

Chapter 66

In Chapter 66 of "We Solve Murders," Max Highfield finds himself infuriated while sitting alone in the Emirates First Class Lounge, feeling betrayed by his bodyguard, Henk, who has failed to meet him as promised. Displeased with having to fetch his own salad, he grapples with his frustration at being left undefended in a posh setting. A nervous teenager approaches, confirming that he is indeed Max Highfield, prompting Max to raise his sunglasses in a brusque acknowledgment. The boy expresses admiration for Max's film, "Titans of War," to which Max retorts about being underutilized in that role and laments the lack of recognition for his work in "The Rose of Sarasota."

As the teen continues to engage him, Max suspects how the boy, unlikely to afford a First Class ticket, managed access to the lounge. Max is hosting a ceremony associated with a Diamond Conference and feels the pressure of comedy routines crafted by writers Shaun and Christine, which he must deliver. The teenager's persistent admiration culminates in a request for a photograph. Though annoyed, Max obliges, noticing the boy's trembling admiration, which is somewhat redeeming. As the boy excitedly returns to his parents, Max resumes his meal, frustrated by the invasion of privacy.

Max attempts to call Henk but is halted by lounge staff, who inform him that calls are forbidden. Despite identifying himself, the staff member remains unmoved. Angry that Henk doesn't take his calls while considering that Jeff Nolan would always answer, Max questions his relationship with Henk and his current vulnerability, given recent threats he has received. These messages compel him to reconsider the necessity of a bodyguard as he becomes aware of darker forces at play.

Reflecting on his film career, Max recalls his role in "The Rose of Sarasota," where he portrayed a sick soldier. He had hoped the film would garner him an Oscar, but its failures weighed heavy on him, leaving him both furious and despondent. Death, often trivialized by the film industry, intrudes upon his thoughts amid the luxury of the lounge, forcing him to confront his own mortality in an unwelcome way.