

SAM HAIN
OCCULT DETECTIVE

THE EYE OF
THE ORACLE



BRON JAMES

This is a preview for Sam Hain: The Eye of the Oracle
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The interdimensional entities are real, though.

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PROLOGUE

Wednesdays, Tim Carmichael had decided, simply were not his days. This one, in particular, had been especially peculiar.

There was invariably a stressful atmosphere in Parliament on Wednesday mornings. Staff rushed about the place like a swarm of confused insects, making preparations for Prime Minister's Questions; politicians were ushered hither and thither, while servers with trays of tea and biscuits dutifully followed them; journalists gathered on the green outside the House, and running news crews set up their equipment. This had happened almost every week for over fifty years, and yet somehow no-one had quite managed to figure out how to make it all run smoothly.

Tim – or rather, Timothy Frederick Carmichael of Worcestershire – had been seated on the backbench of the Opposition for that week's parliamentary debate. He both loved and loathed it. On the one hand, it gave voice to the Members of Parliament to raise their questions directly to the Prime Minister, and for the Opposition to challenge the Government's stance on certain current affairs. A vital aspect of democracy, Tim thought. On the other, the debate would often play out like an argument between two sides of a pantomime audience. Questions and statements would often be deflected with a chorus of jeers and jibes, shortly followed by uproarious laughter and cacophonous shouts from either side. Some MPs had even stopped attending amidst noise complaints, and others had tried to call for a more measured and less theatrical debate.

It did not work.

Tim would sometimes find himself cringing with embarrassment when the debate would descend into what he could only describe as an unruly primary school class. It could be entertaining to witness, like bloodless gladiatorial combat, and he was sure that was why the sessions were broadcast on the BBC, but he often wondered what the public must think of their Government when they roar with laughter or bellow the rafters down. Especially when debating important subjects, like national health care, or the economy and spending of the national budget. But it wasn't his place to question that. Instead, he would be resigned to the backbench until he was called to speak.

This particular Wednesday had proven to be even worse than usual. Debates and questions of the Government's stance on certain international policies, foreign affairs and the ever-increasing amount of budget cuts to vital sectors had very quickly devolved into personal jibes at the opposing party leaders, met with a chorus of 'ooooh's and over-the-top cackles. No progress was made, and no clear answers were provided to any of the serious and pressing questions. Anyone could be forgiven for thinking that they had accidentally caught a political satire show rather than a parliamentary debate. Even Tim's own query ('how can the Government substantiate an increase in taxes, housing costs and tuition fees, while rejecting the proposition to raise the national standard minimum wage?') had been met with laughter, applause, and a remark about why the Right Honourable Gentleman should concern himself with taxes now, when he had never seemed to worry about paying his own before.

Dejected and despondent after the day's debates, Tim had decided to take a walk along the Southbank to clear his head. He looked out over the Thames as he walked, carefully weaving his way through the crowds of tourists who gathered there for some of London's most famous sights. Street performers flanked the constant flow of the crowd, who would stop to watch them perform, often getting distracted by the performances and standing to watch right in front of Tim's path. He was somewhat used to weaving and dodging and occasionally bumping into crowds, but today of all days he did not have the patience for it. It was not until he caught sight of his father – Timothy Carmichael Senior – in amongst the throngs of people, stood watching someone dressed as Charlie Chaplin in the shadow of the London Eye, that he started to feel the pressures of the day begin to lift.

He and his father stopped for a coffee at one of the cafés along the Southbank, and Tim had unloaded about his day. He talked of how he had thought going into politics would mean he could contribute something and affect some positive changes, but those who held more sway in Parliament wouldn't listen. His father sat and patiently listened, sagely nodding his head, just as he always had

done, and although he did not impart any particularly useful advice, simply listening and understanding had helped to alleviate Tim's worries.

After talking for what felt like several hours, but was in fact only about an hour, Tim began to make his way back home. 'Keep true to yourself and fight for what you believe to be right,' his father had said as they parted ways, and as simple as that statement was, Tim found solace and strength in those words. He hailed a taxi outside of Waterloo, and thought about what it was he was really fighting for, what changes he could affect in his current position, as he rode to his house in Notting Hill.

The house in Notting Hill was officially regarded as Tim's second home, and he only ever stayed there when he was in town for parliamentary business. His wife and children were still at home in Worcestershire, and although he missed them and would have preferred a normal family night, he had work to do. Paperwork needed catching up, policies needed reviewing, and he had new propositions to draw up for public sector funding which would have to be presented at the next cabinet meeting.

Nothing about this particular Wednesday had seemingly been out of the ordinary, and certainly nothing noticeably strange or unusual for Tim, except for one thing. One niggling little detail which kept him awake until the early hours of Thursday morning. It was the fact that his father had been dead for almost ten years, and, Tim considered, it would have been very difficult for him to have had a conversation over coffee.

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