

POWERLESS

John Samson

Be different: buy direct
from the author or
tslbooks.uk

THE LIFT

The lift pinged softly, the sound further muted by the light green carpet that rolled away down the corridor of the tenth floor. Deon Scott, a man in his late thirties, shifted his weight to his right leg, preparing himself for the opening of the doors. He was well dressed in a black pinstriped suit, crisp white shirt and purple tie. His polished black shoes that peeked from beneath the precise hem of his suit trousers reflected the bright office lights. It was late, nearly nine o'clock and there was no sign of life in the office. Deon was tired; it had been a long hard week with very little financial reward.

He yawned and rubbed his eyes as the doors hissed open, then stepped into the car his vision slowly refocusing. A slight movement to his left startled him; he had not expected anyone to be in the lift. It was just the security guard.

Deon greeted him with an almost imperceptible nod of the head and the man acknowledged this in a similar manner then edged to the back of the car to accommodate Deon and maintain his personal space.

Both men stared straight ahead as the doors closed and Deon took in the other man's reflection in the mirror-like surface that drew across his line of vision. The guard was slightly taller than him and wore the khaki uniform that all the security personnel in the building wore, including the military-style beret. He stood straight at attention, his face devoid of emotion or thought.

Deon turned his attention from the reflection to the floor indicator above the door. Nine ... eight ... seven ...

The lift suddenly juddered to a halt and the light snapped off, plunging the car into a deep darkness and causing the occupants to lurch. In less than a second it steadied itself and an eerie quietness engulfed them.

'What's going on?' Deon's voice pierced the dark and the silence. He groped uncertainly for the side of the lift.

'Power cut, sir.' The guard's voice had a deep resonance to it.

'Power cut?'

'Yes sir.'

The silence descended again while Deon digested the information he had been given.

'So what happens now?' his voice sounded strange, an intruder into the quiet and dark.

'We wait, sir.'

'Wait? For what?'