

DEATH ISLAND: THE JOURNEY

by Kelsey Ketch

Excerpt

Tucker barked at something that had recently washed up onto the shore. Curious, I walked toward the obvious tangled mess. “What do you have there?”

I pushed him aside and grabbed the green and grey mass. I peeled off the debris and seaweed and rinsed the mud and sand off in the Mouth of the Severn. From the mess appeared an object, which I could only describe as an elaborate golden coin, about four inches in diameter. Yet, the slightest touch caused three outer rings of glyphs—similar to the ones painted on the map—to rotate around a sitting man with a long headdress, bowl, and club. His face profiled, and his legs crossed. The most outer ring consisted of nineteen complicated glyphs, including an eagle’s head, a goat-like face, and a demon face; the middle ring held twenty square glyphs with three curls underneath, some depicting things like hands, skulls, and faces; and the innermost ring had a series of dots and lines—much like Roman numerals—that counted up to thirteen. On the other side of the coin, the same skeletal figure from the map sat in the center while nine teetered glyphs were spaced out along the outer rings—five on the outer ring and four in the middle. Among the glyphs of the middle ring were four arrows pointing in what I would call the cardinal directions. Overlapping the middle and inner rings were three large arrows. Much like a compass pointing north, east, and west. And to the south, two skulls faced each other, leaving a microscopic gap.

My mind spun with disbelief. This had to be related to Death Island. I was sure of it. But how? And where did it come from? How did it get here?

The breeze carried my hair off my shoulder, a shiver ran down my spine, and goose bumps unraveled across my arms when I sensed a presence nearby. I turned to spy a man as pale as ash with a beard as white as snow watching me. Black veins stretched throughout his exposed flesh. His eyes nothing but two black pieces of coal. The mere sight of him made me jump in my own skin, nearly causing me to drop the Mayan coin as I gasped in fright. In an attempt to regain my composure, I took my eyes off the man for a second to steady myself, only for them to fall back on the gardener, or ghost, I met at the Railings’ home.