# CHAPTER ONE

*'When preparing to travel, lay out all*
*your clothes and all your money.*
*Then take half the clothes and twice the money.'*

**SUSAN HELLER**

## The 06:20 High-Speed from St. Pancras

The hands on the impressive Dent station clock high up on the wall show it is exactly six o'clock. In the morning. I am standing on platform thirteen of the almighty St. Pancras International station in London. Sleek, four-hundred-metre-long Eurostar trains are on the adjacent platforms, cocooned behind high security fences, patiently awaiting their first passengers of the day, ready to whisk them off to romantic Paris, hip Brussels, modern Rotterdam or liberal Amsterdam. Above me is the vast and impressive structure of the station's Victorian wrought iron roof, meticulously bolted together back in 1868. For a hundred years a veritable cathedral of steam. To get here at this hour I had caught the first Central Line underground train of the day from my overnight stay out on the London/Essex border. Just an hour ago I was in a leafy