

































his practice. He turned to Sal again. "So, will you help me?"

"Jeez, Frankie, I don't know. I remember Mrs. Ballsziti is a mean one on a regular day. She can't be any fun to be around with her mother dead and all. She never smiles. I thought fat people were jolly."

"Would you smile if Johnny Ballsziti was your husband?"

"Hell no," Sal said, "Johnny Ballsziti is a crazy capo. The real thing. I heard it was an arranged marriage. They did that in those days."

Frankie nodded, and then laughed.

"What's so funny?" Sal wanted to know.

"I never could say his name right. Every time I tried to say hello, the *balls* and the *ziti* always got caught in my throat, something about the *s* and *z* together. I came out sounding like Daffy Duck."

"Be careful, Frankie. He's got a screw loose. And it's bound to be even worse now that Roscoe Keats and the feds have had him in custody. Word is he once had a guy's nuts cut off for calling him Johnny Balls. He's known for that, cutting guy's balls off. It's like his calling card. Rumor has it he keeps 'em on display in his café."

"I heard that too," Frankie said with a grim laugh. Then, "So, you'll help me move Mrs. Cianci's body?"

"For you, my friend and number one client, anything."

"Hey, thanks," Frankie said, adding as an afterthought, "chef."