



Or the Post Modern Prometheus

**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO ANIMALS
YOU GUYS DON'T GET ENOUGH GLORY**

Chapter One

THE LAST ORDINARY DAY IN THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF SIMON ZIMMERMANN THE DAY IT ALL CHANGED



The sun is rising slowly on another day in Little Bosnia, a little hamlet near Bristol. It rises slowly; it rises slowly like it's done a thousand times before. It rises slowly over Little Bosnia's little graveyard, creeping respectfully from behind the deathly splendour of the cypresses, the stooping church and the neat lines of stately, ancient tombstones, casting a thousand mournful shadows over the sombre funereal proceedings, just like it had cast a thousand shadows over a thousand other such proceedings at least a thousand times before. The lads, and a woman too, were standing there, suited and sad, paying their last respects to the lives of three taken before their time; drinking in the fine eulogy of their friend and mentor, a veteran dogsman and a seasoned funeral wordsmith, Tony.

Tony, the great dame of eulogies, eulogized like this:

*".....Run, run, run, run, runnin',
Scamperin' after that hare,
Once or twice a day,
Everyday.
You great racers, bringin' joy to many dogsmen,
Dogsmen such as I - and you, lads."*

This fine man pauses to wink at the mourners scattered before him.

*"Bringin' joy to us all.
But joy is no cheap commodity, no sir.
And through bringin' us all that joy,
You've gone and got seriously overdrawn
At the Greyhound Bank of Life.
And now, sure as death 'n' taxes, you'll be payin'
That joy debt back forever in heaven.
But every cloud's got a shiny lining -
You chased that hare - your impossible dream -
And you never got it. It was always too fast.
And they say the fast die young,
But now, in your three young deaths, you've all got just a little*

bit faster.
And that hare don't stand a chance!
Go get 'im boys. Go chase 'im all the way up to heaven!
Then rip 'im up for..."

The emotion had welled up inside Tony like a facial water table. His eyes were emotions, his face the flood plain. The tears rolled gloriously down his wizened, wind-cracked face; searching out the tributaries of his old man's cheeks before arriving at the delta of his chin. Here they gathered and coagulated respectfully before tipping their caps and falling to their final resting place, the empty grave at Tony's feet. Forged, as they were, from human emotion, Tony's tears were a fitting tribute for the fallen canines that would soon co-habit the grave alongside or on top of them. The water-works, though a regular feature of many of Tony's best eulogies, tampered something rotten with his otherwise flawless articulacy: he stuttered, stumbled and choked the back the tears for what seemed like an eternity before completing the eulogy:

"...eternity."

Eternity was a questionable term to use for the highly debated realm of a dog's afterlife. What wasn't questionable was that Simon, god and vet of these particular animals during their earthly, if not celestial, hours, was heading for a massive iceberg that was set to change his course for what could probably end up being longer than eternity.

Tony, ever the Christian, opted to turn his tearful cheek from the fact that Simon Zimmermann had opened the traps quite a bit before the starter-pistol had actually sounded on this occasion. Murder? Perhaps. Comeuppance? Karma.

Simon, the guy who put the fun in pet funerals as well as the pets, was nowhere to be seen. Was this admittance that he had unjustly slain these, his patients? Did his absence speak louder than Tony's hammy old melodrama?

Nonetheless, playing to the predictable gasps of his dumbstruck, Simonless audience, Tony wiped his face twice with his prickly herringbone hanky, then unclasped his pistol from its sombre, pearl-studded holster.

Cock, hook, and look - safety checks complete, he prepared to end the funeral in the time-honoured fashion that he had honoured for a long time.

"Sniffles, 5-Alive, D'Artagnan - in your traps... Dogs - ready? ...Paul on the forklift - ready?"

"Yes," replied Paul from the forklift, conjoining key and ignition.

"Under starter's orders... for the last time..."

The pistol cracked like a handgun, magnum, or Walther PPK. Paul demonstrated that he was indeed as ready as he had affirmed by slamming the forklift into action. The mechanical whirr of the dog-hearse (an unorthodox tri-forked telescopic handler) whirred mechanically. It was a sad, but hideously long-winded motion that tipped the dogs off their respective prongs. When they eventually fell, they thudded thrice.

Their last respects having been paid, Paul on the forklift also having been paid, the lads (and Shirley) retired to the club house for the wake and its nibbles. Top of the topics, as per usual, was the masterly manner with which Tony handled his euloduties. Shirley insisted she didn't know how he did it. But of course she wouldn't know. Martin, however, backed her up with a little confession that the taciturn lads found difficult to take:

"Every time. Every damn time. Every week I make a solemn vow to self not to cry, but every week I find myself wellin' up like a big ol' blister of tears and emotions."

The lads (and Shirley) silently conceded that funerals were quite sad events. They sipped their drinks and nibbled nibbles.

Finally Martin, a keen though clandestine amateur psychoanalyst, spoke again, attempting to verbalise what many of them were thinking:

"Big doggin' hamlet like this, you'd expect us to get used to a few dogs snuffin' it now and then, what with all the euthanase around at the moment. But we never do."

Murmurs of agreement all round.

If Simon had bothered to attend the funeral or wake he could have, hypothetically, looked back on this scene. He certainly spent a long time looking back at the events of the latter part of this day, still to come. Ah yes, that was the day everything changed – but why wouldn't an epoch of mad tragedy start with a funeral? Normally Simon would have looked back with a sneer, but now, with the corpse of his best friend, slain by his own hand, lying still as a handbrake in his own bedroom, no sneer came near.

Simon had not attended this funeral because he had grown too weary of Tony's amateur dramatics. Tony was an actor, just like those wonderful dead dogs. But Tony hadn't died! He didn't deserve the tragic spotlight. The dogs were performers, Tony was a pickpocket, showing a card to trick the face, while slipping a wallet of glory from the pocket. These so-called bastions of mourning were all flower and oil to Tony's lardy bread and butter mill.

Simon did not agree with parasites like Tony. Simon was the true catalyst to these dogs' glory. He 'stopped' them while they were ahead, Greek tragedizing their otherwise humdrum existences. After all, a dog that only wins one or two races is only newsworthy if it's been brutally murdered. Tony was an agent for the glory, taking his commission from a helpless corpse. Simon took his fee from a creature that could fight back and had life-force to pay with. At least until it was sedated to death. Nought but a parasite! Yes, Simon was glad he hadn't attended. His morals had finally spoken, and they sounded truer than Tony's hollow words.

In a non-hypothetical, and wholly real way, Simon had no real chance to look back; he could only look forward. His mind was busy with just two items, and none of those items was Tony. He owed his friend – O, his best friend, how had he killed his

* Well Simon probably didn't see this funeral as darkly ominous or anything because many of the days he had recently enjoyed had started with funerals. Simon, the only vet, had been spring cleaning.

best friend?! – that much. Onwards and upwards and no petty grudges, that’s what friendship would have told him, if he hadn’t killed it and left it as still as a handbrake in his bedroom. Simon conceded now, distraught, that perhaps murder was not the best way out of *every* situation. Still he’d made a vow – a vow his friend had died for. If he owed that friend anything it was his life back. But even a vet cannot breathe life back into an extinguished corpse.* Simon could do only one thing and that was to dedicate his life, his entire being, to fulfilling this vow to the letter. Simon was a man of morals even if they were not a traditional set of morals. He believed in justice and not just deserts. And now he had more important things preying on his mind.

Back to the previous day, back at the Chinese pavilion, the centrepiece of the ancient Little Bosnia Dogtrack, the emotional rollercoaster had reached another vomitous peak. Spurred on by Martin’s recent success in attempting to talk about feelings, and true to form, Shirley soon piped up with some nonsensical, though fairly inflammatory waffle.

“It’s out of respect of course. Take 5-Alive, one of those poor little critters Paul lowered into the pit earlier. When he was out there on the track, limbs a-pulsin’, eyes a-goggin’, a fierce determination to track down that hare and track down that glory, track-glory, all eyes were on ‘im. Like he was an invisible hero or car-crash or summat. Dare I say it, once or twice that dog reminded me of Jack - summat in the way his legs ‘n’ torso moved when he ran...”

“Oh don’t be silly, Shirley - I think you’ve dared to say quite enough, thank you. I can only assume that you’re referring to Jack ‘the Ripper,’ *the* track legend, the likes of which were never seen before and, now mark these words Shirley, will never be seen again.”

They were all aware of the ‘myth.’ Everyone who had grown up in the hamlet was. It was ingrained in Little Bosnia’s infants as soon as they could overhear the telling of tales. The wake-attendees chatted a while about ‘The Ripper’s’ greatness: eyes that gleamed like moonshine it was said, fur blacker than the Devil’s heart... and Shirley apologised for the inappropriate comparison. Martin said it was okay. He had just wanted her to stay on Lady Luck’s good side, stories of Jack’s ghost coming back to haunt those that bad mouthed him being almost as ingrained as those of his glory and the days when he lived, ‘the glory days,’ when Little Bosnia was Mecca for dogs and gamblers, England-over.

At the same time, they agreed that 5-Alive had been one of the great average dogs of the recent times-passed, just not quite *that* good.

“I mean 5-Alive was a good racer, don’t get me wrong, but he weren’t even a nicotine patch on J the R. Besides, I don’t know what it is but, it takes summat away from ‘em when you see ‘em all limp and wedged on the end of a forklift prong like that. I mean, 5-Alive looked all vulnerable didn’t he?”

* Or could they? Simon would ponder this for about a booksworth.

"You're so right, Martin," agreed Russell, as he usually did, "It's in situations like these, funerals, where the dog is dead, that you just think to yourself: '5-Alive? Not at the moment.'"

And they all had a good laugh.

"Yeah, Russell, good joke to lighten the mood," said Martin, "but it's the irony that spills the tears."

"That and Tony's starter pistol routine," said Shirley, returning them all back to the origin of conversation. They all agreed once again that Tony really was a master dogsman.

They were all glad he was now in charge of The Betting Club. Since he inherited the position, they'd been on a mostly winning streak. His methods were bold genius. Apparently he would just take a dog aside and ask it, simple as you like, "Are you a winner?" then he'd just judge its reactions. He said that maintaining a good and healthy eye contact with a dog is very important. He said, if you wanted to know its secrets, just stare as deep and penetratively as possible into its little doggie eyes. Stare deeper than that, he said, and you might just catch a glimpse of its soul.

Sometimes, they said, after a little chat with Tony, if the answer was, "No," the dog'd just walk home. And that was one more probability of their betting club winning! Bookies hated it, but seeming as everyone hates bookies, Tony was really was just a builder of social bridges, completing the cycle and putting dough on the table. Tony was a great guy to have around, especially with that pile of corpses getting bigger by the minute. He was going to be eulogising every other day at that rate if current trends continued.

"Well you heard what Simon said. He knows dogs inside out, what with 'im bein' a vet 'n' all. But the verdict's always put 'em down. Must break 'is heart."

"Yeah and what Simon says goes. And at the moment he's sayin' Little Bosnia's a myxomatosis hot spot."

"Bunch of myxi mutts. Death's the kindest thing for 'em."

"Speakin' of Simon, where is our one 'n' only vet? I was really looking forward to that lovely joke prayer he sometime does at the end of the funeral to cheer us up." said Shirley, though they had all been looking forward to it.

"I'm sure he'll be at the track-meet today. He's probably down the surgery now up to 'is eyeballs in myxi. Poor old Simon. He must hate havin' to put down all those sickly critters."

"A bee sting, did I hear you say? ...well bring him in and we'll kill him off quick."

Simon, as it turned out, was sitting, as vets had sat for centuries, at his ivory desk, clicking his way though a particularly challenging game of solitaire with his head on one side, thus to pin the phone conversation between his ear and shoulder. He was, because it was his job to do so, working in his office in the grand Vetterage, Little Bosnia's shining temple of veterinary and, dating back before parish records, it was, with local pride, the oldest and grandest building for miles.

Simon was calmly taking a call from a distressed pet owner - just another facet of his employ. Simon was no snob. Distressed pet owners already feel bad enough without being made to feel like idiots by a phone-full of jargon and confusion. Simon's advice was simple. It always was. His news was sadly not good. It rarely was. Unfortunately, Simon explained, the cat in question, a certain Sampson, had 'reached his expiry date,' and therefore the only course of action was to kindly put him to sleep, without any further delay. The owner, this hamlet's Hamlet, was pro delay.

Simon, however, always the man of action, knew that wasting time costs lives and also that he had to be down the track in an hour. In his defence of Sampson (the poorly feline being, of course, unable to defend himself) Simon went so far as to put professionalism temporarily to one side and take the owner to task for his needless dithering and wanton sadism. While it was true that all of Simon's eyes and indeed most of his concentration were absorbed by another fiendish solitaire scenario (Simon muttered a breathy curse on Microsoft), he was still fairly certain, from the small amount of data he had compiled, that this cat had been fatally wounded.

"Come on, pal. Cut Sampson some slack and stop making all his decisions for him. Give him a chance, a chance to die, a chance to rest for once. From what you've told me, sir, I'm about a hundred percent sure that where Sampson has been stung is the neck - now let me just explain to you that that's the equivalent of eating a pain sandwich, *so massive*, that it's got stuck in your throat. And it really hurts."

Later on that very sad, very same day, if people and dogs be bees, then once again, the Track was a hive of activity. In Little Bosnian microculture, the Track ranked right up there with the Vetterage in respect to respect. The only difference being, of course, that anyone could enter the grounds of the Track.*

Young and old and old and young again had descended on their favourite acres of land to watch the greatest dogs of the day battle for the modern equivalent of real glory (something more like 1/Original Glory). Money and talk changed hands and changed hands and laughter and tears and praise were prominent. Almost every face was there, so it would come as no surprise to see some familiar ones...

Back at the Track, where the lads belonged and were at ease, Simon, the resident and only vet, was ill at ease. And also late for the meet.

"Sorry lads. Trouble in paradise." He offered as a breezily fraudulent apology. This vague excuse was, of course, swallowed down by the gang, like a neutral but well oiled sandwich, without even the need for a glass of explanation, or a lethal injection, because Simon was a vet, *the* vet, and therefore one of the only people in Little Bosnia to have earned respect and also one of the only people who thought about things that weren't directly related to dog racing. A philosopher if you will. Instead, they asked about his problems with genuine interest.

"A poor little kitty needed putting down," Simon answered without shedding much light on his tardiness (vets put cats down regularly and still manage to be

* To avoid pet health fraud ancient lore stipulated that only vets, animals of ague and the owners of animals of ague were allowed in the grounds of The Vetterage. Simon upheld this with great passion.

punctual), "but, would you believe it, the chuffing store cupboard was fresh out of sleep juice," ah, the cat of explanation had been let out of the bag, "...again."

The lads considered Simon pretty professional as professionals went, carrying on, as he did, against the odds, in the face of a permanently cripplingly stingy supply budget.

"I had to go back to basics," he continued. "In the end the owner was pretty adamant he had to go... I only just got him down in time though - you know I hate to miss big races like this one."

It didn't really matter that Simon was late. One could forgive a professional for just trying to do his job and trying to do it well. To the lads, it even didn't matter that Little Bosnia only had one vet, for they knew Simon had the skills of about ten combined, though they thought his solitude must make his job about ten times harder. Misery loves company, but Simon, so it seemed, loved misery - revelled in the stuff like a pig in mud, a cock in some seed, or a person who's broken their own legs on purpose in a wheelchair. But the reader probably wouldn't be able to see this facet of his compelling personality - not yet anyway. You'll learn. We all do. The lads thought that perhaps they'd ask the council to supply a veterinary comrade for Simon at the next Hamlet Gathering. Yes, definitely. Simon's work was done for the day and he was down the Track, a place to let go with friends, yet he still seemed so ill at ease, more riled then ever - a sure sign he needed some help.

"I *had* to be here anyway - we've got a ton of club money riding on this one." Simon explained.

"Oh yeah?" Asked a lad.

"Oh yeah," said Simon sternly, "I hear Tony's put the club money down for a mega-bet on some old hobbledehoy. I'm going to go to the bar and get a nice Bloody M and find out what the heck's going on. That Tony had better've put his money where his mouth is or I'm gonna put more than just his money where his mouth is."

"You're going to put yourself in his mouth, Simon?" Russell understood.

"Don't cock around with me Russell," said Simon, and with that he strutted off, muttering some swearies to himself:

"...I hope he's put it on Number 6, Sparky. He looks sharp today... sharp as Dr Simon's scalpel..."

Sparky was one of Simon's real success stories, and, completely coincidentally, one of his only current living patients. He had come wincing and whining to Simon with a broken leg, a dog that usually came fourth or fifth in any given race. Simon had taken one look, taken another one just to make sure and also because it was sound veterinary policy, gently incised and discovered the mischievous bone, drawing it out like a splinter from a toe and, quick as a flash, popped in a zinc one, guaranteeing Sparky a zillion gold medals to come. Now Sparky was sharper than ever - a regular silver medaller and he wasn't even totally healed yet!

Having said that Simon was more riled than ever may well have been an exaggeration when put in perspective by the mood he returned in:

"Well fucking hell, you'll not guess what that old fool Tony's just gone and done... He's only gone and placed a freaking suicide-bet."

"Wow, Simon, don't you just have so much insider jargon. I am a hundred percent flabbersmacked - a pro vet and a master dogsman! What's a suicide bet? That does *not* sound good," a representative lad spoke the minds of all present.

"A suicide bet is when you put all your money (and your betting club's money, I might add), on Lowrider, the gamiest three-legged mongrel in town. And that, of course, is just what dear old grandpa Tony has just done. Idiot."

Simon wagered that this little wager stemmed from old man Tony's overwhelming sympathy towards the older dog. Tony was certainly very old. There was no denying that.

However, this was all met with confused silence, silence that spoke volumes about shock, disbelief, and how they manifest themselves.

Simon had been here before. He knew what was coming. But now he had the benefit of knowing country lore. He wasn't going to make the same mistakes as he had done in his past. Simon knew he had to stir this simmering pot of brewing hatred before he could dip his bread-stick in it and feed his hungry, hungry, ravenous goblet. He needed the lads on-side and angry at Tony before this could really become a window of opportunity like an open classroom window to climb through and do a high school's worth of killing.

"...The odds are forty seven to three each way apiece," he expanded.

"That's absurd odds!" exploded Russell.

"That's damn right that is," replied Simon, warming to his task like the American thoroughbred he probably was.

"No Simon," said Martin in disbelief, "he's not done that..?"

"He's a hundred percent done that - put all our money on a loser." Simon clarified, force-feeding another sugary parcel of half-truth down the jack-knifed gullet of scepticism and incredulity.

"B-But he's a master dogsman." Martin said, worry setting in, his sturdy preconceptions on the brink of a damn good shattering - They *were* absurd odds.

"No, he's not a master dogsman," said Simon, "He was just lucky... for years. Now he's reached his expiry date. His luck's up."

"Why is he wasting our money!? Old people think money grows on trees. Don't he know it's tight around here?" asked Shirley.

"Yeah, real tight, too tight - like my noose. Get 'im over 'ere. I'm gonna kill 'im!" said Russell, getting all vigilante justice about the possible outrage, then looking round wildly for his new prey.

Ah yes, they were all where Simon wanted them. Not to step in where he wanted to be:

"Now now, lads, don't turn into an angry mob. Let's deal with this sensibly. I'll just go over there and have a little chat with him, like a man with a PhD in sensibleness as well as in veterinary."

The upshot of this sensible and diplomatic encounter was the chilling pierce of Tony's flesh by one of Simon's emergency death needles, obtained easily from the velcro hypodermic-handy-holster atop his first aid bumbag.

"Any last words, sucker?" asked Simon.

"What....?" asked a confused Tony.

"Oh no, Tony - wouldn't call for help if I were you, you silly old rabbit; I just put a kilo joule of death juice in your veins." Simon's eyes glistened and flicked like the TV screens he was nostalgizing. All those teenage years of only renting a film if it had been rated R were about to reap lethal but bloodless dividends. Rapturously, he hung suspended in the moment, tingling with wait for Tony's final paragraph, his own auto-eulogy, that would surely be even more goose-bumping than each and every one of his other beautiful and devastatingly poetic verbal epitaphs. Simon's dislike for the man was based on everything but Tony's linguistic dexterity which secretly somewhat impressed Simon.

"I wasn't callin' for 'elp, Simon. I wasn't doin' nothin'. What's the bee in your bonnet today, you crazy foreigner?" Tony didn't even seem bothered. He just wanted to know what Simon was wasting his time with now. He'd never liked that eccentric immigrant, partly because Simon wasn't a fun guy but also maybe because Tony had always wanted to be a vet, the vet, but hadn't quite cut it. He wasn't afraid to voice his distain, but given the circs. maybe he should have been a little more welcoming to Simon in the past. Still there was no time for that now. "You're just wasting everyone's time again."

"Oh... Oh right." Channel Simeyes flicked from smash hit slasher movie to straight-to-V.H.S. bitter disappointment bargain-bin washout. Simon, always having been his own sternest critic, conceded now that he had seriously over-hyped this murder. Tony was meant to be the victim, not Simon. Tony had only moments left to live but he didn't even know this fact and somehow seemed to be using those precious moments to upset Simon. Indeed, poor Simon was finally lost for words, as lost as the romance he'd hoped to find in the situation. Murder was not at all as glamorous as they made it out to be on the silver screen.

In spite of this, the good-humoured chit-chat* resumed and continued (Simon stutteringly trying to belittle Tony while Tony easily and unknowingly belittled the would-be murderous vet) until the master dogsman was dead, and for a bit after, until Simon realised that Tony was dead. Oh Simon, they drugs are quick. Tony didn't even get to hear Simon explaining his evil plottings, how Simon'd just turned the lads against Tony so they'd forgive the murder...

Simon was an outsider alright. He liked it that way but felt a little hurt that he wasn't getting the respect a brazen murderer should. He had killed countless members of this community - admittedly mostly animals - but still he could not bask in the glory he had craved for years. He wanted to be loved (a different kind of love albeit but love nonetheless). Was this a cry for help? What was he doing wrong?

* Editors' note: In the original manuscript, the word 'banter' was used here, but was subsequently removed, On Author's Request, owing to the cataclysmic misuse, odious misappropriation and total deformation of the noun. To quote our author: "A once credible word was pushed, like Anthony, as Cleopatra (Comin' Atcha) would have it, onto its own sword."

Yes, it is now clear that our hero Simon is in fact a blacker than midnight anti-hero murderer. But, manifestly, his murders had not come out of any of the well-thumbed pages of his 'Homicide for Dummies' bedside book. He was no ordinary vet; he was no ordinary murderer. His heart was soot, but his soul was gilded with gold, or gold paint. Ever since he was but an egg in his mother's nest, Simon had shunned the pleasures of the flesh. His spirit was finer; his soul, in some ways, purer. His choice, his duty, his burden was metaphysical, and also really self-indulgent. His poison was pleasure, but his pleasure was pushing his luck; chancing his arm, to the point where it almost fell off. His vow, a teenage promise, tattooed in concrete, if you will, and super imposed onto his chancing arm, was never far from his mind, just like his actual arm was never far, physically, from his brain:

"...I will avenge the murder of my parents by vowing never to fall foul of my own comeuppance. I'll let it get close – erotically close if it likes – but I'll never ever meet it in holy matrimony. Comeuppance came gently nibbling all twenty toes of my two parents. But a big man's nibble is a small man's fatal chomp, and my parents, R.I.P., certainly weren't big. Not as big as me. It can nibble all it wants, but if it bites, it'll get no supper from me..."

Since then, Simon's mistress had always been his impending comeuppance, a mistress as fickle as a promise from Santa, a mistress fit for a master as fickle as Simon. He lived to lead her on and now, in the act of murder, he'd just given her a lovely bunch of flowers and invited her in for coffee.

It felt good. He hadn't had any exciting run ins with his comeuppance for a while. His parents had been given comeuppance for nothing (Simon certainly believed this to be the case) so now comeuppance was indebted to Simon. And he stuck to his perverse logic. He laughed it off. The deed was done at least. Tony may have ruined the moment but any moment is, by its very nature, momentary. Glory was eternal! He'd probably be hailed as a hero! Or at least he'd get a good old pat on the back and a round of drinks from his 'friends'.

Martin, Russell and Shirley, alerted by the happy sound of Simon's laughter, intrigued by the delay and a bit interested by Tony's body splayed across the floor, decided to investigate.

"Oh Lordy, what happened here!?" said Shirley.

"Guys..." said Simon, pausing before speaking again, slowly and somberly, "Tony just went into a coma. ...And then he died."

"Jesus! Poor Tony," said Shirley.

"I was with him at the end and he went peacefully. It was very sad." said Simon.

"Simon you bastard scoundrel, we can see right through you," said Martin, seeing right through Simon, "You might be American but you're not a good liar."

Simon tried a different excuse. Time to leave his comeuppance high and dry once again: "Tony was myxi, he was myxi as hell and he had it coming to him and you know it, Martin." ...They didn't seem to be falling for it... Simon detected the small feeling of worry setting in, then tried to play the caring card:

"Anyway, it was assisted suicide, friendly euthanasia. A friend with needles is a friend indeedles. Guys?"

No one laughed. Why was everyone against him!? His back should have been patted by now.

Even Russell saw his way through the vet:

"Myximactotem is a dog's disease, Simon. We might not be vets, but we do know that."

"Right so, suppose I've been caught red-handed have I? What's the charge?" said Simon getting a little stropo with the lack of support he was receiving.

"It's pretty much murder, Simon." said Martin, who knew about these things, having come erotically close to being a lawyer one Christmas.

"...Murder!? Jeez." Russell was shocked.

"Russell, lads, Shirley..?"

"Did you even for one moment stop to consider your actions!? I mean who the Hell's going to read at his funeral!? *Russell?*" concluded Martin.

Simon saw the credits of *Everyone Betrays Simon* scrolling past his eyes. It only had a few names on it but seemed endlessly long. Maybe that's because time slows down at the end of your life.

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Hark! The call of the dog horn! The race that all their money, the late Tony's reputation, and Simon's future depended on, was about to begin...

"Okay, court's adjourned until after the race. We have to see who's sitting in the little weighing trays on either side of the scales of justice here. Lest we forget Russell, that you were quite eager to bring justice to Tony before Simon was."

"Rightly so, Martin. No need to panic. What you're saying is we'll only need to kill Simon if that wonky Lowrider somehow cheats his way into first place?"

"Yes."

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Another pistol fired that day, but this time it heralded a hurried flurry of life as the great (by modern standards) dogs leapt from their respective traps.

The race was fast like a beautiful bullet, as always, and Lowrider struggled on, on and on, and slowly won the race by loads.

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