

Violin Strings and Piano Chords

CHAPTER 1

Wearing highly polished expensive shoes, a man strode with meaning along well weeded shingle paths between freshly mown lawns.

This cemetery was beautifully manicured, from the tall dark green gloss painted entrance gates, to the squeaky clean windows of the chapel. All was neat and presentable in the garden of rest.

Three parts of those buried there were regularly thought about. Multi coloured blossom, freshly placed in jars or purpose bought containers, brightened up plain grass areas.

The solitary figure paced along, as if the place was familiar to him. Suddenly, his gait slowed and finally stopped. He stood alone amongst a mass of bright new stone markers in the sunshine. A cast shadow fell across the two bunches of flowers he placed there. Head hung and hands crossed in front of him, gave the appearance of someone respectfully mourning. Slowly, raising up his head, Eric Elliot gradually smirked. The look on his face was not that of a friendly man. Unzipping the flies of his black suit, he began urinating on the two graves at which he stood.

White headstones and Cotswold chippings turned dark as the wetness splattered upon them. Streams of urine ran down over the names, Jenny Elliot and Freddie 'Scuffem' Elliot. Date of death was advertised as June 12, precisely one year earlier.

Periphery spots, which had splashed on his costly footwear, were smeared up each calf in an attempt to wipe them clean. That inconvenience did not upset him any.

Pouting his lips, he blew down his nose before presenting the male's grave with a mouthful of phlegm. With that, he turned on his heels and with a very satisfied spring to his step, skipped off along the pebbled path. At the roadside, a sleek black Chrysler waited for him. A

uniformed driver opened the rear door. He waited for the passenger to be fully seated before closing it. The tinted window slid half open and a gush of smoke puffed out from a freshly lit cigar. Almost silently, the car drove away.

.....

Early evening and the Casino had very few customers. It very rarely did at that time of day. A couple at the roulette wheel, several sitting at the scattered Blackjack tables and one very sad man perched at the bar. Slumped on a tall stool, it seemed his goal was to get as drunk as possible in the shortest time.

“You having a bad day?”, Sam Harris asked the man, slouched on the counter.

The tumbler was flicked up and a double whiskey was downed in one. “The worse day of my short And very unlucky life” The glass was pushed towards the barman. “Another”

“Things that bad, eh?”, enquired the white coated man, as he took the glass and squirted two more shots into it from the wall mounted optics. “Not seen you in here before. What’s your name?” The short etched vessel was placed on the counter.

“Dave Dave Morgan”, was his nervous introduction. Snatching the glass, he downed that one too. “The late, Dave Morgan”

“We’re not working up to doing something stupid, I hope?” Sam was never trained to be that caring, it was his own kind nature.

Eric would never invest money in such a frivolous manner for what he would regard as a worthless cause. If it did not earn money, it simply was not done.

“Another”, insisted the drunk, pushing forward the empty. “I don’t know about you, but I’ve already done my something stupid”

“Ah! Feeling a bit sorry for yourself?” Sam had poured another double and placed it in front of Dave.

“How would you feel”, he slurred. “Knowing your death was imminent?”

“Oh, I’m sorry. Is it something, terminal?” Sam’s face showed great concern, as he had never seen anyone attempt to get that paralytic that quickly before. He concluded it must be serious.

“Oh, yeah. Terminal, all right!”, wheezed Dave, as if an Asthma attack was setting in, such was his anxiety level. Throwing the Scotch down his throat, he nodded for another. “Owe your boss some money Lots of money Lots and lots of money”, he sighed.

Harris did his duty and gave him another dose of anesthetic. “None of my business, I know, but”, Sam glanced around. “ Instead of sitting here getting pissed Why don’t you just, get the hell out of here?” He never liked to think of anyone in trouble.

“No point”, sighed Dave, despondently and smiled fearfully. “.... Doesn’t matter where I go The bastard will find me. He’s got spies, everywhere!” That double tot of golden fluid also disappeared as rapidly as all the others. “More! Much more!”

“Are you sure? You don’t think you’ve had enough?”, the twenty two year old casino worker asked cautiously.

“No!! Whatever they do to me I don’t want to feel it”

The barman thought for a moment. He then stood between Dave and the nearest surveillance camera. A new bottle was removed from beneath the counter. “Here. On the house”, he offered, topping the glass up to the brim.

“You’re free with Eric’s drinks?” The speech was becoming heavily slurred.

From a black painted door that possessed a sign declaring itself to be ‘Private’, two heavily built thugs emerged. Seeing their target slowly sinking under the bar edge, they strode purposefully towards Dave.

“Make the most of it”, suggested Harris, flicking his eyes in the direction of Eric’s more, determined employees.

Dave closed his eyes and downed the entire tumbler of yellow spirit in one gulp.

The pair of black suited bruisers stopped just behind the seated man.

“Mister Morgan! The boss would like the pleasure of your company!”, announced one of them in a dark, deep threatening voice.

Morgan took a very deep breath just prior to being grabbed by both arms and removed from the stool.

Faking a smile, Dave looked up at them. “I can’t be drunk enough. I can still smell you”

Taking their job seriously, no emotion was shown as the saggy victim was carried away.

Sam looked on helplessly as his latest customer was dragged off to his fate. Picking up his mobile phone, he began to text frantically.

.....

At seventeen she had it all, long blonde hair, tanned shapely legs, beautiful bright blue eyes and a full private education any girl her age would envy.

In the quietness of her ten bed dormitory, Emma Elliot was packing her bags preparing to leave. She had enjoyed her five years there, except for the time she lost her parents. Picking up a photo of the couple from the bedside table, she looked longingly at it, before giving it a kiss. It was then packed with care, into her hand case. Her mobile sounded the unusual Darlek speech, ‘You have a message’ as a text came through. Swiftly collecting it from the duvet, Emma read the message and smiled happily.

.....

Downstairs in the Head’s office, Eric had arrived to collect his niece.

The Headmistress liked Emma’s uncle and thought the sun shone brightly from his back pocket. If only she knew the truth, she would not have fawned over him as she usually did. Although in her late fifties, she was not unattractive. There was something very homely yet old fashioned about her.

“It has been a real pleasure having Emma as a student here. I know she can be a little

Head strong at times But overall, she is a truly delightful woman and her character has

developed wonderfully. And since that awful incident, last year, Emma has come through that very difficult period extremely well. It's hard to imagine the effect of losing both parents on such a sensitive sixteen year old, especially in such a grotesque manner” Her words were honest and came from the heart.

“Yes. It hit the family very hard, of course. But, for young Emma Well, it was just heartbreaking. As you know, I think the world of her And, I promised at the funeral, she would want for nothing and that I would always be there for her” Eric’s smarmy statement was given between puffs on his cigar.

The head liked the smell of a good cigar. In fact, she was easily impressed with large cars, Designer labeled clothing and all things expensive. Sitting on the corner of the desk in front of him, she crossed her legs and let show rather more thigh than usual.

“I have to say, the support you have shown to young Emma has been most commendable, Mister Elliot”, she praised, holding his hand that little bit too long. “And the generosity you have shown the school, has been most outstanding. The large donations you have provided have given us the confidence, to draw up plans for the new dormitory. I cannot emphasize enough, my gratitude to you”. Smiling her best smile, she hoped the skirt that was purposely raised even further, would provide her with a little comfort of her own.

Eric was certainly not backwards in coming forwards and read the signs perfectly. Leaning slightly, he placed his hand on hers and ogled the fishnet nylon clad legs. “It was nothing. Really”

.....

Early the following morning, Sam sat back in his chair drinking a cup of tea and eating a tuna sandwich. The flat was nothing special, cheaply furnished but everything matched. In fact, the only thing he truly treasured there was his huge DVD collection and flat screen television. That was monstrous, far too big for the size of the room. Handmade shelving housed the

seven hundred or so films he had amassed.

The television news was on as he wound down and his eyes were glued to his mobile as he texted. The reader's tone suddenly changed.

“... And now, an appalling item. A body, police have named as, David Morgan ...”

A mouthful of PG Tips and half chewed bread was spat out as his attention was suddenly snatched. Had he heard that right?

“... Was discovered face down in a brook at Lock's Meadow this morning. He had been shot three times and had his tongue and hands removed. Police are appealing for whiteness's who may have seen or heard anything suspicious in the area last evening.....”

Wide eyed and disbelieving, Sam stood absorbing what he had just heard. But, he had spoken to that man just a day before when he was unwillingly escorted from the bar. His heart sank. He knew of the rumours of course, but this was the first time he had related any evidence.

.....

A torch light flicked around in the darkness. Although Eric's casino was alarmed and had a Battalion of security cameras, all had been switched off just a few moments before. The office door clicked open and a dark shadow crept inside. Focusing on the dark green safe, the beam closed in on the dial. A gloved hand swiftly twisted the knob this way and that with expertise and knowledge of the code. The door swung open and the light flashed inside. Highlighting stacks of bundled cash, the brightness hesitated at the sight of a handgun.

.....

There were routines Eric liked, as a creature of habit. It managed to keep his, more muscular staff on edge. Because of this, four black suited men stood in a line ready for their employer's arrival. Each of the stocky bodybuilders carried a black and chrome briefcase held at their side. There was not that much room in Eric's office, so the line was more diagonal. Besides, there were usually five.

Gambling was not the only business Elliot ran. Each one had a legitimate front, however, there was always scope for illegal enterprise behind those images.

Eric sure knew how to get the best out of that aspect of his activities.

Without warning, the door burst open and the boss paced in, straight to his desk. “Right! Roll call!”, he barked, setting the precedence for the short meeting. Slumping into the impressive brown leather chair, he picked up a pen ready to jot down figures on the large open writing pad. “Takings from taxi’s?”

“Yes, sir”, answered the first man in line promptly and opened his case. Inside, were bound bundles of cash and a copy of the accounts for Eric’s perusal. That process was repeated down the line.

“Takings from the garage?”

“Yes, sir”

“Takings from whores?”

“Yes, sir”

“Takings from brothels?”

“He’s on his way, boss” The first man spoke for him.

Eric looked up. “Why isn’t he here?”, he growled.

“Well, um, there are, um, eight of them, er, boss”, stammered the first man, wishing he had not spoken up for him.

“Well? ... I don’t mind him having a freebie, but not on my fucking time”, snapped Eric, disappointedly.

“Takings from non-casino gambling?”

“Yes, sir”

“All cash double checked, numbers confirmed and paperwork completed?”

“Yes, sir”, they all replied in unison.

“Then, let’s put it all safely away”, proclaimed Elliot, leaning to open the secure box. The heavy door duly opened and Eric froze for some few seconds. Turning away, he closed his eyes and shook his head in disbelief. Turning back, he thrust his head deep inside for a second look. Echoing into the container, he asked calmly, “Has Stevie, gone to the bank, yet?”

“No, boss. He isn’t back yet”, the first man responded. He appeared to be the more senior of the group.

Slowly turning to face his staff, Elliot was beginning to redden and his eyes had a distinctive twitch. “Then, perhaps someone could enlighten me” He started calmly, but then exploded. “..... Where, the fuck, is all my money!!!”