

EXTRACT from Chapter 1, Vengeance of an Evil Man by Robert D Turvil

Twenty yards ahead a lamppost illuminated a solitary man. At this distance there was no mistaking Ulysses Lundetto, current chancellor of Zone 11, a heavyweight in every sense. Next in line to be World President, he was a politician of golden reputation. Not so much as a tinge of corruption had ever been proved against him, yet the inner circle knew. Lundetto was as crooked as a donkey's hind leg tied up in knots, then twisted before being spun.

Bardolf took the moment to flick his special zollar coin, not that he believed in augury. Spinning this favoured silver piece was merely a habit, and he cultivated habits like other people might nurture children. He glanced as it landed in his palm. Decision made, he moved on.

'What were you doing back there?' Lundetto barked as Bardolf covered the last few yards – not that he paused for an answer. 'You're late. Bad mistake keeping me waiting.' He sniffed and tugged up his coat collar.

'Chancellor Lundetto,' Bardolf stated unapologetically, dark eyes unwavering.

As Lundetto glowered, Bardolf set aside Gorg's advice to check round for treachery. He saw no need. Obviously Lundetto had something important to say, otherwise he'd never have left his palatial quarters and travelled a quarter of the way around the globe.

'You wired?'

Bardolf smiled.

'Makes no difference if you are. I've technology that knocks out any device.'

'Chancellor,' Bardolf parried, 'you're one of the most influential men on the World Council of Zone Councils, I assume you have a reason for summoning me to this late evening chat in the rain.'

Lundetto took a deep breath, his small eyes lifting as if to deliver a keynote speech to the WCZC. When he spoke it was with enforceable menace. 'I have you dead to rights, Bardolf. It'll cost you everything.'

Bardolf arched an eyebrow, another habit. 'I'm just a businessman.'

'Save it. Your scam's taken millions out of the Exchequer and I can trace it all back to you.' He ran a podgy hand over his forehead like a preening mantis. 'You're off to jail and you can rot there for all I care.'

Bardolf didn't react.

Lundetto twisted the knife. 'I'll have you targeted by all the lowlife scum.'

Still Bardolf didn't react.

'Are you stupid?' Lundetto demanded tersely.

'Since we're here, Chancellor, you've obviously something else in mind, so let's hear it.'

Lundetto's face coloured beyond its customary ruddiness. 'Don't get smart with me!'

'Just thought I'd save time,' Bardolf countered with a smile.