

FLEEING THE SCENE

By Louis Kasatkin

Heart and lungs ached beyond mortal endurance as he fled, and heard with dread the footsteps behind him, seemingly chasing after him on the dark country lane.

He cursed his own folly for having given in to a panic which as a veteran practitioner of the dark arts of espionage and assassination he ought not to have experienced let alone given into so cravenly.

He'd gotten there late in any event, long after the three others had commenced partaking of the sumptuous repast. And natural inquisitiveness, especially from Marlowe, had caused him to recount as plausibly as he was able the reasons. He realised this was more to put the other two, Poley and Skeres at their ease, for they too were more than a little anxious at his, Ingram Frizer's tardiness. With formal, gentlemanly apologies now aside, he partook of the repast with uncommon relish. His ride from Walsingham's residence out here to Eleanor Bull's reputable lodging house here at Deptford was far too hastily arranged and improvised for Frizer's own professional liking. Scant planning and the gift of one of Walsingham's own blades that had seen action across the water in Holland were hardly compensation enough for his disquieted demeanour.

What was asked of Poley, Skeres and not least himself would under more reflective circumstances been rejected as too hasty and open to failure.

But Marlowe the scribbler, the critic non-pareil, the one who shared his outrageous opinions with all and sundry; those who would listen and many more who heard them because of the timbre of his prevailing larynx, proved alluring enough for the three of them to go ahead with the bare bones of Walsingham's idea. With the sumptuous repast coming to an end and their bellies and spirits satiated with Mistress Bull's copious wines and ales; the boisterous exchange of opinions both large and small took an inevitable turn, one that Frizer was alerted to wait for as patiently as need be by Walsingham himself. The turn that came when Marlowe, ever the disputant, could not hold himself or his temper so fused by imbibing, back from the precipice he himself was allowed to carve.

Afterward, standing in front of their Master Walsingham ,they would all remark how so like one of Marlowe's or indeed Master Shakespeare's stage plays with its own cunningly crafted directions for the players it all seemed to unfold at the time.

Which of course was a lie, as he, Ingram Frizer, his heart and lungs fit to burst on this deserted country lane in the pitch-black with hell hound footsteps behind him, knew perfectly well. He had to come out of this mise-en-scene more alive than that poor sod Marlowe whose last look in this passing mortal sphere was one of sublime incomprehension.

And as his loping strides brought him ineluctably to the stables at the rear of the tavern by the bridge and his silken tradecraft let him deftly unhitch and ride off on a stolen steed back to Westminster with his report of mission accomplished- his mind conjured one more illusion. What would Christopher Marlowe write of this night in one of his plays?

With the footsteps heard on a dark country lane receding far, far into the background Ingram Frizer let his imagination roam thus:-

" Four figures in a room darkly conclave, hushed breaths escape from the mirrors' taut embrace.

Leaving no trace of having been expelled from any mouth nor orifice so plain that might betray the breather's fear. Malice aforethought alone leaving imprints in the air amid this spectral scene. A coven'd place where meaning and word intertwine where shadow and light danced their furtive Pavane,Swirling about, word without meaning, meaning without form, form without content into an empty shapeless void.And in the dimness of guttering candles, the trails of reason evaporated and in the morning to come a new naive horizon bearing a false dawn. "

Bio

Louis is editorial administrator at www.DestinyPoets.co.uk and founder of Destiny Poets and in his spare time is a civic, community, political activist, blogger and general nuisance to the status quo!