

**Stop me before I kill again**

Lowering his head, Hari entered the brown, musty confessional. The smell was awful. Some godforsaken drunk had obviously spent the night here recently. Shuffling his feet nervously, avoiding the large flea ridden rats which called the brown box their home. His voice hoarse, he cleared his throat loudly, waking the snoozing priest on the other side of the confessional. "Father forgive me for I have sinned," Hari wailed. The priest, used to such outbursts, merely shifted in his seat, a sign to Hari that he should continue. "Stop me before I kill again", Hari whispered. Suddenly, he jumped out of the confessional and began sprinting out of the church. The priest, calling after him, cursed his wizened bones.

The buildings leaned towards each other, as if scared of what could now happen in London's streets. The sun was past setting now, and the red and yellow lights had long faded, leaving a grey gloom settling over the city. Guards were stationed along the Thames, reminding its inhabitants that they were constantly under their scrutiny.

Hari's steps rattled on the cobblestones, reverberating off the imposing sides of the buildings. He slunk in the shadows, slowing his sprint to a walk. He avoided the guards' searching glares by pulling his hood down over his eyes. He hunched further into his greatcoat and slowed his breathing, before walking up to the bloodied door of The Red Lion. He pulled open the heavy oak door, and it reluctantly opened with a hollow creak. It was best to keep people out. In Hari's distracted state, he did not notice a figure watching him from the other side of the street.

He walked to a corner table, before sinking into the chair. He looked up to see a masked man in black leather walking towards him. Hari rose from his chair, startled, but the man continued advancing towards him. Hari looked around, panic rising in his throat. The tall man pressed something into his hand. Hari looked down – a piece of manuscript, tightly folded into a square. The man nodded briefly, and swiftly left the public house.

Hari strode purposefully along the cobblestones, trying to keep his face hidden. The manuscript burned in his hand, and he clutched it even tighter. He knew what it contained; and feared the consequences. How could he be expected to kill the king of England? The Red Lion grew increasingly small as he marched away from it, away from the messenger. He ducked into a small alleyway and bent down, pressing his palms to his forehead. He could not decide. "God help me." he muttered. He knelt there, watching the shadows lengthening. He suddenly rose, standing erect, with determination etched into his face. He brushed down his clothes, and began walking towards the centre of the city, into dark depths of London.