

THE FATE OF SCUMBAGS

By Kevin Kaysworth

'I'm claiming sanctuary,' Eddie screamed as the solid wooden doors closed behind him. His voice resonating throughout the large, dark and empty nave. 'It won't effect my benefits, will it?'

The *Cathedral Of Homage To The Sins We Never Think We'll Ever Have To Answer For*, had loomed large and grey. It's name across the entablature above the porch, having loomed long to put it mildly. But size and name's length apart, it was one Eddie had never set eyes on or heard of before.

Not that Eddie was an authority on the holier-than-thou, but he would have expected it to have stood out a little before today. And even with Eddie being all too aware that he hadn't visited the house of God since he was age fourteen when he and some friends had stolen and sold two hundred New Testament prayer books, on a housing estate consisting of just houses, he would have thought such a landmark would have caught his eye.

The high, long and wide nave that Eddie could just make out as his eyes adjusted to the gloom, and that looked as if it could easily accommodate hundreds if not thousands, was ironically as empty as empty could be.

Then Eddie saw it. A dark figure moving before the alter. A tall and what looked to be an enshrouded figure.

As Eddie moved closer to where this figure stood, his boots echoed like drums across the holy vacuum.

'I want to claim sanctuary,' Eddie said more humbly, as he neared to where the figure stood. 'Some nutter's after me and I thought your boss could help,' Eddie finished, looking into a dark human-shaped figure that stood absolutely motionless.

'Kneel!' the raw, sonorous voice suddenly boomed.

'No, it's Eddie. Eddie Byron Mackerby. You see, me ma heard about this poet geezer shit loads of years ago and thought she would give me his middle name. Apparently, he shagged around a lot. She likes that in a man.'

'I wasn't referring to the Christian name. I meant kneel as in genuflect, you barbaric little tit.'

'Genu-what?'

'Get on those knees before I decorate the Lord's house with you entrails.'

Eddie knelt. And so fast, he almost bounced back up to standing again.

'Who are you?'

'Never mind who I am, it's who you are and more importantly what you used to be.'

'What, a Leeds United supporter? That's not a sin, is it? I only supported them for a week. I was having a mid-teen crisis.'

'What fruitless and yob-orientated footy team you did or do support, is of no concern to me.'

'What's so bad about what I used to be?'

'You were and still are a confounded liar, sexist, racist, bigot, bully, thief and gambling addict. But you used to be skinhead. Bracers and all. You used to go *Paki-bashing*, as you so eloquently termed it back then. Stole pensions from old, defenceless people. Stole drugs from parked ambulances, to sell to like-wise scum bags. And lastly, but by no bloody means any less despicable, you used to tease the library cat.'

‘Is that a sin?’

‘Everything I just mentioned is a fucking sin you brainless cock-up of conception.’

‘You’re nothing to do with who’s after me, are you?’

‘You’ve obviously pissed so many people off, you don’t have any idea who it might be. So I’ll make it easy for you. You’re here because I demanded you was.’

‘I ain’t had any letters from ya. And you’ve left no messages on my mobile. I only ended up here because I happened to stumble across this it.’

‘I didn’t call you in as in sending a fucking invite out, you toothpaste-brained arse. The very fact you felt you were being pursued and fled to here in the first place, is what I dictated you should do.’

‘Eh?’

‘You’ve heard the phrase “*What goes around comes around,*” haven’t you? “*They’ll come unstuck?*” “*Their luck will run out?*” Well, I don’t just see these are sayings bleated out over the centuries by wordsmiths, but more as contractual certainties.’

‘Oh, shit! Your not a contract killer, are ya?’

‘It’s taking me all the patience I haven’t got, to stop myself from driving my fist into your ribcage, going south to rip your balls off, before dragging them north for their exit... I am the justice you’ve never faced. The payback that’s never been honoured. The mirror to all the vulgar, inane acts you’ve never had to look back at throughout your economy fair journey through life. I am the executor to the clauses justice puts in place.’

‘You’re not a legal beagle, are ya?’

‘What?’

‘Well you said executor. They deal with wills, don’t they?’

‘Right, liquid shit for brains... listen. I was drafted in by the Lord himself as a trouble-shooter saint. You won’t find my name in the Bible or hear me mentioned in religious studies. Not even be able to purchase an ingot or whatever might otherwise be dedicated to me or what I should be patron of. But I think Saint Of Sifting The Crap From Society, has a nice ring to it, don’t you?’

‘I told my mates, they shouldn’t have knocked the nuthouse down to make way for that retail park. I told ‘em once out in the community they’d never take their medication,’ Eddie said.

‘What sub-English babble are you giving me now?’

‘You’re one of the nutter’s they let to roam about, yeah?’

‘That’s it, come with me,’ the hooded figure growled as he grabbed Eddie around the collar and dragged him along the aisle that continued on behind the altar.

After being pulled past pew after pew with his feet skittering along the floor, the man stopped pulling him when he reached the far end of the nave, where a transept carried on for what looked like another twenty yards before ending in a curved wall. A curved wall which twenty or so feet up, consisted of stain glass windows depicting the various saints and scenes from *The Bible*. Just before this Eddie noticed a short flight of stone steps descending down to a low, ancient-looking, dark wooden door. It was toward this that the disguised man pulled Eddie.

‘This isn’t one of these confessional things, is it?’ Eddie shouted, now more in anger and ready for a physical confrontation.

‘Not in the conventional sense, but of a sorts, yes,’ the man mocked. ‘Well, I don’t fucking do confessions, pal. And if you grab hold of me once more like you just did,

I'll nut ya like I did that Man City supporter last year. And I got two hundred hours community service for that. So tread carefully.'

Having let go of Eddie to unlock the door, the man then turned swiftly to face him. 'You'll be history before your neck even thinks about letting your head know what it's planning to do. And that Man City supporter you got two hundred hours community service for, that you only did five of, is just one of the many you'll be confessing your sins to,' the man growled as his huge fist connected with Eddie's jaw.

It wasn't a room, but a massive endless space of greyish-blue mist from the ground up until where either a roof or sky should have been. Where Eddie found himself looking up toward what could only be described as an eternal ceiling of faces past and present acting out scenes from the past or present. Some he remembered well and some he only partly remembered. Faces of elderly neighbours he had terrorised. The mothers and fathers Eddie knew to have been those to the girls he had impregnated and ditched. Some that looked half dead when he was getting his wicked way with their daughters. Having obviously one on to being the full Monty. Fathers that had taken on the role he should have with the children he had abandoned. Mothers that had become soul mates and counsellors to their damaged daughters. Pakistanis he had subjected to skinhead justice. All who were glaring down at him.

'Fuck off you sour-faced old cows. I didn't see any no entry signs between your daughters legs,' Eddie shouted up at the reprimanding faces of the parents of conquests past. 'And you needn't give me any shit either,' Eddie shouted. This time at the celestial faces of the elderly neighbours he had subjected to such acts as loosening every nut and bolt on their push bikes so as they fell apart, to sending projectile diarrhoea through their letterboxes. 'You shouldn't have had good jobs and kept your fucking places so clean and tidy. What's a bloke from Lower Shitsville supposed to do, eh?'

Eddie's bravado came to an emergency stop, when below he noticed the other faces past and present acting out scenes. Skinhead friends he had carried out his racist attacks with. Friends with who he had shared the same girls that had also left them to fend for themselves. Friends he had terrorised elderly neighbours with him. Brothers in bike dismembering and projectile shitting. All looking up from the impenetrable dark with agonising, piteous expressions. Reaching out, before being pulled back by a force that obviously hurt and terrified them.

'Sorry, everyone,' Eddie began. A fear he had never felt before, bubbling up deep inside him. 'I'll go as far as supporting Man City. I'll even dress up in their kit and walk past Old Trafford when Man U are playing a home game. Please, anything but this.'

'Too late, Eddie...Much, much too late,' the voice of the hooded man boomed from somewhere.

'Up yours. I'm off,' Eddie screamed. Having gained a little of his old resolve. Convinced this was all part of some set-up. But this new-wave of bravado proved short-lived.

'Dead people don't have anywhere to go, Eddie.'

THE END
(1662 Words)

