

The Long Road to Redemption

A fast-paced sensual thriller, with a dark historical past

By Pat Storm

CHAPTER 1: CHRISTINA

The bedroom voiles of the top executive suite, on the 5th floor, are flapping in the wind, as the balcony door has been clipped open. Two sleeping lovers in their late thirties, Dorak and Christina, lie naked in the bed. They are completely oblivious to the sound of car tyres on the wet Vienna side street where their Boutique hotel is situated.

The suite is trendy with copper fittings, dark colours throughout and shiny black and white tiles in the bathroom set in a herringbone pattern. The tiling job is a masterpiece.

Patiently awaiting their master, on Dorak's bedside table, is a gun, a half-finished bottle of malt whisky, a framed old black and white family photo and a clip of money.

Christina's long black hair is splayed across the pillow. Her beautiful soulful dark eyes are hiding behind her eye lids and her curvaceous figure moves ever so slightly with her breathing. She is in a blissful sleep, the sleep we all crave for, the deep sleep one gets from a vigorous immensely satisfying sexual encounter with your lover.

The fawn-coloured duvet is lying discarded on to the floor. The satin sheets covering the spent lovers are the type you spend one night in and make a mental note never to sleep in them again.

Dorak awakes and swings his legs to the floor so he can sit up on his side of the bed. His mouth is dry. There is an itch in the back of his throat that you get from love making activities. He pours a straight whisky, gargles with it, and then swallows the ten-year malt in one gulp. He is a strong man from his gym workouts, his past cage fighting hobby, and is sporting an olive skin that may have seen a few sunray lamps during the Russian winter months. His natural wide smile, cheerful persona, square jaw line and hazel brown eyes make him a magnet to women. His well-kept short hair style further indicates that this is a man who clearly looks after himself.

He picks up the family photo taken before the rest of his family died and raises his empty glass to toast them. He kisses it and then places it back reverently. He turns to admire Christina's curves which are accentuated as she is sleeping on her side. He strokes Christina's back ever so gently and leans over to smell the sweet scent of her neck.

If I die now, I will die a happy man Dorak thinks to himself. A happiness that is ever so fleeting, a happiness that is so often wrecked by the negative side of Dorak's brain. The inner bastard that fights for control undermining everything he has achieved and forever beckoning him to failure like a Greek siren.

The sound of rain on the outside balcony brings him back to reality. He notices that the lower part of the voiles are wet as they, from time to time, get sucked out into the heavy rain and return, admonished, damp from their brief outing.

He wants a cigarette to help him rethink his exit strategy from Vadim and his accomplices. He respects Vadim for his ruthlessness

and his ability to always finish what he starts. Dorak knows escaping Vadim's clutches will mean the death of one of them for he has witnessed countless people killed who have done far less than he has.

Outside Dorak's hotel two cars coast quietly to the front door of the five-storey hotel their wipers swiping away the relentless rain, like a teacher dismissing their class. The green canopies over hanging two ground floor windows announce that it is four gold star Hotel Brauhof Wien. The gold letters proudly stating to the world that this hotel matters.

Four men jump out swiftly from the two cars, all in their mid-thirties, wearing black sinister looking face masks, black SAS fatigues and body armour. They murmur to each other in a Russian accent and have every appearance of being part of a highly organised team of ex-military men who are now guns for hire.

The mission is not expected to take long as the two drivers have remained in their cars with their near silent engines running.

Dorak, as the nicotine and whisky revitalise his brain, suddenly becomes alert. He is worried that he missed something in his meticulous escape plan.

"Christina, wake up," says Dorak as he kisses her around her forehead, cheeks and pulling down the sheet to uncover her buttocks.

"My darling you were incredible, I am so much in love with you."

"I hope the love you feel is not just because you are empty."

"That's a bit unfair."

A laughing Christina adds, "You were quite good yourself. You'll make the woman you settle down with very happy."

As she pulls herself up in bed her long 1.8 metre frame emerges, the very reason why she went to Moscow in the first place for that fake modelling job. Even without make-up her Romanian natural beauty would turn the head of even the most distracted man. Her heavy dark eyebrows are sculpted to perfection setting off her large soulful brown eyes that snare the very being of the person who is captivated by them.

"You know you make me whole. Until I met you, I always felt something was missing."

"Yes, having great sex with this!" says a smiling Christina as she pulls the sheet off to reveal her naked body.

"Very funny. Have you deleted your Facebook and WhatsApp accounts?"

"Surely we are safe in Vienna."

"Have you been in touch with anyone?"

"I needed to contact my family to say I am alive and will be seeing them when this dies down."

"What have you done?"

"Only an email tonight to my sister while you were in the shower."

"What did you say to your sister?"

"To meet us here, at the hotel, tomorrow morning."

"Christina, Christina, we must leave the hotel tonight. Vadim's men may already know the address of this hotel."

The small hotel reception area has a cosy feel to it, with classic styled furniture, shiny black and white square floor tiles laid diagonally, and an elegant reception desk made of dark wood that guests would find inviting.

The ringleader of the black clad men is towering over 1.7 metre receptionist and is showing him photographs and his gun, which has a silencer. The ringleader, ex-Spetsnaz, Russia's special forces, has reached the rare age of 40. An age many of his colleagues never made. He sees killing people as an inconvenience, like you might feel about killing a fly while at dinner. Can you be bothered to get up, maybe not, or maybe so.

The scared Polish receptionist has been trained for many eventualities except for this one. To add insult to injury he is on an unpaid trial period. He can hear the indifference in the ringleader's voice and knows better than to panic so he maintains eye contact and remains outwardly calm. His badge, worn proudly on his uniform, informing everyone that he is called Henri.

"Henri, how do you want this to play out? There are two options. You tell us the room number where these two are," as the ringleader taps on photos of Dorak and Christina, "and show me where you have your surveillance recorder or, I shoot you in both kneecaps and shoulders to get the information."

"They are in the executive suite on the top floor. Come with me into my office I will show you the recording equipment."

The ringleader follows Henri into the small office which is dominated by a large screen showing images of a dozen cameras. Henri turns off the hotel's surveillance system and the large screens go dead.

"I can see Henri that you are a sensible man. Lock the hotel's entrances. Lock all lifts and bring the master keys as I want you to open their door and their safe."

"Are there any other staff we may bump into?".

"The only person is in the kitchen and they are unlikely to receive a room service request at this late hour. We only have ten rooms occupied tonight. Please do not harm her."

"That Henri, will depend on your cooperation."

The intruders and the reluctant Henri head to the lift and Henri uses his key to access the fifth floor without any chance of guests witnessing or being embroiled in the invasion.

As they arrive at the fifth floor the ringleader places his hand on Henri's shoulder. Henri is sporting some designer stubble, some lightly moussed hair that gave the impression he did not care, yet he had spent five minutes getting it just so right. His long thick eyelashes offset by long sideburns and light sparkling grey eyes made him fodder for any cougar that ventured into the hotel. They would, however, be wasting their time as Henri is in love, very much in love, with Andrea who is working the room service shift this very evening.

"Now Henri, so far so good. You will walk down the corridor as if you are delivering something and wander pass their door. You then will quietly back track and place this," he hands Henri a small piece of adhesive tape, "over the spy hole and give us a thumbs-up when this is done."

The ringleader shows his thumbs-up signal.

"You will stay, with the card ready to enter the lock as we run up. When I drop my arm, you will open the lock and fling the door open. We will do the rest. You stay by the door as we will want you to open the safe. Is that clear?"

Henri just nods. His blue eyes reflect the stress he is under and are crystal clear. His future life flashes in front of him. He sees himself as a happy father with Andrea as his wife. He instantly knows that he will no longer hold off proposing to Andrea. Four years of happiness is more than enough to ensure him that marriage will not ruin their happy contented world.

"Any warning to the guests and you and your friend in the kitchen are kaput. Is that understood?"

Henri nods as he sets off purposely down the red carpeted corridor.

Back in the apartment Dorak's short lived contentment has gone. He is furious with himself and his incompetence, he knows their safety has been compromised by a small lack of attention to detail.

"Christina, please tell me all the communications you have done since we left the apartment in Moscow?"

She starts to cry.

"I am so sorry Dorak. I did not think. I also sent a couple of texts from your phone."

"Don't cry my love. I should have swapped my sim card when we landed. We had better get packed and aim to clear out of here within 30 minutes."

Behind their apartment door a scared Henri walks down the corridor silently and fixes the tape on the eye hole. Only muffled sounds can be heard from the inhabitants inside. He gives the signal. The ringleader, who is out of sight, is watching his performance in the sanctuary of the open lift with the use of a mirror held low to the ground.

"Check your body armour, all helmets and face masks are to be tightened. We must take him alive. He will be armed. I will be

behind you with the syringes and will take care of the woman. Is everybody ready?" asks the Ringleader.

"Da."

"Da."

"Da."

With that the leader nods to the two intruders who run towards the door as if they are floating over the carpet. Not a sound. The ringleader's hand goes down and Henri opens the door as the leading two intruders rush through the door.

Dorak hears the ever so slight click of the door lock releasing and the door flings open. He lurches to grab his gun.

Four intruders burst through the door. Dorak manages one shot into the body armour before the first two intruders hit him and they all fall to the ground.

Christina who is taking clothes out of the wardrobe drops them on the floor and runs naked to the balcony. The window voiles momentarily distract her but then she sees the balcony table and chairs and quickly decides to use the chair as a stepping board to her freedom and death.

She jumps, her last act as a lover, her last act as a woman. Christina gave no more than a muffled scream as she wants to deny the Russians that satisfaction and some thuds trace her journey down to the inevitable impact. Christina was never going back to Russia, never going back to the brutal torture that would have followed, she had predetermined her action months ago.

One intruder goes to the balcony and staring over the rail sees her lying on the basement patio, "We won't be needing to take her back to Russia, she is lying smashed up on the basement patio."

The intruders roughly handcuff Dorak's hands behind his back. He is processing what he has just heard. His future life is now of no consequence. Struggling has no purpose anymore.

The ringleader kneels by Dorak and sinisterly whispers, "Someone wants to speak to you".

He shows Dorak the screen of his iPhone. A close-up of Vadim's round face beams from the iPhone.

"You stupid bastard Dorak. It took us all of twenty-four hours to find you. I have organised someone to make your last few hours memorable. I will watch and savour every scream."

"Fuck-off", replies Dorak spitting at the phone.

While this distraction is happening, the leader injects lorazepam into Dorak's neck who, after a brief struggle, passes out.

"Vadim, we lost the woman she jumped to her death."

"No surprise there. She was always a brave one. Leave her body where it fell. It will send a message to my other girls."

"We will be in Donau within three hours. I would be happy to get the information you want from him."

"Stick to what you are good at. I have Amer arriving. His work is a masterpiece in pain. Be my guest and watch."

CHAPTER 2: VADIM

Amer is listening to his favourite track. The 'Ode to Joy' from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and is singing at the top of his voice. Not just any recording. But the recording from 'A Clockwork Orange,' his favourite film.

Amer sang the first verse in his fluent German, in his partly trained baritone voice. His rendition could win a prize at a karaoke competition although not fool a voice coach.

Oh friends, friends not these sounds
Let us sing something more pleasant,
more full of gladness.

Joy, Joy, thou source of light immortal,
Daughter of Elysium,
Touched with fire, to the portal
of thy radiant shrine we come.

He had found on the internet, a Japanese orchestra doing a 'flash mob' Ode to Joy in a Tokyo shopping centre and had watched the inspiring footage countless times. 'Ode to Joy' had now become his go to track to get him in a good mood.

As the second verse starts Amer commences visualizing the torturing of the killers of his parents. He sees himself in a dinner suit conducting a symphony of pain. Getting their screams to match the grandeur of the music. Oh, what bliss that will be.

He has hunted every summer holidays for the four militia that entered their house on that warm summer evening. He even knows their names which he has personally extracted, after some persuasion, from some other soldiers in that platoon. Once he had checked the names against his database their role was over. Of course, Amer could not allow them to live, and he assumed, they knew that.

For ten years no one had seen the four men. He had their photos and had offered a reward in certain circles for their whereabouts. Nothing. Rumours circulated that they had died in a brawl, were killed by a farmer, or had killed each other over a game of drug fuelled poker.

As he turns a tight bend in the road, there in front of him, is a twelve-pointer young stag in the middle of the road dazzled by his lights. Amer turns off his lights and slows down to an eventual halt. The stag for some reason stands his ground. 'Maybe he is enjoying the warmth from the road', thinks Amer.

For a few minutes Amer just enjoys the moment of connectiveness with a beautiful animal. He has loved animals all his life. In fact, he relates to them more than humans. For humans have scarred his very soul. The deck of cards he had been dealt with had left him associating with the runts of the pack. When he sees an animal it reminds him how innocent and beautiful a life could be if not borne out in the body of a homo sapien.

"You better get going big boy," says Amer as he takes his pistol from the glove box and fires over the stag's head. There is an

immediate response and Amer smiles and thinks, 'That the stag will live for another night at least'. Amer has never hunted game, they are too beautiful, too exquisite to be hunted for pleasure and the pot. He laughs to himself thinking what opportunity the next trigger-happy driver has missed, for it is not uncommon around these parts for hunters to carry a loaded rifle, illegally in their boot.

He turns into the lane leading to his place of work this evening and reluctantly switches off the music. It still had a few minutes left to go on the track so Amer put the earphones in his pocket so he could finish it off while setting up his tools for the night's work.

The two-hundred-year-old one storey stone farmhouse is incarcerated by a tall brick perimeter wall. The farmhouse, located just outside Donau on the northern border of Austria, has no nearby neighbours.

Amer shows his ID to the guard at the gate, who was one of the successful extraction team. He is cleared for entry and slowly enters the pebbled driveway. The pebbles are so small they give off that crunchy sound of a new laid or seldom unused driveway. Amer waits patiently for his car to be searched, a necessary formality in the business circles he frequents. Under his dark blue work overalls, he wears his customary black polo neck jumper and black trousers. A colour that does not show blood, an unfortunate but necessary by-product of the profession he learnt from an Albanian doctor during the Bosnian conflict.

Another member of the extraction team strides out to meet Amer, "You better be good. We have tried for an hour."

"Tried what?"

"To get the information."

"You fuck-wits do not understand anything about the psychology behind pain. This now could take hours."

Amer turns and starts to unload his German Tischlerei toolbox. He knows not to continue with the conversation as it will be a waste of his time. Amer's handsomely chiselled chin, sparkling light blue eyes and classic hair style would make him a popular man with the ladies if that was his interest. It is not. His Asperger's disorder makes him almost immune to the attention of anybody. His focus is his beloved car. He saunters, shaking his head in disgust, towards the farmhouse. As he enters the kitchen pulling his toolbox he meets the ringleader of the extraction team who is on the internet. The ringleader does not bother to look up.

"I understand you know where everything is. Your victim is with two of my men."

"My name is Amer," say Amer offering his hand but the Ringleader ignores him.

Amer shakes his head in disgust and starts dismantling the toolbox carrying it down the tight stairs in two trips. He knows the way to the cellar as he had a job here only three months ago.

Amer enters the underground, near empty, stone walled cellar, pulling his expensive toolbox. It is so deep in the ground that no

windows are possible. The cellar smells of disinfectant which tries but fails to mask the musty smell so common in cellars that are hidden from the tentacles of any fresh breeze that strikes the farmhouse. His trained eye can still see the dark stains of blood on the chair that sits expectantly in the middle of the room. The leather straps, stretched from past vigorous struggles, tell their own story.

The blood-stained chair has company, a small table and a small ceiling mounted TV screen with a camera mounted on it. The room is poorly lit, by one large light bulb, although two spotlights pointing at the chair are ready for showtime.

Another Russian guard enters.

"We will bring him in 10 minutes."

Amer simply nods and sets about organising the room to suit his method of working. He repositions the table by the nearby wall and pins a picture of his beloved Porsche Boxster Spyder on the wall. .

"Make sure he is conscious. Instruct your mates if you ever touch one of my projects again, I swear I will fuck your pumpkin."

Only a Bosnian would appreciate that insult thought Amer with a smile.

"Anytime, anyplace, you Serbs are all mouth," says the Russian.

"I am a Bosniak, you moron," responds Amer.

To be the sole survivor of your family is bad enough but to then have many other dark events happen have left Amer as damaged goods. You could say, corrupted by evil. His past is always ready to haunt him especially in the early hours of the morning. Haunt him with the type of events that are seldom discussed and when shared you regret the chink in your armour that allowed the openness to have occurred. Amer's best defence was to ensure nobody got close to him. His smile only lighting up when he is with his cars and his equipment for, they never let him down. Maybe that is a bit harsh for he does love singing opera and gains immense pleasure when he has been successful with an information extraction.

To assert that Amer is meticulous about his work is to state the obvious. Some who saw his preparation might label him anal. His German three tier toolbox is a masterclass in order. The three layers are held clipped onto each other with the top section having a raised lid with gas hydraulic strut supports.

Amer opens the top steel toolbox revealing multiple drawers and puts his earphones in and listens to the last few minutes of the soundtrack. He starts picking up his first tool and he hears in his mind a scream from a past torture when using that tool, on queue with the music. He picks another and a different memory floods back and the scream is equally well timed, this continues until all the tools he plans to use tonight are on the table.

He relates to Alex's love of violence, Alex his mentor, Alex the star of 'The Clockwork Orange'. He sees himself, like Beethoven, as an artist. In his case as a conductor and composer of a symphony of pain.

He polishes and repositions each tool he has decided to use, with care and precision. Each tool is spaced out in order, precisely three centimetres from each other.

Amer repositions the chair so it is precisely in front of the camera and TV screen and refreshes the marks on the floor where the four legs should be.

You could say Amer not only liked his job, but he also loved it. He is very good at extracting information and long ago exceeded the skill level of his teacher. He starts each assignment by a mind exercise where he convinces himself that the person in front of him is one of the intruders that killed his parents and brother. He starts feeling the hatred well up in his body. It works for the session, but he knows like the time before, and time before that, he will be troubled for weeks afterwards by the pleasure he felt administering the pain.

He looks at the photograph of his beloved Spyder and rings his mechanic. In a workshop, in a specialist garage on the outskirts of Salzburg, a phone rings and a mechanic goes to the desk to answer.

"Christoph speaking."

"Christoph, It's Amer, I am wondering whether I could pick up the Spyder tonight instead of tomorrow?" Amer delivers this request in a slow precise way.

"That could work."

"How are you going on the modifications?"

"It is the first time we have been asked to fit bullet proof glass and bodywork in a sports car. The rear oil spray unit has been fitted under the bumper. I cannot, for the life of me, think why you need all this James Bond stuff in a car you hardly use."

"I have some Russian clients you would never want to meet. Your work could save my life one day," responds Amer.

"What does the car weigh now?"

"It is only 150 Kilos heavier and the weight balance is still 50:50 over both axles."

"Did the nitrous oxide boost get fitted?"

"Of course. Your acceleration will be phenomenal so you should try it out on the track first to get the hang of the power surge."

Amer feels a wave of pleasure run through his brain. He can see the shock on the faces of some of the BMW M3 drivers as he surges passed them on the next track day. Oh, what bliss.

"I will collect the Spyder after midnight as I want to drive it to clear my head."

"Send me 15,000 Euros and the car will be ready in the lock-up garage and the code for key collection is the same as before."

Amer runs his fingers over the elegant lines of the car in the picture and smiles. Amer transfers the money via his smart phone, a

small price to pay for a mistress that will never, never let you down.

The red lights on the screen flashes and Vadim's round face fills the screen. He is a big fat man, his 110 kilos on his 1.93 metre frame make him an imposing figure. He would look older than his approaching sixtieth birthday but for his dyed black hair.

Vadim was brought up in the vast countryside outside of Tbilisi, Georgia. His loving parents were killed while he was still young in a car accident and he went to live with a childless uncle and auntie. At a young age making money was more important than schooling and he was soon selling cigarettes and drugs at college. He once joked he was earning more than his teachers, so it was daft to attempt to listen to them. Reading and basic maths were the only skills he needed to master to operate. The rest was the skill of seeing and closing a deal to his advantage.

He married into some wealth and used all the money gifted to the new couple to invest in buying more contraband to sell in Moscow. By the time the Soviet regime was breaking up, in the early 90s, he had already made money for some key players in the Kremlin. It was thus natural that his bid for a state-owned oil company was successful.

His association with Davit Kartlish, another fellow Georgian and gang leader, showed Vadim that a ringleader must be brutal in front of his lieutenants to show that he will go further than they would. This frequently meant beating to death a traitor in the most barbaric way so that his lieutenants see what the penalty of betrayal is. Although the brutality had a reason Vadim is regularly repulsed for days. He always throws away the clothes he was wearing both to remove any DNA linkage to the crime and secondly, to erase the event from his past.

He soon realised that there was more money to be made buying Soviet entities and then selling them years later. This involved maintaining his close links to the Kremlin which he managed to do by purchasing a series of villas in Jurmala, the picturesque resort of pine forests and dunes in Latvia. He was one of the first to realise that Latvia was a perfect place to transfer Roubles into Euros and salt it away in reputable banks in safe European cities.

His entertaining was both lavish and a deep play. Holding on to favours until there was real value to them. The eventual rewards made him look, just what he was, a very clever and wise man. One who had made a fortune without having to compete with the Russian mafia. A competition that guaranteed a curtailed life span. This meant that he could happily live in Russia and that the Russian mafia kept well away from him as he had the ear of the power brokers in the Kremlin who were amassing a small fortune in their overseas bank accounts care of a grateful Vadim.

The loss of his parents had a long-lasting impact on Vadim. From that point on made a vow never to love someone so much that their loss would be devastating. His only breach had been his daughter Sasha. To protect her he had positioned her in London, never to return to Moscow. Which was not a loss to Sasha as she had spent most of her years in London with summer vacations in Latvia and Monaco.

Whilst Vadim had not applied himself at school, he had a very sharp mind and ability to see opportunities long before others did. His selling of ideas to willing investors was second to none. He only ventured into the art world when he knew that he could flick the object on at a sizeable profit while at the same time offering a smoke screen as to how he continued to make his fortune.

Vadim started to collect cats. He was introduced to them by his wife and he loved the way they made servants of you. The cunning way they showed affection. It was not long before his six cats cost more each year than a lawyer could earn in Moscow over the same time frame.

He has been betrayed by many people. His wife had an affair and he had her killed in a road accident with her lover. He had survived two attempts on his life, all assisted from the inside.

Vadim had liked Dorak, more than any of his previous bodyguards. Dorak, had shown bravery, commitment, and loyalty and so the breach in trust really hurt Vadim. He had not seen it coming. The gold was one thing but taking Christina was like losing one of his precious cats. It demanded to be avenged. To Vadim, domination is more than a game, it is his main reason for existing.

He is already in his silk pyjamas respectably covered by a crimson coloured dressing gown eating his favourite caviar, repulsively, spooning it in his mouth while stroking one of his cats. He is almost squirming with pleasure with visions of Dorak begging for the mercy of a quick death, which would not be granted. Dorak must suffer so much that he will wish fervently that he had never been born. Flashbacks of Amer's last successful information extraction came flooding back and a smile became transfixed across Vadim's wide fat face.

"Amer, this torture session must be slow and painful. I have all the time in the world and this bastard stole my gold, my black book and my favourite girl."

"What information do you want first?"

"The gold. You must keep him alive until we have found it. You may need to come back tomorrow evening if he has lied about the location."

Amer, stares at the camera and nods.

"Is the chair in the correct position for your viewing Mr Chernov?"

"Perfect as always. Text me when you are ready to start."

With that Vadim stands up, finishes off his vodka and shifts out of picture, a happy man. Another bastard that tried to cross him is about to regret that he was born.

Two guards bring in Dorak, battered, naked, bloody, soaking wet, semi unconscious. They drag him across the floor and strap him to the chair. One guard deliberately nudges the chair away from its marks.

Amer glares at the Russian guard and mutters, "I cannot wait to take you on, you fucking moron."

"As I said before anytime, anyplace, any weapon. You will not last ten minutes, like the last Bosnian I killed."

"One day we will meet and allow our knives to do the talking," responds Amer.

"That day cannot come soon enough".

The guard then spits on the floor in the general direction of Amer.

Amer repositions the chair and sends a text to Vadim. The TV screen flicks into life. He touches the victim gently on the shoulder, his trademark start, and feels the sudden nervous flinch. Amer knows he is clever but has never been able to test his intellect against others as he had minimal schooling. He is particularly jealous of torture victims who have loving parents and a good education. The war has not only decimated his family but his education.

Reading, or the lack of it, meant that he had a truncated understanding of more sophisticated words. The words that the over educated, under suffered, privileged few enjoy using to embarrass the unwashed. These bastards are his favourite torture victims. It is like killing two birds with one stone. He knows that all the people he is asked to torture have been operating on the dark side of the law. His role is to aid and abet one evil party to extract information from another. He is almost providing some sort of social service to mankind.

Vadim, salivating at the prospect of the night's entertainment, appears smiling on the screen.

"Dorak, can you hear me? Dorak, I am drinking my Kors Vodka to celebrate this auspicious evening. Your last memories on this planet will be regret that you ever saw me. Mine will be delight."

A momentary confused look shoots across Amer's face.

Dorak is conscious enough to realise he will be dead soon. He wants to die so he can join Christina. But he must find a way to die without giving up the location of Vadim's money. To ward off the pain he dwells on happy times. One of his happiest moments in his life was listening to his mother sing. He starts humming a lullaby that is barely audible. Amer, recognising the tune positions his ear closer to Dorak's mouth.

"Nini, sine, spavaj sine (*Hush son, sleep son*)
San te prevario (*Sleep is eluding you*)
Beša ti se, beša ti se (*Your cradle, your cradle*)
Na moru kovala" (*Was forged out at sea*)

Amer joins in on the chorus and second verse.

"Kovala je, kovala je (*It was forged, forged*)
Do tri kujundžije (*By three blacksmiths*)

Jedni kuju, jedni kuju (*One is carving, carving*)
Drugi pozlaćuju (*Another is gold plating*)
Treći nose, treći nose (*Another is carrying, is carrying*)
Od zlata jabuku" (*A golden apple*)

Amer and Dorak have a long lingering look into each other's eyes. The last time they saw each other comes flashing back into Amer's mind, like a comet on its return orbit.

The turning point Srebrenica 1992

Five groups of four militia from the vicious Serb Volunteer Guard, in oak leaf patterned camouflaged uniforms, are crossing fields to surround a small hamlet on the outskirts of Srebrenica. It is early summer and the year is 1992.

Each group are targeting a different house. Flies are swarming around their sweaty faces. Their eyes are bulging from the consumed methamphetamine and alcohol. They are unshaved, fired up to go with all semblances of army etiquette discarded, as these are not required for a massacre.

In a children's bedroom nearby, golden sun is shining through the billowing curtains and a few flies are circling around the ceiling. The walls are a sky blue with drawings of exotic African animals drawn by their talented and loving mother.

The mother, in her mid-thirties, with long flowing black hair is wearing a white hand-embroidered dress and a blue apron. She is holding her second child, her favourite, but she, as all good mothers, will never let on. She is singing the children's favourite lullaby while an older, rather detached child is reading a book in bed quietly.

"Nini, sine, spavaj sine
San te prevario
Beša ti se, beša ti se
Na moru kovala"

An armed militia suddenly enters through the open door and shoots the mother in the back, without pausing for a moment. Another armed militia follows and marches through the internal bedroom door and another shot is heard.

The father is tying trout flies at his small desk, in the corner of the lounge, for his next outing to the pristine River Pliva, a trout fishing haven. He has not been there since the troubles began. But that does not stop him dreaming of that allusive ten-pound trout. He has a vision of a big brown breaking the surface in their dramatic taking of the fly he is tying and then plunging down in the depth of the pool dragging the floating line as if it was not there.

His trout fishing passion is, as he often says to his beloved wife, a health insurance against the stresses of being a foreman at the nearby Lead and Zinc Mine operated by Gross.

The sound of the shot brought him out of his daydreaming and has him rushing for his shotgun. A journey not achieved as the bullet in his head shuts down his entire purpose for living. So quickly, he has no thoughts of goodbye.

The mother is falling to the ground and knows her youngest, in her arms, will be killed too so she falls heavily ensuring he is knocked

out by the fall. In her last moments of coherence she covers him with her body and dress and hears her dear husband's death notice.

Pointing to the older child the leader orders, "Don't kill the child. He is old enough to work for us. We lost two yesterday."

"Fuck it, that will mean I miss out on all the fun." With that the annoyed militia soldier grabs the screaming child and walks out the door.

Amer's mind is brought back by an angry Vadim, "Mu-dak, I am not here to listen to a duet, Amer."

Amer checks for the birthmark, his brother Dorak had on his left shoulder. The one they called 'strawberry.' It is there much bigger than it had been on a 11-year-old boy. He has his long-lost brother before him. Dorak soon shows signs of surprise then recognition. Amer quickly places a finger over Dorak's mouth. Not a word is to be uttered.

"I require my more powerful cattle prod as he is still not alert enough to feel the pain," Amer explains to his online audience of one.

He ambles back to his toolbox, giving himself time to work out the next important sequence of events. He opens a hidden compartment containing a Russian PSM pistol with a screwed-on silencer and loaded with a full magazine for such an occurrence like this. Amer, looks up and smiles at the guard that is watching him and quickly raises the gun up from behind the toolbox and shoots one guard in the head and the troublesome Russian guard in the chest. He then fires at the camera breaking its lens.

"What the hell is going on? My picture is down. Is that shots I heard? I must have Dorak alive," shouts Vadim.

Amer turns off the power source feeding the camera and monitor. He kneels by the moaning guard who is clutching his stomach and lifts his chin so he can see his eyes.

"We will never get to have that fight, what a shame. Enjoy this instead."

Amer places his cattle prod on the guard's chest that is protecting his heart inducing violent spasms and a fatal heart attack.

Amer waves some smelling salts under Dorak's nose, and his eyes open.

"Dorak, Dorak, it's Amer, Amer, your younger brother"-he shakes him again—"Dorak, I need you to stay awake and shoot the guard that comes in. Can you do this for us?"

Dorak is too exhausted to do anything more than nod and take the loaded pistol Amer has given him.

Amer dresses Dorak with the dead guard's clothes. Every minute or so Amer presses his cattle prod and emits a loud scream to make the torturing scene authentic for the upstairs guard.

Upstairs the Ringleader's mobile phone rings.

"Mr Chernov, how are you?"

"What the hell is going on. My picture is down. I thought I heard muffled shots."

"I can hear plenty of screams. Everything appears in order at this end."

"Amer is not answering his phone get him to ring me back," orders Vadim.

"I will do that immediately."

The ringleader walks slowly down the stairs. There are loud screams from the victim. The ringleader does not know Amer so he takes out his gun and slowly, silently, opens the cellar door.

Amer can sense that the door is opening very slowly, there is a slight draft and a subtle, but discernible, noise from the door hinges. His back is facing the door, for he wants to appear fully absorbed in his work. The naked dead victim in the chair is shaking from the insertion of the cattle prod. He bends down to the victim's ear and asks very quietly.

"Where is the gold?"

There is no answer and the naked victim's body shakes once more from the cattle prod.

Amer bends down to the victim's ear and asks louder, "Where is the gold?"

Again there is no answer and the naked victim's body shakes again. The ringleader looks at the corner of the room and sees one of the Russian guards slumped on a chair with his back facing him above a pool of blood.

"What the fuck is going on here?"

Amer turns slowly with the cattle prod in hand pointing at the dead Russian, "That idiot tried to shoot Dorak."

Amer turns around and loudly shouts, "Where is the fucking gold?"

The tall ringleader walks over to look at the dead Russian and notices that the torture victim is shorter than Dorak. He quickly swings around to see Dorak, in guard's clothing, in the other corner with a raised pistol.

Dorak shoots at the chest as due to his weakened state he does not trust a head shot. The ringleader, who is hit below his left shoulder, reels back and before he can raise his gun, Amer kicks the gun away. He then grabs his Fairburn-Sykes knife which is placed between the dead victim's legs and dives towards the Ringleader.

Amer knows he has to land with the knife extended so it ruptures the Ringleader's stomach. To his surprise the Ringleader has anticipated the move and manages to stop the knife penetrating more than a couple of inches. They are now locked in a struggle for control over the knife.

Whilst Amer is a competent knife fighter he is no match for the much stronger larger Ringleader who twists Amer's arms so that his grip weakens. With a smile the Ringleader is about to thrust the commando knife into Amer's chest when a slight thud sound puts his mind into total darkness. Dorak has managed to walk up and give an executioner's head shot.

"You took your time Dorak."

"We have one more guard Amer, where is he?" asked Dorak who is rapidly running out of energy.

"He is at the gate; I can handle it."

Amer wipes the new blood that has seeped from the wounds on Dorak's face as best he can.

As they approach the stairs Dorak turns, "What about your gear Amer we may need it?"

"We only require this for the time being," as he lifts his pistol and loads a fresh magazine into it.

"Stay here while I check where the outside guard is," adds Amer.

Amer creeps up the stairs slowly and quietly and makes his way into the bright kitchen and listens. There is no sound. He crawls to the nearby window facing the driveway, turns off one of the inside lights, and slowly inches up to the windowpane. He scans the grounds and finds that the guard is pissing up against his car.

"The fucking idiot."

Amer locks the kitchen door and whispers down the stairs.

"Dorak come up and stay low the guard can see into the kitchen."

The porch light is on and it is too bright so Amer risks turning it off. The guard rushes back to the gate thinking that he will get an inspection by the Ringleader.

They wait a few minutes and then, after unlocking the door, Amer drags Dorak out.

"Help me, this guard got 230 volts to the heart. Vadim is furious, I need to get him to the doctor urgently," shouts Amer.

As the guard paces quickly towards them Amer draws his pistol which he has hidden down the back of Dorak's neck and kills the gateman with shots to the chest and then to his head.

"Come on Dorak just stay awake for a few more minutes."

"Amer, Amer I have searched for you everywhere."

Tears flood down Dorak's face as it dawns on him the significance of the evening.

Amer hugs Dorak and suppressed memories of his childhood flood back.

"I know, I know. Please help me we have little time," pleads Amer as he bundles the bulky Dorak into the front seat of his fastidiously tidy 335i two door BMW.

Amer puts the safety belt on the now unconscious Dorak and races back inside to collect his toolbox, his photograph and to wipe down all the surfaces he has touched. In the meantime, Dorak has slumped over the closed car door christening it with blood that is flowing freely from his nose and ears.

CHAPTER 3: DOCTOR PHELPS

Amer enters the back streets of the Salzburg where rubbish bags left out for the early morning pick-up lay shredded across the pavement. Stray cats and local foxes have been on the search for the workers' discarded sandwiches. The streets are lit by the latest LED streetlights. It is very quiet as the workforce that frequents this industrial area are now tucked up in bed.

Inside the BMW there has been a persistent stream of blood from Dorak's face wounds and the passenger door and seat have a dark red colour of congealed blood. For a moment Amer is extremely disappointed with the staining of his once immaculate car interior. He, however, knows the car's days are numbered now as there will be CCTV footage of the number plate.

"Dorak, you are with your brother, it will be okay, I am going to get you to a Doctor as soon as we have switched cars."

Amer whispered as he knows the conversation is wasted as Dorak is in a pain induced sleep.

Amer turns into a side street that is lit by a sole red glowing streetlamp. This area of Salzburg is famous for a bat that is very sensitive to light and the green coalition council have changed all the lighting along the bats' highway.

Amer switches off the engine and coasts the last 200 metres, in neutral, to a row of garages by a large mechanic's workshop. The advertising boarding states, 'We do modifications to performance cars that others cannot do'.

He gets out of the BMW and walks over to a security code box that is cleverly concealed under a white metal lid and enters his code. Automatically one locked garage door opens, and the interior lighting comes on revealing a whitewashed interior. This is an expensive garage where many owners collect after hours. Amer's love of his life is under this car cover.

Amer enters the garage and looks for the concealed car key lockbox which is located low down on the rear wall and removes the car key using the same code he has used before.

Pulling the car cover off reveals the sensual lines of a Porsche Boxster Spyder. The front wheel arches rising to cascade down to meet the smiling mouth of the air intake. The same body lines that fatally attracted James Dean, who in 1955 died in a head-on crash turning in front of an oncoming Ford Tudor sedan. The lines that will never age, unlike the procession of its fastidious owners who will succumb to mother nature's will. The black hood has long tie backs, reminding one of black bra straps giving the driver the same thrill as they are removed. The car with two boots, when open, are a showstopper as the uninitiated wonder where the engine is. Sitting proudly on the driver's seat is an envelope and a bottle of champagne from the grateful mechanic. A nice touch Amer thinks.

"How are you my beauty? I hope you appreciate the money I have just spent on you. You will soon meet my brother Dorak." For a number of years Amer has talked to his cars. They represent to him, the only things he can truly trust as they have never let him down.

To Amer his cars are a love affair that is frozen in time. Their looks remain forever beautiful, their performance never suffers because they are not feeling 100%, and they intuitively know how to make you feel a million dollars.

A radiant and joyous smile comes across Amer's face. He picks up a rag and wipes the remnants of blood from his hands and reverses the Spyder out of the garage. Amer tears some sheet material he found in the garage to make a seat cover. He lifts his brother from the BMW and places him in the Spyder's low bucket seat.

He transfers the two top layers of his toolbox from the BMW to the Spyder's front boot, and the bottom layer, with the car cover and champagne, to the rear boot.

After removing the BMW's number plates Amer takes the reserve petrol can, he always carries, and pours it over the BMW's seats. He lifts the bonnet up and cuts the fuel hose. Leaving the bonnet up he leans into the car and starts the car putting the gear lever into drive. As the car starts to slowly edge towards the nearby steep bank, he throws his lit lighter through the open driver's window. Flames engulf the car as it drives over the curb and gathers momentum down the embankment. A trail of flames chases back up the bank racing to him as the petrol, jettisoned by the fuel pump through the cut hose, catches fire. It is almost like the car is trying to get to Amer and punish him for carrying out this terminal deed.

He writes a note to Christoph.

CHRISTOPH, PLEASE GET RID OF THE BMW DOWN THE EMBANKMENT AND TAKE THE COST OUT OF THIS. WILL EXPLAIN LATER.

He leaves the note and €500 in the garage under a brick. After turning off the lights and activating the garage doors to shut he gets into the Spyder. Amer pauses momentarily at the embankment to pay his last respects to his burning BMW, it had deserved a kinder separation, but he must get rid of any traces of their DNA.

In a car that is not known to Vadim makes Amer bolder on the drive to Starnberg. He enters a back alley residential area with rows of garages on both sides.

The garages appear rundown. Except Amer's garage has a reinforced door, an alarm, and an acid sprayer attached to the ceiling should someone enter without turning off the alarm.

He looks over to Dorak. His taller brother is now a handsome man. His dark hair and dark eyes being offset by his white, but bloodied teeth. He allows himself some time to think about all the time he has spent searching for his elder brother. Both he and Dorak made it almost impossible to reconnect as all social media platforms were too risky for their occupations. He realises he has something to thank Vadim for; bringing the lost brothers together.

Amer retrieves the toolbox from both boots and reassembles it, and a bag containing his racing gear which he always leaves in the car and walks over to the garage door. He extracts the small remote that is around his neck, which he uses to deactivate the alarm and opens the automatic doors. He enters his mancave pulling his Tischlerei toolbox. The garage is surprisingly untidy for Amer.

This is deliberate as he does not want the garage to attract attention. This is not where he stores his beloved Spyder. The car has a state-of-the-art garage, at his home, on the other side of Starnberg.

He locks the toolbox in a cupboard and at the back of the garage he removes a pile of bricks and lifts a concrete slab. Underneath is his black stash bag. He looks inside and checks that the wads of €100 bills, his passports, guns, surveillance equipment are intact and puts the waterproof black bag in the Spyder's front boot.

Amer smiles as he changes into his Stand 21 white Porsche racing fireproof cotton overalls and black Stand 21 driving shoes as he has over 800 kms to drive, very fast. A drive he will enjoy immensely. His overalls and clothing are neatly hung in the cupboard for collection sometime in the future.

Amer dials a number on his mobile.

In a house about 20 miles away a mobile phone rings and Dr Phelps slowly wakes up, turns on the light and takes the call. In his line of work each late-night call means lots of money. The quality furnishing in the bedroom indicate that Dr Phelps requires money, lots of money, to maintain his opulent lifestyle.

"Doctor Phelps, how can I help?"

"Doctor Phelps, it's Mr Bošnjak speaking, you worked on me a few months ago. My colleague has cracked ribs, cut mouth, usual stuff from a severe beating. It requires fixing tonight. I am 20 minutes away from you."

"That will be €4,000 in cash."

"That's doubled from last time"

"It's one o'clock in the morning. Have the money or I will go back to sleep."

"See you shortly" answers Amer, who has already taken a disliking to Dr Phelps, the time before, as he is an upper class, well educated, corrupt English doctor.

At 1.7 metres and weighing 70 kilos Doctor Phelps is the perfect size for his beloved cycling. He has even shaved what remains of the hair on his head. In fact, he has not stopped there. The shaver is his friend in the shower.

Dr Phelps searches for a phone number on his pad and rings the number.

"He has contacted me and is due in 20 minutes."

Vadim is lying on his bed in a large elegant apartment, with white being the dominant theme behind the interior designer's plan. He is using his Lenovo Yoga laptop, which he somehow balances on his mountain of a stomach and is looking up his address book. He finds the number and makes a WhatsApp call on his cell phone.

"You have wanted an assignment from me and now is your chance. Record this conversation," Vadim pauses, "are you ready?"

"Fire away, Mr Chernov," replies his contact.

"Get three armed units to this address."

A picture of a handwritten address, on a notepad, is on the smartphone screen.

"Kill this man," a picture of Amer is on the screen, "and make sure this one, the taller one, who will be injured, and sporting bandages comes to me, alive, with not a hair out of place."

A picture of Dorak is on the screen.

"When you have him, we will arrange a rendezvous. I will also send these images to you by email.

"€50,000 will be deposited in your account and €50,000 on delivery. Send me your bank details."

The leader of the infamous biker gang is a large man proudly showing heavily tattooed arms. All gang leaders are like this as they have risen to the top by dishing out more beatings than they have received. Being big means, you can handle the punishment better and have an optimal chance of outlasting most challengers.

He very efficiently emails back his bank details. Silence on the phone is a sign that the two diligent and efficient parties are busy. Vadim is wiring the money while the gang leader is dialling on his other phone.

"I have wired 50,000 Euros" Vadim replies.

"I have been looking forward to this moment Mr Chernov. Please wait a minute," putting his finger over the microphone so Vadim will not hear he talks into the other phone, "We need to do an extraction at Donau. One injured, one armed operative to kill. Doctor on site is complicit."

"We can be there in 40 minutes, using three bike teams," replies his associate.

Switching back to the other phone.

"They will go on bikes for speed. They can be on site in 50 minutes." The gang leader has learnt to be conservative with estimates.

"They had better make it quicker than that and I want the capture recorded live on a GoPro."

"40 minutes it is with GoPro streaming and we will dispose of the body the usual way after having set fire to all evidence."

"Confirmation of the deposit money transfer should arrive at the same time your boys do. Do not fail me. Do not fail me."

"We have not yet failed a client and don't intend to start Mr Chernov." He punches the air. His gang has landed its first Russian client. More will surely follow.

Back at the immaculate two storey house wisteria is growing on the outside with the white shutters tied back to welcome the summer. The Doctor has his car parked in the garage behind the house so not to clutter the overall impression of enchantment that the property imbues. The lawn is beautifully mown. A robot lawn mower is resting for the night in its station, ready for duty tomorrow as new grass blades dare to venture towards the sun.

The doctor heads to the shower and stands naked in front of his full-length mirror. Dr Phelps loves to marvel at his physique, just the way most athletes do who have their body fat sitting at less than 15%. Dr Phelps had even paid for an underwater weighing. This involved calculating the volume of water displaced which informed Dr Phelps, for €1,000 that he has 14% body fat that puts him in the super athlete class.

He loves mirrors; really loves mirrors. One in the bathroom and one full length also in his bedroom. It is the favourite part of the day, to see the result of the testing cycle ride on his tanned physique. He wears a permanent sneer so years of neglect of his teeth are not reflected back to him. A sight befitting a man who is too tight to invest in his teeth.

He puts on his white medical coat and heads into his office. Dr Phelps, who is in his early sixties, lives alone as he is a perfectionist. No partner is good enough for him. He is a 'Lycra boy' with a goal, within a couple of years, to win The L'Étape Switzerland for his age group.

He has decided to work out his remain years in cycling heaven. Well that's the official story whereas, if truth be known, he was caught charging for fake patients and was permanently banned from practising by the General Medical Council in the United Kingdom.

Pictures of the doctor on racing bikes adorn his office. His face showing a smugness of self-righteousness, common in doctors, and amplified in Dr Phelps case through the added ironic delight of overcharging, or you could say, robbing criminals.

He got into this medical practice for the dark side by accident, treating a shot wound late one night and was surprised at the generous payment he received. He specializes in extracting bullets and all the associated gunshot residue and then staging the wound so that another story is plausible. He is so well respected in those circles that he now has even charged retainers to some large gangs for being available 24/7.

The Spyder's lights hit his study windows casting large moving shadows on the opposite wall. Dr Phelps looks at the images from six security cameras on his computer screen and takes a photograph of the front of the Spyder and sends it on by email.

'HERE IS THE NUMBER PLATE. I WILL TRY AND HOLD HIM HERE. HAVE RECEIVED PAYMENT, THANK YOU.'

He presses the switch to activate the gate and the Spyder comes to the front door. The sound of tyres on the newly laid gravel can be heard from his upstairs office.

Amer leans over to wake Dorak.

"Come on Dorak you must help me here. Where is your safe house?"

"It's in Latzfons, Northern Italy."

Amer enters the address of Dorak's safehouse, into the Spyder's Satnav. A smile comes across his face. What a drive he has in front of him. A drive made in heaven.

They arrive at the front door, thankfully Dorak's legs are the only part of his body uninjured. The door opens before Amer has time to knock.

"Do come in, straight through and second on the left- looking at Dorak—"who do I have here?"

An annoyed Amer hands over the €4,000 in tight bundle.

"For that amount of money just fix him, give him painkillers and keep your mouth shut."

Amer is worried about the damage the Russian guards may have done to Dorak in their botched interrogation.

"Steady on I am only trying to make conversation at this godforsaken time of the morning."

Dr Phelps helps Amer to drag Dorak into the immaculate surgery that has a strong chemical smell. The doctor puts on his gloves very carefully and slowly, for he now must endeavour to keep them on site for at least 30 minutes. He is pleased to have the full payment from Amer in his pocket before the oncoming mayhem occurs.

"Help me Mr Bošnjak undress him and lift him onto the table."

The Doctor commences a long and thorough examination of Dorak.

Tapping on Dorak's rib cage Dr Phelps asks, "Who the hell did this damage?"

"I don't know their names, but they will not get the opportunity to do it again."

After a thorough and drawn-out examination Amer asks, "What is the damage Doc?"

"Three cracked ribs, badly bruised testicles, a cut lip that will need three stitches and a knife wound under his neck that I will glue with Truglue skin adhesive."

"Will he be able to travel for a few hours in a car?"

"That should be fine. I will give him some sleeping agent so he will not scratch his dressings."

After twenty minutes most of the work has been done. Dr Phelps knows he cannot hold them much longer without raising suspicion. Turning to Amer Dr Phelps says, "Please stay with him and watch that he does not scratch his dressings especially his neck. I will get some medications from my office."

The Doctor walks to his office and opens his medicine cabinet loudly and then sends a quick email from his computer.

"PATIENT HAS BEEN FIXED. WILL NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD THEM. TOO DANGEROUS FOR ME. WILL LET DOWN PRESSURE IN ONE TYRE TO SLOW THEM DOWN."

The doctor then strides to the front door. He turns on the security lights and calls out to Amer, "How is he doing? I need to get some herbs from the garden to stop the swelling around his rib cage."

"He is still out cold."

"Still keep an eye on him to ensure he does not roll off the examination table."

Dr Phelps slides quietly out the door and picks some herbs and then kneels by the driver's side front tyre and starts to remove the dust cap. Amer is observing him from the doorway with his pistol in hand.

"A bullet if you touch my car. Who knows I am here?"

"Hold on there," the surprised Doctor raises his hands slowly. One hand still holding the herbs.

"Let's take a walk to your study, nice and carefully, keeping your hands up," orders Amer.

As they enter the Doctor's study Amer heads for the computer.

"Stand over there," and he waves his pistol at the general direction of the window.

He opens and reads the last sent emails.

"How did you know Vadim is after us?"

"His security contacted all doctors who patch up criminals in the region tonight forcing us all to comply."

True, Vadim's team had been busy contacting doctors working in the dark side. He had been alerted that he might receive a call from two fugitives, one who he recognised from a previous treatment. A substantial reward has been the real incentive for compliance.

Dr Phelps temper flares, he cannot stand being threatened in his own sanctuary, so he makes a sudden lunge with a scalpel he has previously picked up from the desk. His scalpel may have reached its intended target, Amer's heart, had Amer received a normal upbringing but never with a war-hardened Bosnian. A swift move to the left and a squeeze of the trigger has the doctor dropping the knife, clutching his chest, and falling to the floor mainly through shock rather than the pain.

Finding it difficult to breathe, Dr Phelps has to have the last word, "They will find you. You both are dead men walking."

Amer steps over the dying doctor and runs downstairs and drags Dorak into the Spyder. After five minutes of driving he swings the Spyder around and returns to the house. He has realised that he needs to; get some pain killers for Dorak, erase the surveillance recording and emails, and wipe all touched surfaces. He does not want to make it easy for the police to implicate him in the Doctor's death.

Amer parks the Spyder by the gate facing the way he will depart, and with his pistol walks quickly back to the open front door.

Looking up he sees the surveillance cameras he had missed previously.

His eyes followed the wiring to the top left-hand window. The doctor's study.

He quickly strides in through the open front door and jumps up the stairs three at a time. The doctor's body is motionless on the floor in a pool of blood.

The surveillance cameras are wired to the computer. Amer taps a key and the computer screen comes alive.

He deletes the surveillance recordings and the emails and wipes down the keyboard and mouse. He sprints out to the car. The distinctive noise of three motorbikes approaching swiftly, comes up the valley.

"Shit."

Amer gets into the car and secures his safety belt.

"Dorak, brace yourself," instructs Amer.

Dorak, groans as he is thrust into the side window by the force of the accelerating Spyder.

The lead bike swerves to miss the car and the rider and armed pillion are sent over the handlebars into the nearby wall. Amer smiles, there is now one less bike to worry about.