

THE CONFESSION

Father Lorenzo opened the hatch of the secluded booth to hear a lost soul's confession. The shadow of a rounded faced man cast itself through the gothic carved wooden window by virtue of candlelight that burned ceremoniously from its high position.

'Forgive me father, for I have sinned.'

'Speak my child. For my ears are those of God and he places his hand on your shoulder at this moment. But, before you confess your sin, you have not attended confessional for some time, am I right?'

'This is true, father. I am weak in the eyes of the church. I ask for the Lord's forgiveness so that I can leave this place of worship a reformed man.'

The bells rang out from the nearby Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore. Florence was a throng of tourists, but here in the Basilica of Santa Maria Novella all was calm.

'I have killed my best friend. He betrayed me. And now I wish to kill my wife. I am full of hatred and remorse but cannot reconcile my position with the Lord. I have prayed and yet I receive no guidance. Am I forsaken, father?'

'Thou shalt not kill is the sixth of the Ten Commandments. Exodus and Deuteronomy guide us and yet you have killed. You have denied an explanation from those that have betrayed you. The Lord God forgives all sins; however, you are here on false pretenses my son.'

'I am a charitable man, father. I serve my community. I give and expect nothing in return. And now this. I have had to make a stand. For me. For my family.'

'This is sinful yes, but it is unlawful. Moses provided the commandments so that we may move forward with reverence and harm no one in the process.'

'I come here father, seeking God's forgiveness, not his condemnation. And you as his servant, who are you to judge?'

‘I believe I knew your father,’ said the Priest. ‘He was a great man. A generous and kind man. You are not his son. But you will receive the Lord’s guidance, and you will repent your sin by attending service every week and partaking communion. I cannot say you will win through, however, upon your ascent you will be asked at the heavenly gate to confess, face to face, with the Lord.’

There was no response from the other side of the booth. The confessor had left. A strange cool breeze aired the chapel. Father Lorenzo stepped out of the booth and made his way to the robing room located behind the high altar. Entering the room, he knew he wasn’t alone. He knelt before the small table adorned only by a small crucifix. Looking into Jesus’s eyes, Father Lorenzo started to recite the Lord’s prayer and as he did so, felt the sharpness of a jagged blade enter his torso from behind. There was no scream from the fallen priest. As he fell, he whispered, ‘may God forgive you Giuseppe.’