

A tall man strode around the corner as if he needed to get somewhere, but not anywhere that he desired to be quickly. Everyone else was waiting for him, but he did not want to see them. His soon-to-be ex-wife and her lawyer sought the wealth his family's death had bestowed on him. Parents, uncles, grandparents. They all had passed on to their various believed versions of heaven, though Uncle Kevin probably came back as a black sheep given his role in his human family.

Unknown to his dear wife, Alice, Eric no longer had the money he inherited. Along with the money, Eric inherited the debt. Not with the IRS or stockholders who were duped or creditors, but with the mob. Eric had paid the debt, and escaped with his kneecaps, though the family butler, whom Eric ultimately had to let go, did have a hole in his shoulder. Eric used the last of the money to pay for his medical bills. Alice, and her lawyer, were not going to be happy, but it would be satisfying telling her that her payday would bring her nothing.

A small tabby cat hugged the wall as she followed Eric. She was a smart cat, and she understood Eric's struggles. Her last human had kept her safe and warm. The woman had been even nicer when she had been pregnant, but once she had her kittens, the woman had taken her babies, sold them, and chucked her out on the street when she had fought to get her babies back. Dexter the cat understood how her new human could be feeling used right now, but like Dexter had found Eric, Dexter knew Eric would be happy again. All he needed was a mouse and a snuggle.

In Eric's left hand was the coffee he got every morning at the cafe down the street from the hotel he staying at since he and Alice split. Later, at the meeting, he will fill the empty cup with water for Dexter, and let her drink it on the table. Alice will hiss and spit more than Dexter ever has over the mess she thinks Dexter makes, but Dexter is a very clean cat. She never spills a drop. The two lawyers will see this and wonder just what else Alice exclaims over that does not actually happen. They will hash out a deal that ends up being favorable to Eric.

In Eric's right hand was a small watch face. It belonged to his mother. It was a woman's watch, but a very elegant one. On the back was inscribed "Bella Donna." Eric always thought his father had gifted it to his mother until a few days before her death, his mother told him about an older Italian man she had loved before meeting Eric's father. The man had promised to take her to Italy, but never did. She only began wearing the watch every day after she made enough money to take herself to Italy. She met Eric's father there. He was traveling too. The brown leather band had broken many years before, but she could never get up the desire to fix it. It reminded her every day that sometimes you have to do things yourself, especially for the things you truly want. Eric kept it as a reminder of her positivity and goodness.