60,000 UK citizens set to lose £170m in Cyprus crisis

PANIC AS EU RAIDS BRITONS’ SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

Up to 60,000 British savers are to lose thousands of pounds each after European finance chiefs ordered an unprecedented raid on personal bank accounts. Expats and UK troops based in Cyprus will have their savings decimated as part of a painful bid to bail out the bankrupt island.

By Simon Watkins and Alex Hawkes

Britons have about £1.7billion of deposits in Cyprus and could lose up to £170 million. The Cypriot government has agreed to seize up to ten per cent of savings and use the money to bail out the island’s crisis-hit banking system. The move sparked panic and queues yesterday as crowds desperately tried to withdraw their money at cash machines. Restrictions have been imposed to stop people emptying their accounts or moving their money out of the country following the

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Pages 25-28

Prologue
I am the Shade.
Through the dimly lit city, I see.
Through the eternal vow, I take flight.
Alone among the banks of the river Arno, I scramble, breathless,
turning left on to Via dei Castellani, making my way northward, huddling in the shadows of the Uffizi.

And still they pursue me.
The footsteps grow louder
now as they hunt with relentless determination.

For years they have pursued me.
Their persistence has kept me underground... forced me to live in purgatory... labouring
beneath the earth like a chaotic monster.

I am the Shade.

Here above ground, I raise my eyes to the north, but I am unable
To find a direct path to salvation...
For the Apennine Mountains are blocking out the first
light of dawn.

I pass behind the palazzo with its crenellated tower and one-handed clock... making through
the early-morning vendors in Piazza di San Firenze with their horse voices smelling of lampredotto and roasted olives.

Crossing before the Bargello, I cut west toward the spine of the
Radi and come up hard against the iron gate at the base of the
top.

Here all hesitation must be left behind.
I turn the handle and step into the past from which I know
there will be no return.
I urge my leads out to the narrow stair case...
spiraling skyward on soft marble treads, pitted and worn.

The voices echo from below.

Bequeathing, They sing behind me, unlamenting, calling me.

They do not understand what is coming... nor what I have done for them!

Ungrateful land!

As I climb, the visions come hard... the lustful bodies writhing
in fiery rain, the glutinous souls floating in excrement, the treacherous villains frozen in Satan's icy grasp.

I climb the final stairs and arrive at the top, staggering near
dead into the dawn morning air.

I rush to the head-high wall, peering through the slits. Far below
is the blessed city that I have made
my sanctuary from those who exiled me. The voices call out,
arriving close behind me.

‘What you've done is madness!’

'Madness brings madness.

‘For the love of God, they shout, 'tell us where you've hidden it!’

For precisely the love of God, I will not.

I stand now, cornered, my back to the cold stone. They stare deep
into my clear green eyes, and their expressions darkens, no
longer cadging, but threatening.

‘You know we have our methods. We can force you to tell us
where it is.’

For that reason, I have climbed halfway to heaven.

With no warning, I turn and reach up, curling my fingers onto
the high ledge, pulling myself up, scrambling onto my knees,
then standing... unsteady at the precipice. Guide me, dear Virgil,
across the void.

They rush forward in disbelief,
wanting to grab at my feet, but fearing they will upset my balance and knock me off. They
beg now, in quiet desperation, but I have turned my back. I know
what I must do.

Beneath me, dizzyingly far
beneath me, the red tile roofs
spread out like a sea of fire on the countryside...
illuminating the fair land upon which giants
are roaming... Giusto, Donatello, Brunelleschi, Michelangelo, Botticelli.

I inch my toes to the edge.

‘Come down! They shout. ‘It's not too late!’

O, wifful ignorance! Do you not see the future? Do you not grasp
the splendour of my creation?

The necessity?

I gladly make this ultimate sacrifice... and with it I will
extinguish your final hope of
finding what you seek.

You will never locate it in time.

Hundreds of feet below, the cobblestone piazza beckons like a
tranquil oasis. How I long for more time... but time is the one
commodity even my vast fortune cannot afford.

In these final seconds, I gaze down to the piazza, and behold a	sight that startles me.

I see your face.

You are gazing up at me from the
shadows. Your eyes are
mournful, and yet in them I sense
a veneration for what I have accomplished. You understand
I have no choice. For the love
of Mankind, I must protect my
masterpieces.

It grows even now... stee... stammering beneath the blood-red waters of the lagoon that reflects
no stars.

And so, I lift my eyes from years
and contemplate the horizon. High above this bur-
dened world, I make my final supplication.

Dearest God, I pray the world
Chapter 1

The memories materialised slowly... like bubbles surfacing from the darkness of a bottomless well.

A veiled woman.

Robert Langdon gazed at her across a river whose churning waters ran red with blood. On the far bank, the woman stood facing him, motionless, solemn, her face hidden by a shroud. In her hand she gripped a blue tunic cloth, which she now raised in honour of the sea of corpses at her feet. The smell of death hung heavy in the air.

Seek, the woman whispered. And ye shall find.

Langdon heard the words as if they had spoken them inside his head. Who are you? he called out, but his voice made no sound.

Time grew short, she whispered.

Seek and find.

Langdon took a step towards the river, but he could see the waters were blood-red and too deep to traverse.

When Langdon raised his eyes again to the veiled woman, the bodies at her feet had multiplied. There were hundreds of them now, maybe thousands, some still alive, writhing in agony, dying en masse. Deaths... consumed by fire, buried in flames, devouring one another. He could hear the mournful cries of human suffering echoing across the water. The woman moved toward him, holding out her slender hands, as if beckoning for help.

Who are you? Langdon again shouted.

In response, the woman reached up and slowly lifted the veil from her face. She was strikingly beautiful, and yet older than Langdon had imagined - in her 60s perhaps, stoic and serene, like a timeless statue. She had a sternly set jaw, deep soulful eyes, and long, silver-grey hair that cascaded over her shoulders in rings. A muted set of lips paused hung around her neck - a single snare coiled around a staff.

Langdon sensed he knew her... trusted her? But why? She pointed now to a writhing pair of legs, which protruded upside down from the earth, apparently belonging to some poor soul who had been buried headfirst to his waist. The man's pale thigh bore a single letter - written in mid-X. R? Langdon thought, uncertain. As if... Robert? Is that... me?

The woman's face revealed...
Dan's fired up by Dante

In my new book, Inferno, I am returning to the heart of Europe, and in particular to the works of the great Italian writer Dante Alighieri. Although I studied Dante's Inferno as a student, it wasn't until recently, while researching in Florence, that I came to appreciate the enduring influence of his work on the modern world. I believe people enjoy learning about the world in which they live. They find it interesting, for example, to view the Church of great works of art through a different lens, perhaps through the eyes of a specialist in this case, the symbolist and my main protagonist, Robert Langdon. With Inferno, as with my past books, the only fictional elements are the characters; all the artwork, history, locations, documents, and science are real. In Inferno, Langdon must navigate a fresh landscape of codes, symbols and science... along with more than a few secret passageways.

HISTORY MAN: Dan Brown has set his new book in the heart of Europe

nothing. Seek and find, she repeated.
Without warning, she began radiating a white light... brighter and brighter. Her entire body started vibrating intensely, and then, in a rush of thunder, she exploded into a thousand splintering shards of light.
Langdon bolted awake, shouting.
The room was bright. He was alone. The sharp smell of medicinal alcohol hung in the air, and somewhere a machine pinged in quiet rhythm with his heart.
Langdon tried to move his right arm, but a sharp pain restrained him. He looked down and saw an IV hanging at the skin of his forearm. His pulse quickened, and the machines kept pace, pinging more rapidly.

Where am I? What happened?
The back of Langdon's head throbbed, a gnawing pain. Gingerly, he reached up with his free arm and touched his scalp, trying to locate the source of his headache. Beneath his matted hair, he found the hard nubs of a dozen or so stitches caked with dried blood.
He closed his eyes, trying to remember an accident. Nothing. A total blank.

Think.

Only darkness.

A man in scrubs burst in, apparently alerted by Langdon's racing heart monitor. He had a shaggy beard, bushy moustache, and gentle eyes that radiated a thoughtful calm beneath his overgrown eyebrows.

'What... happened?' Langdon managed. 'Did I have an accident?'
The bearded man put a finger to his lips and then rushed out, calling for someone down the hall.
Langdon turned his head, but the movement sent a spike of pain radiating through his skull. He took deep breaths and let the pain pass. Then, very gently and methodically, he surveyed his sterile surroundings.
The hospital room had a single bed. No flowers. No cards. Langdon saw his clothes on a nearby counter, folded inside a clear plastic bag. They were covered with blood.

'God. I must have been bad.'

Now Langdon rotated his head very slowly towards the window, beside his bed. It was dark outside. Night.

All Langdon could see in the glass was his own reflection - an ashen stranger, pale and weary, attached to tubes and wires, surrounded by medical equipment.

Voices approached in the hall, and Langdon turned his gaze back towards the room. The doctor returned, now accompanied by a woman.

She appeared to be in her early thirties. She wore blue scrubs and had tied her blonde hair back in a thick ponytail that swung behind her as she walked.

'Tm Dr Nina Brooks,' she said, giving Langdon a smile as she entered. 'I'll be working with Dr Marconi tonight.'

Langdon nodded weakly.

Thal and Isono, Dr Brooks moved with the assertive gait of an athlete. Even in shapeless scrubs, she had a warlike elegance about her. Despite the absence of any makeup that Langdon could see, her complexion appeared unusually smooth, and the only blemish was a tiny beauty mark just above her lips. Her eyes, though a gentle brown, seemed unusually penetrating.

He should have gone up Kings Cross
She checked her silenced weapon and stared up at the window - Langdon's light had just gone out...

Langdon probed his memory and then shook his head, which pained in protest.

"Mr. Langdon, you are," he said, still writing, "a couple of routine questions for you. What day of the week is it?"

Langdon thought for a moment. "It's Saturday," he remembered earlier today walking across campus going to an afternoon lecture series, and then that's pretty much the last thing I remember. Did I fall?

"We'll get to that. Do you know where you are?"

Langdon took his best guess. "Massachusetts General Hospital?"

Dr. Brooks made another note. And is there someone we should call for you? Wife? Children?"

"Nobody," Langdon replied instinctively. He had always enjoyed the solitude and independence provided him by his chosen life of bachelorhood, although he had to admit, in his current situation, he'd prefer to have a familiar face at his side. There are some colleagues I could call, but I'm fine."

Langdon probed his dark recesses of his memory, but again saw the veiled woman. She was standing on the banks of a backward red river surrounded by bodies. The stench of death returned.

Langdon was overcome with a sudden, instinctive sense of danger. . . not just for himself, but for everyone. The pinging of his heart monitor accelerated rapidly. His muscles tightened, and he tried to sit up."

Dr. Brooks quickly placed a firm hand on Langdon's sternum, forcing him back down. She shot a glance at the bearded doctor, who walked over to a nearby counter and began preparing something.

"Mr. Langdon, anxiety is common with brain injuries, but you need to keep your pulse rate down. No movement. No excitement. Just lie still and rest. You'll be OK. Your memory will come back slowly."

The doctor returned now with a syringe, which he handed to Dr. Brooks. She injected its contents into Langdon's IV. "Just a mild sedative to calm you down," she explained, "and also to help with the pain." She stood to go. "You'll be fine, Mr. Langdon. Just sleep."

"If you need anything, press the button on your bedside."

She turned out the light and departed with the bearded doctor.

In the darkness, Langdon felt the drugs and the fear from his system almost instantly. Dragging his body back down into that deep well from which he had emerged. He fought the feeling, forcing his eyes open in the darkness of his room. He tried to sit up, but his body felt like cement.

As Langdon shifted, he found himself again facing the window. The lights were out; and in the dark glass, his own reflection had disappeared, replaced by an illusory skyline in the distance.

An old man stepped out of the darkness. It was a move he knew the medieval structure well. It was unique in the world. Unfortunately, it was also located 4,000 miles from Massachusetts....

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Outside his window, hidden in the shadows of the Via Boregallici, a powerfully built woman effortlessly unstraddled her BMW motorcycle and advanced with the intensity of a panther stalking its prey.

Her gaze was sharp. Her close-cropped hair - styled into spikes - stood out against the unturned collar of her black leather riding suit. She checked her silenced weapon, and stared up at the window where Robert Langdon's light had just gone out.

Earlier tonight her original mission had gone horribly awry. The vow of a single dove had changed everything.

Now she had come to make it right.

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