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## Modern love

by Lorraine Gailey

The assassin settled himself in what he knew could be a long wait. He had positioned himself high up in the clock tower overlooking the little square with its fountain in the centre and pavement cafes on three sides. The sun was bright behind him, meaning he could see the square clearly but anyone looking up at the tower would be dazzled by the sun.

He'd been doing a job like this for decades as a covert operative for his government. Long ago he developed a mantra that helped him keep sharp focus when the moment came to pull the trigger, making sure he killed the right person without hesitation. He'd never yet missed his target. His mantra was: 'I do this for love of my country'.

In recent years, he'd found it more and more difficult to see the connection between his mantra and his designated target. There had been one too many occasions when he suspected he was being used to play out a personal power grab rather than fulfil an objective for national security.

So he had stepped away from that career, but he found he missed being able to apply his well-honed skills and began to seek a new direction. He started to focus on individuals he knew were causing harm (and frequently death) to others, and who would continue to do so until they were stopped but who were unlikely to be stopped by legitimate means. He decided he should be the one to stop them.

As he scanned the town square in the sunlight, he spotted his target and focused his sights on the man's forehead. As he pulled the trigger that ended one human life but saved so many more, he recited his new mantra that reflected his modern love: 'I do this for love of my fellow human beings'.