

Excerpt #1 from The Coronation by Justin Newland WV#1

This extract is from Chapter 3. It's from the point of view of Ian Fermor. He has been stabbed and been dreaming.

He awoke. Brilliant lights illuminated his mind his head. He kept his eyes closed to see them pulsing in circles of evanescence. Exhausted from fighting the agony, he dreamt of the eagle. If only... the eagle, the mysterious Adler with two heads, would return. He had flown with it over the royal lands of Northern Europe and seen the land of the End-mark. He remembered that much.

More voices in the room... an old man.

“Amelia, did you say his name was Fermor?”

“Yes, pastor,” Amelia replied.

“The name sounds familiar,” the old man mumbled. He leant forward and said, “Ian Fermor, I am Pastor Leopold. Can you hear me?”

He groaned an exhausted, “Yes.”

Ian Fermor blinked. The two women and two men around the bed were shaded by the lantern and the moonlight beaming through the gap in the curtains. The texture of the light reminded him of how, at twilight, when dusk fell on the glens at home, he would run through the heather field, across the gurgling stream, passed the gnarled oak, and burst through the cottage door, to find a welcoming fire and a warm embrace from his ma' and a scolding from his pa' for his tardiness.

Another memory impinged on the fragile membrane of his mind. During a few moments of euphoric clarity, before the deep veils of pain were once again drawn across his life, he recalled the great times he had shared with his friend, James Watt. With a long journey ahead of him, to a bourn from which no traveller returned, he wished he could share a

Excerpt #1 from The Coronation by Justin Newland WV#1

wee dram or two with Master Watt, and rekindle those many fascinating conversations on engineering and instrumentation. That seemed as far away as the gun-metal waters of the Clyde and Glasgow's cramped housing.

Back in the room, the pastor was saying, "Herr Fermor, you are near the end of your sojourn on Earth. Stay with us a little longer while I read you the Commendation."

"He may not know what that is, Pastor Leopold," another woman said.

The pastor cleared his throat and said, "The Commendation is also known as the last rites. Do you understand?"

The last rites – that had a ring of finality about it. The words resonated inside him, like a distant echo. Squeezed between mind-numbing waves of pain, he moaned, "I do. But I can't die. I have... to serve the Adler. I must live."

"It's natural," the pastor replied. "But you have been called to meet your Maker."

"No," he murmured. He was drowning in an ocean of pain and blanked out.

When he came round, the pastor was saying, "Into your hands, dear Lord, I commend the spirit of this man. Ian Fermor, do you want to say anything? Do you seek absolution?"