



The Man in The Mirror Series

Episode 1: The Late, Great Mr. Morrison

By Richard Miller

Chapter 1

Paris, 1972.

The upscale apartment is dark, and quiet, with the only available light being a dim yellow glow coming from somewhere in the kitchen. A nightlight, perhaps. Aside from that, there is only the cold, grayish rays of the moon spilling through the window sheers. Enough light to silhouette a few pieces of furniture here and there, but otherwise, everything remains lost in thick, murky shadow.

The feeling is one of dread. Dark dread. There is an ominous heaviness that hangs in the air like a thick odor, and like an odor, you can neither see it nor touch it, but you know it's there, and its presence is undeniable.

And it clings to you, this heaviness does, like a humidity. The sensation, of which, causes your skin to tighten and turn cold as it seeps into your pores. You can feel it thread through you, like a tendril, as it works its way into the very recesses of your soul.

And this feeling, this dark foreboding, you *know* is an omen, a warning of sorts. A warning of something yet to come. Something bad. It is, in fact, a message. A message not unlike the one a pack of circling vultures delivers as they wait for the thing below them to take its last breath. To die.

And indeed, something here will die tonight. And in its dying, something will be born. A legend. One that will endure for all the days to come.

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There is one other light to be found in the apartment, and that is the thin ribbon glowing along the bottom of the bathroom door. The bathroom itself, of course, being brightly lit and is where we find the subject of tonight's story.

His name is Jim Morrison, a native of California whose meteoric rise to fame and fortune exceeds anything ever seen before him. He is best known as the frontman for the rock band *The Doors*, a band, more often than not, described as being the voice of the sixties. And naturally, that voice would belong to none other than Jim Morrison himself.

But Morrison was more than just a rock star. Much more. He was, by all accounts, a rock 'god'. Adonis' body, matinee idol good looks, charisma, talent... He was a man who, given his chosen profession, had it all. A man who had been given everything. But for some people, everything is never enough. They want more.

But what more could Jim Morrison possibly want? More money? More love and adoration? More fame?

What more, indeed.

In Mr. Morrison's case, the answer to that question remains elusive to this day, but it only stands to reason that when you have everything a mortal could possibly want, there is only one thing left to achieve.

...immortality.

Chapter 2

The bathroom is what you would expect from an apartment owned by one of Paris's most elite: elegant, stylish, fashionable, but most of all, obscenely expensive. The floor is a black/white checkerboard affair made from the finest Italian marble. The walls, also Italian marble, consist of large, white panels laced with faint, light gray swirls. On one side of the bathroom sits a lavish, white wood vanity with lighted mirror and red velvet cushioned chair. On the opposite side of the room, standing diagonally in the corner, is a matching full-length oval mirror, its ornate frame fashioned from the same lavish white wood as the vanity. On the back wall are two standing marble sinks, his and hers, also white, with an ornate gold, gilded frame mirror on the wall behind each one. Off to the center, standing somewhat alone is a large, two-person, claw-foot bathtub made of the finest white porcelain and featuring the standard gold feet.

Lying in the bathtub, his hair pulled back in a ponytail and his arms loosely draped over the sides, is the god of rock himself, Jim Morrison. Only, he doesn't look like much of a god tonight. His head is tilted down, and there are small slits where his eyes once were. His mouth is slightly open, and a constant stream of drool stretches from it down to the bath water a few inches below. It is difficult, if not impossible, to discern whether the man is even conscious.

On the floor below his left hand are two Jack Daniel's bottles, both empty and both lying on their sides. Cigarette butts from an overflowing ashtray litter the floor surrounding them. On the other side of the tub, on the floor directly beneath his right hand, is a rubber tube tourniquet and an expended syringe. A melted candle, a book of matches, and a bent spoon used for cooking heroin complete the ensemble.

At this time, the bathroom is quiet. Deathly so, without so much as the sound of the infamous celebrity breathing.

In the corner, inside the full-length mirror, a figure slowly begins to appear, materializing in much the same way as a Polaroid developing before your eyes. It is the image of a distinguished looking man in his forties. Perhaps early forties. Early enough so that there is no hint of grey in his perfectly groomed, perfectly black hair. The hair itself is short, parted on the side, and combed straight back on the sides. It glistens as if held in place with expensive pomade. The man himself is slender, which is to say his build is perfect for his six-foot frame. He is wearing a perfectly tailored black suit with a white dress shirt and a matching black tie of a width bordering on the side of thin. His shoes are gloss black and fashioned from the finest Italian leather money can buy.

He is a clean-shaven man with stern features and dark, serious eyes made even more so by the thick, black brows that punctuate them. In all, it is apparent that he is a person of impeccable taste, style, and mannerism.

He stands with his feet slightly apart and his hands clasped in front of him, but he does not move. Not at first, anyway. He simply stands, instead, and studies the scene in front of him.

After a while, after he has adequately absorbed the situation, the dark figure steps from the mirror and onto the black and white tiled floor. He looks around the room and quickly finds what he is looking for: a chair. A small one, neatly tucked under the vanity. He walks the short distance, grabs the chair, and carries it to a spot perhaps five feet

from the side of the tub. He carefully sets the chair in place, facing it toward the tub, and lowers himself into it. He crosses one leg over the other and then leisurely leans back into the chair's plush cushion. He is comfortable, this mysterious man is, and as such, lifts his coat lapel with his left hand and, with his right, extracts an elegantly crafted, custom-made cigarette case. He opens the case and selects one of the custom hand-rolled smokes inside. He parks the cigarette between his lips, closes the case, and returns it to the jacket's inner pocket. He then retrieves an equally elegant silver lighter from the jacket's outer pocket and lights up. He takes a deep, satisfying pull from the cigarette and blows a blue-gray cloud of smoke out as he returns the lighter to the pocket from which it came.

The man sits with his left arm across his midsection so that the hand cradles the elbow of his smoking arm. In that position, the dark intruder sits in his comfort, enjoys his cigarette, and studies the man in the tub, the one completely unaware of his presence.

He watches Mr. Morrison closely and sees him slide further into the bathwater. At this rate, it won't be long before his mouth and nose are below the waterline, meaning there isn't much time left, so he initiates the conversation...

"How are you this evening, Mr. Morrison?"

The man in the tub startles and jerks his head slightly upward. With his eyes being the barely perceptible slits they are, there is little chance that he can see the intruder, so he swivels his head to the left and right to try and determine where the voice is coming from...

"Wha...who...who's there?"

His words are sluggish and slightly slurred, and in no hurry to leave his lips. The dark man takes another drag and replies...

"Oh, no one, really. Just an old acquaintance of yours. As you may recall, you and I had a bit of business together some years ago, and I'm simply stopping by to check on my - shall we say - *investment*."

"Investment? So, you're...you're...like...from the record company?"

The man laughs and waves the notion away with his hand...

"No, no. Not at all, Mr. Morrison. I'm in a different line of work entirely."

"You keep ca-calling me Mr. Morrison. Are you like from the...from the... IRS? Because if you are, man, you can't...bother me. I don't live in the U.S. anymore."

"No, Mr. Morrison. I'm not from the IRS, but if you prefer - if it will make you more comfortable - I can call you Jim. Would that suit you?"

"Yeah. Yeah. Call me...ca-call me...Jim."

He slumps further into the water.

"Jim. That's...that's my name...Jim"

"Very well, Jim. Again, I'm not from the record company, nor am I from the IRS."

"Then how...how do you know me?"

"Hhhmmm. How do I know you? Yes. Well, you see, we met years ago at UCLA while you were a student there. You may remember me - or not. Of course, I looked much different then, as did we all, but at that time, I took on the form of just another student on campus. And now that I think about it, I actually looked a little like you, with the long hair, tattered jeans, tie-dyed t-shirts, and sandals, only I wasn't nearly as handsome. And something else - we liked the same music, you and I did."

He takes another drag and stabs the cigarette in the air to emphasize his next words...

"Probably still do. Oh, and by the way, I'm a big fan of yours. *Big* fan. I must say, you've done quite well for yourself, Jim. Quite well."

Another drag, another blue cloud, and then he continues...

"But you know, looking back on it now, I think more than anything, that's what drew you to me, the music. I was a musician in a band, and you were a fledgling film student going nowhere. It was a perfect setup. Perfect, because not long after you met me, your interests changed. They shifted from making movies to making music. They shifted because that was really where your heart was, the music. And I knew it. And, I helped you with that."

"Helped me?"

"Yes. Helped you. More than that. I *made* you."

The stranger has piqued his curiosity. Morrison tilts his head slightly in the direction of the voice...

"Made me?"

The man chuckles...

"Yes, Jim. Made you."

"I don't...I don't get it."

The stranger takes a deep breath and lets it out in the form of an elongated, somewhat frustrated sigh...

"Of course you don't. You people never do. You meet me, you tell me your wants, desires, and dreams, and then I give them to you. Everything. Everything you secretly want and wish for, I give you. And then once you have it - the fame, the fortune, the money - you forget who I am. You forget how I told you it would all happen just the way you wanted."

He pauses. He leans a little further back into the chair's cushion and gazes at the ceiling for a moment as he reflects on the dark nature of his business. He takes another drag, exhales the smoke through yet another frustrated sigh, and then returns his attention to the god of rock as he continues...

"But you people never take me seriously when I tell you these things. Oh sure, you laugh, agree to my terms, and complete the deal, but you think it's all some kind of joke. Just some funny ruse of mine. Something to make you laugh while you're high. And then, of course, it all happens the way I said it would - the fame, the fortune, the success... everything you wanted. And naturally, once it happens, you attribute it all to your self-absorbed, egotistical selves, telling yourself it all happened because... Because, well, that was your fate, your destiny. That it was simply something that was going to happen anyway, that it was just a matter of time."

He takes another drag and produces another blue-gray cloud, and then continues the thought...

"Yeah, just a matter of time before the world discovered you, before it recognized your talent, your beauty, your god given star quality... Just a matter of time before the entire planet sees you for the special person you are. The celebrity. The star."

"What are you saying? What are you s-saying, man? That I...that I'm a phony? That I...I don't deserve what I have?"

"Not at all, Jim. That's not what I'm saying. I didn't give you anything you didn't already have - the body, the looks, charisma, phenomenal voice... That's just you. But think about it. There are eight billion people walking this planet, and you're foolish enough to think you're the only one with those qualities?"

Another drag as the dark stranger studies his quarry for a moment. He tightens his lips and nods, then gestures toward him with his cigarette and continues...

"You're smarter than that, Jim. You are. Do you really believe that it was all a coincidence? Being at the right place at the right time? That, that was the only difference between you and all the other Jim Morrison wannabes?"

Again, the stranger chuckles. He takes another drag and lets the smoke spill from his mouth as he continues the dialog...

"No, Jim. That's not how it works. There was a difference between you and all the others, true, but the difference was that you met me before they did."

"No. No fucking way. I don't...I don't even know you. You had nothing to do with me."

The stranger exhales one final cloud and then bends over and crushes the cigarette out in an ashtray long since overflowing with butts. He uprights himself and bends the fingers of his left hand into the palm in order to inspect his perfect manicure...

"Personally, Jim, I don't care what you do or don't believe."

He takes in a deep breath through his nose and lets it out. He recrosses his legs and rests his perfect manicures in his lap...

"That's not why I'm here, to convince you of anything. What you believe or don't believe doesn't change a thing. It really doesn't matter, and frankly, I get tired of these conversations. Just like Marilyn. A dime-a-dozen knockout blonde with only marginal acting abilities who thought the same way. That she's so, so very special. That she got to where she did because she had things no one else did. But she wasn't as smart as you, Jim, and she believed her own rhetoric. Like you, she shook my hand, got what she wanted, and then forgot about me. That is, until the day I showed up to collect, to consummate the deal. Then she remembered me just fine. Didn't want to, but she had no choice."

"And that's wa-why you're here? To collect?"

"No, that isn't why I'm here. Actually, your debt isn't due for another twenty years. But, you see, you've chosen to pay it off early, just like your friends Jimmy and Janis. Which" (throws his palms up) "I have no qualm with. Early payments are not a problem with me. But no, I'm not here to collect. I just dropped by to say hello. After all, it's been

a while. Besides, I find it to be good business to check on my investments from time to time. You know, keep my finger on the pulse, so to speak."

"Investment?"

The stranger pulls his sleeve back and checks his Rolex...

"That's right. Investment. I'd love to explain it to you, Jim, but I'm afraid I'm out of time and must be going. I have many more calls to make tonight."

The stranger stands, smooths his jacket with his palm, checks his tie knot, and straightens his cuffs...

"But I must say, Jim, it's been a real pleasure to see you again. And, I have a feeling we'll be doing this again in the not-too-distant future. Until then, you have a pleasant rest of the evening now."

And with that, the dark stranger takes a final look at the rock god, then proceeds to the mirror and steps inside. He resumes his original stance - feet parted, hands clasped in front of him - and slowly fades into nothing, leaving the only reflection remaining that of the man known as Jim Morrison, the superstar, as he continues to mumble to himself while slowly sliding further and further into the warm Parisian water.

But at some point, the mumbling stops. It stops because a historical moment has just occurred. A moment that will both shock and sadden the world. A moment that will shake the music industry to its very core.

And somewhere in an upscale cafe on the fashionable side of the city, the side where the beautiful people mingle and congregate in their fashionable herds, a Doors song begins to play. The name of the song?

The End