

Epilogue

It was an aortal aneurism.

Nero was in the Levant for his annual celebration of the death and rebirth of Adonis, a period of mourning followed by celebration of rebirth, watching women wail and celebrate, with nature waking up from the mild Mediterranean winter, when the rivers are full of reddish water, the blood of the Phoenician god wounded by the boar, as the melted snow from the mountains discolored and swelled the rivers and rivulets.

That is when Tony's driver called. His name was also Tony, and while identified as Tony-the-driver he pretended he was a bodyguard (when in fact it looked like, given the comparative size, he was the one bodyguarded by Tony). Nero never liked him, always had that strange feeling of distrust, so the moment of sharing the news was odd. During his silence on the line, he felt sympathy for Tony-the-driver, even started liking him.

Nero was designated as the executor of Tony's will, which made him initially nervous. He had somehow a fear that Tony's wisdom would have a gigantic Achilles' heel somewhere. But, it turned out, it was nothing serious, a flawless estate, of course debt-free, conservative, fairly distributed. There were some funds to discretely provide to a prostitute, for whom Tony has had some antifrangible obsessive love, of course helped by the fact that she was both older and much less attractive than Tony's wife, that sort of thing. So nothing serious.

Except for the posthumous prank. Tony bequeathed to Nero a sum of twenty million dollars to spend at his discretion in... It was to be a secret mission; noble of course, but secret. And, of course, vague. It was a great compliment Nero ever got from Tony: trusting that Nero would be able to read his mind.

Which he did.