

The Michelangelo Quagmire

New York City, present day

Harris was sweating through his new Brooks Brothers suit. He was overweight, out of shape, overdressed for the heat, and running late. He moved as quickly as he could through a phalanx of rich Manhattanites as they maneuvered in and out of posh townhouses and overpriced boutiques. This was Harris's fifth and final stop of the day and the only one that involved him committing a felony.

The gallery's air was cool and dry, carrying a faint smell of aged wood and polished stone. Harris exhaled as he took in the scent, relieved to escape the sticky New York heat. He was greeted by a familiar-looking woman with coiffed auburn hair and subtle, expensive perfume. Her pretty face was coiled in a look of mild exasperation. She took in Harris's sweat-soaked face and red cheeks and found him wanting. Her green eyes flashed.

"You have kept Jonathan waiting," she trilled in her faintly posh British accent.

Harris was briefly speechless. "Uh...Clementine?"

"Yes, Harris?" She raised an eyebrow, feigning surprise. "You remember me? Let's catch up as we walk, shall we? You really are quite late."

With that, Clem was off, her long legs moving swiftly up the marble staircase in heels that clearly cost a fortune. Harris followed, catching a faint hint of designer perfume and European confidence. Clem led him into the main showroom—a room straight out of a robber baron's mansion, with herringbone parquet floors, mahogany wainscoting, and period furniture accented in gold and silver. Cerulean-blue walls displayed paintings in gilt frames, each detail as grand as any fine museum.

“So, you’re still in New York, Clem?” Harris asked.

Clem shot him a sharp look. “Straight to the point, yeah? Americans! Yes, still here. After grad school I called off my engagement, phoned my father, and he pulled some strings. So here I am.”

“Oh. Hmm,” Harris replied awkwardly.

He was saved from more awkward small talk by the unmistakable report of a man’s dress shoes clacking off ancient hardwood floors. They both turned to greet Jonathan P. Thacker. The gallery owner covered a lot of ground quickly for a man of modest size. His round face and full lips supported a constant, full-wattage smile. Younger than he sounded on the phone, thought Harris, perhaps mid to late 30s. His eyes were pure magic, brilliant blue orbs pulsing with excitement and mischief. His head was crowned by unruly tufts of curly brown hair, a chaotic mass which he seemingly put zero effort into controlling.

“Harris, so nice to finally meet you!” said Thacker with real warmth in his voice. He let his Brooklyn accent boom from floor to ceiling.

Harris looked sheepish. “Sorry for the delay.”

“No apology needed! If you were talking to Nail Renfrow at the Met, I’m sure he rambled on. It’s a wonder, in this heat, you made it so fast. Come!”

The gallery owner made a quick twist of his wrist and headed toward a hidden door in the wainscoted wall. He opened the door and lead them into a small, business-like showroom. The space was functional—plain walls, sensible carpet, two black leather chairs facing an easel, and a low marble table between them. Storage racks lined the walls, holding countless treasures. Once Jonathan and Harris were seated, Clem moved to the wet bar, pouring a generous amount of dark liquid into a crystal glass.

“Join me! A drink before the war, eh?”

“Um, sure,” Harris said, unsure if this was the right move.

“Scotch? It’s a fabulous Macallan,” said Clem with silky ease.

Harris desperately wanted a beer, but he knew it would be bad form to ask for a beer when Clem had just poured the gallery owner two fingers from a \$4,000 bottle of Macallan 30 Year Fine Oak Single Malt Scotch.

“That’d be great. Thanks,” said Harris meekly.

The two men clinked glasses. One large gulp later Jonathan had downed approximately \$300 dollars’ worth of Scotch; Harris nibbled speculatively at the edge of his glass. The ceremonial first drinks out of the way, Jonathan made another of his wrist motions which sent Clementine to a discreetly-placed phone. Thirty seconds later two gallery technicians went to work carefully placing an oil painting on the easel. Clem closed the heavy blackout drapes and adjusted the lights. The room was dark except for the gemlike surface of the painting.

Harris got out of his chair and slowly circled the painting, a hunter sizing up his prey. Chin in his left hand, he moved in and out, getting closer, then farther away from the painting. The portrait captured an elegant woman around forty, seated in a green velvet chair. Her red hair, pinned back, framed a sharp, porcelain face with an enigmatic smile. The artist had accentuated her angular features and swanlike neck, making her striking rather than conventionally beautiful. Dressed in a black silk gown with silver highlights that curved like an Art Nouveau feather, she seemed both regal and remote.

Jonathan joined Harris in front of the painting. “So, what do you think?” asked Jonathan.

Harris turned his attention to Jonathan. “Better than I could have hoped. Really flawless. Exquisite surface texture. A poor man’s Madame X.”

“That’s why I put it aside for you,” said Jonathan, his Brooklyn accent in full cry.

Harris pondered some more. “I love it. Perfect for my museum and perfect for the donor, too. But I can’t do \$350,000. I have a budget of 250K, max. I could probably talk him up to 275, maybe get the museum to sweeten the pot up to 300. But 350 is out of the question.”

Harris waited for the voluble Brooklynite to explode into a profanity-laced tirade. To his surprise, the gallery owner took on an introspective air.

"Are we really going to haggle over this? Let’s be honest—you’re here for the trip, not the painting," Jonathan leaned in with a smirk. "The time travel fee is 250; I don’t set that price or control it, and I only see a cut of it. I’ve got 50 into this piece, so at 350, I’m barely making my margin. The painting’s just a front. Don’t get lost in the small stuff, or this opportunity will slip right past you. Don’t miss your shot." He sounded almost apologetic.

Harris’s face registered the chagrin he felt. He held up his mobile phone. “I’ll make the call.” Harris stepped outside and briefly spoke with his benefactor, an elderly man who’d asked him to find "something pretty" to honor his late wife, who had passed after a long battle with Alzheimer’s. Harris had browsed other galleries over the past few days as cover, but he knew he had to find the piece here, and this red-haired beauty was ideal. Jonathan’s fee would discreetly be drawn from the total, a clever move—if it all held together.

Harris couldn’t suppress a smile as he walked back into the showroom. “He’s on board. I have a bank check for a \$50,000 down payment with me. The remainder will be wired by the end of business today. Just have one of your financial people call this number to set up the details.” He handed Jonathan the check and a business card with a phone number.

Jonathan’s perpetual full-wattage smile somehow got even brighter at this news.

“What now?” Harris asked.

“First, we secure the funds. Then, if all goes well, you’ll be off at 5 PM sharp.” Jonathan paused, leaning in. “But first—a word of warning.”

“Warning? Look, I know I’m screwed if anyone finds out,” Harris muttered, nodding at the painting.

“Not just that.” Jonathan’s voice dropped. “Time travel isn’t just risky—it’s painful. Follow the rules, or you might not come back.”

With a flourish, Jonathan produced two sheets of heavy linen paper embossed with the gallery’s logo. Near the top of the first sheet was printed:

THE THREE RULES

1. **Stay Within Range:** Do not move more than 1,000 feet from the landing site, or you may miss the beacon and be left behind. Your guide will help keep you within this area.
2. **Stay Within the Cloak:** Remain inside the aura of your cloaking device to avoid any unintended impacts on future events, i.e., the so-called “butterfly effect.”
3. **Return on Time:** You have a set time limit. When your watch signals, ensure your entire body is on the landing pad, or any part outside will remain behind. Failure to return on time could be fatal.

The second sheet was blank where Harris’s contact list and questions should have been.

“Wait, what? I submitted half a dozen names and thirty-two questions!” Harris protested.

Jonathan’s expression was stone-cold. “This is business. If you want to go, this is your chance. I had nothing to do with that; the developer made the final call. No exceptions.”

“But I need to ask questions! I need to talk to him!” Harris argued.

“It’s out of my hands. You can walk away now. If you go, you agree to the three rules—no exceptions,” Jonathan replied.

Harris glanced at the clock: 4:33. The trip was set for 5 PM. “Yeah, sure. Like I have a choice,” he muttered.

“In for a penny, in for a pound,” Jonathan crowed. “Maybe Clem has some insights. After all, you went to grad school together.” He left, leaving Harris and Clem alone in the room.

Harris looked stunned. “You’re coming with me?”

“Third trip. First to Renaissance Italy,” she said, her calm hiding clear excitement.

“I remember—didn’t you get an MFA before switching to art history? Always wanted to paint like the old masters.”

“Something like that.” Clem smiled, poured herself some Scotch, and passed Harris a cold beer. “Cheers.”

Curiosity flooded Clem’s eyes. “One question—why risk so much for this? You have a good job and all.”

Harris shrugged. “I have a job but I hate it. I need to get back East. This trip could land me a spot as a doctoral student under Kenneth Mack at Harvard.”

“Been years since Mack’s taken on a student,” Clem said, raising an eyebrow.

“He’ll take me when he reads my research proposal.”

Neither of them spoke for a moment.

“We’re going to meet Michelangelo!” Clem squealed.

“That’s the plan,” Harris grinned.

“Don’t worry about the rules,” Clem added with a sly smile. “I’ve done this before.”

Florence, Italy, 1502

Every muscle in Harris's body hurt, his head throbbed in time with his heartbeat. He lay flat on a bed of scratchy hay that pressed into his back, and the thick, humid air reeked of horse manure and stale sweat. A fly buzzed close to his ear, and as he tried to call out, his throat felt dry and raw.

"You alright?" Clem's voice cut through the haze. Her face appeared above him, grinning. "Wake up, love! Time's wasting!"

Clem helped Harris up. "We're in a small stable, right outside Michelangelo's studio. I've been peeking in through a hole in the wall for a few minutes while I was waiting for you to come to." Clem pointed to the hole. "Nothing too exciting, he's dictating a shopping list or some such to an assistant."

She looked at the watch-like gizmo on her wrist. "Oh, and we're right on time, October 6, 1502. Late afternoon, I think."

A weary horse watched them from across the stable and knickered. Clem stepped aside so Harris could take a turn peering into the dim room. It was a modest space with sparse furnishings, a high ceiling, and a large west-facing window. The overcast sky cast a somber light, barely lifted by a small, flickering fireplace.

Michelangelo sat at a crude table, legs crossed, deep in thought, reciting a shopping list. "Get three new chisels from the blacksmith near the Ponte Vecchio. Also, more charcoal from Paolo's shop on Via del Corso. And as much paper as you can find."

Michelangelo's voice was high-pitched, dry, gritty, sandpaper and sawdust. The assistant, an attractive young man of 18 or 19, sat across from Michelangelo and took notes. The flawless translation came through a tiny, state-of-the-art device in his ear.

Without warning, Michelangelo started yelling at the assistant. “I need these supplies if I am to finish my giant!” the artist thundered. “Tell that little weasel one of the consuls from the Opera del Duomo will pay him!”

The young man looked worried. “But master, the vendors want payment upfront. They are afraid the city will not honor your debts.”

Michelangelo’s face turned red. “Who are they to question me? I work for the chief magistrate of the Republic of Florence. They doubt me! They doubt the Republic! All will be paid for!”

The diminutive artist paced for a moment before returning to his verbal assault. “Do I have to do everything myself? Can I not delegate even the smallest task to you?!”

The two men were inches apart now. Michelangelo, who was perhaps a half dozen years older than his assistant, was nevertheless quite a short man and of slight build. His assistant, on the other hand, was well-muscled and nearly 6 feet tall; the famous artist would not stand a chance in a fight. But the assistant was clearly deferential to the master, who by this time was a terror to behold. Spittle flying from his mouth and hands flailing, Michelangelo stepped quickly toward the bigger man and slapped him, hard, across the face.

“I’m surrounded by idiots and children!” He bellowed, pivoted on one foot, and stormed out the door.

“Shit,” said Harris. “What now?”

“What happened?” asked Clem.

“Michelangelo just left in a huff, I think to do the shopping himself. What do we do? If we follow him we can only go 1,000 feet from the beacon, but if we stay here we’re stuck watching the assistant!”

Clem was thinking. “Let’s talk to the assistant. He might know when Michelangelo will return. Based on my other trips, we’ve got about two hours until the vortex beacon reappears.”

“Talk? What about the cloaking device and the butterfly effect?”

Clem’s eyes twinkled with mischief. “The device malfunctioned.” She flicked a switch on her wrist, and everything sharpened into focus. “The translator still works, but we’re visible. If our cover’s blown, we might as well make the most of it.”

“But I don’t speak archaic Italian, sputtered Harris. “I can barely keep up with regular Italian!” Harris threw up his hands.

“The translator can suggest dialogue in archaic Italian. Accents will be tricky, but it’ll have to do,” said Clem.

“And what about our clothes?” asked Harris, exasperated. Both were still in modern suits.

Clem looked around. “I have a plan for that, too,” she said, triumph in her eyes.

Ten minutes later they emerged from the stable onto rain-splattered Florentine cobblestones wearing peasant clothing liberated from a nearby clothesline. Worn over their modern clothes, the peasant duds, ripe with odor, helped them blend in.

They walked quietly to the front of the studio, the rough cobblestones pressing against the thin soles of their borrowed shoes. Clem knocked, and a faint echo resonated from inside. For a tense moment, there was only the distant hum of Florence—vendors calling, the rumble of carts on stone—until finally, the door creaked open and the assistant appeared, his gaze sharp and wary.

“Yes? What is it?” said the young man, worry coloring his face.

He had a long, straight aquiline nose, furrowed brows, deep-set eyes, an unruly mane of hair, large, calloused hands, a muscular yet slender build, and a distrustful look in his eyes.

Clem, always a leader, took charge. “Hello, we are looking for the master, Messier Buonarroti,” she offered, in slow, deliberate, and apparently not very good archaic Italian.

His eyes grew suspicious. “Your accent – are you from Milan? Rome? Did the Pope send you? My master left, but he may return at any moment. You must leave now. If he finds out I let foreigners into his studio, it will not go well.”

The young man moved to close the door, but Harris spotted something in the studio that gave him courage. He stepped further into the studio, blocking the door with his body.

“We are not from Rome or Milan. We have a far stranger tale to tell, one that you will want to hear. One that will benefit you and Messier Buonarroti, I think,” said Harris in what he hoped was a more acceptable accent.

The young man looked back and forth between Harris and Clem. He was confused and worried, but curious, too.

Harris sensed the young assistant was wavering, so he slowly took his pack off his shoulder and fished around until he found what he wanted. He handed the assistant an iPad with a single, high-resolution image displayed. It was a closeup of Michelangelo’s singular masterpiece, David.

The assistant took the device, said a prayer, and fainted dramatically onto the studio floor, iPad clunking on rough-hewn stone.

Clem shot daggers at Harris with her eyes. “Why the hell did you do that!”

Instead of answering, Harris pointed to the stage at the back of the studio. On it stood a massive block of white Carrara marble at least 15 feet tall. It was only roughed out, but even in this nascent state, it was unmistakable.

“Is that...could it really be?” Clem asked, awestruck.

“It is,” Harris confirmed. “The very block of marble rejected by others until Michelangelo took it on. He signed the contract over a year ago. But none of the sources place him working in a studio—only in the churchyard, day and night, for two years.” Harris was captivated. “In January 1504, after two years of work, this block will be unveiled as the David we know today.”

The assistant was stirring. “I am Giovanni Paolo Giovinco. Who the hell are you and why are you torturing me?”

“I’m Harris, this is Clementine. We’re um, we’re from the future,” he said, unsure of what else to say.

Giovanni took this well, considering. He picked up the iPad off the floor and nodded silently. He gave a mirthless laugh. “Yes, of course you are. Or you were sent from the Devil to deliver me to the gates of Hell. Either explanation seems equally plausible.”

“We don’t want to make problems for you. If we could ask you a few questions we’ll leave and never return,” said Harris.

Giovanni placed the iPad on the table gingerly and gravely considered the device. “He is the least of my problems right now. You know what you’re doing, yes? You showed me that, that impossible image, on that infernal contraption to shock me.”

Clem tried her luck. “I know it’s a lot to take in, but we really are from the future – about 500 years in the future, actually.”

She took off the peasant clothing and made a gesture for Harris to do the same. Without their Renaissance disguises, they made an odd pair in the modest studio.

Giovanni swayed again but kept his balance this time. “Dio Mio,” he said as he made the sign of the cross. “On second thought, yes, please ask me your questions and leave,” the assistant pleaded.

Thirty minutes later, Harris had filled up an entire legal pad with notes he’d take from Giovanni. Details of the contract, how much was promised to the master upon completion, Michelangelo’s daily routine, how the creative process worked. Harris asked questions, while Giovanni flipped through the books the duo brought with them. The most interesting part of their conversation centered on Giovanni’s role.

“I’m his assistant, yes, but more than that,” Giovanni said with a sly smile. Historians speculated that Michelangelo was gay, and Giovanni’s demure answer suggested the rumors might be true. “As you’ve guessed by now, I am the model for the giant. Despite what you heard earlier, the master has great faith in me. I am, in a sense, his muse. We discuss his art every day—the creative process, David’s thoughts before facing Goliath, that pivotal moment of anticipation. Everyone knows the outcome, but the master wants to capture the complex emotions just before the clash.”

“You are his student? Harris guessed.

Giovanni looked momentarily imperious. “Yes, naturally. Surely, when you consult your books, your fancy machines, you see that I will be a famous artist, too. Not as famous as the master, but famous nonetheless.”

Harris and Clem both tried to hide the truth in their faces, but Giovanni was a bright young man. A dark cloud descended over his face. “Not so famous, then?”

Harris tried to assuage the young man’s pride. “I have not come across your name, though my research has focused on Michelangelo. My training is incomplete and I may have

simply missed you.” Harris mused. “Perhaps you become a poet, or a philosopher, or move to a foreign country to work for a far-away king. Heaven forbid, but perhaps you die young of disease or some other calamity before you make a big name for yourself,” he said in a consolatory tone.

Giovanni walked toward the nascent David. He spoke with his back to them. “I’ve looked through all your books, some of which I can read, a little. Others I looked at the pictures. I am not in your future, but the master reaches amazing heights. The Sistine Ceiling, St. Peter’s Cathedral, a Pope’s monument!”

A look of grief colored his iconic features. “Of all the possibilities you laid out, only an early death seems likely. Or desirable.”

He handed them a drawing. “I drew this for the master three months ago.”

Harris and Clem were speechless. On the rough paper was a flawless drawing of the Madonna and Child—technically as precise as any Renaissance work Harris had seen, with perfect control of light, proportion, and perspective. But beyond that, it radiated a sweetness and innocence in the Virgin’s face. It was a presentation piece, meant to prove Giovanni’s readiness to leave his apprenticeship and open his own shop.

“He refused my release,” Giovanni said. “Says I still have much to learn. But I’m no fool. I visit every studio, every church; I see what Leonardo and Raphael are doing. I know I’m ready, but my master will not let me go.”

Suddenly, they heard Michelangelo yelling from the street outside. Giovanni furrowed his brows, gathered the assorted books, and wordlessly led the pair to a door discreetly cut into the wall.

“This leads directly onto the stable. Please leave. The master...well, you have seen. I can't explain what I do not understand.”

Harris and Clem thanked Giovanni and walked through the door. They emerged into the early evening gloom of the barn. Harris walked out of the stable and pointed into the distance.

“That's the Florence Cathedral. We're closer than I thought,” Harris said, wonder in his eyes. He started walking. Clem, drawn in by his enthusiasm, followed. Her device beeped – only 30 minutes until the vortex portal reappeared to take them back to the 21st century.

A short walk later and they were at the back end of Santa Maria del Fiori, the church known the world 'round as the Duomo. As they walked around the green and white marble edifice, a sharp voice caught their attention.

“Signor and Signora, stop, please, police!!”

Harris stopped short. Clem, absorbed in a tourist guidebook, nearly ran into his back.

A young man wearing a black doublet, white shirt, black pants, and carrying a sword in one hand was walking briskly to catch up with the couple.

“Yes, what is the problem,” offered Harris, conciliatory.

“The problem! Your wife is dressed most immodestly. It is scandalous. Get off the street immediately or I will have to arrest you both!”

In their hurry, they had forgotten their disguises.

The policeman lifted his sword toward the pair.

Harris held his hands out in a gesture of surrender and calm. “Sir, we are foreigners, from England. Our fashions are different. We meant no offense.”

“Where are you staying?” demanded the young policeman.

Harris offered a hopeless look to Clem. “We just came from Master Buonarotti’s studio,” he said, pointing in that direction.

While the young policeman considered this, Clem stepped close to Harris and, without warning, kissed him hard on the lips. During the kiss, she slipped off her wrist gizmo and secreted it into a hidden pocket in Harris’s jacket.

“No worries, mate. I’ll be fine here; head to the vortex. No tears,” she whispered into his ear.

Harris was about to say something when his world went black. A second policeman had approached from behind, read the situation, decided Harris was a threat, and hit him on the head with a baton.

He awoke, sometime later, leaning against the Duomo wall, head throbbing, as a group of beggar children rifled through his pockets. His bag was there, but his iPad—and more alarmingly, Clem—were gone. Staggering to his feet, two things happened simultaneously: the watch-like device in his pocket beeped, showing just two minutes left, and a group of men approached him with menace in their eyes.

“Sorry, Clem,” he whispered into the Florentine dusk, then dashed toward Michelangelo’s stable.

Harris stumbled right into Michelangelo outside the stable.

“Watch yourself, idiot!” the artist snapped, never slowing his pace.

As Michelangelo stormed off, muttering, a thin blue ribbon of flame appeared. The vortex beacon. Harris stepped into it, leaving the Renaissance behind.

Cambridge, Massachusetts, present day

Harris found Kenneth R. Mack in his office. One long wall of the office was dominated by hardwood paneling fitted with dozens of built-in shelves lined with antique books. To Harris' eye, many of the volumes looked old enough to be from the Renaissance. The wall opposite the bookshelves was beautifully fenestrated with old glass panels fitted into pointed-arch woodwork, topped by a stained-glass clerestory. Natural light flooded the academic's mini cathedral. Mack was seated behind a beautiful antique Italian Renaissance desk.

Harris knocked gently at the open door.

"Come in," the professor called out without looking up from the book in front of him.

He was a trim, fit man of about 60. An avid cyclist, he was rumored to cycle hundreds of miles through the Italian Alps every summer. Wire-rimmed glasses framed ever-curious small black diamond eyes. His face was sharp everywhere, too many points and not enough hollows. He wore a blue and white checked button-up shirt, sleeved rolled up, faded blue jeans, and a well-worn pair of sandals.

"Please, sit," said Mack.

Harris fidgeted, too nervous to speak.

"Your application essay was a pleasant surprise," said the scholar. "Very apropos for the times, I think," he said in a calm, measured baritone.

"Thank you," managed Harris, relief coloring his features.

"Sister Clementina of San Miniato! I've been trying to get a read on her for two decades! Your archival sources are impeccable. A real revelation. She was English? Learned to paint from her father, a diplomat and a little-known artist at the court of Henry VII? All of this is new to me. To everyone, really."

Mack gestured to his books, as if to verify his claim, then moved to the window overlooking a small quad. He paused there before turning back to Harris.

“How did you choose Clementina as your subject?” Mack asked, his surprise barely hidden.

Harris hesitated. He couldn't tell the truth—that when he returned, only two books on Michelangelo remained where there had been dozens. That a database search now yielded only a few articles, where once there were hundreds. Wikipedia claimed Michelangelo died suspiciously on October 6, 1502, at age 27, crushed by the marble he was sculpting, with his assistant, Giovanni Giovinco, initially suspected. Cleared of any wrongdoing, Giovinco went on to become a major Renaissance master.

Just as Harris began to panic, he received, improbably, an email from Clementine—sent from 500 years ago.

From: ClemColgate78@gmail.com
To: HarrisHSmith77@gmail.com

Dear Harris.

This probably won't go through, but I had to try. Don't worry about me. I'm fine. I'm happy. I never belonged in the 21st century anyway. I was taken in by some nuns at San Miniato al Monte. I gave them a cover story about my father being a painter and an English diplomat, etc... I walk through the streets of Florence every day and study the Renaissance masters as they work. I get time to paint every day, and I'm getting better and better. Soon the headmistress says I'll paint a fresco in the local church. I am at peace. I do my work for the nunnery. I study. I paint. Look for me in your fancy university library sometime.

Love, Clem.

A week later, Harris drained his savings account and flew to Italy. There, he scoured obscure archives, churches, and libraries. Upon his return to America, he mailed his application essay off to Mack.

Harris snapped out of his reverie. “A friend in Florence emailed me out of the blue. Said I’d find some interesting documents regarding Sister Clementina in the archives of San Miniato al Monte,” said Harris – as close to the truth as he’d ever get.

Mack retrieved a letter from his desk and handed it to Harris. “Congratulations. Classes start September 3rd,” said Mack through a warm smile.

Harris took the acceptance letter and shook Mack’s hand.

“Would you like to see an advanced copy of my latest work?” asked Mack, who motioned toward the book on his desk.

In big letters on the cover, Harris read: **Giovani Giovinco: Rethinking the Sistine Ceiling**

Author Bio

James Peck serves as the director and curator of the Sears Art Museum at Utah Tech University, where he also teaches art history. With a PhD in Art History specializing in the art of the American West, and a Master’s degree focused on Italian Renaissance and Baroque art, his academic expertise is broad and diverse. An aspiring novelist, James writes short stories that traverse themes of time travel, noir, and the zombie apocalypse, hoping one day to share his imaginative worlds with a broader audience.