

E.K. PRESCOTT

SINS OF MAN

THE IVY LEAGUE CHRONICLES

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Chapter 1



WHO'S HERE?

Victoria woke startled from a deep slumber. It was pitch dark at three a.m. and quite cool in her bedroom. She paused, sitting up, and using all her senses to track the impending danger. Her husband was not at home. He had to work a case all night and would not be home for several hours. She noticed Ginger, their five-year-old Irish Setter, was not barking at anything unusual. *Ginger always barked at every little thing. Certainly, if someone was here, she would alert me.* Victoria really didn't want to rise since the damp cool nights this time of year on the English Moor were bone-chilling. Still, she felt compelled to check on Julianna, their three-year-old daughter. Grabbing her house coat

placed near the end of their double bed, and sliding into neatly placed slippers on the floor next to her bed, she walked down the hall to peek in on her daughter. Victoria lovingly smiled as Julianna resembled a little angel all tucked in with her fluffy covers snuggling her chin. She was sound asleep with an innocent, precious smile on her face. Realizing she had been hearing things, Victoria returned to her warm bed for the night...at least she thought so.

Sometime later just before dawn, she awoke trying to catch her breath. It took a moment to get her bearings straight. *What is this?* The fog in her room smelled like residue from a fire. *Oh my God! The house is on fire!* Almost paralyzed with fear, Victoria ran gasping for air screaming for her daughter as she ran to her room. *She's not here! Where is she?* Panic set in as she frantically looked for her Julianna. As she descended the stairs, she began to feel the heat of the fire. *Oh my God! NO!* Shaking and whining, Ginger was curled up hiding under the staircase. Julianna was standing guard with her arms around Ginger's neck.

"Mommy! Mommy!" Suddenly, the thick smoke started to fill Victoria's lungs as the rapidly burning fire caused timbers to start falling around them. Instinctively, Victoria ran to her daughter to shield her from the hot

falling timbers. As her body covered her daughter and Ginger, large, inflamed rails fell upon all three of them.

HONK! HONK!

What? Startled, Richard awoke from a short nap. Drowsy because of a lack of sleep, he decided to pull off on the side of the road to take a quick nap on his way to Harvard University. He was perspiring from head to toe. Every part of his body had tensed from his dream. Putting both of his sweaty hands on the top of the steering wheel, Richard laid his head on top of his hands. The weight of his sorrow was too heavy to bear. He had been able to keep these visions deep inside until a few months ago. *The fire at the Congressional Hartford Hotel must have triggered my nightmares.*

Weary with grief, Richard was barely aware of the many cars passing him, as he tried to focus. He was on his way to Harvard University for the biggest football game of the year—Yale Bulldogs against Harvard Crimson (Harvard had no real mascot). Yale had not lost a game all year, and this would be the final game of the season; November 24, 1923.

It was not only the last game of an undefeated season; it was a game against their arch-rival. However, unfortunately, it was a gray, rainy, cool, brisk fall day

leading into winter. Everything was muddy and damp, which made the coolness seep deep into your bones. However, weather was not detouring anyone from attending; it was a packed stadium.

It was the wettest day of the 1923 Ivy League football season with absolutely horrible conditions for the last game of the year. The Harvard Stadium field looked like a large bath of mud. Planks provided a clean path for spectators to move around the exterior of the stadium. The cold and wetness would not dampen this historic day. The deluge ended a few hours before the game; deep puddles of water became deep puddles of mud. The murky but dry skies cleared the way for the star-studded crowd to take their seats.

The Harvard Stadium was an open oval forum, which left it most vulnerable for further rain showers. President Taft, Joe Kennedy, and a Rockefeller or two, among other Harvard and Yale elite alumni and patrons would have the best seats in the stadium. In this case, it would be the driest as a large canvas protective awning was erected just for them. The seams of the stadium overflowed with students from both universities while season ticket holders took their seats. Everyone was ready for the game of the year.

Yale's football frenzy began a few days earlier with their last football pep rally of the season. The male "Y" cheerleaders led the procession from Dwight Hall to Woolsey Hall with a large student body shouting triumphant overtures behind their lead. But once inside, all were quiet as the team took their seats on the stage in anticipation of what they were about to hear. Silence rapidly changed to cheers as Captain Mallory rose to the podium to speak.

"I am not going to make any predictions, as I don't know anything about Harvard except that they have been in the papers. But I can assure you that the team will play the same brand of football that was played against Princeton and Army."

However, it was Yale's beloved football coach T.A.D.'s final words to the team which rallied all spectators.

"Gentlemen, you are now going out to play football against Harvard. Never again in your whole life will you do anything so important."

The next morning every member of the university seemed to be in attendance gathering to march to Yale's Bowl in order to watch the last Bulldog practice of the season. Crowds were present at 9:45 a.m. near Byers Hall with band and cheerleaders leading the way. All sang

enthusiastically as they paraded singing their favorite songs: “Bulldog,” “Onward We Go,” “Good Night Poor Harvard,” and “The Undertaker’s Song.” When everyone had taken their seats at the Yale Bowl, all shouted with sweet visions of victory as Coach T.A.D and players ran across the field to begin the last home practice before the big game.

Once again, all festivities were repeated the following day from Dwight Hall, as forty-five members of the Yale team left for the big game. Yale’s cheerleaders, band, and a roaring crowd of students, as well as enthusiastic citizens, participated in a send-off for their beloved football team. Their cries of jubilation could be heard for miles as their train left New Haven Union Station for Cambridge, Massachusetts.

For Yale Bulldog fans, trains added extra coach, dining, and sleeping cars, advertising special rates for Friday and Saturday night. All was a party! Harvard Yale Football Night at The Harvest Room at the Cambridge Grill and The Yale Harvard Football Dance at the Harvard Union were just a few of the myriads of public and private parties to be held in both Cambridge and New Haven. Outside of having fun, keeping warm but fashionable was a priority. There were hundreds

of advertisements from Yale and Harvard's student newspapers to *The Boston Globe* for repairing wear-and-tear of outer garments for the big game, encouraging sales for the popular raccoon coat and Stetson hat, including cashmere mufflers, hosiery, and gloves. Even Al Jolson cancelled his Saturday matinee at the Schubert Theater, rescheduling for Sunday.

For those who could not make this historic game, a Grid-graph, a technological improvement from the old scoreboard, would be available at Woolsey Hall. The Yale fans could follow the enthusiasm of the game for fifty cents. The attendance fee was a donation going to the Japanese Student Relief fund (an earthquake occurred on Sept 1st as many students began their residences in Tokyo and Yokohama. Over 200,000 dead and four million daily walked through rubble to find loved ones). The Grid-graph was an enormous form of a football field rising twelve feet above the floor and measured fifteen feet from end to end. It tells the score, quarter, number of minutes to play, downs, yards to go, team in possession of the ball, as well as the actual path of the ball on the frosted glass grid iron, five feet by ten ruled off in ten-yard sections.

All was ready for the game of the year!

“It’s about time he showed up,” Maize muttered, quietly chastising Richard’s late arrival.

Richard had shaken off his deep sorrow from reliving the death of his wife and child and was now ready to enjoy the game. Scott and Maize had been waiting by the entrance gate on the south side of the stadium watching all kinds of fans meander in and out of the stadium. It was wet and cold, neither Harvard nor Yale fans would let the weather dampen their excitement for the big game. Scott stood comfortably attired in his raccoon coat and Stetson hat as Maize wore the warmest coat and clothes she could find. For her, practicality was more important than fashion on a day like today. Anyway, if she was going to find some good scoops, she did not want to stand out.

Richard had found it almost impossible to park his car, making him later than usual. As he approached the stadium gate where they arranged to meet, Professor Wikki noticed Scott and Maize a short distance ahead. Once he found a place to park, the walk seemed as if he was tramping in mud from New Haven to Harvard’s Stadium. Richard had shaken off the terror of the death of his wife and child, keeping his ghosts at bay.

“Hi, you two. You look like you are waiting for someone,” he said, slightly raising his voice with a quick wave.

“Very funny,” Maize retorted as she smiled and rolled her eyes.

In the distance, you could hear the cheers of the crowd as the marching bands took their turn, parading up and down the drenched field.

“Not to worry, I have special seats for us via the Dean of the law school.”

“Oh yes, I forgot, you are the favored son these days,” replied Scott noting the elite status.

“The Dean is probably already seated with his cronies, as in who’s who. You up for that?”

Both Maize and Scott nodded yes as Richard continued.

“I know you two want to talk to me about something, but...since I am late...we will have to table it for now.” It was not a question but a matter of fact.

“Respectfully professor, you give late a whole new meaning,” Maize chided.

Richard just gave her one of his famous smiles. Each day she reminded him more and more of his young daughter. He didn’t know if that was a blessing or a curse.

“Great to see ya,” interrupted Dr. Seymour lightly patting Richard’s right shoulder. “I can see you are running late as usual.”

Dr. George Seymour, a history professor at Yale, was a self-imposed friend of Richard's. They had met briefly during their college days at Cambridge University in England many years earlier. Last summer, George was significant in procuring an honorary membership to the Elihu Senior Society for Richard, which Richard only accepted to keep his enemies closer.

The Elihu House was located on Yale Street, not too far from Richard's office in Phelps Hall on the east side of the campus. It housed fourteen fourth year students who were tapped at the end of their previous year, third year. Richard did not like belonging to anything, especially something that restricted his movements or called upon trusting in someone or some group. He knew something was going on, as in sinister, behind the scenes without his knowledge since he received this unsolicited coveted invitation out of the blue. However, for the sake of curiosity, Richard decided to accept the invitation.

"On the way to our special section?" inquired George.

"Yes, the three of us will be there soon." Richard had no intention of entering the stadium with Dr. George Seymour or sitting with him and their Elihu brothers.

As the three entered the packed stadium dressed to survive the weather in their own style, Maize motioned

for Scott and Professor Wikki to go ahead, her words would not have been heard over the roar of the crowd. She would meet them later. Her goal was to mingle, inching as close to the sidelines as possible, in order to overhear any newsworthy conversations. Even though only Yale men were allowed on *Yale's Daily News* coveted newspaper staff, in the first few months of school, Maize had nicely coerced a friend of a friend to slip stories to an unidentified staff member who welcomed the byline. Maize was a great newspaper reporter; she was just ahead of her time. To her, this was the only way to beat this gender biased system and do what she loved, investigative journalism. Her years and present part-time position at her father's newspaper, *The New Haven Gazette* as a part-time society reporter, and her experience investigating a murder with Professor Detective Wikki last summer, uncovered a burning desire to become an investigative journalist.

As Maize approached the sidelines with a newspaper reporter's pass clipped to her coat, compliments of her father's newspaper, the Yale team took the field. Maize would not let this male dominated system beat her. She ignored the stares as she watched Captain Mallory lead the team on the field. He with two other members, met

in the middle of the rain-soaked field for the coin toss. Yale won the coin toss electing to receive. She wrote a few notes as she watched the slippery ball cause a succession of quick possession changes. After a few penalties on both sides and a lot of slipping and sliding, Maize put her pad away as the first quarter came to an end.

Maize liked to quietly roam in and out of the crowds hoping to pick up a tidbit of information here and there. She would write a piece about the game but wanted an interesting angle. Near the end of the right field sideline, she noticed Scott huddled with some of his Wolf Head's brothers, obviously in deep conversation. Maize surmised it was about girls; it was always about girls. The Wolf's Head Secret Society was the elite third year secret society made up of eighteen members who aspired to become Bonesmen members of the coveted Skull and Bones Secret Society for fourth years.

"Okay, Jake, we will go look for him at the half. You know he probably is drinking himself into oblivion," Scott surmised reassuring Jake.

Jake was worried about a fellow brother who was not seen for at least two hours. This was highly unusual as Tad, Jake, Scott, and Harry were always together. To mingle with the opposite sex was a treat for Yale boys,

since supposedly Yale was an all-male school, so they had planned to take advantage of this occasion together. Tad would not miss this opportunity.

Tad and Jake roomed together at their society house.

Jake agreed. "Tad is still feeling the effects of a small private party he attended last night. I barely got him up in time to catch the school's chartered bus for the game."

"And, if he is continuing drinking, no telling where we will find him," ended Scott.

"Okay, okay. If he doesn't show up, we will meet here at halftime and go look for him," concluded Harry.

Finished with the conversation for now, Scott noticed Professor Wikki in the stands chatting with Dean Dunby. The seat to the right of Wikki was still empty waiting for his arrival. Scott felt he should join them as invited, to sit among the professors was a privilege he should not miss. As Richard took note of Scott moving down the row to the open seat next to him, his eye caught the intense conversation between George Seymour and Ron Davenport, standing alone away from the stands. Upon reading their body language, it was obvious to Wikki that Ron was not happy about something, as George, with a solemn expression on his face, was doing more listening than talking. Very uncharacteristic of him.

“I am not satisfied we have totally buried our tracks. The government appointed committee reviewing President Harding’s death is asking too many questions,” cautioned Ron. “Not to mention that Mrs. Harding did us a great favor by burying the President within three days after his death without an autopsy.”

Taking a moment to look around for any eavesdroppers, Ron noticed a quick communicative glance from David Rockefeller. It was more of a nod of understanding. President Taft, who graduated from Yale and taught history at Yale before moving into politics, and David Rockefeller, a large patron of Yale and whose daughter attended, sat comfortably in a special covered area for VIPs. They were enjoying the game immensely. Even though George was not a 33rd degree Mason as Ron, he still had an important role to play in keeping the ancient secrets hidden. Since his great, great, great grandfather Roger Sherman, the only man to sign all important documents related to the United States Constitution, his family had been friends and worked alongside the Rockefellers. In 1921, George Seymour, along with David Rockefeller and other elitists, met in Paris with the English, mainly the Rothchilds (whose ancestors were from Germany), to create the Counsel of

Foreign Affairs in the United States, which was anything but that. George's title as a professor of history at Yale University was only his side job. His main responsibility was to do his part to protect the ancient secrets handed down from the Knights Templars. At Yale, he helped camouflage the ruling elite's local and global agendas.

"We have our papers printing four possible scenarios of his death: Mrs. Harding killed him because of all his philandering and criminal acts, as vengeance or shielding of his good name; someone found two sailors dead with civilian clothing and then saw Al Capone and another dressed in sailor's clothes at the Alaskan shipyard; since he had been ill for some time, he committed suicide; and the best one is the Vampire Association is taking credit for his death." George chuckled.

"You should read what the Vampire Association has published in their newspapers. The good thing is citizens are buying into one lie or another," continued George.

Ron continued, "As the last of deceased President Harding's Ohio Gang, Harry Daugherty is still Attorney General even though Jessie Smith committed suicide... we know better...and Fall resigned under pressure. Unfortunately, Harry is still conducting his illegal affairs from the White House, drawing unwanted attention. He

may prove to be a problem on many fronts. We need to start the suggestion that President Coolidge ask for Daugherty's resignation."

"I will start the process," stated George, concluding their discussion.

Richard knew Ron, unconsciously, was demonstrating deceptive body language. While at Scotland Yard, Richard had an interest in studying body language. He became quite skilled at using these techniques when interviewing and interrogating. One sure giveaway was Ron's attempt to smile but his eyes were not, looking intensely into George's eyes as he spoke. He also seemed to be trying to stand still placing his hands in both his pockets emphasizing something with his voice not his actions. In addition, this was the first time Richard had seen the two of them in a conversation which denoted they were more than just Elihu brothers or friends. All signs pointed to hiding something very important. But what?

Richard lost sight of George and Ron as the crowd suddenly rose erupting in cheers. As spectators watched Mallory and Pond try to recreate their miracle plays during the second quarter, Crimson's kicker Cheek dropped a punt ball on the 32-yard line, fumbling as

Mallory tackled him. Pond picked up the ball and ran for a Yale touchdown. With the placement kick, the score was now 7-0. Yale was ahead at halftime. As the teams ran off the field to their respective locker rooms, Maize seized this opportunity to flag down the popular Pond for a quick quote.

Richard motioned to Scott he wanted to introduce him to some people he should know. If he was going to be his prodigy, he would need to know who's who in New Haven. Forgetting all about his buddies and their plans, Scott was eager to follow his mentor.

Soon third quarter was underway and everyone was back in their seat; Maize had now joined Scott and Professor Wikki. As the crowd roared when Mallory on fourth down made a place-kick adding three points to the Yale score, now winning 10 -0, Scott noticed Tad and Harry running up the stadium stairs waving their hands and yelling his name. Scott excused himself as he inched his way down the row to meet them a few steps below. The boys had found Tad in a field house adjacent to the stadium, lying very still face down. Scott motioned for Professor Wikki and Maize to join him. After a quick discussion, all were on their way.

Once at the entrance of the field house, Richard asked them to stay behind and wait until he gave the

cue to enter. He did not want to take any chances. The boys' description of the body sounded as if there could be foul play. Richard entered stealthily, using all his senses to analyze the situation. The field house was a large oval metal building which resembled a Great War airplane hangar now used to store athletic equipment. Dim, dingy, and damp with only the gray light peering through the infrequently placed high, tiny windows, Richard could barely see Tad lying face down on the cold cement floor a few feet in front of him. Nothing seemed unusual or out of place, so Richard called for them to enter. They all walked together towards Tad's body. Jake, Harry, Scott, and Maize stood solemnly around Tad while Richard kneeled to observe his body.

Having been trained in crime scene protocol while working at Scotland Yard, Richard knew not to touch Tad, cognizant not to contaminate the crime scene. He was acutely aware of the possibility of contaminating the crime scene, like the liquor flask shielded by Tad's left hand, Wikki leaned over his face, crouching close to smell his breath. He moved in to see if he was breathing. There was no breath, only a strong odor of alcohol and a slight scent of something Richard could not pinpoint. He paused to observe if there were other signs of what he

suspected to be cyanide poisoning. His suspicions were correct as he noticed reddish bruising on his cheek.

Wikki, although he didn't know exactly how long Tad had been there, which he surmised was not long, was sure the body showed signs of acute cyanide poisoning. Acute cyanide poisoning kills with lightning speed. *He was murdered. Why such a lethal dose?*

Scott knew before the words came out of his Wikki's mouth. Wikki looked up at the solemn bewildered young adults staring down at him. "I am sorry. Tad is dead!"