

It was an elaborate attempt - a tiny Trojan horse placed within the mechanism of the centre, slowly edging its way across the plane of tiles, in search of a potential exit. Meanwhile, the rifling hand had found its pocket and fled an escape through the multiple channels that weaved in and out of the decorative pillars. The usual Corinthian foliage replaced by the carved faces similar to those shown on the repeating televisions of the shop windows. Plaster gargoyles watching on, nose-less through their own poor manufacture – and no sign of a well-dressed iconoclast. The heavy breathing of the escapee gradually petered away down the corridor, slowly dissolving into the noise of a gathering crowd, where a heard of bagged shoppers had been attracted by the clockwork diversion, the horse still making its pilgrimage to what currently looked like either a jewellers or a betting shop.

The guard was approximately half way through his stint, sat back on his fat laurels and occasionally performing a rotation in his chair as a source of amusement. He had amassed a tower of matching drink cups that served as a trophy of achievement, offsetting a day that was usually spent returning lost items (or children) to members of the public, or filing them (not the children) in a large cabinet at the end of his office. The large cabinet was possibly the only expel of energy that he had mustered in his ever-lengthening - and ultimately shortening - career, a rigorous cataloguing that had taken place for as long as he could remember. Unlike more simplistic systems of colour or brand, he had chosen to organise them into characters, each cabinet door designated with the different personalities that he had assigned. Close by, a jumper had sat poised for weeks, cobwebbed but still uncategorised, it was his size but he would never wear it. On the return of another foot spun circumference, the monitor flicked to the scene of a gathering crowd, an unusual blip in which a heard of shoppers had been attracted by a diversion in the screen, a tiny mechanical horse slowly edging its way across the faux classical floor. What at first seemed like a journey to a betting shop destination was suddenly diverted, knocked off course by a pair of passing feet, the wound legs charging for an exit via the escalator.

Wheezing strongly from the acceleration of his exit and still giddy on adrenaline, the potential error struck him cold. The black cotton glove on his left hand did not match the pasty skin of his right. The scar and the ink were visible, a scratched biro floor plan marking his undiscoverable route, in the path that lead through a thick black forest of hairs. It could have been lost in the nerves, but the blood speed and his full pockets made the worry less important. Besides, the crowds would have now dissipated and the only remnants would be comments left on the low-resolution online videos bounced between friends.

The fickle bags continued to stream along the well-lit channels, apart the escalator that appeared to be stuttering to a halt, jarring with two stallion legs that protruded, crushed in the inner workings. It simply hadn't been the pivotal moment that he had hoped for, a false lead that had only served to break the repetition of his desk-based orbit. The mechanics would arrive within the hour and the circuitry would be easy to fix; he was sure of this, it had happened many times before. Even on his return, the architected cup tower had toppled; a small blot of juice – most probably orange - had seeped from the pinnacle and found a new vein along a cobweb. The spider looked on confused, waiting patiently on the tradition of a fly. He returned to his orbit and scanned the cabinet recalling the imaginary inventory, each section of doors conjuring the faces and stories he had so far constructed. The black cotton was very particular indeed, with a stitched seaming fitting tightly round what would have been a relatively small hand. The problem was that there was a small-embroidered tag, so small that it could easily be missed, a tag that on closer inspection displayed a faded name scratched in ink. A name that simply made it too difficult to place within his categories, it was too concrete, it didn't feel like it could fit. He swiped at the obstructing cobwebs and placed it on top of the pile.