

As he'd looked around the toilet, a glint of light had caught his eye, above the sink the source of this light was a token mirror, scratched and peeling. The mirror wasn't what caught Tate's breath though, it was the lack of reflection, or more precisely, his reflection.

Tate reached out unbelievably to touch the mirror, and although he could see and feel his hand touching the crazed glass, there was nothing caressing back.

With a gasp, he thrust his face towards the mirror, wondering if his eyes were playing tricks.

Nothing.

He could see straight through to the open door behind him.

"What?" convinced there was a plausible explanation he adjusted his stance and looked back into the mirror from a different angle, still nothing. However, etched into a corner of the mirror was the ubiquitous graffiti. But not your everyday tag as spawned by your everyday scroat. This particular tag set Tate's heart racing.

Terribilis est locus iste.

And next to it, an eye looking back at him.

“Fuck!” though not given to the random use of foul expletives, on this occasion he felt more than justified. “What the hell is going on”?

Tate had spent most of his adult life taking care of business for a group of men whom he'd never met, whose names he'd never heard spoken and who conducted themselves behind a cloak of secrecy befitting a government spy agency. Men who for reasons known only to themselves, employed Tate to eliminate leaders, masters and gurus of various cults and other more secret and arcane orders as (supposedly) obsolete as The Templars and the Priory Of Sion.

Due to his profession, Tate took pride in the fact that nothing fazed him and he normally carried himself in the manner of one who was steadfast and dependable, nevertheless he was by now thoroughly unnerved. Stumbling out of the toilet, he decided he needed to clear his head.

Striding back to the section between the compartments, he threw open the window, shut his eyes and let the night breeze wash over him.

Except now there was no breeze, no sound of the passing wind.

Opening his eyes in surprise, Tate realized that it was blacker than a Welsh pit outside. Surely they weren't still travelling through a tunnel? Tentatively, expecting to feel at least a light breeze he reached his hand outside the window.

Nothing. It was as though the train wasn't moving and yet he could hear the steady tattoo of the wheels against the rails.

Something was wrong here and being nobody's fool, he decided he was going to find out what. Despite the absconded passengers there still had to be somebody driving this bloody thing. Tate was going to find the driver and find out what the hell was happening.

More certain of himself now and acting on instinct honed from years in his craft, Tate made his way through the empty carriages to the front of the train. On his way through another compartment he noticed on one of the tables a mobile phone similar to the one he himself used, except this phone had one of those new camera attachments which Tate admired.

Despite wanting to get to the bottom of this strange journey, Tate couldn't help but stop to admire it. "Expensive, wouldn't have left this behind, whatever the emergency!" he thought to himself.

Picking it up to look at the screen, he was yet again taken aback to see displayed;

Terribilis est locus iste.

What the hell did that mean and why did he keep seeing it?

Inflamed, he returned the phone to the table with a knock hard enough to ensure an insurance claim then strode purposefully once more in the direction of the driver's cabin.

On reaching the last carriage however, the automatic door didn't open. Strange, must be a glitch. He stepped back and approached the sensor once more, still it didn't open.

Using his considerable size Tate tried to force the door but it still wouldn't budge.

"Balls!"

Taking a long, deep breath and realising there was nothing he could do, Tate decided to return to his seat to think through his options. On approaching his carriage however, he became aware of a mobile phone ringing, the same one he'd heard previously. He hurried through the doors and snatched up the phone which typically, stopped ringing. Gritting his teeth and resisting the urge to launch the goddamn thing, Tate looked at the screen for a clue as to who the caller was. He wasn't really surprised to see The Phrase Of The Day;

Terribilis est locus iste

Something clicked in Tate's brain, a glimmer of recognition. Hurrying back through the carriages he picked up the laptops that he'd seen earlier along with

the diary and the fancy mobile and returned back to his seat. He could sense a pattern here.

On opening the diary to the page with the latin, Tate noticed something he'd previously overlooked, a doodle of a crossed compass and set-square.

The main screen of the first laptop displayed nothing but latin nonsense. However, the icons on the taskbar caught his attention, they were all the same. 7 shields, white with a red cross.

The second laptop's taskbar had just one symbol which Tate vaguely recognized as being the logo used by a sect known as the Golden Dawn.

The screen of the phone revealed nothing. Alarming though, every button on the keypad bore a different religious symbol, most of which Tate recognized.

This was freaky, Tate knew these symbols identified the various cults and orders that he, on behalf of his employers, had had 'dealings' with in the past.

As he was about to retrieve the severed thumb from his pocket, Tate became aware of the train gradually slowing. Thank God, he thought, maybe finally he could get some answers.

Tate didn't recognize the station they were pulling into and didn't really care, he just wanted off. Making his way to the doors he was aware that the sky was a shimmering red. Dawn breaking already?

The door opened and a porter helped Tate out onto the empty platform

"What the hell happened on that train?" Tate demanded.

"The train, sir?" replied the porter. "Why, it crashed shortly after leaving your station"

"Crashed, what are you talking about? There was no crash!"

"See for yourself sir" said the porter, pointing to the train.

Tate looked and was dumbfounded to see that the carriage he had just left was nothing but a smouldering heap of metal, At that point he became aware of screams of agony and the smell of burning.

Confused, Tate grabbed the porter by the arm. "My God man, there's other passengers still trapped in there. For Heaven's sake, do something!"

"Other passengers sir? They disembarked further up the line, they had no need to come this far down, now, if you'll follow me please"

“What do you mean, Why would they have no need to come here? You’re not making sense!”

“They were good people sir, they don’t belong here, for this is a terrible place.”