

The reflective mirrored surface shimmered in front of him, the dull sickly yellow glow of the single light bulb in the small bathroom refracted back to illuminate the image. The image? As Tate stepped forwards, his heart was hammering against his ribs as if threatening to explode. Try as he might, the reflection in the mirror stayed fast - the dingy grey walls of the bathroom, the door still lying ajar behind him, even the graffiti strewn in a backwards scrawl. It was not what he saw that made his blood run cold; it was what he didn't.

Tate stretched out one hand towards the mirror, willing it to reflect the appendage back to him... nothing.

He stumbled from the bathroom into the waiting compartment, trying to make sense of what had just happened. The mirror had shown nothing more than a reflection of an empty room; it was as if he didn't exist.

The train seemed eerily silent. He wandered back through the compartments towards where he had been seated. The effects still lay discarded on the tables, as if their owners had been disturbed and left everything as a matter of urgency. A Handbag lay unattended, a laptop, valuable items, why had their owners left them? He strode over to the upturned laptop with the 4 words emblazoned on the screen 'Terribilis est Locus Iste.' What the hell did it mean? Latin had never been his strong point. He could just about understand that the message hinted at something being terrible, not the best example of his BI-lingual ability. He

slammed his fist against the keys of the machine in frustration, he was accustomed to being in control, this was a situation that was fast becoming like fragment of a bad dream. One where you couldn't make sense of what was happening, but that deep sense of foreboding fear lurked there in the recesses of your mind.

He looked down at the laptop to find he had inadvertently accessed whatever the woman had been working on. He seated himself in front of the screen and viewed the page before him. The Order of Sion, nothing of any interest to him, history had never been an appealing subject to him, he preferred to live in the present day, that was what made him who he was – revered in his field. The thought caused the flicker of a smile to momentarily play with the corners of his lips. Besides he had some vague recollection that it had something to do with God and religion, definitely not something he had any time for. He began to close the laptop so should the occupant return, she would not realise he had invaded her privacy. In that moment something at the top of the screen caught his eye – an image depicting a staring eye.

The image pulled him abruptly back into reality, the tattoo on his victims thumb was a replica of the image, which now flickered on the screen in front of him. The crude edges, the almost infantile shapes conspiring to produce this unsettling orb.

He placed his fingers on the keyboard, wondering if within this screen there perhaps lay answers to his ludicrous plight. The strident ringing of the phone pierced the air and caused him to eject from his seat rather more abruptly than he would have liked. The laptop fell to the floor at his feet, the screen shattering into many fragments.

'Damn it!', he looked around, fully expecting someone to appear through the automatic doors. The phone continued to ring, some irritating tune most probably from some TV show or recent pop hit. It wasn't enough to have to be subjected to the crap, which was passing as music or mindless garbage, which actually made it onto TV screens, we now had to listen to it everywhere. Tate found television invasive and mind numbing which was why he had never in his adult life owned one.

The ringing continued incessantly in the background, cutting into his thoughts, the only one he had now was how bloody angry the noise was making him. He strode purposefully towards the distraction, silently seething, cursing the lad both for leaving his phone here to bother him and for his rather questionable choice in ring-tones.

Tate made a grab for the phone, noticing the many flashing buttons, which adorned its front. How the hell was he to answer the damn thing? He noticed among the obvious numbered buttons there seemed to be a button with an image of a telephone on it, that seemed a safe bet. He pressed the button and pressed the phone to his ear.

The voice at the other end was female. There was a cacophony of noise in the background and this woman's high-pitched, almost screaming voice. She was obviously distraught.

'Tom? Tom? Are you there? Is that you?'

Tate was fast feeling frustration with this whole episode, he wanted to know what the hell was happening, where was everyone? Why did it seem like he had fallen off the face of the earth.

'Look Lady....' His words were penetrated as if invisible.

'Tom, Son, please talk to me, tell me you're alright... for the love of god - PLEASE!'

Again Tate attempted to quieten this woman, more to relieve the ringing in his own ears than to pacify her. 'Lady, whoever it is you're looking for, is not here, its just me'. Tate heard the woman's tears, heard her distress as she uttered the words

'There's no-one there'.

The phone went dead; the woman's words were still ringing in Tate's Ears 'There's no-one there'. What the hell was going on, first the reflection, now this? He felt like he really had fallen off the edge of the earth.

Had he somehow found himself in some weird kind of limbo?

Outside, the darkness seemed impenetrable, the train had yet to exit the tunnel, yet he could feel the carriage move beneath him, signalling that the locomotive was indeed moving at the same static fast pace.

The bang came suddenly, out of the silence that seemed to be closing in around Tate. He could see that the source of the noise came from the leather-bound diary, which had fallen onto the floor. The same diary, which he remembered bore those 4 words – 'Terribilis est Locus Iste.' That had to be the key to all of this. What did it mean?

He didn't quite know what he expected to find hidden within the pages of this worn diary, but he found his throat dry and his heart unexpectedly quickening pace as he found it had fallen open at 1 particular page. There it was again – The eye, staring at him, almost mocking him, it seemed to urge him on, wanted him to understand his plight.

Then - There it was! 'Terribilis est Locus Iste.' – This is a terrible place. He felt accomplished for a fleeting moment, almost the feeling a climber achieves on reaching his summit. He then reflected on the words, which he had just read, a terrible place? For the first time Tate knew the simple taste of fear. So many times he had seen the look pass over the faces of many victims, yet never considered it, never wondered how it must feel. He knew now that something terrible was happening to him. He was no

longer in the real world, he existed here and now in this terrible place, alone. He did not even have the company of his own reflection. After all he did not exist, why should he expect to cast a reflection.

The book still lay open before him, the eye, mocking. The words he read were mere notes, figments of an obviously tortured mind. As he read, the words seemed to come together, make sense, two sections stood out more than any other on the pages before him - Judgement of souls and pathway between heaven and hell. The staring eye denoted The Order of Sion, which stood in judgement of tortured souls in purgatory, a limbo state between heaven and hell. Staring eye tattoos denoted members of this order. It is believed, these people had the power of God to stand in judgement of damned souls, to keep them in a purgatory state, to prevent them from passing to the other side.

The horrible realisation came over him. He wished he had of shared in the fate of those poor souls who obviously perished with him, but had moved on to another place. He was no longer a part of the living world and had not been permitted into the land of souls. He was forever to be in this 'tunnel' between heaven and hell. As he walked towards the end of the train, over the door, were the emblazoned words 'Terribilis Est Locus Iste.'