of chatter going on as he entered the commissary. His friend Tiatoo came up to him right away hugged him saying come join us at the first team table. Players would congregate as to what team they were playing on. This was the first time Sammy had been invited to sit with the first team table. He fit in really well as they all admired his great skill and goal scoring ability. The talk was all about him playing for Zimbabwe in the world cup qualifying this year. It’s the big news in town the captain said so get used to it. You are going to be pestered every time you step outside these walls. Sammy did not like the idea of being confined to just the complex for the upcoming season. He thought I will need to talk to Mr. Dundee about the situation. After breakfast they all went out to the training area. Some of the players looked like they needed to lose a few pounds. Sammy had trained all summer with Mr. Governor Willie so he was in relatively good shape. He knew the first week was going to be rough. The

coach Mr. Croucher would put them through their paces. Mr. Dundee first welcomed them all back and congratulated Sammy on his selection to the Zimbabwe side. Sammy was embarrassed but knew he just had to buckle down as some of the players would out to get his spot on the team. He thought this is just a dog eat dog situation and every year will be the same. Someone is always trying to take your place on the team.

Training the first day was all run, run and run some more. Long distance around the track was first about a marathon or it seemed that long to him as they ran for two and half hours. Lunch break most of the players just slept under the bleachers just to get rest. Sammy went to the commissary and had lunch. One thing he knew was that if you run you will need a lot of food. Mr. Dundee was also in the commissary so they ate together. During the meal Sammy confronted him with his popularity problem. Sammy asked about some form of protection when he left the compound. Mr. Dundee thought it was a good idea. He said that he would get a local security company to provide two bodyguards for him whenever he left the compound. Mr. Dundee said he would make those arrangements right away. They order will go out today and tomorrow you will have all the security you need. The driver

for the club will drive you wherever you need to go. Sammy was under no illusion it was going to be pretty tough making his way around the city.

The afternoon session was just as bad as the morning lots of sprints, relay racing and hurdles. It was not until the last hour that they got to practice with a ball at their feet. Short passing drills in small boxes were the start of the touch drills. The teams were a little disappointed that they did not have a six aside game late afternoon. Coach Croucher was more interested in their current fitness status having had six weeks off from training. The training session ended with each player complaining about how tired he was. Sammy on the other hand was in good shape and could have gone on all night. The next day was the same routine. It was not until the fifth day that Coach Croucher late evening divided the players into six aside. This is where the training starts to get vindictive. Players would need to convince coach that they are still number one in their position. Sammy was selected to join the first eleven offenses. They were to play the reserve eleven defense. All in all, with the youth team included there were six teams. The first game was the youth team offense against the reserves defense. The goalies would get plenty of practice as they were

rotated in and out. They all played quite well not game fit but with a lot of aggression and skill.

Sammy over the break had developed into a very formidable figure he now stood six foot three weighing fourteen stone and very strong. Players could not bowl him off of the ball he stood his ground well. His physique at the age of fifteen made him quite a target for foreign teams to want to acquire his contract. John Osgood had followed him during the past year and saw how he had graduated into that of a real professional player. John had been in contact over the summer with Southampton Football Club about the talents of this young player. He was not aware that Sammy was now chosen to play for Zimbabwe. Southampton had indicated that they would love to have him tryout on during the upcoming year. John thought it would be a good idea. He approached the Kaizer Chiefs through Mr. Dundee about the possibility of a loan arrangement with Southampton Football Club. Mr. Dundee said it was just a little premature to make those arrangements. "We need to wait until the season is underway," he said to John on the phone. "You know he has been selected to play for Zimbabwe?" "No" John said. It's true close to Christmas break from the club football he will play against Nigeria, Gabon and Sudan they

are all in the same league. At present Zimbabwe are second to Nigeria in-group “E” with one more complete round of games to play. Sammy if he plays well will have the opportunity to play in all three remaining games. “This would be quite a boost to his professional career,” John said. Next year is the World Cup in Mexico won’t it be something if Sammy makes the World Cup proper at the age of just sixteen. He would be the same age as Pele when he played for Brazil. “My word, this boy is just moving along so fast,” John said. One thing I have to say, “Mr. Dundee is that you are managing him extremely well.” The boy has terrific confidence when he’s on the pitch. “Let’s see what happens this year John,” and hung up. John knew he would need to keep very close tabs on Sammy so that Southampton would have first choice at signing him within the year.

Early morning Sammy arose and got dressed it was opening day of the season. The Kaizer Chiefs were home to Port Elizabeth Patriots. As usual before a game Sammy had butterflies in his stomach. He did not take breakfast with the other players on this day. Walking to the front desk he requested the driver and the bodyguards to be on hand in half an hour. They arrived shortly after the phone call. “The

Anglican Cathedral,” he said to the driver. “Yes sir” as the car left the complex. Sammy when arrived at the cathedral ordered the car to wait until he came out. The driver said how long? “As long as it takes,” Sammy said. He stopped for while just inside the narthex to get a sense of belonging. After several minutes he preceded and walk slowly towards a pew in the middle of the nave. There was an aura on this day that made him feel uplifted. Seated he looked at the altar in his mind he looked for guidance with respect to his life that was unfolding. The unknown at times made him feel insecure. His career was progressing at an alarming pace. All of these thoughts gave him concern and consternation. Kneeling he prayed and thanked the Lord for the gifts he had given him. One problem in the future he would need to resolve would be the issue of farm resettlement by the marauders, this he asked the Lord for strength on how to resolve the problem. Staring at the stained glass Tiffany stained glass windows he felt a slight touch on his shoulder. Father Wilcox had slipped into the pew from the other direction. “Welcome back I’m glad to see you Sammy,” he said. “How did you remember my name? “Well it’s not hard if you are constantly on the TV news programs,” father Wilcox answered. I’m afraid that’s one of my problems that I came to pray about. I’m glad you’re here son. The Lord will

guide you I'm sure. They talked for about an hour. Sammy then said, "I must leave and travel back to the compound father. "Please do come and see us again," he said. Sammy shook his hand as he left the cathedral. The driver remarked in a derogatory way, "What the heck you go there for he can't kick a ball." Sammy just ignored the comment as he stooped to get into the back seat.

The car drove across the parking field stopping just outside the dormitory complex. Sammy released the driver and went quickly to his room, as the bus would be leaving for the Huntsville Hotel. It was late afternoon the bus took all the players to the hotel for a team strategy and analysis of the opponents the Johannesburg Saints.

During the break it was announced by Mr. Dundee that Sammy had been selected to play for the Zimbabwe national team. Most of the players clapped and wished him well. Sammy gave a short speech thanking all of them for their support. He said I will not let the club down and I'm hoping we get into the World Cup next year. Zimbabwe have three more games to play and if they can beat Nigeria they would automatically go through to the finals so it's a very big game in early December. After an intense review of the other team

most of the players knew their assignments. Coach Croucher named the starting lineup. The cheetah was not on the pitch to start off with. Most of the first team players were quite shocked that he was not selected. No one would question the coach's decision but it did seem strange that the most talented player was not in the starting lineup. Sammy knew that it would be just a matter of time and he would be sent in. The team boarded the bus. They arrived about an hour before the game. The crowd for opening day was very large expected would be about sixty thousand fans. The road to Ellis Park was lined with throngs of people. As the players' coach went by fans would shout out Cheetah, Cheetah. Coach Croucher was uneasy with his decision to leave Sammy out of the lineup based on his popularity. He thought that the other team would come out playing at top speed. After a short period, he would bring in Sammy.

The team disembarked from the bus with the crowd so enthusiastic about the team. Cheetah, Cheetah, cried out everywhere by the Chiefs fans. Police escort line was necessary so as the players could get into the stadium. The first day of any season is so inspirational the Chiefs fans were no different. Sammy made his way to the dressing room. Johnny the Physio

welcomed the team. Each player plus substitutes dressed ready for the game. Sammy as he approached his uniform touched it delicately and thought what an honor to be playing for such a great team. The room soon smelt of liniment oil Sammy knew then it was back to business. He was now excited about the game. The Physio requested him to jump up onto the work out table. Sammy he said, "Are you ready to go?" Sammy replied, "I'm fired up inside can't wait to run out on to the field. The Physio rubbed him down and worked on his muscles. After about five minutes tapped him on the shoulder saying "You're ready." All the player of both teams assembled in tunnel ready to run out. As they came into view there was an enormous roar from the crowd. They lined up ready for kick off. The announcer named the lineups of both teams. Sammy was not in the lineup for the Chiefs. Soon as the crowd did not hear his name for the starting lineup there was a loud chant started Cheetah, Cheetah, Cheetah. Sammy arose from the bench and acknowledged the crowd with a clapping of his hands above his head in recognition. After this the crowd quieted down and started to concentrate on the game.

The first ten minutes was as expected by the coach, fast inspiring football by the visitors. Coach Croucher knew this

would happen. He kept his cool but into the second twenty minutes he knew it was time to bring on Sammy. The teams were still deadlocked at 0-0. There was a roar from the crowd when the lines man signaled for a substitution. Sammy was already warming up ready to substitute. Tiatoo was pulled off and Sammy went on. Cheetah, Cheetah the crowd chanted for several minutes. Sammy settled in very well and started to cause the opposition a considerable amount of frustration with his skillful moves and feints. Just before half time he received the ball on the right side. Swiftly he took off leaving the defense behind him. With the goalie defending the near side post he approached and slid the ball around the goalie sprawled out and curved the ball into the net. There were fireworks everywhere and drums pounding at his success. The goal was masterful for such a young player John Osgood remarked commenting during the game. Sammy is just a talented player for such a young age was another of his remarks. The game ended with the Chiefs winning 2-0: Sammy scored both goals. John Osgood interviewed Sammy after the game. Clippings of his two goals were shown on national TV. Sammy could only say that it was a great privilege to play for such a wonderful club. John Osgood announced again that Sammy would be playing for the Zimbabwe National team against Nigeria. He

will be one of the youngest to ever play for his country. John said as I recall the only one player younger that was Pele for Brazil. Sammy even being mentioned in the same breath as Pele made him feel very honored. John Osgood after the interview took Sammy aside and said that he wanted him to try out next month in England for Southampton FC. Sammy said that he would be delighted to try out for an English Premiership side.

The season was going along really well for the Kaizer Chiefs. Sammy had already scored fourteen goals in eight matches and broke the record for consecutive goals in a game at seven. The Chiefs were riding high at the top of the table thanks to Sammy's spectacular performances. Mr. Dundee said, "He would release him for two weeks to attend the English club's facilities and train with them." It was convenient, as he would only miss one league game during this time period.

John Osgood phoned Willie to ask him if he would accompany Sammy to England as he had a pretty hectic schedule during this period. Willie responded with yes he would love to get a chance to go back to England for a short stay as it had been about seven years since he had left home. John said that

Southampton would be interested in looking at Sammy during the month of October six weeks away.



© 2000 Southampton Football Club

Chapter XI

Premiership Plus

Arrangements were made with Southampton FC that Sammy would tryout during the first week of October. Willie talked to Mr. Dundee about the trip to England. He himself was extremely interested in the trip and thought that he might come along with both of them. Willie thought this was a good idea. Sammy would then feel quite comfortable about the trip with both of them supporting him in the new environment.

The plane taxied out onto the main runway at Johannesburg airport. Sammy sat in business class. The seats were very comfortable for the long journey to London Heathrow. As the plane took off he looked out of the window. The flight pattern was to fly over Ellis Park. Sammy wondered what the team was doing at this time as they were all still in training it was three o'clock in the afternoon. Willie and Mr. Dundee had a lot to talk about during the flight. Willie told him that he was going back to his old stomping grounds. Willie was looking forward to meeting the Southampton executives. He had only

followed the later years through the newspapers so he did not have a good feeling for how the club was doing in the Premiership. Sammy rested up. The flight took about twelve hours. Its ETA was at three in the afternoon on a Monday. The first day of the week is normally a light training day at the Dell Willie explained to Sammy. The players normally in the afternoon play golf or do community service for the club. The captain announced that they were approaching Paris and would be landing in about one hour. The plane's flight path took them over the Dover coastline and then turned west. The Thames was directly below as Willie pointed it out to Sammy. His eyes were glued to the earth below as they made their way over the East-end of London. The docks were detailed as ships were lined up in the piers. Willie said to Sammy look out at this window you can see the Tower of London coming up on the left side of the plane. Sammy had read about the Tower Bridge and London Bridge. He was now seeing them for real. "It was unusual to see London as it's normally overcast," Willie said, to Sammy. Sammy was just so thrilled to see the sights of London from the air. He hoped while he was in England that a short trip to London may be in the offing. Fasten your seat belts was the order from the cockpit we will land in just twenty minutes. The plane made a wide circle out

over Windsor Castle and then lined up with the Heathrow runways. They were flying at seven thousand feet and descending fairly rapidly. Sammy's ears were popping. He kept chewing on a piece of gum that Willie had given him to release the pressure it was not helping a great deal. The plane flew over the large water reservoir just outside the Heathrow and within minutes they touched down. Bouncing several times on landing Sammy held on tightly to the arms of his seat as the engines were reversed and the braking system applied. This was not a good experience he thought to himself. The plane slowly came to a taxiing speed. Sammy felt much safer now that they were down. It was several minutes after arrival at the gate before they disembarked.

Willie led the way, as he was familiar with the airport and the routine. Mr. Dundee he said, "Follow me." Both Sammy and Mr. Dundee followed as they took the people conveyor for quite some distance. Willie said, "That's the only bad thing about this airport gate so far away from the actual terminal." Willie directed Sammy as to what immigration booth he had to go through. He said to Both Mr. Dundee and Sammy that he would meet them at the baggage claim and just follow the crowd they will lead you there once through immigration.

Willie met up with them at carousel six. They waited some time but eventually the luggage arrived. They assembled the bags on the dollies and went through customs. They had nothing to declare so choosing the green line they cleared customs immediately with no stopping. Once outside Willie said, “Can you see anyone with a sign that would have our names on it.” Sammy was the first to spot the sign, Cheetah, Cheetah. This made him feel really welcomed in this strange new country that he had read so much about in books. He directed Mr. Governor Willie to the chauffer holding up the placard. They made their way towards the driver. He was immaculately dressed with hat and dress gloves on. Sammy thought to himself “Pretty classy what.” “Mr. Woodward from the Southampton Football Club I’m your driver today,” he said. They followed him out to the sidewalk. A limousine was waiting for them. Standing alongside it was Mr. Southgate the General Manager. Introductions were dealt with and by that time the luggage was put in the boot and they were off.

The trip to Southampton was full of small talk about the Premiership. The club size and facilities were outlined. The training session would start tomorrow at their academy grounds in Stoneham Lane. “Today we will go back to the

Dell,” Mr. Woodward said. “You will meet up with another young player on our staff who is an apprentice. He at present, plays for the youth team and is about your age seventeen I believe.” Sammy said, “Yes sir.” “Mr. Dundee and Mr. Sutcliff we have arranged for you to stay at the Polygon Hotel right in midtown and just about a half mile from the Dell.” Willie was now excited about the whole thing as it had been planned as he expected very professionally. They arrived at the Dell at six in the evening. The limousine pulled into the small parking lot. Mr. Southgate showed them all to the team managers entrance. They passed a guard who said, good evening to them. Mr. Southgate said, “Is Mr. Winston in his office?” as they passed the guard. “Yes he’s waiting for you.”

Mr. Winston heard the reply and was already at the door to his room awaiting the arrival. “Well how did the trip go Sammy?” as they all entered the room. “It was very interesting especially when we landed at London airport. I really got to see a lot of buildings I had only read about in magazines.” “Well young man we have a lot in store for you in the next two weeks” Mr. Watson commented. He slid back into his armchair handing both Mr. Dundee and Willie the intended schedule for the weeks ahead. “First I think we would like to see you tomorrow

training with the reserves. Your physique looks very strong and I'm sure you will work out fine to start off with them." He called to the guard to get Tommy White to come to the office. Within a minute appearing at the door was a very young looking apprentice. "Tommy he said, Sammy Cheetah will be staying at the Baddersly Mansion with you and the rest of the youth team. Make him welcomed I have talked to all of the other players about these arrangements so you should fit in well. There is a team jitney that transports you to and from the training ground it's just about twenty minutes to the training ground on Stoneham Lane." With that he beckoned Sammy to leave with Tommy White. "Don't forget his luggage it's with the guard." The two players left the office and Mr. Watson closed the door for privacy. "Mr. Dundee I need you to brief me on the young lad's achievements. "Better than that Mr. Sutcliff give me his background." Willie led the manager through the life story of the young man up until the Kaiser Chiefs signed him. "Quite impressive," was his words when Willie finished. "By the way I understand you used to be on the books back in the late sixties." Willie replied "Yes sir." The clubs come a long way since we were in the Third Division South in those days." "Mr. Dundee your next." "Well sir the young lad has exceptional talent he is quite deserved to be here.

In two months around Christmas time he will play for Zimbabwe in the World Cup qualifier rounds against Nigeria who are the favorites to win the group. I'm personally looking forward to watching that game even if it is only on TV Sky Sports." "That means this lad will be as young as Pele when he plays." "Your right so it's quite an achievement for the young lad." "Tomorrow we will all start taking a good look at him. I will run over to your hotel it's not far away. In the morning the Limousine will collect you at eight thirty. It's at your disposal the entire time you are here. "That's so very kind of you," Willie replied. Before we leave, how is John Osgood doing? He has not been down to see us for a while." "John is very involved in the National side of South Africa as coach. He also hosts a Sky Sports TV weekend show on the Premiership Football. He is always involved locally with young promising lads as I'm sure you are aware of." John has served the club admirably both past and present," Mr. Winston said. "I have a lot of respect for John," Willie replied. After this brief exchange they all left for the Polygon Hotel.

The weather had been very cooperative this year and it was a very late fall with it being very sunny most of the day. Willie thought this would certainly help Sammy, as he had never

played in a blinding rainstorm, normally typical weather for this time of the year. Tuesday was just one of those days as he met Mr. Dundee for breakfast. They both talked about the reception they were given by the club. Mr. Dundee said, "It was all very regimented, British and professional." Willie said that the club was one of the best in the Premiership as far as taking care of young players. In years past they have always looked after their youth teams in the academy. The facilities are really aging as you could tell yesterday. The office was a mainly pine wood floor worn down with studs so it was pretty uneven. The government has told most of the clubs with similar facilities and wood stands that they must rebuild because of safety reasons. I believe they have near future plans to build a new stadium that will hold about thirty-five thousand fans. This will be almost three times what it holds today at the Dell. Mr. Dundee said, "That he hoped that during the training sessions that he might talk to the coaches to get their view on training and the preparation of players. It's so important today that clubs keep up with new technology to assist in the molding of a complete player." Willie knew that they would all be very helpful.

They made their way to the training facility on Stoneham Lane arriving at nine in the morning. The majority of the players were already out warming up. The coaches were huddled in a group working out the drills for the day. Willie saw Sammy of too one-side tying his bootlaces. Shortly thereafter he sprang to his feet and joined the other players. He seemed very happy just to be in training. This time he was taking the orders well and did not find difficulty in understanding the Hampshire dialect. The drills were similar to those of the Chiefs so he was quite accomplished at them.

Mr. Winston, the team manager, was paying close attention to Sammy's skills and tenacity around the senior players. The teams on this day would go through a set of drills that most international teams used, but with modifications. Sammy would shine no matter what was dished up to him. All of his magical skills would come to the forefront on this day as he was really trying to impress the manager. After two hours they were called for a six-aside game with low goals. Mr. Winston picked the first team defense. Willie was selected to play against them on the opposition. He was very quick and could outshine most of the players much to their amazement. So fast off the mark with a ball at his feet he was able to pass players

with lightning speed. Remarkable shielding skills and had a wicked shot. The first team players watching just clapped at his wonderful skill. Mr. Winston knew that he had the chance immediately to acquire a great player in the making.

The afternoon session was now a full game with player a mix from the first team and reserves. Sammy first played with the first team. It was not long before he had racked up four goals. The coach rotated him out and he then played with the reserves just to score two more goals. The senior players were having great difficulty defending against him. Sammy was in his element and a couple of times did a little show boating with overhead scissor kicks. Each task was undertaken with dexterity. Goals did not result from this fancy feat, but it sure looked good when he performed the task. The coach was very pleased with the first days training. When the players left the field Mr. Dundee and Mr. Winston had a quiet chat of to the side. Willie went into the training facility just to see all of the amenities they team had at their disposal. He was very impressed with the training weight room and technological advancements made in training players. It was also rewarding to see rooms set aside for personal use and with TV's for pleasure. Sammy spent some time with both of them before

they left. “Well how did I do today?” he asked Willie. It was a pleasure to see you blend in well with the other players. I think you gave them a lot to think about for tomorrow. With that Mr. Dundee and Willie got into the Limousine and left. Sammy would need to tidy up his gear and take the jitney back to the mansion. The short journey back gave him time to think about his first day in training. He felt good so far and was feeling very good with the club’s facilities and training ground. At the meal that night some of the reserve players and youth team came over to congratulate him on a fine display.

Of course there were many questions about where he came from. The interest in his country made him a little homesick, but he shrugged it off as his thoughts drifted towards tomorrow’s training. It was about ten o’clock that he went to bed after relaxing in the TV room and watching a football game. Sammy would try to watch as many games as possible in his spare time. The reason for this is that he felt one could pick up skills that other players performed. He himself would then try and duplicate such skills. This is always the strength of good players to constantly strive to improve oneself.

The evening meal at the Polygon Hotel was quite different than that of Sammy’s. Mr. Dundee, Mr. Winston, Mr. Southgate

and Willie would meet to discuss the day's events at Stoneham. Mr. Daundee and Willie were sat at the bar having a glass of wine when both of the gentlemen from the club joined them. As a group they started to address the young boy's future. Willie stepped in right away and said to what end is there to be a contract offered. Willie was not backward about coming forward. This shocked the two of them. Willie was very candid he wanted to know the boys contract arrangements before talking any further, it's obvious to me that you are very interested in signing the young lad so let's talk money first. Mr. Dundee was taken back as he was not ready to make a deal, but was ready to listen.

Here's the deal Mr. Southgate said, three hundred thousand-transfer fee. Sammy gets ten percent personally. He will make two thousand a week. Willie butted in, "And what about time frame of the contract you will offer?" Mr. Southgate said, "We have discussed a three-year to start off with." "His personal terms I would like to see him have a car with insurance. Take that back a Jaguar car this year's model or the year he signs. The accommodations should be a very nice apartment close to the training ground or within twenty minutes. A fully furnished apartment paid by the club." Sammy should be

consulted also on his personal terms. It's my intention to manage him for some time. There will be no agency fees on your side so that's a big expense you don't have to pay. I'm personally wealthy so I can waver such fees," Willie said. Mr. Dundee was stunned by the conversation, but was smiling inwardly as the club would reap quite a substantial sum of money. Mr. Southgate thought they could come to terms with the proposal. Mr. Winston the manager stated that Sammy was someone very different, as they do not have a black person on their staff although other clubs did. From the way he has settled in just being with the club one day it's evident that the boy is well schooled and has a deep conviction about the game. We are very happy with the arrangement. Mr. Dundee said that as the club now owned his contract he thought it would be good towards the end of next week to all assemble and make final recommendations for a formal contract. This meeting went on for some time with just accolades after accolades about Sammy's ability and character. It was about eleven o'clock when they broke up. The club's representatives left with tentative handshakes on the deal. Willie and Mr. Dundee stayed in the lounge and discussed the deal. Willie was happy so far about what was happening although a deal on the first night was not expected. Mr. Dundee stated, "That as far as the

club was concerned he was very happy with the deal as it would help in signing new players.” It’s now up to Sammy to show promise in the rest of the days remaining.

The next day at training Sammy was taken aside and told to report to the Dell with Tommy White as they were to travel to London that afternoon to play at Stamford Bridge in a reserve match with Chelsea. Willie and Mr. Dundee arrived to watch training and were informed of the club’s decision to play him in the game. Willie told Mr. Dundee that this was a very good sign from the club. They both watched for a couple of hours and Mr. Dundee would take notes and talk to the coaches. This was quite an opportunity for him to improve his coaching ability. What a resource having hands on with a Premiership club.

In late afternoon they drove to the outskirts of London to Stamford Bridge. The game kicked off at eight. It was a one of those nights that was fairly cold with a mist over the pitch. There was concern that the game would not be played. The referee did agree after inspection that the game could proceed. Sammy was in the lineup right from the start. When he ran out on to the pitch you could see the gleam in his eyes. By his body

motions Willie could tell he was ready for this game. Sammy won the toss and elected to play towards the river. He was selected to be captain on that night. The lights were on already. Sammy had not played under lights it was to be his first. Kick off and the game was underway. Sammy took the ball on the run and gave the Chelsea team fits on his first run. This was to be a memorable night for him as he scored the first two goals. The Saints won 4-1 it was a very good start for him. When he left the pitch Willie met up with him in the dressing room just to let him know that they were supporting him all the way. Sammy was pleased to see them both. He asked the coach if he could travel back with the two of them. Normally the coach would not grant such a request. Understandably he granted the request.

They left the ground with about an hour and half trip back to Southampton. Sammy was so excited about the way things were going. While in the back seat he was pumping Mr. Governor Willie about how he was doing and whether the club was interested in signing him. Willie and Mr. Dundee had discussed the situation and agreed that it was too premature to tell Sammy all the details of the proposal. They had agreed to let it go until the week had passed. Willie while driving just

indicated he thought he was doing very well based on the fact that he was chosen as captain tonight and scored two goals. Chelsea he said, “Is a heck of a club to score two goals against was a great start.” They dropped Sammy off at the Mansion it was now one o’clock in the morning. As Sammy walked into the Foyer he waved and said, “Thank you both of you.” He slipped out of sight as the car pulled away.

Thursday’s training went to plan. After the training session the players would normally congregate around the manager’s office awaiting the line ups for the weekend’s games to be posted. On this day it would be one of surprises. As Sammy walked into the facility Tommy White came to him and said, “You’re on the first team for Saturday at home to Everton.” Sammy thought how could that be possible I have only been here a week. He made his way to the bulletin board to find out that it was the truth. He smiled and walked away thinking I may not make the first team as starter but I may get some time on the pitch as a substitute. Just as he was leaving to go back to the Mansion Willie and Mr. Dundee congratulated him on his selection to the first team.

Friday Willie met Sammy in the morning after training that was only up until mid-day. He said to Sammy that Mr. Dundee was having a meeting with Mr. Winston on the possible signing with Southampton Football Club. A thrill went through Willie's body as all that he had dreamed about maybe was taking shape. "When will I know? Mr. Governor Willie." "I would think on Monday." Sammy took the advice that Willie gave him that he should not get his hopes up to high as things could turn out differently than that expected. "Hopes and dreams can be destroyed by ruthless people just keep that in mind." Sammy sat in the front seat saying, "Where are we going this afternoon?" "Well we are going down to the New Forest to see my old club and a dear friend John Moody," Willie said.

They made their way across Southampton and headed out on the A-430 towards Brockenhurst. This was really something special as they approached the town Sammy saw horses and cows walking just free across the road. "Where's the herder?" he remarked. "No Sammy they are free to roam all year." "Do they ever get caught or stolen?" "They are rounded up each year. The new foals or calves are branded. They roam wild throughout the New Forest over several thousand acres."

Sammy thought that so strange, but on the other hand there were no predators like a lion to contend with. The roads now became very narrow and winding as they approached the small village of Sway. Willie pointed out the home they used to live in was very well kept. Sammy remarked, “It looks just like a photo postcard.”

They turned the next corner and swung into a small opening in a wooded lined field.

Inside was a beautiful pitch with just a small stand for spectators. Willie said, “This is it not to impressive I’m afraid but it gave Janet and myself a lot of pleasure. The car came to a stop in the parking lot that could accommodate maybe twenty cars. Adjacent was the clubhouse they both got out. Willie and Sammy strolled around the grounds. They went up the steps to the clubhouse, but as expected it was locked. Willie had hoped someone might be there on this day as it was near the weekend and sometimes the grounds man is around just pruning things up for the weekend game. The walk gave both of them time to rethink about what was going on around them. Sometimes Willie said, “We get so wrapped up in things that we tend to see some pitfalls.” Sammy was still too young to appreciate the remark so it went over his head. Willie said,

“John’s home is only five miles away and as it was now late afternoon John would be home.”

Arriving just after tea, the car pulled into the driveway at Cottagers Lane with a crunching of the small river pebbles that was the bedding for the driveway. Sammy could hear several of them splattering against the side of the car. Boy he thought this could ruin the paint job in a hurry. John could hear the noise and came to the door immediately. “Well I’m damned, Madge come see who’s hear”. Madge appeared in the doorway “Willie how did you get hear.” “First let me introduce you to Sammy Kufa Kahn or better known as Sammy Cheetah in the sports world. “Pleasure” John said, “Do come in.”

“Madge could you make a cup of tea for both of them” he asked her politely. John showed them into the new glass windowed conservatory. It was tastefully decorated and very comfortable. As they sat down John said, “So what do I owe the pleasure of this visit to?” “Janet and I have been away seven years or better. I had the opportunity to travel with the young man for a tryout at the Dell.” John was also a very strong supporter of the Saints. His eyes lit up, “Is this the young man I saw the article about in the Daily Echo tonight?”

“Yes,” Willie replied. John was now very excited to have this young super star in the making in his home. “From the report he did an excellent job at Chelsea.” “I have not seen the report as of yet,” Willie said. Sammy could see the evening paper lying on the corner of the table. He bent over and as he was picking it up said, “May I sir?” John, with great enthusiasm said, “Yes be my guest” Sammy read the article. It was all over the back in the sports section. “Look at this Mr. Governor Willie my second goal being scored.” It was a spectacular photo as Sammy scored using a scissor kick from about twenty yards out. Sammy said, “Is there any possible way that he could have the paper. I would love to send it to my father in Zimbabwe.” “Willie remarked that he would be home before the mail so it would be best if John did not mind that he would take care of delivery to his father personally.” John could only accommodate the young man’s request. If there are further reports next week. I will send them on to Willie for you. I understand from the report that you are here for just one more week. I also saw that you are named in the first team for Saturday’s game at the Dell. “Good for you,” John said. “Well I’m going to have the pleasure of may be seeing you play young man.” Sammy said, “I will not let you down sir.” Madge interrupted the conversation with tea and biscuits being placed

on the table in front of them. John asked Willie if he had got to see his sister Mavis. “Sadly John I will not have time, but I will call over the weekend.”

After tea all four of them went down to Barton on Sea and strolled along the coast. Sammy felt very at ease now as the cool air of the ocean blew in his face. The rolling cliffs made it so beautiful as he looked out towards the Isle of White. The needles that day could be seen a plain as could be. He was content just to take it all in. There was small talk between them all. John walked along side Sammy and chatted about Zimbabwe and the political condition and the lawlessness in the country. Sammy as a young man had strong views about it all as he was brought up on a ranch where the owner Mr. Governor Willie was such a gentleman and had looked after all of the farm workers. “Mr. John” he said, “Even to the extent of schooling, medical and farming. The Messina Valley ranch is an ideal model for white farming and how we can all get along together. Someday I will change all the bad that is now coming out in press reports. You must understand Mr. John that I have not seen a lot of these reports as I live in Johannesburg now. Beit Bridge is in the Southernmost tip of Zimbabwe so news takes a long time to get there.” John was

very impressed with the young man's insight and views on current affairs. They walked for about four miles eventually ending up where they started. John said let's just walk down to town about a mile and have a nice drink in the local pub.

They entered the Rising Star pub John thought that it was quite a novelty as Sammy was to embark on a new career as a star maybe. They all sat in the corner and talked about current affairs and how Willie now found the country's political soundness and cost of living. Sammy just took all of it in. The dartboard being the center of entertainment with partners lined up to play. The two gentlemen playing pennies on a small shuffleboard so highly polished. Four other men were playing dominos none of this had he seen before so it was very interesting just to watch people's expressions. Sammy just drank an orange aid. John asked if he would like a British pork pie. Sammy said, "He would," not knowing what it was, but just to please him. When it arrived with mustered on the side he watched what John was doing first and then followed. The mustered stung his head and he shook it off with a smile as if to say you got me John on that one. The pie did taste delicious though and with the drink it went down well. They all had a wonderful time together time was approaching ten

o'clock curfew was at twelve Sammy needed to get back to the Mansion. Willie thanked John for a great evening. On leaving John said to Sammy, "If at any time you sign with the club our home is always open for you I mean that sincerely. Play well tomorrow I will be there rooting for you." Sammy thanked John for his hospitality and they drove away.

It was game day Sammy was to report at eleven o'clock to the Polygon Hotel. The first team met there every home game to have lunch. Sammy was not aware of the arrangements so he was very surprised to see Mr. Winston in the lobby when he and Mr. Dundee came into the hotel after a mornings shopping in Southampton. Mr. Winston called to Willie as they made their way across the lobby. He addressed both of them, "Would you like to take lunch with us today?" They both said, "It would be a great honor to do so." "We need to get spruced up is that O.K.?" "Lunch is in half an hour so do join me in the Queen Elizabeth Room."

Mr. Winston had waited in the lobby when the two came out of the elevator he was right there to lead them to the Queen Elizabeth Room. All the players were there along with the substitutes. There was quite a melee going on with in talking

and Sammy was off to one side alone out of the picture. Mr. Winston went straight over to him and asked him to join Mr. Dundee, Willie and the staff at the head table. The team were shocked. They realized that they had not treated Sammy with the respect that he deserved. Mr. Winston opened the lunch with a chastising of all the team. "I would of thought that all of you would have a made this young man welcomed to our club," he said. Yes, he's black, yes he's a great player and yes you should all take notice of him because I can assure you all he is quite a gentleman for his age. Just in closing he happens to be a very bright young lad also. "Some of you need to learn some manners." He was fuming as he sat down. Sammy was very embarrassed about the whole speech. Although, he did feel a lot better inside after it though. They had a light lunch afterwards discussed the game plan. During the session Mr. Winston said we have a weapon today that we are going to use at some point in the game. For those who may be ignoring the young man your jobs may be in jeopardy so it's incumbent that you show enthusiasm today while on the pitch and left it at that. The head table left the dais and as they did Mr. Southgate said to Willie and Mr. Dundee, "You're our guests today in the club boxes next to me." Willie felt privileged at the invitation.

As always the Dell was packed. It was a very small stadium. The bleachers are close to the field and players can feel the frustrations of the fans, as they are right on top of you when on the pitch. Willie had played on the Dell so he knew the pitch well. Sammy went into the dressing room to find a place already set for him number 29 to what significance he did not know, but it was a place and it was equipped. His own boots were there as the apprentice had asked for them on Thursday night. He was quiet as he sat alongside the captain of the side. Within a short time, the Physio requested him up on the table for a rub down. It was a very dreary day outside overcast although not raining as of yet. Roll call and they all assembled ready to run out Sammy was not in the starting lineup. The team ran out to the crowd's roar. Sammy was not impressed because sixty thousand at Ellis Park was much louder. They went over to the coach's bench and waited.

The game started it was very fast, but Sammy knew he could handle it as he liked the challenge. He was patient, as his time would come. About thirty minutes into the game it was still 0-0 with Southampton having the majority of the game and pressing hard. There was a goal line crash and the Saints striker was carried off on a stretcher. Mr. Winston told

Sammy to get up quick and start to warm up. He knew that he could not get totally warmed up in such a short time but did his best. Substitution 9 off 29 on; it was his number what a thrill Premiership football he was about to achieve that status. The crowd slowly started chanting Cheetah, Cheetah, and Cheetah in a low tone and with a crescendo as loud as could be expected as he ran into the center of the field. What a debut he felt quite at home with the crowd behind him. Within seconds he was in the thick of things moving in and out of players laying the ball off with precision. The team began to take command. A long ball from the full back gave him a through pass at the halfway line. He pounced on it a with lightning speed and was instantly one on one with the goalie. Willie in the stands knew he would not miss this. He timed it well as the goalie was coming of his line he chipped it over his head the crowd went mad with cheers of Cheetah, Cheetah. Willie said, "I would have bet a hundred pounds that he would not miss that one" as he turned to Mr. Southgate. Mr. Southgate was standing cheering and cheering. He turned and said, "This lad is going to be inspirational around here."

Half time came and went the Saints still only had a small edge on the game it was very intense. Sammy was feinting and

dribbling with ease. The Premiership players were in awe of his ability. He would turn them around to his liking and stroll on by. The defense was having to double-team him. Mr. Winston knew it was time for another switch, as Sammy needed support. One of the substitutes was a very fast not with great skills but could finish very well. On he came the game started to change and the Saints poured it on. It was a great flick on from Sammy that put the new player through about fifteen yards out the ball sailed into the net. The Saints finished the day winning 3-1. Sammy was the hero of the day as three points for the win now cleared Southampton from the relegation zone. This spot they had occupied on so many a season. Some seasons they were lucky not to be relegated as goal average saved them. Away from the drop zone gave the team a boost. The team players hailed him as he came into the dressing room. Sammy was pleased with the day's work. Mr. Winston called him into the office after the game and presented him with a game ball. "Son," he said, "you were fantastic out there today." Willie, Mr. Dundee will meet you tomorrow at the Polygon Hotel and go over our plans.

Sunday afternoon the group met to finalize the contracts so that Mr. Dundee could go back with a complete proposal from

the Saints. Willie representing Sammy by his side gave him a complete synopsis of the proposal and contracts just an hour before they all met. Mr. Southgate the general manager started the meeting with a short speech on how the club could be the right move for Sammy. The accolades about Sammy's ability were again and again emphasized. Mr. Winston the manager of the team thought the offer on the table was both good for the club and for Sammy personally. We have had a great report from the supporter's club already and they are extremely happy to have Sammy onboard. Willie advised Sammy that if he needed modifications to the contract he needed to address them at this meeting. Sammy said, "The only line that needs to be added is that when asked to play for his country the club would release him." In addition, if there were any personal family problems the team would release him in those instances. Willie said, "All good points you brought up." I would add also that his wages are to be deposited automatically every week. The account is in Messina South Africa. His bonus shall be paid immediately on signing. The signing will be in Johannesburg at the end of this playing season or after the World Cup if Zimbabwe it the team makes it through the elimination rounds. This seems to be very likely at this time. Willie thought it was all in order. Mr. Dundee said that the

club would like an advance retainer to buy out his contract. Southampton will agree to a fifty-thousand-pound bond to be advanced as earnest money. With most of the major items agreed to it was time for a round of champagne. They all sat around for the next two hours just talking about Sammy's future and what would be expected of him when he reports to the club.

Sammy was very pleased with his contract he was looking forward as Willie had promised to call his father and give him the good news. At eight o'clock that evening he went to Mr. Willie Governors room. Willie was already on the phone he was quite upset. Sammy immediately sensed something was drastically wrong. What's the problem? Willie just stood there holding the phone with tears streaming down his cheeks. "Mr. Governor Willie what's wrong?" He tore the phone from his hand. Talking to whoever was on the other end. It was his Father Sonny. Sammy he said, "It's extremely sad news Janet was mauled by one of the lions as someone left the main gate open. She is in very critical condition. Doctor Savage is doing his best, "It's not looking too good." Sammy stopped just for a short time and seated Mr. Governor Willie in a chair. Sonny said that Janet was in a coma and she was tore up pretty bad.

She has lost a lot of her face tissue and one eye has to be removed. Sammy could only feel totally depressed. Willie just looked into space with tear after tear streaming down his face. Sammy knew he could not help in this situation so he made his way to the door. “Mr. Willie Governor my heart is saddened also,” he said as he left the room. Sammy went to Mr. Dundee’s room and told him the bad news. He made a gesture to go directly to Willie’s room. Sammy stepped in front of him saying, “He’s best left alone tonight. Mr. Dundee please inform the club of the bad news about Janet.” Mr. Dundee agreed that he would take care of arrangements, as they would develop next week. Willie should be on a plane tomorrow. He worked all night to make flight arrangements for Willie. The morning would be very difficult; he would need to face Willie so as to give him the details. Sammy went back to the Mansion. The jitney was made available for him that night.

Monday morning Mr. Dundee waited until eight o’clock to call Willie. It took several phone calls for him to pick up. “Willie this is Mr. Dundee I’m so sorry to hear about Janet.” Willie now was in a panic this was not in his character. “What can I do? I’m so far away.” Mr. Dundee stopped him right there. “Willie last night I made arrangements, you are booked on a

flight out at eight tonight to Johannesburg. The club has made available the limousine for you to use all day. It will transport you to London Heathrow later on in the day. If you need help to pack let me know, I will be there right away.” Willie said “Thank you so much for your kindness.” and hung up.

At about nine Mr. Dundee called again to invite him down to breakfast. Willie said he would be down shortly. At the breakfast table they went over the plans for young Sammy. Mr. Dundee said, “Sammy will be playing in the mid-week game for the first team away at Charlton in London.” This made Willie smile, as he knew the club was so impressed with his understudy that he had coached. They finished their business discussions and left the table. Mr. Dundee said goodbye and left for the training ground. Willie went upstairs to get an update on Janet.

Sonny answered the phone he knew it would be Mr. Willie Governor. He had him on his mind all night. The pain he was suffering he wished he could share with him.

Willie asked Sonny a million questions, there were no answers as to how it all happened. Willie changed the subject at some point in the conversation to let Sonny know the status of

Sammy's position with the Saints. Explaining the details made Sonny feel much better. He was now very happy for his son. "The only problem Mr. Willie Governor is that we will not see him for some time to come from what you're saying." "That's correct Sonny." "I have made arrangements so that he still has a minimal amount of money being allocated to his checking account monthly. He will be a millionaire in a very short time. The way I see it long before he is twenty-one." Sonny was taken back by the remark. "Yes" Willie said, "I have made sure he is well taken care of in the future." Sonny thanked him and hung up. Willie now was itching to get going to the airport. He packed and met the driver in the lobby. The bellboy picked up his luggage. He went to the front desk to check out. The young lady behind the desk just said, "Mr. Sutcliff you're all taken care of. Your bill is taken care of by the club. Have a safe trip home." Willie strolled across the foyer and out into the street. It was a very sunny day so it made him a little happier as he jumped into the Mercedes. The driver was quite aware of the situation, as they had informed him at the office. He did not mention it as Willie sat quietly dreaming as the car pulled on to the M3 heading for London. This day would be endless for Willie.



Chapter XII

Homeward Bound

Flight 1206 now circling Johannesburg airport was the end of the flight for Willie All passengers please fasten your seat belts. We are on final approach to runway fifteen landing from the north. He glanced out of the window just as the plane touched down. Instantly he felt a considerably better inside, as it would now be a matter of hours and he would be back at the ranch.

Immigration and Customs were dealt with and he made his way to the parking lot where he had left the jeep. He needed to stop for gas outside the airport as the jeep was close to empty. Through the tollbooth at the airport and making a sharp turn onto the service road he could now feel the cool air of the evening blowing over his face. Occasionally a tear would roll down his cheek as he remembered special times he had had with Janet. Praying as he traveled and hoping that a miracle would happen that Janet would awaken when he got home. Just before the main road adjacent to the on ramp he stopped at a petrol station. He made a quick call to Sonny as to the status of Janet. “Mr. Governor Willie she still is in a coma, but it does not look good, her vital signs the Doctor Savage tells me are not responding to the drugs. Sonny said, “I wish I could give you good news but I’m afraid she is in very poor

condition.” Willie thanked him hung up, kicked the tires on his jeep in frustration and sped off.

The homeward bound journey seemed to be passing in a fog. It was six hours later when he pulled into Pretoria exhausted. Willie wanted to carry on but knew he must rest as he had been traveling now about twenty-four hours. The original guesthouse he had stayed at seemed to be the likely place to get some rest. The Heatherdale Guest House was on the north side of the city he pulled into the driveway early afternoon. The owner recognized him and said. “Mr. Governor Willie can I help you?” “I would like a nice quiet room for a few hours before I get back on the road.” “Would you like a meal before you leave in the evening?” “I would appreciate a call in about four hours that should be about six o’clock I believe. “Yes sir”, was the owner’s reply. “Mr. Governor Willie your room is on the backside looking out over the gardens.” Willie could remember it was very peaceful on this side of the property.

The baggage was placed in the room. He laid on the bed and stared at the ceiling within minutes he slipped into a very deep sleep. A loud knock on the door “Mr. Willie Governor it’s time to get up.” He had overslept a couple of hours. His body told

him that he needed the rest before proceeding with his trip north to Beit Bridge.

He was startled and groggy as he answered the door. “Yes how can I help you” to the young Bellboy. “Sir the owner wishes you to join him for supper before you leave in the dining hall.” Willie thanked him saying, “I will be down in a few minutes.” He cleaned himself up and then felt a lot better after the sleep. The owner was at the bar waiting. Willie marched into the bar feeling quite spunky. “John I’m going to pass on your invitation, but could you pack me a lunch for the road,” he said.” They both sipped a glass of wine waiting for the packed lunch. It was delivered within ten minutes. Willie said,” John I’m sorry but I must leave right away Janet is in serious trouble and I’m on my way back from England.” John understood the circumstances and assisted him with his luggage to the jeep. Willie he said, “Take really good care of yourself don’t fall asleep at the wheel. You have about a ten-hour journey ahead.” Willie thanked him for his kindness and pulled away from the guesthouse.

The N1 ran straight to Beit Bridge it was not a bad road. The surface in parts was broken up in general it was paved most of

the way. Willie was now pushing the limit on the jeep moving at seventy miles an hour. The night was cool and he was wearing a heavy jacket, as he knew that the mountain range he had to travel through would be very cold. Early morning, he reached Messina passing straight through he was pleased that Messina Valley Ranch was but thirty minutes away. His heart was pounding he did not know why. His eyes were full of tears and strangely his mouth was completely dry. He was shaking inside as the jeep made the turn off of the N1 on to the ranch property. Sonny could see the dust bowl streaming behind a vehicle it was so large it was at least twenty feet in the air. It could only be Mr. Governor Willie speeding like that he said to himself. The jeep pulled around the circular driveway. Willie jumped out as Sonny came down the steps. "Where is she?" Sonny grabbed him, but he rushed past him heading for the bedroom. He pushed Lawanda aside as she was leaving the room. Lawanda screamed, "Mr. Governor Willie It's too late! It's too late!" Willie just rushed into the room.

Once inside he stopped abruptly looking straight ahead. The body of Janet lay there motionless, stiff, but with a smile on her face. The torn face, an eye missing and a body gorged in places made him feel sick. He sat beside her staring and crying

without a word. It was several hours before he would leave the room. His soul mate, friend, lover and wife had left him. No one was in the house the windows were dressed in black and the blinds drawn. He went to his favorite chair slumped into it and fell asleep from total exhaustion

A slight tap on his shoulder and Reverend Black was standing next to him. Willie you need to come now we are going to lay her to rest. They strolled to the back of the barn and in the center of the zoo. Sonny had built a wonderful mausoleum. The rock formation and woods made it very special. Members of all the tribes brought the coffin out of the house. Willie had not noticed, but there was a long line of families from all of the farms. Both the Southern Territories and Northern were in attendance. Beautiful tribal songs were being sung in their own languages. Janet he knew would have loved the funeral in her honor. Just the fact that all of the tribes at the funeral was comforting, this made him feel better. The coffin was placed in the mausoleum. Reverend Black gave a wonderful eulogy. Willie placed a fuchsia on her coffin. It was her favorite flower. As it lowered into the grave, he shoveled the first dust onto the coffin bowed his head knelt down and prayed. It was an unbelievable sight. Five hundred families all did the same in

unison. The silence lasted several minutes Reverend Black raised his hands. They congregation rose and left in solemn single file. Each in attendance passed the grave offering flowers or personal items in respect. The buses left and then there was an eerie silence around the ranch compound. Willie went to the porch and just sat there staring at the evening sun setting. What was his life to be now he thought, without her?



Chapter XIII

Easy Does It

Sammy under the guidance of Mr. Dundee, completed his two-week tryout at Southampton FC. The club was now pleased with the final arrangements. Sammy would report to the club directly after the World Cup in Mexico if the Zimbabwe Football Association selected him. The selection to the Zimbabwe side was eminent, so it was a matter of the team winning a place from the African Nations elimination rounds. Sammy knew that his career was taking shape very quickly, a lot more than he expected in such a short time.

Arriving back at the Chiefs Facilities, it was his first priority to call Mr. Governor Willie to ask after Janet. He was not totally surprised although he felt the pain for his mentor that Janet had passed away. He asked Mr. Governor Willie if he made it home in time. It was silent on the phone. “Mr. Governor Willie are you there?” he asked. “Yes Sammy It’s been very hard for me to accept the death of such a wonderful person.” Sammy said, “Mr. Governor Willie not only you, but also the world

lost a wonderful person in Mrs. Sutcliff. How can I ever pay you for the support and advice you have given me over the past ten years?" Willie replied, "Sammy always remember to give back at some time in your life to others less fortunate. Something I have tried to do. Remember goodness will always prevail in the end. The Lord does not always show you an immediate direction, hidden sometimes is his work for you to accomplish." Sammy told him about the final days at Southampton FC and then hung up.

He was now feeling down and needed time alone. Mr. Dundee he asked could I take the Mercedes this afternoon after training. Sammy had qualified as a registered driver through the driver's education school provided by the club. He took the test just after they arrived for training this year. Mr. Dundee said, "Yes but just be careful we need you for Saturdays game." The car was as usual outside the player's entrance in the manager's spot. He sauntered up to the car. Sammy felt in command of his destiny for the first time ever. It was a marvelous feeling as he put the key in the lock, opened the door and slid into the driver's seat. Sammy started the engine and with total confidence drove out of the stadium complex. He had driven the jeeps on the ranch on many an occasion. His

father was a firm believer in building a character in his children to make them self-sufficient.

Once on the highway he just quickly looked at the fuel gauge to notice that it was on full. He need not worry about gas for some time. It was only ten hours and he could be home he thought. As he sped along the highway he saw a sign for Beit Bridge. Impulsively he steered onto the N1 heading north. Should he turn back or just go on to his home. He considered all of the ramifications and realized that the club would be in a panic if he did what was in his heart. The next exit he pulled over and turned around. Sammy thought it would be wise to visit the cathedral and talk to Father Wilcox. This decision most probably saved him a lot of embarrassing moments if he had continued on his way. The cathedral was just about twenty minutes away. Pulling into the driveway, he made his way around the back to the visitor's parking lot. Entering the rectory off to the side he saw a small table with a bell on it. A clang clang and shortly afterwards Father Wilcox appeared. "Well young man what do I owe this pleasure?" Sammy said, "I need to talk to someone who will listen to my plight." "You sound a little confused young man lets go to my office," pointing in the direction on the other side of the rectory

vestibule. Father as he closed the door and made him welcomed. As he entered he ordered a cup of tea from the custodian. The two of them sat down. Father Wilcox took out a pipe asking Sammy if it was all right to smoke in front of him. "My only vice," he said. Well tell me what's on your mind. Sammy went through the experience of the car and his strong desire to go home. You did right by not going it would have been quite a messy situation for you and the club. Your father, I'm sure, would have been displeased with you. The sadness that Mr. Willie Governor experiencing is natural the healing will take time. He will get back to normal in the near future. You going to Beit Bridge would have only inflamed the situation, as you are very close to him. Sammy he said, "You are very young and very accomplished sports star, it is going to be extremely hard on you. Temptation will be everywhere around you and your friends. People will try to be your friend knowingly just to hurt you. Some will be very envious. Drugs will be offered also women. All of these temptations will confront you very early in your success even in England. You will not be exempt from the temptation. I believe you have a very strong religious background it will surface and like today you will eventually make the correct evaluation of each situation. You need not worry about human temptation it is

natural you are equipped to handle it. The Lord will always be there for you. Just as he had given the speech to Sammy the custodian knocked on the door with a cup of tea.

As he left, he was now uplifted and could see once more the trees from the woods. He drove back to the complex parked the car and went to the commissary for his evening meal with all the other players. The task ahead was to bond with the other players and get back to training with them all on a regular basis. He entered the commissary during the evening meal. Mr. Dundee was seated with the players Sammy sat at one end with the first team. During the meal Mr. Dundee stood up and made the following speech. “The letter I have in my hand is quite exciting for our club.”

“It reads. The Zimbabwe Football Association wish the Kaizer Chiefs to release Mr. Sammy Kufa Kahn known as Sammy Cheetah to play for Zimbabwe on the following dates.” Mr. Dundee stopped the announcement, as the club members were all ecstatic with cheering and clapping of hands. Speech, Speech, Cheetah was their chants. Sammy was now embarrassed and slowly got to his feet. He now stood six feet four and was a very commanding figure. With his hands held

high he was able, after a short time to quiet the club members. “Thank you for all of your support. It has been a very emotional time for myself. My career is moving very fast. The club has also sold me to Southampton Football Club at the end of the season.” All the team members once again cheered in joy. He continued with, “This new development means I will be away only a short time and will miss just one league game with the team. It is important to me that we as a team win the South African Cup and League that is my desire and I will train and perform to my best. Tomorrow after the strain of the trip to England I will be at home with the people I love and respect.” He sat down there was a short silence in appreciation. Mr. Dundee went and sat down with Sammy giving him the letter for his scrapbook.

The Kaizer Chiefs were still in second position but a win would mean they would then take the lead as they had a game in hand on the league leaders. Sunday’s game was to be played at home against a much lower team in the table it was expected to be a winning result. Training that week went very slow for all the players, as it seemed interminable. Friday eventually came around and the team settled in to a coaches meeting to review the opposing team’s previous games on the TV. After lengthy

discussions and interaction between coach and players they all felt pretty good about playing this important game. At eight o'clock Mr. Dundee invited Sammy to the manager's office. Sammy was now maturing and being called to the office meant that he did not have to worry about the consequences. When he first came to the club this type of impromptu request would have him worrying about what was to happen. Knocking first he then entered with "Good evening sir". "Well Sammy we have a pre-game show tomorrow at the Sky Sports Studios with John Osgood", Mr. Dundee said. "John would like to announce your accomplishments over the past month. The interview will be at two o'clock meet me in my office at one."

The morning was spent preparing himself for the game in the evening against Pretoria Patriots. Sammy during lunch intermingled with all his friends and they were kidding him about his afternoon interview. He took it all in jest although inside he very proud to be representing Zimbabwe. His future at Southampton Football Club would be a dream come true. After an hour he went to his room and dressed for the interview. As always and dead on time at one o'clock Sammy knocked and entered after Mr. Dundee's replied with, "Come in." "Sir are we ready?" Sammy asked. Mr. Dundee was out of

his seat and walking towards the door. Putting his arm around him he said, “Sammy we are going to miss you around here come next year.” Sammy with deep sincerity said, “This is my football home and I will always remember the people and friends that helped me.”

They were approaching the clubs Mercedes; crowds for the evening game were already in the parking lot. Sammy signed about twenty autographs and then proceeded to get into the limousine. Arriving at the Studios and John Osgood was waiting in the Foyer. He congratulated Sammy on his selection for the Zimbabwe team. They went to Studio three. Sammy by now was getting quite used to interviews and press releases. He was now a very stylish and mature young man. John interviewed first Mr. Dundee as to his feelings about the trip to England and then the selection of Sammy to the Zimbabwe National side. Mr. Dundee thought that the trip to England was certainly a terrific experience not only for Sammy but for himself Southampton FC were very gracious and have a wonderful organization. He himself had come back with several ideas that he would implement within the Kaizer Chiefs. After about twenty minutes the interview switched directly to Sammy. John's first question was. “Sammy how do

you feel about representing your country?" He would reply with a long statement as to the honor and experience it would mean to his career. "The TV broadcast would be on after the game at eleven o'clock to-night," John said. After the interview John called Mr. Governor Willie. "Willie I have Mr. Dundee and Sammy in the studio he would like to talk to you. They conversed for about five minutes and then Willie let Sonny talk to his son. Ending Sonny said, "You need to talk to your mother." Sammy was delighted to have a conversation with her about his future. Her final words were, "Sammy keep your feet on the ground son and the Lord will look after you." Sammy was delighted with the opportunity to talk with both his parents and thanked John for setting it all up in advance. Mr. Dundee and Sammy left for the hotel to go over the evening game with coach Croucher.

Sammy had performed so well that the Kaizer Chiefs were now holding first place in league. It was now only a few days away and he would be on a plane to Nigeria to play in the World Cup elimination rounds. The game was of the utmost importance to the Zimbabwe National team. Winning this game would automatically secure first place in the World Cup Africa Nations elimination league group "E". On Friday

Sammy sat looking out of the plane window at Johannesburg Airport. The flight would take about one hour and twenty minutes. He was now very excited. The captain announced take off and that all passengers should fasten their seat belts. This was the first time he would travel by himself. He was now very self-assured. Sammy saw the ground quickly passing behind him as the plane slowly made its way up to twenty thousand feet. The plane was a turbo prop so it was quite noisy. They flew out to the north and then east towards Zimbabwe, Harare airport. Sammy was to meet up with the team. The team would practice for three days before flying to Nigeria.

Arrival at Harare was very emotional for him, as he would first meet up with the national coach. He made his way to the luggage pick up area. Mr. Kuno was there to meet him. "Sammy" the coach shouted as he approached his luggage. Sammy turned in the direction of the sound. The coach stood at least six foot six tall and was well dressed. With introductions over they both made their way to the limousine waiting in the pickup deck of the airport. The driver was awaiting his two passengers. Both Mr. Kuno and Sammy slipped into the back seat. They had a very good conversation during the trip that took about fifteen minutes to get to the

training facility. The facility was pretty run down as the country was going through a very difficult political time. Money for sports was very low on the government agenda. Leaving the limousine, they were greeted by several of the players who had just finished the afternoon training session. They all knew of Cheetah, as he was big news in the African Nations press. Sammy did recognize the two players that he had played against in the African Youth Cup several months ago. They were quite taken back by his stature and demeanor. He was developing into a true professional in his sport.

Training the next day was pretty much what he had expected. It was apparent to him that most coaches use similar drills and techniques for improving skills. Sammy had practiced them time and time again. His touch on the ball and the way he weighted a pass was just exceptional. It was important that if the team were to get into the next round they would need to become a cohesive force. Training together even for just three days would culminate into a very strong bonding between players. Sammy was now starting to fit in really well as the first day came to an end. The players would all showered up and had an evening meal together. Sammy really enjoyed the comradeship. Players were now beginning to understand his

role playing as number two in their 4-4-2 playing formation. This formation required two strikers upfront of which Sammy was now commanding a place on the first string. His cohorts were amazed at his agility and skills. Jokingly they would comment about him being called Cheetah. Sammy would take it all in jest. After the three days they were all prepared and ready for the long flight to Nigeria. The National management team and coach were very upbeat about the team's capabilities.

The night before the game was a very quiet night and the team reviewed game after game that the Nigerians had played. Each player on the team knew his counterpart's normal moves and they would pause the movies on numerous occasions to go over specific talents of the opposition. The speed demons were to be marked closely. Coach Kuno was very specific about the team's stratagem. He remarked mid-field we need to dominate and Cheetah to linkup with you all. His job is to roam and feed Tuti up front. We need the backs to take chances and make their defense panic on the wings. After a very long session it was time to check into bed and wait the next day.

The next day seemed interminable as he lay on his bed dreaming of how well he would play. This is quite common

with professionals to play the imaginary game the night before. Once again he got up with a slight nauseous feeling in his stomach. The pain was not overpowering but was certainly annoying. He had breakfast with all of the players who were in a great mood. They were all ready for the afternoon game. Obviously they were not treated with respect when they arrived, as there were no traveling fans. The Zimbabwe National committee was in full force to show support for the team, Nigeria on the other hand had been to the World Cup and knew the importance of this game.

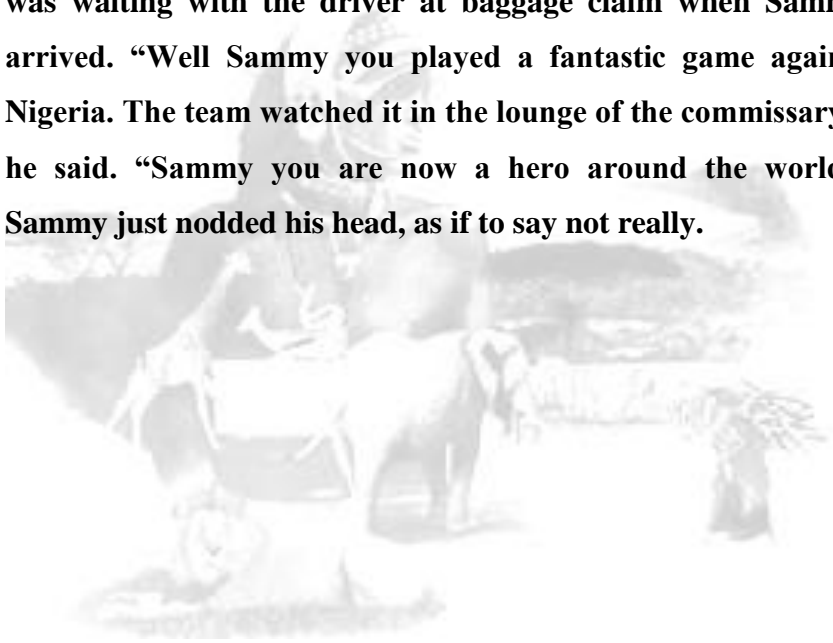
The dressing room was quite somber as the players were nervous about the game. Sammy was trying to lighten up the team. Coach Croucher was now worried about how the team would start the game. After being rubbed down they were all ready to file out. As they came out onto the field the stadium was jam packed with about eighty thousand fans all booing. It was quite overpowering, Sammy just laughed it off and went about the business of warm-up. Team National anthems were played visitors first the visitors and then Nigeria's to a thundering welcome at the end. Banners were exchanged the coin toss for ends and the game was now on.

The first ten minutes was played at a furious pace. Both teams were extremely fit and had great speed in many of the positions. Nigeria was the first to score about fifteen minutes into the half. Sammy was spurring his team on as though they were not a goal down. Long ball from the right defensive player opened up space Sammy flew into the opening. Tuti crossed over in front of him drawing several players with him Sammy was now wide open with the goalie to beat. Without a doubt the ball hit the back of the net. They were now on a level playing field again. Half time score was 1-1. The coach gave a heartwarming speech during the half time. The team was inspired and believed they could achieve the impossible. The pundits betting line was 10-1 odds for them to win. The second half would be similar to the first although some of the Nigerian players were starting to feel the fatigue of the very hot sun. Sammy had a sense that they might be able to pull off a win. Ten minutes to full time Sammy collects a ball just inside his own half. Turning the opponents inside out he was able to lay off a perfect pass as Tuti who ran into the center circle. As he entered the circle he launched a dying effort and struck the ball at a very sharp angle. The shoot was a little bit of a fluke but it sailed in. The team was excited, as now all they had to do was to hold onto the lead for just a few more minutes.

Headlines in all the African papers the next day, **ZIMBABWE INTO THE WORLD CUP**. Sammy standing outside of the hotel before flying back to Johannesburg just stood and stared and stared at the billboard on the street side with the same type of headline **CHEETAH DOES IT FOR ZIMBABWE**. He stood there and just wished he could take it home with him. Mr. Kuno came outside; they stood together and dreamed of what was to come. Sammy he said, “You played one hell of a game yesterday.” “Thank you sir,” he replied. It looks like we have a great chance to make it. As the papers report it we are in. It’s a little premature as we have one more game to play. I’m pretty confident the team will go through.” The teams were now all ready to board the bus to the airport. They were all very up and could only talk about. The future months ahead for all the team members would be very strenuous. The press and home fans would scrutinize each team member very carefully. Training for the World Cup games will need to start in late April. The regular season would be over at that time so their respective clubs would release the players.

Sammy did not have the opportunity to be with his teammates as he flew into Johannesburg. His fellow players had a huge

welcome of some twenty thousand fans at the Harare airport when they arrived home. The trip to the national training ground was lined with thousands of cheering fans. Sammy was somewhat relieved that he did not have to go through the mill of fans. He had got used to it, but to him unnecessary to him. Only Mr. Dundee met him at the airport in Johannesburg. He was waiting with the driver at baggage claim when Sammy arrived. “Well Sammy you played a fantastic game against Nigeria. The team watched it in the lounge of the commissary,” he said. “Sammy you are now a hero around the world.” Sammy just nodded his head, as if to say not really.



Chapter XIV

English Premiership

The World Cup in Mexico turned out to be a learning curve for the Zimbabwe team. They were drawn in a very tough group and were eliminated in the first round. Sammy had firmly established himself since the World Cup in the Premiership through playing for Southampton FC. His first years between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one were more of an apprenticeship at the club. He did receive several accolades one being footballer of the year in the Premiership. The golden boot award was his for the taking during the current season as he had scored twenty-six goals before the Christmas break. He had not been home for about five years he felt shameful of the fact, but this was the first year in the Premiership League that a true Christmas break had been scheduled.

Sammy knocked on the door of the manager's office. "Come in," Mr. Winston acknowledging the request to enter. Sammy poked his head around the door and entered. "Mr. Winston I would like to travel to Zimbabwe during the break if that is all

right with the club?” “Sammy we would only ask that you report back on January the eighth one week before the restart.” the manager stated his desire. Sammy thanked him and went about his business to make arrangements to fly home. That Friday December the twenty second he was on a flight out of London Heathrow to Johannesburg. He was now very ecstatic about the thought of meeting up with his family after almost five years away. The flight home was uneventful. After twelve hours the plane was now circling over Johannesburg. It was his intention to just stop by the office of the Kaizer Chiefs.

He stepped outside the arrivals terminal and hailed a cab. The cabbie while stowing his luggage in the boot realized he had a celebrity with him. Cheetah could it really be he thought and he's in my cab. The cabbie started up a conversation with Sammy. He asked him a million questions as the journeyed the short distance to the Kaizers Training complex. On arriving he asked Sammy for his autograph. Sammy with a wonderful smile on his face signed an old programme that the driver had in his cab it was at least six years old. It was the first game he had played for the Kazier Chiefs. He was unannounced as he strolled into the commissary. Some of the older players

recognized him and immediately started calling Cheetah, Cheetah. Mr. Dundee was passing by when he heard the commotion going on in the commissary. He rushed into the room to see his super star standing amongst all the players. Once again questions from all of the players as to his passed present and future.

Mr. Dundee forced his way through the players and quickly quieted them down. "O.K. Sammy will answer all of your questions one at a time." By then he had reached Sammy and with a strong handshake said, "Welcome home son." Sammy felt very warm inside, as this truly was his home he felt. Many bridges had been crossed in the past five years, but this was still his sentimental football home. He stood at one end and for an hour answered questions about the past few years. Mr. Dundee, after the hour, called the meeting to a halt. They both went to his office. Mr. Dundee sat down and said to Sammy, "This is just like old times." Sammy was now a very worldly person and carried himself with a passionate demeanor Mr. Dundee just looked at him in silence. Realizing that he was starrng he abruptly spoke asking Sammy, "Where he was to stay tonight?" "Have not thought about it he replied." Picking up the phone Mr. Dundee called the Huntsville Hotel. Next

question was, “How are you traveling to Biet Bridge?” “Not thought about that either.” “Well you can take the limousine or have the driver take you to Beit Bridge.” Sammy requested that he use the driver. Mr. Dundee informed the front operations to make the driver available within the next twenty minutes to drive him to the hotel. With that he informed Sammy that the team was away this weekend in Durban. The complex if you need to use it is yours. Sammy thanked him saying that he would move on to Beit Bridge as he only had two and half weeks’ home. They parted with a warm handshake and Sammy met the driver at the front office. Johnny the driver was still with the club so it was like old home week. They had plenty talk about as they drove to the hotel. Sammy released him, but said he hear at eight o’clock tomorrow so that we can get an early start.

At six in the morning the driver met Sammy in the foyer of the hotel. They had a quick coffee and then went on their way. A full tank of gas would be sufficient to get them to Biet Bridge. The journey along the N1 was fairly uneventful. Sammy always admired the Soutpansberg Mountains, as they were so majestic. It was now seven in the evening as they pulled of the main road.

Mr. Governor Willie was on the porch in his wheelchair. During the latter part of the year he had suffered a stroke that left him impaired on his left side. His motor sensors were damaged. As he looked at the horizon he could see a puff of dust rising. He summoned Sammy's younger brother to help him by ringing a bell adjacent to him on the porch. Sonny junior came to his side. "Mr. Governor Willie how can I help?" Willie pointing with his right hand mumbled, "Look what's coming towards the ranch." Sonny now focused on the horizon and watched. The dust subsided for a brief time. It was apparent that the vehicle had stopped at the gatehouse. Sammy announced who he was at the gatehouse. The visitor was relayed to the compound. Sonny senior came running out and called Lawanda as he passed their home.

After five minutes the Mercedes pulled into the compound. There was an uproar going on with all his sisters running out to see him. Sammy climbed out of the limousine stooping to avoid hitting his head. As he did, he thought this car was not made for him that's for sure. Lawanda ran quickly to his side hugged him so tight. He knew he was home at last. Sonny, his father, would wait his turn shook hands and said, "Welcome

home son.” Sammy looked over all their heads and noticed Mr. Governor Willie in a wheelchair. He slowly made his way over to the porch went up the newly constructed ramp. Leaning over as he approached he held both Mr. Governor Willie hands and squeezed them tightly. Mr. Governor Willie eyes lit up and with a mumbled voice said, “Welcome home Sammy.”

Sonny, stayed quietly in the background in awe of Sammy. Sonny realized that his brother was a super star in the world of football. Sammy moved around the wheelchair and just hugged him with all his might. They both looked out on all the family and friends that were now assembled in the compound. Sammy said to them all that he was so glad to be home even if it was only to be two weeks. Sammy released the driver who would return in two weeks to pick him up.

The next morning would be a family run out. Sammy’s younger brother, Sonny his father and himself took the long run together. It was very inspirational for his younger brother as he trailed behind both of the senior members of the family. The final turn and it was a race across the football field to the bleachers. Sammy made it first, believe it or not his father now fifty years old or better made it second. Sonny the younger just

laughed as he sat down after being about two yards behind them.

The three of them sat and just starred up into the blue sky with sweat flowing down their backs and forehead. Sammy, after several minutes, asked his father how bad Mr. Governor Willie was. Sammy explained to him that the doctors expected it to be a long time, but he may recover some movement on his left side with therapy. We have constructed a whole workout routine using rings and chains for him in the garage. Mr. Governor Willie does the routine twice a day and has improved quite well since it happened two months ago. Sonny senior said, “It’s going to be a long time most probably all year before he can walk again.”

It was Saturday and the local football teams were all arriving in the buses that had been maintained and in good shape. A total of eight teams arrived and were all around the bleachers. Sammy went over to the verandah and asked Mr. Governor Willie if he would like to watch a few games. Willie responded that he would. Sammy wheeled him around the back of the garage. It was quite an impressive site with all the teams in their uniforms. The bleachers were packed with spectators and

friends. The Saturday games at Messina Valley ranch were tradition and the farms all participated the Leagues were much larger and it took a lot of organizing. Sammy approached the bleachers and found a seat on the end. Mr. Governor Willie had a very good view of the field. The first match was an under twelve game. Sonny junior was the referee. He was very smartly dressed for the occasion with the proper attire even down to the stripped jersey being black and white.

Sammy enjoyed the game and at half time went to center field. He sat down the players of both teams and talked about football, but most of all an education. He was very inspired by the way they all reacted to him. Very few of them understood who this very large man was. One young lad did know of him and quietly asked, “Are you Cheetah that plays for Zimbabwe?” “Yes” Sammy replied. It was only then that the crowd understood who was in their presence. The bleachers then emptied out and they all sat around him asking millions of questions. He answered all of them in turn but knew the game needed to restart. He ended by saying if they wanted his autograph he would sign at the interval when they all had a meal together. The meals together with all the players made

him feel very at home amongst his people. He did go around signing autographs for those who wished him to do so. Mr. Governor Willie just smiled as he watched from the porch the whole time. Mr. Governor Willie rang the bell and Sammy responded. Sammy could you take me to the garage he requested. On entering Sammy watched the Governor go through his routine without help. After an hour he beckoned Sammy to help him back to the porch. They sat on the porch as the sun was starting to set the buses had left and there was tranquility once again around the compound. Mr. Governor Willie loved Saturdays, as it was so inspiring to see the young talent developing.

“Sammy” he said in a mumbled voice “I need you to drive me to Mr. Sinclair’s Monday would you kindly do so.” Sammy said he would only be too happy to accompany him to the law office. Monday morning at nine o’clock they left the compound. Sonny senior did not accompany them as he had other chores to take care of. The morning air rushed over the front windscreen and felt warm and powerful as it brushed through Sammy’s hair. Mr. Governor Willie was very silent the whole trip. They pulled up in front of the law office. Sammy wheeled Mr. Governor into the office. Miss Susie was

still the secretary to Mr. Sinclare and with a warm “hello Mr. Sutcliff and Sammy how are you both today?” Sammy replied respectfully and Mr. Willie Governor mumbled, “Thank you for asking.” The office had not changed in fifteen years still a junkyard of papers Mr. Governor Willie thought.

“Well what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?” Mr. Sinclare retorted in a very loud voice. He was a little hard of hearing. Miss Susan repeated most questions and answers twice for him. The meeting started with Mr. Sutcliff requesting his will to be updated. As you know, I have no heirs to my estate and I would like to make provision for the following. Mr. Sammy Kufa Kahn is to become the sole heir of my estate. Sammy stood there in amazement as to whether he heard correctly. Again Mr. Sutcliff repeated and I mean all of my holdings, stocks the mine included. Mr. Sinclare was stunned, but would oblige the request. Please draw up the papers this week and deliver them to me before Sammy goes away again. I would like him to have a copy in his hands. Mr. Sinclare said that was a tall order, but would do his best.

Sammy and Mr. Governor Willie left without a word. Sammy got the Governor comfortable for the journey back to the

compound. Sammy drove off with a feeling of total astonishment as to what had taken place at the office. Mr. Governor Willie mumbled, "Sammy you do not have to ask why or tell anyone about today it's our secret. Mr. Sinclair knows better not repeat what goes on in his office as there is a client privilege between us both." Sammy needed to give him some assurance as to his capabilities to carry on the farm at a later date. As they drove along Sammy told Governor Willie that in the evenings he did attend Southampton University and was awarded a degree in Business Management. At present he was taking Political Science. He was expecting to graduate in the spring with honors. Willie's face lit up and squeezed Sammy's arm just to let him know how proud he was of him. Arriving back at the compound, Sammy with the help of his brother got the Governor out of the jeep into his wheelchair. Sonny settled him on the porch ready for the evening meal. Today would be special as Mr. Governor Willie insisted that they all eat together in the utility room just off of the kitchen. This would be the first time the whole family and the Governor would have such a meal together. Sonny was honored at such an invitation. He thought what's got into that man he must be going off the deep end.

The meal was well underway; Mrs. Lawanda had made it very special as the Archers were also invited. They still ran the school system for the farmers and now had five hundred children of all ages attending school. There was a lot of noise going on with all the cross talk. Mr. Governor Willie clinked his glass as to get attention to all. He stood up and with a very clear voice for the first time in almost three months said, "To all those present on this day I have willed my entire estate to Mr. Sammy Kufa Kahn." Sammy nearly dropped dead as he thought it was supposed to be a secret. They all looked at Sammy in amazement. Lawanda cried and Sonny was dumbfounded. His son would be the heir to a massive fortune. The estate had grown over the years and had tripled in profit as to what it was when Mr. Willie Governor first came to Messina Valley Ranch. Including all the stocks and bonds Sammy would be worth about thirty million pounds and exorbitant amount of money. Sammy could only say when he inherited the farm he would continue in the loving and humanitarian way that Mr. Governor Willie had shown towards all the people of this very close-knit community. Sammy excused himself from the table and went for a walk around the back of the garage.

Taking a ball from the lockup box he started to run and run with the ball at his feet.

Shooting at the back of the garage just like old times. His mind would wonder as he went through his skills. How would he continue in the footsteps of his mentor Mr. Governor Willie? Sammy understood the challenges ahead for his country and for himself. He was determined to find a solution to the marauders that still ravaged the land under the auspices of government enforcers. Sammy, in the near future, knew he would get involved in a political solution. His playing career was still important to him and so was his popularity within Zimbabwe. This closeness with the crowds would play an integral part in his future endeavors. On this night he would just work and work as hard as he could to keep fit before returning to England.

Chapter XV

The Bernabeau

Sammy returned to England arriving on time for the start of training on the ninth of January. Southampton FC had a chance this year of making the Champions League as they were now in seventh position in the Premiership. Sammy was playing extremely well and was the favorite with the fans at the Dell. He continued to thrill them week after week with dazzling performances. It was now approaching Easter and the games over the holidays would make or break the team as to a Champions League position. Southampton had a really tough schedule until the end of the season. Sammy had now scored forty goals and led the league by ten goals. He was destined to win the golden boot award. The closest rival was a player in the Spanish League playing for Barcelona having scored thirty-five. The award was a European award and was very prestigious.

Mr. Winston called Sammy into his office on Good Friday. Sammy wondered for what reason. As he entered the room Mr. Winston quietly asked him to sit down. I have some good news

for you and the club if you agree to it. “What is it?” Sammy asked. Sammy the club has been approached by Real Madrid to transfer you to their club. It’s a massive fee and one we can’t really afford not to accept. “How much?” Sammy said.

“Twenty thousand pounds,” Mr. Winston replied. This would make you the most expensive player to be transferred in Europe. You need to talk it over with your agent Mr. Willie Sutcliff in Zimbabwe. All these years Mr. Willie Governor was still his agent. Sammy had not wanted it any different over the years. Sammy knew that Mr. Governor Willie was in no shape to get involved in the transfer. “First when is this to take affect?” Sammy asked. “Within two weeks.” “Sorry but no. I will only consider it at the end of the season.” Sammy you realize you will receive two million pounds just for the bonus to transfer. Sammy said go back and negotiate my request for the transfer to take effect at the end of the season.

Sammy’s main concern was the fact that he wanted to obtain his Political Science degree from Southampton University. The club did not know of his involvement in a scholastic career. Mr. Winston said, “I will go back to them and request a transfer at the end of the year.” Sammy was delighted with the decision. “Mr. Winston I think that it is the best interest of all

parties to get the extension until the end of the season. It will hopefully ensure Southampton FC into the Champions League for the first time ever,” Sammy said.

Several days had transpired when Sammy got the official notice from Mr. Winston that Real Madrid had accepted his request. Sammy would report at the beginning of the new training sessions in July. His graduation from the University was to be in May so he was now happy with the transfer delay. His personal terms were to be negotiated when he flew to Spain one week later to sign the final papers. The European and English papers got a hold of the story. Within hours Cheetah was plastered all over the sports sections and front page on those that strictly report football. He was nominated for the Golden Boot award by UEFA. Sammy was quite honored at the possibility of being not only Footballer of the Year but also winning the Golden Boot award. His football dreams were now coming true and it gave him great confidence as a young man of twenty-two. The thought of playing for Real Madrid in the Champions League would be such a thrill. On the following Monday he flew to Madrid. The club officials were all there to welcome him to Spain.

The club's facilities were run very professionally. Each training camp was so well kept with flowers beds and with tree lined roads. After watching a training session, he was introduced the club members. The team was very strong and one of the most expensive teams in Europe. Accumulatively the first string weighed in at about one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. The payroll was extremely high compared to other clubs, all except Manchester United in the English Premiership. Sammy sat down during the afternoon to negotiate his personal terms. His terms were outlined to the contract negotiator. Amendments to the contract would be needed such as being released for the Zimbabwe National team as needed. At the end of Spanish League two complete months away from Madrid. Real Madrid was to furnish him with a secured apartment with bodyguards. A private car with driver and not the least was time off during the Christmas break to travel to Zimbabwe.

With all these items now firmly agreed upon he sent his contract to Mr. Willie the Governor to review. Three weeks later he received a wonderful letter back from Beit Bridge. Mr. Willie Governor even wrote the letter and explained that he thought the contract was in good order and that he would

advise him to sign it. He also emphasized that he was on a recovery path. His left side was starting to show motor movement. Mr. Governor Willie reiterated that it would be a shame that he could not attend his graduation from Southampton University just two weeks away.

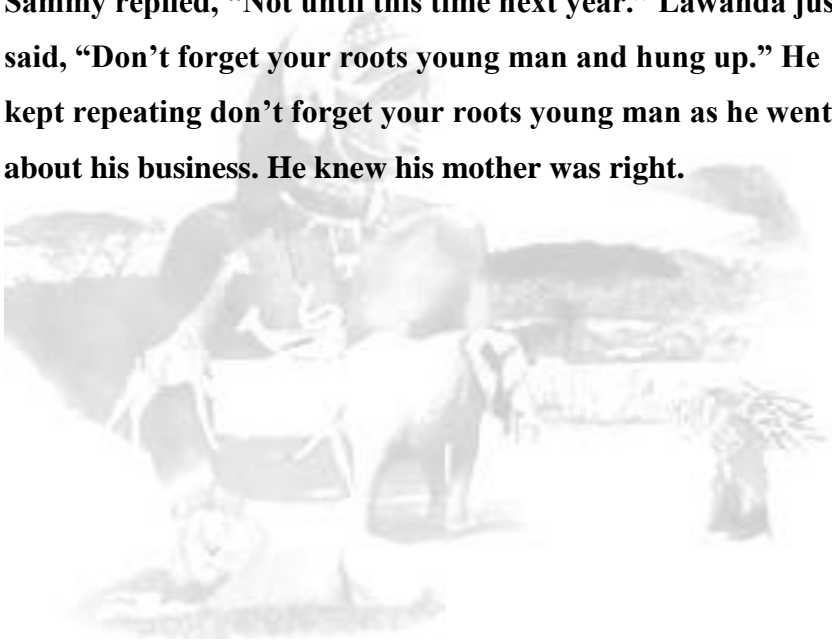
The letter was just what Sammy needed to inspire him to sign the contract. Before signing make sure your money is directly deposited into your account each week.

He wrote a letter immediately to the board of Real Madrid Football Club. Enclosed was the contract and a letter confirming his reporting for training date. He did call and talk over his salary requirements that they were to be deposited each week. They agreed on this arrangement. With the contract now settled Sammy needed to deliver a copy to the club. With copy in hand he took directly to Mr. Winston at the club's office at the Dell. After a long talk they agreed that this was a great move for him and the club. Mr. Winston stated that he would always be welcomed back if he desired to play in England. The Club was now on the fringes of qualifying for the Champions League for the next year. Mr. Winston said, "Sammy this is all because of the great year you have had." Sammy was appreciative of all the club had done for him and

this was at least, a little pay back for all the members and staff of the club. Mr. Winston remarked as he left the office, “We will miss you around here.”

The day was just sunny with a slight breeze as he strolled across the grounds of the Southampton University. His stomach was reacting just as it did for each game. A gnawing sensation at the bottom of it made him feel slightly sick. Nervous as he was he still drove on towards the bulletin board. The Bulletin Board hung very conspicuously in the center of the Science Department main hall. There were no other students looking at the board as they result of the finals had been posted two days earlier. He was now feeling pretty scared as he looked down the long list of graduates. Finally, he noticed his name Mr. Sammy Kufa Kahn passed with honors. He leapt out a yell, “Yes I did it!” Swinging around he noticed his professor just passing through the hall. A smile on his face made Sammy feel exuberated. He had accomplished a goal that was more important to him than all of his football accolades and awards. He was now well educated, as well as a well-known personality in his country. This was to be his foundation for his future ahead. He left the University and immediately called Mr. Governor Willie that he had passed his

masters in Political Science. Willie was so excited for him. He told him to hold on, while he got his mother and father. Willie now was able to walk with a cane. Lawanda talked first and then Sonny they were so proud of him. He said that he had also signed for Real Madrid and would be moving to Spain in about four weeks. Lawanda asked, “When he would be home again?” Sammy replied, “Not until this time next year.” Lawanda just said, “Don’t forget your roots young man and hung up.” He kept repeating don’t forget your roots young man as he went about his business. He knew his mother was right.



Chapter XVI

Politically Correct

Four years had passed; Sammy was now in his prime as a player. He had not been home for quite a while even though his contract would allow him. During a course at the University in Madrid he met up with a wonderful young lady from Senegal who was studying in Spain. The two of them appeared at all the club functions. This relationship was developing into something a lot more than he had originally planned. He would have to make a commitment to the young lady this year as they had been courting about two years. It was during the Christmas break that he proposed to Miss Janice Poitier of Senegal. She accepted his proposal and the date was set for the following Easter. Sammy was now left with a major decision whether to have a wedding in Spain or in Senegal. The two of them had talked through his career path and Janice knew he wanted to return to Zimbabwe at some juncture in time.

The wedding was held in Spain and the club put on just a marvelous wedding for the couple. Neither parent did not

know about the wedding, as Sammy wanted to keep it quiet until they went back home.

It was a silent and calm night at the compound in late November of the same year Sammy was married. Mr. Governor Willie was aroused by wild screams from the animals in the compounds. He was still not good on his feet. He grabbed a gun and went out the back way. There was a great commotion with bullets flying in all directions. The women and men of the compound were all firing at randomly into the dark. Sonny was directing shouts and commands across the compound. They had all trained for such a night. Mr. Governor Willie tried to take up a position in the garage. In doing so he was shot as he made his way to the door. He lay in agony as the mini war continued. The attack lasted two hours and eventually the fight was over. The government forces had lost about fifty. The farm had lost only three. Sonny asked where is Mr. Willie Governor. He ran around frantically to find him slumped just inside the garage on some hay. He had bled profusely and was near death. Sonny held him in his arms as he bid them all fair well. As his eyes rolled over he said, Tell Sammy I love d him like my own.”

Sonny knew there was still work to do so he mustered about twenty of the farmers and wives and drove towards the Limpopo River. As he turned off the highway several young boys with their sisters were running away from the farms. Sonny stopped them asking what was going on at the Limpopo Farms. They were all so scared that all he could get out of them was that there was an attack and fierce fighting going on. He directed several of the women to hold up and look after the children.

As the convoy of four trucks entered the farms to the south a raging battle was in progress. It appeared that the balance of marauders from the compound had regrouped with the fighting force in the South. After a brief meeting with some of the Sub foreman he was apprised of the situation. They had sent for reinforcements from the Messina Mines, as there was a tremendous stock of ammunition there. The women along with the farmers were showing a great strength and the government forces were in for a real battle. The arrival of Sonny made them all feel very confident that they could hold onto their lands. The battle lasted well into the morning hours. After sixteen hours of battle the marauders were driven back to the river. They had submitted to the onslaught of a well-organized

mercenary army. By mid-day they had about two hundred deaths and one hundred casualties. The battle was over with the rag tag remains fleeing up river. This was a very serious situation as the government forces had suffered a very serious setback. This white farm would never go to the government-backed forces Sonny thought.

It was a very solemn day as the parade of coffins was once more lined up at the small church in Beit Bridge. There were all told twenty farmers and Mr. Willie Governor. Sonny sat in the front pew awaiting the service to start. Silently the doors opened and a massive figure stood in the aisle slowly walking down towards the front Sonny turned, but the light was so bright as it dazed his eyes. It was not until the figure appeared before him in the front row that he noticed it was Sammy. Sammy went to the front bowed in front of the coffin and touched the British flag with true respect for his fallen mentor.

The Eulogy

The news was in all the papers in Europe two days ago. I have flown many miles to get here in such a short time. On this day we respectfully give our final farewell to a wonderful man who

was truly inspirational to all of us. For those who have had the honor of working or just being around this great human being and to have known Janet his wife can only say that they were true humanitarians. Mr. Willie Governor I know will join his lovely wife Janet in heaven. The two of them will always look down on this community and bless us. I myself on this day pledge that our wonderful country will get back to its original roots. No more government marauders or killings. There shall be a return to law and order, the Lord willing. For the fallen comrades who have farmed the lands with dignity we honor your souls also. Your deaths will not go unanswered. Assuredly as I stand here before your families there will be day of retribution. He bowed his head as he left the lectern. Sammy stood in front of the coffin kissed it saying, “Mr. Governor Willie God speed you to heaven.”

Sonny looked towards his son and knew in his heart that he was now ready to take on the awesome responsibility of Messina Valley Ranch. Lawanda was so proud of him as tears rolled down her cheeks. His sisters were all now growing up to be young women two were married and lived at the compound. The third was very close to Lawanda and still was under the same roof. Sammy left the Church and made his way back to

the compound. Sonny let him be by himself, as he knew there was now a lot on his mind. There was a small burial ceremony at the ranch and Willie was buried next to Janet his beloved wife.

Sammy wandered in and out of the rooms of the main ranch house. He would look at ornaments and pictures just hanging on the walls. Sit in a chair and remember the times he had spent with Mr. Governor Willie. The hours they had spent in training together. His father Sonny awoke him from his staring quandary. "Sammy You are now the owner of one of the most successful farms in Africa," he said. It still did not sink in; Sammy was still feeling the sadness of his loss. He quietly said to his father that he would like to be alone for a while. Sonny stepped out of the room so that his son could reflect on his future.

Several days passed it was time to call the club and let them know about his future plans. His original contract was up at the end of the season. They were willing to renegotiate a three-year deal. Sammy told them that he would need until July to sort things out in Zimbabwe, but he would be back in Spain within the week so as to complete the season with the club.

Sammy spent the remaining days with the family. During this time during a supper meal he let them know that he was married and would be bringing his lovely wife home with him during the summer. Lawanda was very happy for him. Sonny was a little upset that he had not told his father about the wedding. Sammy explained it was all kept pretty quiet even Janice's family did not know of the wedding either. With this Sonny was once more convinced that his son did the right thing. Sammy in his own right was very wealthy and the inheritance would make him one of the richest men in Zimbabwe. This was one of the reasons why the government wanted to resettle this farm. It was very productive land and by using the resettlement program as a disguise, the incumbent president would obtain the rights to the land. Sammy knew this was greed on his part. The farmers had defended the land and it took the government forces by surprise as to the ferocity of their defenses. It was national news. Sammy now saw this as an opportune time to come home and start his political career.

His final five games at the Bernabeu were very exciting as Real Madrid played in the final of the Champions League against Valencia. It was an all-Spanish final and the crowds

roared Cheetah, Cheetah as he took to the field. Sammy scored two goals and the team won 4-2. To top it off they also won the Spanish League. The papers were full of accolades. Sammy was there hero. In his mind he was just another footballer who loved the game. Sammy announced at the end of the final game that he was returning to Zimbabwe to retire from football. The European community were stunned at such a departure and being so young. Sammy would have at least another five years of playing at top level if he stayed healthy. Shock waves went through the football world. Sammy was convinced it was the right thing to do. He had thought it all through thoroughly and knew his direction was led by his religious beliefs.

With his lovely wife by his side he waved goodbye to the large crowd at the Madrid airport. The chanting Cheetah, Cheetah could be heard throughout the concourse. He smiled as he boarded the plane heading for Johannesburg. After twelve hours they landed at the airport. Janice was apprehensive as she was about to enter another world quiet different to that of her childhood in Senegal. She was African by birth, but miles apart by ethnic customs. Janice was a very astute young lady only a year younger than Sammy. The two of them made a great looking pair, as she was also six feet tall and

immaculately dressed. A very classy lady as the Spanish press had said in a recent article on the two of them. They made their way through the airport. As it would be John Osgood had found out about his flight plans and was there waiting to meet him. Sammy was quiet surprised at this chance meeting as they had not talked for a few years. John had followed Sammy's football career and report extensively on it to the Africa press. Sammy first introduced Janice and them said, "Well how did you know I was on this flight?" "You know I have connections in all those small places," John said. Sammy I knew you might need a ride to Beit Bridge so I have arranged our corporate Limousine to drive you there. "That's it," Sammy said. They were both delighted with his kindness and could not tank him enough. By the way your brother is playing well for the Chiefs just to let you know. "You mean Sonny?" "That's him, he is doing a fine job as a defensive player." With that said the two of them were put into the limousine and they started their long journey to Beit Bridge.

Ten hours later they swung off the N1 at the Messina Valley farm entrance. Sammy was stopped at the gatehouse. He announced it was Cheetah. They immediately let him through. Janice was now taking it all in as it was new to her. She

thought why the guards, but would ask Sammy later. They arrived at the compound with a welcome committee in assembly. All the family was there except Sonny junior. Lawanda just hugged and hugged Janice as if she was her own. Janice was a little taken back with the affection. She was now officially in the family. The Rogers were their also and Doctor Savage. Lawanda had prepared a meal on the porch and the whole family; The Rogers and Doctor Savage were invited. It was a mini wedding day as far as Lawanda was concerned. Sammy would take residence in the main lodge that was used by the Sutcliffs. He was the new owner of the ranch and all the holdings. Sammy was prepared for the future and was confident of his direction. Janice was by his side she was a companion, listener and lover. She knew that the future was going to be uphill as Sammy had talk over his intentions while on the plane trip. This was to be the start of his political career in Zimbabwe politics.

Chapter XVII

Referendum

Sammy and Janice settled in very quickly. As Sammy went about business Janice's could sense urgency about Sammy that was not there before. One night as they were eating on the porch Janice remarked about this aura that had overcome Sammy. "This is not your natural way of behaving," she said. Sammy apologized for his anxiousness. He said, "I have to get started on my political campaign before my popularity wanes." Janice could see the urgency but said, "We have only been here for two months so why the hurry?" Sammy talked about the two attacks on the farm in the past. Janice was concerned about her safety after listening to the sordid details of the infighting. She knew that the farmers were still being trained in great numbers to protect the ranch. It appeared to her that they were a very dedicated group. The new owner being of the same color and from the original compound required them to cooperate with him also. They had shown their respect for him by continuing to work the lands as they had done for many years under Mr. Governor Willie. This phenomenon would certainly give rise to what could happen if the rest of the

country would see Sammy's ideals and his unique character. Janice knew he would make a few blunders in his political career along the way and that was to be expected.

Trusting others in African politics can be disastrous. Sammy's popularity in the past would go a long way in swaying the masses to vote for him. To get into the arena of Zimbabwe politics was going to be a rough ride for him. Sammy she knew had the courage, commitment and tenacity to follow through on the pledge he made at the funeral of his mentor.

Sammy outlined his plan with Janice who was always a keen listener. She would comment on and off as to certain legal formalities that he would be required to file. First she said, "You must run for the local district." What party would you like to support?" Sammy did not like several of the party leaders in power at present. "Well," Janice said, "File papers for your own party. What will you call it?" Sammy replied with the "ZDRP." (Zimbabwe Democratic Reform Party). "I guess you have thought about that quite a bit since we got back home," Janice said. "No just thought of it now," Sammy stated. Good party charter name Janice thought. The two of

them drank a glass of wine to celebrate the new ZDRF party's first night as a formidable group to be reckoned with.

“Mr. Sinclair knows all the ins and outs of politics in Zimbabwe as he ran for office as legal Secretary of State at one time under the Ian Smith government. The country at that time was called Southern Rhodesia,” he said. Sammy with another startling comment turning toward Janice said, “We will go tomorrow to Beit Bridge and see Mr. Sinclair the lawyer I have few things I need to clear up with him about my inheritance.”

Monday morning, they both drove into town, Sammy dressed in safari attire so as to make himself less conspicuous. Parking outside the office of Mr. Sinclair. Janice remarked, “How long has he been in business?” Sammy said, “At least forty odd years. “The front really looks that way,” she said. They entered and Susan was still his secretary of many years. Good morning how can I help you both? “I’m Mr. Kufa Kahn,” Sammy replied. Do you have an appointment she asked in a sweet but pertinent way?” “No” was his answer. Well give me a minute and I will talk to Mr. Sinclair. Sammy could hear her announce his presence. Mr. Sinclair immediately jumped out

of his chair. Knocking his knee on the corner of the table. Still in anguish from the knock he said, “Mr. Kufa Kahn come on in to my office.” Susan looked at Mr. Sinclare in a strange way as if to say who is this black person that he knows so well. Susan was obviously not a football fan otherwise she would have recognized the name. Mr. Sinclare fussed around to remove the stacks and stacks of papers strewn everywhere. His office had not changed in all those years still disorganized even though Susan had tried her best to keep him straight. “Well young man what do I owe you the pleasure of this visit?”

Sammy first introduced his lovely wife Janice stating that she came from Senegal. Mr. Sinclare acknowledged her with a warm, “Pleasure to meet you mam.” Sammy continued the conversation asking Mr. Sinclare to put together a complete portfolio of all his holdings and summarize his net worth. “Quite a tall order he declared, it will take about a month or so.” Sammy then led into his intensions to run for political office but needed to know all the ins and outs of such an undertaking. You were involved may years ago with the Ian Smith government. I’m sure that experience I can draw from. Mr. Sinclare was quite honored and flattered from the comments of Sammy. “First Sammy, I know you have little

qualification to run as a representative because of your football career.” “Not true I have a degree in Business Management and a Masters in Political Science from Southampton University. Janice is highly qualified also. She has a degree in International Law from the University of Madrid.” With that said the look on Mr. Sinclare face, showed that the two of their accomplishments in higher education took him back. “I did not realize you had devoted time to studies,” he said. “Only the very intimate friends know of this,” Sammy replied.

“First let’s start with how the country is set up at present with respect to political parties. ZUFP is obviously the ruling party and has a large majority of some three hundred to one hundred and sixty seats. The one hundred and sixty others are divided into six parties who just cannot agree on most political matters. The ruling party has a mandate that allows him dictatorship rule practically. Mr. Sinclare paused for a while.” “Continue.” Sammy said. “The incumbent has really monopolized all the decisions on the new economic bills and the court system. Having such a large majority and the new sweeping mandates has white lawyers leaving or resigning their post. Black untrained now occupies those seats left vacant by the mass exodus. Regaining the integrity of the judicial

system will take a monumental effort. Party registration if you intend to form a new one will be extremely hard as the incumbent makes his own rules. Putting that aside you will first need to run for the district twenty-one that is the lower part of the country around these parts. Mr. Hanson is the representative at present and remains only because he is a big supporter of the incumbent president. He is due for re-election next March. You will need to put up a good fight, gain his seat and then become a member of the Zimbabwe Parliament. You have the resources as your estate when I last checked about five years ago was worth about thirty million pounds. I'm not checking into your current wealth, but I assume from what you have told me that you are a very careful young man. Your personal portfolio will not be needed to run for office. It will take about fifty thousand pounds I would think to defeat Mr. Hanson. The re-election of the incumbent President will not be for another two years after that. You then will have time to find out the inner workings of the government. When we talk next time I will put together a synopsis of the current districts and how the voting went. Sammy was beginning to get the picture on how to approach his political career. Janice was excited; her only reservation was that the farm had quite a large mercenary trained force. The questioned remained would

the incumbent president send an army to fight for the farm that Sammy was now the owner of. It was a known fact that Zimbabwe forces aligned with the incumbent were fighting in the Democratic Congo Republic. The recall of troops back to Zimbabwe of such a large army would certainly alarm Sammy and perhaps jeopardize the family's safety. There was a lot to consider," Mr. Sinclair remarked as they left the office after two hours of consultations.

Janice was very quiet on the way back to the ranch compound. The both of them had a lot to review and if it was a go ahead what were their plans. She could tell that Sammy was ready for the challenge. That night as they sat on the porch having a quiet meal together Sammy invited his father to dine with them. Lawanda and her staff treated Sammy just as they did Mr. Governor Willie with total respect. Their routine was the same as it had been for years. Sammy or Janice had not sat down with Lawanda to modify it as it all ran smoothly. It was to be an evening of soul searching. Sonny was made aware of his son's intentions. Sonny said in a very profound way, "Sammy great leaders are born and you have all the makings of one. I'm fairly positive when you announce your entry into the political arena you will receive a massive support from the

rural farmers who now support the incumbent president. I'm concerned about your safety and I would think that you might want to have a body guards around you at all times once you start the political campaign." As the evening wore on they all were exchanging ideas and assembling facts on what would be his platform to run on.

The country was in a melee now that the Commonwealth Nations had put embargos on it. AID's was rampant with over three million of the population infected. There was an astonishing sixty-five percent of the nation under the age of fifteen as a result of the infection. The majority of the youth of the country were without parents. The voting population was now only five million out of twelve. The unemployment was at its highest ever twenty-five percent eight hundred thousand out of work. These numbers are shocking Sammy thought. How to reform the country and lead it back on its feet would be a task that even the most skilled politician would shy away from. Sammy loved his country so much that he really thought that he could go forward with a plan for total realignment of the counties resources and manpower. The infrastructure would need to be once again put in place and law and order would to be his first mandate. All of this needed to be accomplished

without fear of another dictatorship. The country if it was to succeed in the new world order for the Millennium now approaching needed drastic changes. After several hours Sonny left the two of them to be alone. Janice and Sammy just looked into the beautiful black sky sparkled with stars as full silver moon adorned the horizon just picturesque. The couple knew without words spoken, that the time had come for change.



**NOW IS THE TIME
TO READ
CHEETAH**