

Descent
By Leigh M. Rose

It was about five in the afternoon and Thomas sat at his usual corner table in the coffee shop, his back toward the wall. His eyes were bloodshot with dark circles under them. He looked like he had not slept much in a couple days. The barista was young and cute, he liked her. He knew she felt sorry for him, she remembered him from when he was always clean shaven, smiling and bought the Grande Latte and left a good tip. Now he was unemployed like so many other people, so she gave him free refills, it was the cheap stuff but hey – she couldn't risk her job giving away the expensive coffee. He was just glad he could sit there as long as he needed to access the free wifi; he had canceled the internet service at his condo to save money, and had already used up all the data on his phone.

Thomas also knew he shouldn't drink so much coffee, it kept him awake most of the night, but he didn't care, he really didn't want to sleep. He took another sip of the coffee and peered over the top of his computer screen to watch two men enter the shop and order. They glanced in his direction and he quickly averted his eyes and looked back down at his computer screen. He wondered if they were watching him, talking about him. He didn't think they looked the type, but he couldn't be sure. He wasn't sure of anything anymore.

He watched the two men pay for their coffee, they were laughing and talking. They were so loud – loud like he used to be – happy like he used to be. Thomas ran his fingers through his disheveled hair, then watched the two men exit the shop and walk down the sidewalk, probably back to jobs. A job he didn't have.

At first, he started coming to the coffee shop every day to access the internet so he could look for a job, he was motivated then, and certain he would find something quickly, a guy with his skills and experience – it would be easy – right.

Days turned into weeks and then into months. He had some money put away, and there was unemployment and the severance package. It wasn't great, but at least it was something. At least he was better off than some; he was still in his condo. How many resumes had he sent out? Fifty, one hundred? He lost count, became discouraged. Why didn't anyone call, why not just one call? It wasn't his fault he lost his job, it was the economy, first one sector than another, businesses closing, millions unemployed, it was like knocking over dominos. How many more were going to fall before he could bounce back? How long before he could find a new job?

When he was still working, he felt bad for the people without jobs, "there but for the grace of God," he would whisper, but he didn't think it would happen to him. The company was stable, on the right track. When did it start, what was the first domino? He wasn't sure, nothing was clear in those first few days that followed; he was in shock. It was like there had been a sudden death in the family. At least that was how it felt.

Then one day almost as suddenly as he had lost his job everything was very clear. What day was it that it all started to make sense? Was it last month or the month before? He wasn't sure. Without someplace to be, some task to complete, a deadline to meet, all the days and now nights ran together. And now he wasn't sleeping. He worried, were they watching him, did they know he had put the pieces together? Did they know he had figured out their plan? Surely others had figured it out too; otherwise, the information

wouldn't be on the internet. He thought about it. Thomas looked out the window again, the men were gone; they had disappeared down the street and out of his line of sight.

Thomas looked down at his computer screen and clicked on a link and then another link and then another. Everything was right there, in bites of electronic media, the plots, and the reasons, the logic. It was all part of their plan. Control the wealth, control the flow of money, control the governments, and control the world. They would be the world power; it had been in play for centuries it was the global economy that set the final stage, no paper money, no gold standard. Who had all the gold? They did! It was right here, it made sense. They were weakening us, making us dependent; causing us to lose our jobs. It was a conspiracy to gain control of leaders in key countries, to control the start and outcome of wars, to gain control of the money, The World Bank, and now talk of a global currency, god why couldn't they see it. He could see it; it was so clear.

The barista, the cute young girl, walked over to his tiny table in the corner and smiled as she refilled his cup. He smiled back then looked around the coffee shop. Two more people had entered while he searched the internet. How could he be so stupid, how could he not notice? There was a pattern. They always came in twos. They always glanced at him, at him sitting there in the corner. They knew where he was, they were watching him, they knew he had read all the literature on the websites and read all the blogs. They knew he had figured out their scheme, their plan. Who could he tell? Who would listen? He could start his own blog; he could tell everyone thorough postings in cyberspace. But he knew they were responsible for the computer viruses. It wasn't hackers, it was them. The viruses were just a way for them to test their plan to control the flow of electronic money. Y2K was a test run to see how many people would prepare

and arm themselves and how many people they would need to track down and eliminate. The rest, the ones who didn't believe, they were like sheep, their flock, they would just follow – unaware of what was going on around them.

The secret societies, the Freemasons, Knights Templar, Illuminati, Carbonari and the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, they spanned the centuries, there were so many. The secret societies that had been threats had been eliminated. But the others, they were the soldiers, recruiting, infiltrating, brainwashing. And they all pointed back to one master, a master in Rome. The second Roman empire, the secret Roman empire, the Holy Roman Empire, with one leader in his white and gold robes.

The two men; they were watching him again. He had to get out of there. He had to get home and lock his doors, barricade himself inside. Try to stay awake as long as he could in case; they came for him. In case they came for him before he could start his blog to tell everyone of the world conspiracy, the new world order that Rome was working to establish.

Thomas looked around. He looked at the cute young girl who served him coffee. Poor girl he thought, she is so young, she has no idea. He logged off and closed his laptop. He nodded and quickly thanked her for the coffee and then with his laptop under his arm he rushed out of the coffee shop. It was only three blocks to his condo; it would only take a few minutes to walk back but he cut through the park instead and then ran along the river. Thomas kept looking over his shoulder to make sure no one was following him. He slowed his pace, he was tired, his heart raced, and his head hurt. It would start to get dark soon; he hated the shorter days – more time for them to come for him during the night. He wanted to get home while he still had a home to go to. The

Vatican controlled the banks. When they found out he knew they would take his condo, he knew that – he was certain of it. How could he have been so naive all those years, but it was so clear now, the conspiracy, the plot, the collapse of the economy. All the information was out there, he had put the pieces together.

He was almost home, almost safe. Thomas pulled his house key from the front pocket of his faded and tattered jeans then looked over his shoulder just before he entered his condo. Thomas went from room to room checking closets, under beds, behind the sofa. No one was there – he was alone. He pulled the drapes so no one could see inside. He was afraid to turn on the lights. If they saw the lights, they would know he was home, they would come for him. At first, he had started leaving the lights off to save money but then after he realized the collapse was their fault, losing his job was their fault, he knew it was safer to leave the lights off.

Thomas went to the kitchen and opened the refrigerator. It was almost empty. When did he buy food last? He couldn't remember, was it yesterday, no, yesterday he spent the day in the coffee shop surfing the internet and discovering that a handful of old European families controlled the Federal Reserve. Why couldn't our leaders see what was happening? No, they started this, they were part of it too. Two centuries ago, they started the wheels in motion. Skull and Bones, it just was a primer. Maybe he bought food last week? His head hurt.

Thomas pulled a candle and a box of matches from a drawer in the kitchen then carried them into the living room. He placed the candle in the middle of the coffee table and lit it. Then he turned on his laptop. Sometimes he could pick up a neighbor's

unprotected internet and get on-line. He waited a minute. No luck tonight, something was blocking the signal. That was the only explanation.

There was a sudden knock on the door. It startled him; he blew out the candle, had they found him? Oh god had they come for him! There was a knock again.

“Thomas. Thomas, this is Alice, Alice your sister. I know you’re home. I know you’re in there.”

Thomas walked to the door and looked through the eyehole. “Are you alone?” He said through the door.

“Yes, I’m alone. I want to see you. Mom and Dad and I are worried about you.”

“I’m fine, just go away, go home, and tell Mom and Dad I’m fine.”

“No Thomas, I’m not leaving until you let me in, and I see you. I’ll stay in this hall all night if I have to.”

“Okay, just a minute.” Thomas went to the window and looked out on the street. He wanted to make sure the two men from the coffee shop hadn’t followed his sister to the condo. Thomas turned the latch on the deadbolt and slowly opened the door. “Hurry, come inside before someone sees you.” Thomas grabbed Alice’s arm and pulled her inside.

Alice looked at her brother, and then her eyes quickly surveyed the living room. “Thomas what is wrong with you? You look terrible, and this place is a mess. I’ve never seen you like this! Mark said something was wrong, but I had no idea it was this bad.”

“Mark! Mark doesn’t know what he is talking about!”

“Thomas, Mark is our cousin, and he is also a psychologist, he’s worried about you and so is the rest of the family.”

“Mark is part of it, they get inside people's heads and tell them everything is going to be alright and stop them from seeing the truth.”

“Thomas that is crazy. Mark is not your enemy. Look, I know losing your job was hard on you. I know you've had a tough time finding another one, but these last couple of months you've been spiraling down. It's scaring me.”

“I'm not crazy; I'm not spiraling! If you would just look at what I've found, you'd see it too. The secret societies are working for the Vatican. In two thousand, that was when the final plan was put in motion. The invasion of Iraq, wars in the Middle East, viruses, the economy, all of it – they are behind it all.”

“Thomas, the Vatican did not invade Iraq. That was the US, and it was years ago.”

“I know that,” he yelled, then lowered his voice. He was afraid someone in the neighboring condo would hear him. “I know, but Tony Blair was Prime Minister then and he is Catholic, and he works for the Vatican. British Intelligence gave the U.S. the information that led to the invasion and then the destabilization of the...”

Alice put her hand up in front of her to stop him. “Thomas, stop it! I don't want to hear this, you keep yourself locked up in here in the dark, you look like you haven't slept in days, you don't eat, you hang out at that coffee shop drinking coffee all day and looking for conspiracies on the internet. Thomas,” her voice cracked with emotion, “you aren't stable. You are on this emotional descent...”

Thomas grabbed her arms and shook her. “I am not crazy! Did Mark tell you I'm crazy?”

“Thomas stop it you're hurting me!”

Thomas released her and stepped away. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to, I’m sorry.”

“Thomas, just come back to Mom and Dad’s house with me. You can shower and shave and get something decent to eat and get some sleep. We’ll keep the doors locked and the drapes pulled. I promise. Just please come with me.”

“I can’t, it’s dark out. It’s easier for them to get me when it’s dark, not as many people to see them, not as many witnesses.”

Alice rubbed her forehead with her fingertips, then looked back at her brother. “Thomas, why don’t you talk to Mark, maybe he can understand what you are talking about and find a way to help. He came with me.”

“He’s here with you? Why did you bring him here? Where is he?” Thomas rushed to the window and peered through the drapes to the street below.

“He is in the hallway just around the corner. I told him to wait there. I was afraid that if you saw him you wouldn’t let me in,” Alice replied.

Thomas started pacing quickly back and forth across the living room floor. “I told you. The psychiatrists and psychologists, they make up mental conditions so they can put drugs into us. They get us dependent on their drugs and then they can control our minds.”

There was a knock on the door. Thomas stopped pacing and stood motionless – frozen in his steps.

There was another knock on the door. “Alice, it’s Mark; are you alright?” Thomas saw the doorknob turn. His eyes widened, there was a flash of memory, he had forgotten to lock the door when he let his sister inside. Mark opened the door.

Thomas started yelling, “Get out! Get out of my house! You are not going to turn me into one of your zombies; I know what is going on! I’m going to let everyone know! I’m going to tell everyone!”

Leaving the door open Mark stepped inside the condo. “Thomas let's just sit down and talk. No prescriptions, no-shrink mumbo jumbo, just you and me and Alice – family. Just like when we were kids.

Thomas spun around and lunged at the sofa. From behind a cushion, he pulled a handgun. Alice screamed, “Thomas no!”

Thomas pulled the trigger. The bullet hit the door facing not far from Mark’s shoulder. Mark dove and jumped to shield Alice. Thomas fired again – this time the bullet hit the wall just below the ceiling.

Alice screamed, “Help! Help!”

Suddenly two uniformed police officers with guns drawn burst through the door. Thomas flung his arms into the air and threw the gun. One officer tackled him and pushed him to the floor and cuffed his hands behind his back while the other officer stood over them with his gun still drawn. Thomas started sobbing. “I’m sorry; I didn’t mean to; they’re coming to get me. It’s all part of the conspiracy; I just needed to protect myself. I didn’t mean to hurt them.”

The officers lifted Thomas to his feet then turned to check on Mark and Alice. “Are you okay? Did either of you get hit?”

Mark’s hands were shaking, and Alice had tears streaming down her face. “I think we’re both okay,” Mark said. Alice shook her head in agreement.

“We’re going to take him downstairs and put him in the car. I’d like you both to come along so I can ask you some questions.”

“Sure, sure officer,” Mark responded. He was still in shock.

By the time they got downstairs another police car had pulled up. Its lights were on and neighbors were starting to gather outside.

One officer put Thomas in the backseat of the patrol car while the other pulled out a notepad to take Alice’s and Mark’s statements. Alice asked, “how did you get here, how did you know to come?”

“One of the neighbors called, they said there was a domestic dispute and the guy had appeared unstable lately. What’s your relationship to him?”

“I’m his sister.”

The officer looked at Mark who had his arm around Alice’s shoulder. “My name is Mark, I’m their cousin.”

The officer looked back at Alice. “Have you noticed any problems with him, how he has acted?”

Alice wiped the tears from her cheek. “He lost his job a few months ago. He was a manager, and his company closed their offices here. He took it really hard. He is so smart, and really a nice guy but hasn’t been able to find a new job – the economy is just so bad right now, not being able to find work was driving him crazy.”

The officer wrote down her statement.

End