

# A Surprising Kipling/Core Connection



**MONRIA**

Volume 4

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## INTRODUCTION

Ever since the discovery of the ancient journal in the file cabinet in 3013, the majority of my time has been spent reviewing its contents, but not without fear that it would be discovered that the journal was missing. That fear is still strong, but I continue persevering because there are so many unanswered questions. We were fortunate that in 3014 our disruptions were minimal except for Valentine's Day when the Shub went after Angel of Shadows again as their human sacrifice to Yog-Sothoth, and our St Patrick's Day event where all four Moon creatures banded together in a show of force to gain back control of Monria. They have all failed.

The Kipling/Core connection seemed real, but after reading the notes discovered in Jennifer's desk, I'm not so sure. Who are all the players in this ongoing maze of mysteries that seem to escalate at every turn? And who is it that seemingly stands in the shadows intentionally leading us with twists and turns to nowhere in particular as diversions?

One can't help but surmise that there are sinister plots at play despite the semi-quiet time during 3014 that we enjoyed. We know more about Cthulhu, we know more about the Cultists, we know more about the *Cult of Shut'thend* and its devastating rituals. We also know more about the connection between each of the creatures and how they are used by the cult to cause chaos.

In my continued exploration of the ancient journal found in the file cabinet, I have yet to uncover the dark magic spells the Cultists supposedly use. However, it is the green Maladrite Elixir that interests me more and the extent to which the properties are used to control creatures and humans alike. I fear that the wake of devastation that the Cultists left on Earth before their grand exodus was just the beginning.

We have been tried and tested with periodic creature uprisings, but now it seems the battle will become one of the mind. Physical battle is one thing, and something that we have weathered well, but how are we to rise above the superior technology that the Cultists possess if we are to not only advance our cause, but also learn what is required in order to survive?

The first Moon colony obviously succumbed to the evil forces that reside in the dark, both above and below Monria's surface. We do not want to be its next victim, nor a casualty of manufactured chaos the likes of which has us constantly on alert.

As I continue to learn from the contents of the journal, I also hope to learn from my continued encounters with Goth just what the Cultists might be up to, but ...

If all of this wasn't enough, Monria's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Anhithe, put out an important alert to the colony and its allies that is quite disturbing.

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## Ch 1 | Monria's CEO Publishes a Disturbing Alert

### ALERT TO THE MONRIA COLONY AND ITS ALLIES

Today, March 5, 3015 at precisely 6:14:31 universe time, the Monria control systems were infiltrated by the *Cult of Shut'thend*. It appears that their primary purpose was to take control of the transmitters, an effort in which they succeeded. What followed was a horrifying broadcast consisting of a series of evil rituals that was not only heard on Monria but across the universe. Given the gravity of the situation I ordered a full scale attack on our broadcast infrastructure. The mission was a success and the transmitters have been disabled. The affected are currently being treated, and anyone experiencing mild bouts of insanity should report in to DSEC Forensics for medical attention.

#### Creature Rituals



Our research team is analyzing the recordings and we have a team of scholars trying to translate the transcripts. They appear to be conducted in an ancient language. The following are censored excerpts from the initial reports that we have released into the public domain.

“From the little we could translate by cross referencing the archived material, we can see that the word ‘Gof’nn Hupadgh’ is significant and this is definitely a form of ritual sacrifice. Analysis of the audio suggests that the screams are authentic. I fear the worst for <REDACTED>.”

“This incantation is known to us and is an attempt at resurrection. The peculiar thing about this ritual is that it appears to be the resurrection of <REDACTED>. It is possible that a very cruel form of repeated punishment is being administered.”

“The repeated use of ‘gof’nn’ and similarity to documented rituals seems to suggest that fertility is a dominant theme. If successful, this chant could have a significant influence on the creature population.”

“A successful translation of the word ‘uln,’ which means to summon, leads us to the conclusion that there was some kind of attempt at communication beyond Monria.” We are still decoding the rituals performed, and some of this material is sensitive, but it is clear that there have been evil acts performed by the cult in the name of Cthulhu. It seems impossible to believe, but our initial investigation suggests that the occult deeds have fulfilled their purpose.

### Field Reconnaissance



Field agents and undercover operatives have been dispatched, and those that remain have returned initial reports. What follows is part of a short wave transmission from deep inside the caves.

“It is worse than we thought! Even though the broadcasts have been disabled, there are strange melodies drifting through the atmosphere. The creatures seem to be driven by these sounds, and in certain parts of the caves, ritual chants appear to be still occurring. They are attacking in droves. I barely made it this far and am not sure how I can return. I will continue on.”

“I have made it through the tunnels and you won’t believe the change in here. The creatures are growing in strength and I have spotted new maturities. There is not a human in sight, they have devoured them all. I am the only one.”

“I am in a deep cavern surrounded by crystals. It appears that the Yogs have managed to reproduce, the cavern is full of hatchlings and some weak adults. My best guess is that this is some kind of Yog hatchery.”

“In the distance I can see a Leprechaun. Wait, he looks a little different. He is wearing a gold coat and seems to be taming the hatchlings. They are responding to him and actually performing tricks. I think our old allies are using their abilities to make the hatchlings more docile!”

### **A Word From K'Tan Partathus, Arch Follower of Cthulhu**

A letter has just been received via an emissary, it is from K'tan Partathus, the Arch Follower of Cthulhu, formerly presumed to be the leader of the Monria arm of the *Cult of Shut'thend*. The letter in its entirety is published below:

#### **To my oppressors,**

I am the oppressed. I am the innocent that falls by your sword. You are the infidel with your worship of machines and the gratification of self. Your modern decadence is abhorrent to me, and I will destroy all that you have built. All non-believers will die in the name of the Great Old One.

Where are the pain lords to defend you now? The one that hides in shadows serves us, and your contraptions resist.

As we the cult wait for the Great Old One to return from his slumber, we have enacted our ancient rituals. The Elder Things call and the Shoggoths answer. Conscientia is reborn and the believers rejoice. Azathoth bestows great power upon his lineage and we reclaim Monria for our Gods and for ourselves. We will crush you as we have crushed your forebearers. Your smog will no longer be tolerated.

Do not think the little people can help you, because the children of Yog-Sothoth thrive and hold dominion in the darker places.

To the deceiver and falsely proclaimed Moon Manager, you are but a pawn in the cosmic game. Did you think that destroying the instruments of pain was your own idea? Tru'nembra now sings freely and his voice drowns the stench of your foul machines. I have claimed your waves for my own and we will no longer be forced to endure the torture of your sounds.

Bend your knee and join us. Defy us and face insanity or worse. The Guardian of R'lyeh has returned to lead the Cult of Shut'thend, and your frivolities will no longer be tolerated.

#### **Cthulhu fhtagn,**

K'Tan Partathus (Arch Follower of Cthulhu)

#### **My Response:**

K'Tan Partathus, apparently you have not learned from your already futile attempts at controlling Monria that we are a force to be reckoned with. Unleash what you will, because there are no little people on Monria, only warriors that stand tall in the face of adversity with one very relentless goal in mind ... total victory and the preservation of Monria at all costs. Tru'nembra needs voice lessons.

## Ch 2 | Startling Kipling/Core Info Sets A New Course

The relative calm from 3014 carried over into this year until the major blowout of our annual St Patrick's Day event on March 17th, 3015 which we expected with the continued disruption of the Yogs and other creatures. We also learned that there is a faction of the *Esoteric Order of Dagon* present on Monria. This isn't good news, because they are Cultist allies working against the good of the Moon and its community. Our presence seems to be a continuing threat to their existence, regardless of how many times we have offered coexistent peace. It is my hope that there will continue to be minimal disruptions.

"Hello, this is Dark Moon."

"Hello DM, this is Jennifer."

"Hello Jennifer, how are things going at the DSEC Forensics Lab?"

"Fine DM, but I'm calling about another matter of urgency. I need to speak with you in private, but not here at the lab. There are things that you need to know. May I visit you at your home?"

"Of course Jennifer, I'm free now, but let's make it the Monria Archives & Research Center. Just call me back when you arrive and I will give you access."

"Thank you DM, I will be there in about 20 minutes after I tidy up at the lab."

Well this is quite curious. I've been meaning to contact Jennifer to have a chat after Core was killed. I have a myriad of racing thoughts as to what she might need to tell me that is so urgent. My initial impression after I caught her and Core in a seemingly secret meeting at the DSEC Forensics Lab while I was looking for more evidence, was that neither she nor Core was a friend to Monria. Her behaviors of late have been questionable. She gave Colonel Mitchell forensic results that he had no business having. Critical documents appeared on my desk in the secure room at the lab where the file cabinet is and she claimed to have no knowledge of how they got there. She also shut down the lab for cleaning one day due to a chemical spill by one of the techs. I wasn't buying it.

Jennifer might be running scared after Core's death, and if she has any information at all with regard to how it happened, or even why, then it might help to answer some questions. I don't know, I'll just head to the research center and wait till she arrives. This is going to be a long 20 minutes.

"Hello, this is Dark Moon."

"Hello DM, this is Jennifer and I am outside the MARC office door."

"Ok Jennifer, I'll buzz you in ... make sure there's no one else around before I do please."

"No one is here but me and I can't see anyone else in the area."

"Hello Jennifer, let's talk in the office ... have a seat."



"Thank you, I just couldn't wait any longer to speak to you."

"You look nervous Jenn, relax, take a deep breath, and tell me what you have."

"I *am* nervous, because what I'm about to tell you I should have revealed a long time ago, but then I actually believe that not doing so took the course of events in the direction they needed to go."

I just couldn't imagine what Jennifer was about to share, but her fidgeting and nervous body language gave me pause to feel a bit nervous myself. There are still mysteries surrounding certain activities that have yet to be resolved. If she has any information whatsoever that gives a clue to what the hell has been going on at the forensics lab with her and Core, then maybe we can gain some ground and sort a few things out that have raised more questions than answers.

"Whenever you're ready Jenn, just take your time, there's no rush," I said, "my time is clear the rest of the evening."

"Thank you DM, I appreciate that, and I hope you won't be upset with me for waiting so long to reveal what I'm about to tell you. The burden has weighed heavy on my mind, and created a great deal of stress for me. To the point that it was getting difficult for me to perform my duties effectively."

"Well then, I think the only thing left to do is to unburden yourself. I will remain open-minded."

Open-minded, yes, but not gullible, and her every word will be scrutinized.

"I'll just put it out there," she said, "Core is my brother. We are descendants of Rudyard Kipling."

Ok, I didn't expect *that* bomb to drop. It seemed minutes before I was able to collect myself and utter a sound. I knew this news would have so many implications but I was having trouble slowing my racing thoughts long enough to think of a single one, except ... the note I found in Jennifer's desk revealed that Kipling was a ruse to distract me, but I can't let her know that I know that and tip my hand. I'm totally confused.

"Do you have any idea how many questions are swirling in my head right now from that news Jenn? I hope you have the time to answer some of them, because this could take a while."

"Yes, I'll answer whatever questions you have."

"Good, then my first question is ... are there any other Kipling descendants inhabiting the Moon?" This was a rather tongue in cheek question, but she took it seriously.

"None that I know of DM, but I will tell you that Core and I both received a strange communication not long before the attack on Core by the Cultists. It simply said ... '*Hello family, all is not what it seems and you are in danger.*' However, we have had no contact whatsoever with any family members here or elsewhere."

This is bizarre and raises even more questions about what has been occurring. Now the question is, who else has infiltrated Monria, and what are the implications, if any, that may be putting us in more potential danger.

This opens up a whole new can of *what the hell* is going on with the connection between Kipling and Cthulhu. I thought we resolved that, but apparently not, and this new information is so explosive that it actually causes me great concern. Ever since the discovery of the file cabinet, Monria has been on high alert.

"So the message that you and Core received could mean that there are potentially more of your family that may be on the Moon? I'm not upset, but frustrated that you didn't come to me sooner."

"Well, not sure about family in particular DM because like I said, we haven't had contact with family on Earth or anywhere else, so we have no further information. We couldn't tell where the communication was coming from, so it may not be on Monria. It seemed rather mysterious though because it came through our TelComm units, and we had never given out any of our means of communication to anyone, either on the Moon or elsewhere. We tried to respond, but the transmission was blocked. The other thing is, we really never had a closeness with family members on Earth, we are Monrian Born."

I'll get back to that one because if they are both Monrian Born, there are two other people involved, and I've only seen the Monria shirt on Core. I'm not finding Jenn's story too credible, but I think it's important that she think I believe her.

"I guess my next question would be ... why did you and Core play a game of deception by implying that there was a connection between the Kipling family and Cthulhu? It seems an extreme measure to bring information to light in this way, and it cost a great deal of time and effort to even get to this point."

"I know DM, and we're really sorry for that, but we had good intentions and felt that the only way we could get the file cabinet to surface was to covertly get the Cultists to show their hand. There's a long history here that dates back to 2345 and beyond before the Cultists made their exodus from Earth to Monria."

"Wait, what? How do you know about the Cultists from 2345 and their exodus to Monria?"

Right about now the veins underneath my facial skin are pulsating, and a rushing blush overcomes me as my first thought is immediate and deliberate ... what if she and Core knew that the ancient journal was in the file cabinet, and what if she knows it's missing? However, one other looming question is consuming me ...

*Why is she talking like Core is still alive ...*

### Ch 3 | Jaw-Dropping Disclosures

It was minutes before I realized that my jaw was still sitting on the desk after Jennifer's disclosure that she and Core knew about the activity of the Cultists in 2345. On one hand, I immediately wanted to know more, but on the other, there was a paralyzing fear that kept me from speaking because I was afraid I had tipped my hand with the last question.

"DM, are you ok? You're looking rather pale at the moment."

"Well, I'm quite taken aback by what you just said, and I'm a bit unsteady as to where to continue with this line of questioning."

Jennifer shifted in her seat, back straight, hands folded in lap before saying, "I know this must be somewhat of a shock to you DM, and I'm sorry I didn't speak sooner, but we became even more afraid when we saw that not only the Cultists were growing in numbers, but also the rest of the Moon creatures."

"Somewhat of a shock," I exclaimed, "your disclosures are not only concerning, but are raising so many more questions that I'm finding it a challenge to move myself from stunned to clear-headed enough to continue."

"I'm really sorry DM, are we in really big trouble?"

There she goes again, talking like Core is still alive. She is weirdly talking in a juvenile tone. This needs to be sorted right now because it's going to drive the direction of continued questioning about the Cultists and whatever else is known.

"Jennifer, I can't help but notice that you are talking about Core as if he is still alive. Are you just having a difficult time accepting his death at the hands of the Cultists, or is there something here I should know?"

Jennifer now shifted even more in her chair before saying, "I *told* him that this wasn't going to go well, and that you would be upset at what we did."

"Unless you *really* want to see me upset Jennifer, it would be best if you start at the beginning because my patience is wearing a bit thin right now while trying to make sense of all of this. So is Core alive, or not?"

Jennifer took a deep breath, but then spoke her response quite quickly, as if thinking that saying her words fast would somehow lessen the severity of the message. "Yes DM, Core is still alive."

This changes everything, and the nagging sound in my head of red flags running up the flagpole was deafening. I don't see how any of this is going to turn out in a positive way. I just know that I need to tread cautiously so I don't trip myself up.

"Well then, I don't understand, because Core's body was found on the stage platform at the Monria Hub in a pool of green fluid with another spattering of the same just off the edge of the stage. Core had his rifle in hand as if he had been fighting off his attacker, so how do you explain this?"

Surprisingly, Jennifer now sat back and slouched a bit in her chair while folding her arms across her chest. She had a look not of fear that she and Core had been caught in something quite sinister, but exhibited body language that appeared more to be steady and in charge rather than one of a defensive posture which is normally understood to be the case when one sits back and folds their arms across their chest.

It was now / whose hair was standing up on the back of my neck, / whose racing pulse could be felt at every nerve ending, / whose face felt flush again, not only from anger that this is even happening, but from a new heightened sense of fear like nothing I had ever experienced before.

Jennifer leaned forward, and with a very engaging glare she said almost in a whisper, "Core and I staged it to throw off the Cultists. They were getting too close to our investigation for our liking. When you called the DSEC Forensics Lab to retrieve Core's body, I made sure I was along to supervise and took control of the evidence collection."

It was I who sat back in my chair now, putting my hands in my pockets to not exhibit a defensive posture, and looked straight at her with somewhat of a half smile. She mirrored my earlier posture by leaning forward, so let's see if she continues with this dance because it will be quite revealing. When one mirrors another's body language it's a sign of making an attempt to build rapport, but it's generally in a positive effort. I'm not so sure at this point where in the realm of relationship we are, especially in light of what has transpired so far this evening.

Jennifer proceeded to slowly sit back, putting her hands in her pockets, but the glare in her eyes remained. No smile, no ease of tension, no shield of defense raised, just a pure sense of presence without warmth. At this point, I felt I needed to find out as much as I could because I wasn't sure how the rest of the night would go at this rate, and I was trying desperately not to show the decreasing level of trust I was feeling.

"So where is Core right now," I asked, wanting to at least establish that he wasn't nefariously out stirring up even more trouble, "and is it possible to bring him in to have this chat with us?"

"Core is in a safe place and not ready to talk yet DM," now crossing right leg over left, not breaking her glare, and appearing to be looking over her eyebrows. Both of us are now pressured to show calm in the face of this continued question and answer session, not knowing what the next moment would hold.

"Ok, then can you tell me what it was, or is, that you and Core are investigating, and what you felt the Cultists were getting too close to for your liking?"

There is a loss of all sense of time, other than in this critical moment where information is vital to what happens after this. I fear that if I am not more calculated, I will lose this opportunity of discovery.

"Core and I learned that there was a file cabinet in the West Crater somewhere that contained an ancient journal written by one of the Great Old Ones, which is why we couldn't overtly do a search without being discovered. It is known to be one of the artifacts recovered from the church on Earth prior to the great exodus of the Cultists, and hidden in the file cabinet. We followed the lead to Monria and knew we would need help flushing out the cabinet. The journal contains a great deal of information that the Cultists don't want the general public to know, especially the Monria colony because it would thwart the Cultists' efforts."

I wasn't sure at this point that I was breathing, but I knew I needed to continue to explore as much as possible before the night was over. I felt my jaw beginning to clench, my fingers grabbing the cloth inside my pants pockets, while also trying desperately to hold back any appearance of losing coherence in my line of thinking, but I am beginning to feel a bit numb.

"Oh," said Jennifer, "I guess I should also tell you that the file cabinet is that of Rudyard Kipling's if that's of any significance DM."

*Suddenly, the lighting seemed to change ...*

## Ch 4 | Jennifer's Truth is Unexpectedly Revealed

I would say questioning Jennifer was a bit rough given the nature of the information being shared because it created somewhat of a challenge to know in what direction to go at times, there were so many. However, in this moment, the direction was quite clear. Never more than now am I quietly celebrating finding the ancient journal in the file cabinet, because I believe the knowledge gained will most likely save my life tonight.

There was a gradual change in lighting taking place, it wasn't normal, but many things of late seemed to be out of the realm of any semblance of normalcy. Jennifer slowly uncrossed her legs, sat up straight, back against chair, hands in lap again, but the locked-on glare remained steady. It was then that I could see a faint aura of green coming from behind her. I knew immediately that I wasn't dealing with the Jennifer that I've known for so long whose work at the DSEC Forensics Lab was instrumental and quite valued.



I needed to do some shifting of my own if I was going to salvage this night and not become a victim. I knew almost instinctively what was happening. It was the Sept 17, 2345 journal entry where I read about the incident at St Edwards Church in Teaksbury, England. Decca, who claimed ownership of the church, and who had authenticated documents to prove as such, was addressing the crowd of townsfolk protesting the takeover by the *Cult of Shut'thend*. As she stood at the podium she became increasingly angry, and it wasn't long before a green aura started forming around her body. The end result was disastrous.

I took my hands out of my pockets and placed them on the desk while maintaining an upright posture that wouldn't seem too invading. I softened my facial expression as much as I felt I could, and gradually exhibited a friendly closed-mouth smile, similar to a child's face when they look at you with puppy-dog eyes, waiting for you to excuse the mischievous behavior that upset you.

"Look Jennifer," I said with more of a friendly tone, "I'm sorry if I've come across more intense than perhaps my usual self with you, but I think you might have to admit that the information you are sharing with me is quite startling at the least, and caused a bit of shell shock. My first instinct after the initial shock was that if I had known this information sooner, I might have been able to help you and Core with your investigation."

Of course I wouldn't have helped, but it looked as though extending an olive branch was taking root because Jennifer seemed to calm down. The green aura was slowly dissipating, and the glare from her eyes began to transform into more of a presence than an angry distance. I continued with my effort to soften the moment in hopes that I would be able to gain more information. As Jennifer became more relaxed, I began to mirror her body language, not in precise positioning, but in a more relaxed sense of *I'm with you, let's work this out*. It wasn't long before Jennifer began to speak.

"Again, we are really sorry DM, we meant no harm, but we knew that you had the means to put some things into action that we had no control over, and that it would help us immensely, so in spite of the deception, we thank you for coordinating the efforts to flush out the file cabinet."

"Ya, about that." I wanted to jump right in with loaded questions, but I knew if I approached this in an irritating way, we would be back at square one again. "You mentioned that the file cabinet belonged to your ancestor Rudyard Kipling, so can you tell me the story surrounding this and how he came into possession of the cabinet and its contents? I actually thought that what I had uncovered on my own dismissed Kipling."

"Ya, about that," Jennifer echoed, almost in a facetious manner, "Kipling was drawn to horror, dark fantasy and the supernatural, and as you probably know, wrote his own tales of horror and fantasy, his most famous being *The Mark of the Beast*" in 1890, quite some time ago. I have a copy in my personal library."

It seemed an odd sidetrack to bring up Kipling's affinity for horror and dark fantasy, along with citing a particular writing, but she must be going somewhere with this. While my question wasn't being directly responded to, I wasn't going to stop this peripheral mini-bio of Kipling and risk yet another potential incident of *glarin' in the green*. I know enough Kipling history to hold me for now, except the part about how he is connected to this file cabinet. Perhaps she'll get there eventually.

"The story is complicated DM, so what I will tell you for now, is that the file cabinet existed in a church on Earth in a location that I will not reveal as yet. The documentation and artifacts you have reviewed thus far, are not the most valued."

Why do I get the sinking feeling that this is where the journal will rise to the surface again. If so, we could be heading into an eggshell moment, but I'm also wondering why the location of the church seems to be significant enough to not want to disclose it. Does she and Core know about the secret compartment in the file cabinet? If they discovered it, do they think the journal was there and now gone? I decided that it would probably be best to play curious.

"I found the contents of the file cabinet quite helpful thus far Jenn, so I'm not sure what you mean when you say they are not the most valued." I gave a bit of an intense look of confusion while also paying close attention to Jenn's body language and facial expressions. It became immediately clear that she was scrutinizing my response to establish a center of trust, and after a short hesitation, it seemed she accepted my response as honest, and decided to continue sharing information.

"The most valued artifact that is supposed to be in that file cabinet DM, is a journal with an accounting of the *Cult of Shut'thend* and their activities on Earth prior to their great exodus to what we have to believe was Monria based on our investigative leads and now the recovery of the file cabinet itself. There was also documentation that chronicled the *Cult of Shut'thend* as the catalyst of other cults. However, the most potentially dangerous writings are dark spells conducted by the Cultists during invocation rituals."

I hope there's enough distance between Jenn and I for her not to see the hair rising once again on the back of my neck because we have just reached the point of no return. It is I who now wonder whether she will take the role of asking questions, or if I should seize the moment and pivot, but something else crossed my mind in that instant that may have given that moment away, at least to the degree that I shifted gears.

There's no question in my mind based on tonight's experience that Jennifer is surely a converted member of the Cultists and the *Cult of Shut'thend*, and while I want to know so much more about the Kipling connection, my gut-wrenching thoughts are now asking ...

*Does she think that I have the journal and is trying to trap me into a confession ...*

## Ch 5 | Navigating Dark Corners

Never before have I felt so word challenged in order not to escalate a potentially dangerous moment. Sitting across the desk from Jennifer seems more of a volly to keep things from getting out of control, rather than actually getting somewhere with learning what she and Core are up to. The intensity of this exchange is weighing me down a bit, and if I don't bring it all back into focus, I fear for the worst.

In this short but critical moment of silence, I was able to realize some implications that have me treading lightly. Jennifer said she and Core were both descendants of Rudyard Kipling, but if they were Monrian Born, how did they learn they were both descendants, and what was the catalyst for the investigation into the Cultists? I'm both confused and irritated that this chat seems to be all over the map and not very cohesive with regard to clear definitive information.

Not trusting what I am hearing at this point, the one thing that *is* clear to me, is that I need answers, and I also need to proceed with caution in order to get them. If I make one false move, it could mean disastrous results. Something else that has me puzzled though, is that Goth is able to read my thoughts, but there are still so many unanswered questions about him as well. Based on everything I know so far, I don't think he is an actual Cultist convert, but rather some other alien entity that was part of Monria before the Cultists arrived. It would speak to his urgency in wanting to assist us to remain alert and strong in order to defeat efforts at control.

If Jennifer were able to read my thoughts, then it makes sense that this would have been over already. I will assume for now that the Cultists don't have that ability, and just able to use their dark magic to either drive people mad to the point of death, or to control them to do their bidding. History has revealed that the ultimate goal is to control all of Monria, and based on what has been learned, the previous colony was weak enough to be overpowered by them.

"That's incredibly interesting Jenn," I offered, hoping she will accept my desperate try at innocence in the wake of preserving balance in this volly of *who knows what* exploration, "the documentation of the file cabinet contents has not turned up such a journal, so there must be something I'm missing."

I'm either going to fall flat on my face, or I get a pretend Oscar for this performance because Jennifer continued with her piercing observance of my facial expressions as well as my body language.

"There has to be a hidden compartment somewhere," she finally responded, "but I haven't been able to determine where."

Yes, yes, YES ... so she doesn't know the journal was there and is now missing. The question is, how soon before she discovers the secret hiding place in the file cabinet, only to also discover that the journal is gone?

Now it's time to see how far I can get with finessing more answers to the disturbing questions I have lingering that have the potential of blowing this whole thing up.

"If I haven't said it yet Jenn," I began, "I appreciate that you are bringing all of this to my attention. At first when you walked in here and started sharing information, my first reaction was surprise that you and Core didn't come to me to help you with this situation. I might have been able to assist with your efforts to uncover this mystery, albeit a potentially dangerous one, rather than expending a lot of energy with a seeming cat and mouse escapade that put us a bit at odds for a moment."

I am now prepared for her delayed response after the intense scrutiny of my facial expressions and body language. It might take me longer to achieve that pretend Oscar but I'm willing to do what it takes to gain a modicum level of trust to get the answers I need. Goth, if you're listening, then you know I need your help.

At this point, she has to know that I have a laundry list of questions that I'm not sure she'll answer right now, or perhaps ever. What I have learned from the journal so far is a devout determination by the Cultists to awaken Cthulhu from his death-like sleep, and that they have failed at least a couple of times that I know of, but I'm getting the impression that the journal and its contents could be the means to eventually facilitate a successful effort.

"Thank you DM," Jenn finally responded, "I enjoy my work at the DSEC Forensics Lab and helping to document Monria's discoveries. The file cabinet with the artifacts was a particularly valuable find, and I'm sure there is more to learn from the contents. I hope we are able to uncover the location of the ancient journal as it may be the key to learning the inside workings of the *Cult of Shut'thend*."

There's no way I'm sharing with her that I have the journal, nor that I already know the history of the *Cult of Shut'thend*. However, I have no doubt that there is much more to learn before we as a colony are able to defend ourselves more effectively with each attempt that the Cultists and other creatures at their behest try to make to control Monria. I'm going to risk asking one key question before this is over.

"If I may, Jenn," I began, "how did you learn about the file cabinet and the ancient journal that is supposed to be hidden inside? I'm just curious where the connection comes in and how you know about the *Cult of Shut'thend*."

"Core and I inherited Kipling's journals," she responded, "and it was in his notes that we discovered information that inspired our investigation and search for the file cabinet, and now hopefully the ancient journal that will tell us much more."

The answer I got I'm sure was a fabricated one. At this point, I'm not expecting truth because I have no doubt that there is something more sinister going on and that in some way Core, and perhaps others, are involved. I still don't know with any certainty whether Core is still alive or not, and if he is, where is he?

"Well, it's good that you guys are here then," I replied, "it seems like what you have discovered can be of benefit toward helping our survival against the uprising of the Cultists, and perhaps the other creatures as well."

Jenn initially just stared at me. I'm sure it was an attempt to determine whether my reply was genuine or not. I know it wasn't, but apparently she bought it.

"Right," she said as she rose from her chair, "I'll leave you to your work and get back to the lab where I have things to attend to myself."

There was no doubt in my mind that this was her way of avoiding a continuation of questions on my part, but then, I didn't want to create another situation where I angered her and risked even more potential for a disastrous outcome.

"Thanks for opening up about you and Core, Jenn," I replied, "I'm sure it wasn't an easy thing to do considering the nature of the situation. Perhaps we can in some way work together on solving this mystery, so let me know how I can help. If I find the ancient journal during my documentation of the file cabinet contents, I'll let you know, and if there's anything further that comes up, I hope you'll share too."

She raised her hand in a slight wave as she walked out of my office. I was not ready to move yet. I needed a minute to collect my thoughts to get to a starting point and where I go from here. One thing I know for certain, I need to have a chat with Goth, and hopefully gain some insight on how to proceed. I'm sure he will say, *with great caution*, and that's what has me on edge the most.

For now, I need to change this doom and gloom in the air. While Christmas is a few months off yet, it's my favorite holiday, so I'm going to decorate. It always cheers me up, but in the process, I'm hoping that Goth is tuned in and pays a visit.

With decorating done, I sat back down at my desk in the office to tackle other Monria work that needed my attention, but I found it challenging to focus. I'll go decorate the penthouse too and make a quick check on the community to see if anyone needs me, then come back. Maybe then I'll be more clear-headed and able to continue with work, but then, I thought about the ancient journal and that I have a lot more to filter through before everything is read; at least everything I know to be available at this point.

My secondary thought though is ... *where is the grimoire?*

## Ch 6 | The Return of Core

With Christmas decorating done at both the research office and the penthouse, and knowing the community is doing fine right now, I headed back to the research office to see if I could make a dent in other work. It was going well until I needed to get something from one of the file cabinets.

As I rose from my chair at the desk, Core walked into my office. As I stood there in shock (I'm sure with a dropped jaw) I was also fearful. Until this moment, I wasn't sure if he was still alive or not. Apparently he is, but in what state. This should be an interesting conversation, but the question is, will he corroborate what Jennifer has shared with me, or will this go in a different direction? Without empirical evidence of anything I'm being told by either, is there one to trust over the other?



"Core," I said, "I'm surprised to see you. I'm sure you can probably understand my confusion right now."

Core hesitated in the office doorway for a moment, not sure whether to enter, and just stared at me. It made me uncomfortable and hesitant myself as to whether or not I should engage him in conversation not knowing whether he is a Cultist-convert as well and able to do what Jennifer does with the Maladrite Elixir. There's an immense intensity in the air right now.

"Core, have a seat please," I offered before sitting back down.



"Hello DME," he responded as he sat down, "nice to see you again. I'm just afraid that Jennifer will come back when she finds me missing. I escaped from a hidden location in the Cultist caves with the help of Narissa Thompson, and you were the only one I could talk to about my ordeal with Jennifer and the Cultists."

Do I buy this and not think it's yet another attempt at trying to find out if I have some knowledge about the missing ancient journal, or do I tread lightly to prevent one more potentially dangerous situation if in fact Core *is* a Cultist-convert?

I'm not even sure anymore whether the Kipling story is true or not, or whether this was an elaborate and well-orchestrated attempt using the plausibility of Kipling's son ending up on Monria during a possible UFO abduction in World War I. One way or another, I'm hoping I can make some sense out of this, and soon.

Wait, what? Narissa Thompson is still alive from the original exploration team?

Last time I saw Core, he was lying dead on the Monria Hub stage. I had alerted Colonel Wang from the DSEC Military TopOps Division to investigate his death. It seemed so permanent given our advanced technology where death meant instant revival. This was different, and after I had received the second photo showing an entirely different death scene at the Monria Hub, I engaged someone from the DSEC Forensics Lab that I thought I could trust to lift any residue from the stage where Core was lying in some sort of green fluid. It seems I can't trust anyone from the forensics lab either because I still haven't gotten a report on whether or not there was any residue to analyze.

I have a feeling that while Jennifer is at the lab I won't get any straight answers. She already said she supervised the removal of Core's body, so I guess I should surmise from that not to expect a report. Right now, I need to deal with Core.

"How did you connect with Narissa Thompson," I asked, "she's from the original DSEC exploration team and a member of DSEC Security, but she's been missing for quite a while, and assumed she didn't make it."

I didn't want to give away that I already knew about her circumstances and what she went through with the Cultists, but I genuinely didn't know what happened to her after she was found in a pool of that green liquid in the cave somewhere.

"She just showed up where I was being held hostage," he began, "and said that she could help get me out of there. She also told me to contact you to fill you in on what's been going on. If you have time, I'd like to bring you up-to-date. It's going to take a while, so is there a safer place in case Jennifer comes back here?"



I love my job. It's full of intrigue, mysteries, secrets and adventures, but it's also not without risk and danger. There's potential for a decision to be a wrong one, and if there's anything I've learned so far, things aren't always what they seem. Also, the information I have gained from the ancient journal leads me to believe that there are definitely dark forces on Monria that we will have to deal with, but there is so much more to learn because like I said, I am nowhere near done reading.

"We're going to be ok here," I replied, "I'll activate the window shading and secure everything. By the way, how did you get into the facility, it was locked?"

"I will share that with you in due time DM," he responded, "but for now, I would like to share information with you that is vital to the survival of Monria."

A chill ran down my spine because this feels so familiar, so reminiscent of past experiences with Goth and putting things off until another time. I feel that this is going to be another one of those enlightening moments, and that's ok, as long as it all makes sense and I can determine what is truth and what is not.

"Where is Narissa now," I asked.

"I don't know," Core responded, "but she said that she will be getting in touch with you soon. She said she needed to take care of something first, but I don't know what that something is, she didn't share that with me."

"Ok, then tell me what you have been up to, especially with Jennifer, and why you're afraid of her coming back here if she discovers you are missing?"

I knew the answers to the questions, other than him being held hostage, which at this point makes more sense than anything else, but the Kipling/Core/Jennifer story has to be revealed in truth, and not just an extension of more lies to cover up what they might have been up to in order to gain access to the ancient journal.

"I have been involved in a covert operation," he began, "but not with Jennifer. We had to involve her unknowingly in order to advance with the operation."

My thoughts were racing like parts of a Rubics Cube being twisted and turned in a race against time to connect the dots and bring everything into focus. I'm not sure this will happen though, because I am anticipating more twists and turns given the nature of Core's response. I have no guesses at this point.

"I don't know what to make of that Core," I responded, "so I won't even try, and I'll let you fill me in with the details. Windows have been shaded and center is on lockdown. If anyone buzzes at the front entrance, I won't respond."

Thing is, I'm still thinking about how Core was able to get into the facility, because I had it on lockdown before and had to buzz Jennifer into the center. There's no way he had time enough to catch the closing door on her way out without her seeing him, so I am stymied right now.

"Truth is," Core said, "I am an operative with ISMA and sent here on a mission to track the movement of the *Cult of Shut'thend* and their activities that still have major ties to Earth and other locations."

I have two questions. How did the Intergalactic Space Mission Agency get involved, and does General Winslow Anderson know about this? He headed up the ISMA on Earth before he took over the General's post on Monria where he is now directing the activities of the DSEC Military operation.

Oh, and ... *who is "we" ...*

## Ch 7 | Secrets Revealed

The continued mysteries on Monria that have made it difficult to make relevant sense out of experiences thus far are beginning to give way to explanation. I'm not so sure though that these explanations will give us a more concise way in which to deal with the periodic uprisings, nor the behavior of the Cultists.

This exchange with Core is nothing less than jolting, but I fear I haven't heard the worst of it yet. I'll reserve my judgment as to why I wasn't aware of what's been going on, and why Core hasn't come forward before now.

"I have so many questions Core," I began, "and while I want to know everything at once, I'll start with one. Is the Kipling connection a valid one?"

"In a word," he responded, "no."

My first inclination was to show anger for the deception and all of the exhausting time spent following leads because of false information. However, first inclinations have the potential to facilitate a blindness to facts, especially in a situation that has become as volatile as this one. I can't wait to hear why this was sanctioned.

"I know you must be angered by the deception," he continued, "and I apologize for that on behalf of ISMA, but I will share what I can to explain the necessity of such."

There, he said it *for* me, I'm angry, but I'm choosing to keep a calm demeanor in the face of not knowing more at this point.

"So this was ISMA's doing," I asked, "and was General Anderson in on this?"

I'm not sure I wanted to know. General Anderson and I go way back. I did a lot of undercover operative work for him myself when he headed up ISMA, including the [Covert Ops mission to Planet Cyrene](#). They were a planet in turmoil at the time and on military lockdown. Senator Calvin Neff had taken up a Senator position in a sector on Cyrene after serving as a Senator on Earth for many years.

The Senator felt that the Zekkonians were up to something and needed a covert operation to flush it out. However, during the mission it was learned from Zorra Winters, head of the Acacia Rebirth Corps (ARC), that her husband, the Supreme Commander, Will Winters, discovered a mind-control drink, and his goal was to have everyone on Cyrene under his control. There were those who were immune to it, including Zorra. A genocide was in progress at the time and it was a dire situation that needed immediate attention, and an antidote.

Unfortunately, I don't know the outcome of this fight against mind-control because after I shared the information with Senator Neff, I returned to planet Arkadia which was my home at the time. Shortly thereafter is when I got the offer for the position on Monria. Even though we are not on military lockdown, I find some parallels in our fight for survival, not to mention a very real mind-control element on the Moon that has potential to wipe out yet another colony, or render us completely helpless.

I'm a bit beside myself right now, and concerned about what comes next.

"Yes DM," Core stated, "on both counts."

Not only am I swimming in fragmented thoughts, but feel betrayed. I just couldn't fathom that General Anderson wouldn't have shared all of this with me. We have experienced some hellish moments over the years, and enjoyed an unbreakable trust, so I am at odds to make any sense out of this whatsoever.

"ISMA designed the details of this covert operation," he continued, "under the leadership of General Anderson prior to him leaving the ISMA Headquarters on Earth and assuming his current position as General of the Monria DSEC Military operation. His departure from ISMA was intentional, and he was also instrumental in providing the job offer to you that brought you to Monria."

This isn't getting any better, and I am so stunned right now that I couldn't even tell you what kind of look I must be projecting. It was numbing, and the only thing I could do was remain focused on every word that Core was uttering because I will have to sort it all out after this is over.

"Before I go any further," Core said, "it's important for you to know that deceiving you was an incredibly difficult and stressful situation. However, in order for the operation to be successful in flushing out vital information, we needed you not to know so that your interactions with key operatives and those in question held a level of authenticity to the degree that the mission maintained total integrity."

I'm not sure whether that is any consolation or not, but I'll revisit that thought once I know more. There *has* to be more.

"I will tell you this," Core continued, "General Anderson has the utmost respect for you and your investigative abilities, but on this mission, you had to be led with a series of events that he knew would trigger your instincts. That's how well he said he knew you, and that he had no doubt that even blindly led, you would produce the desired results that would help us get to the bottom of what's happening on Monria. We still have a ways to go, but unforeseen incidents have occurred and your full presence and awareness is now required."

Oh yay, I get to play with the big boys now. Silent sarcasm is all I can afford in this moment, until I know the scope of this elaborate operation at my expense.

"What about Anhithe, Monria's CEO," I asked, "has he been in on this?"

"No DM," Core responded, "you and Ant had to be as natural as possible as a team and not raise any questions by those who were watching that could do harm. As I mentioned earlier, General Anderson intentionally relocated to Monria, not only to command DSEC's military operation, but to expand its defensive powers against the rising darkness on the Moon, and to protect you and the new colony."

So far I get that, but I don't understand yet why I couldn't have played an active role in this operation instead of led by unknown forces. I can't help but think that I could have been much more useful as an operative myself. If General Anderson has that much respect and trust in me, then this should have been a no-brainer.

"Needless to say, I'm stunned right now," I replied, "but I want to know as much as you can tell me so that this makes more sense to me please."

At this point, I don't know who I interacted with that was also in on this, and how my being a blind participant contributed to the advancement of security for Monria. I'm still wondering how he got into this facility while on lockdown.

"We all feel badly that your participation had to be led by calculated maneuvers," Core said, "but we felt the risk was minimal given that General Anderson had so much faith in your instincts to lead us in the right direction."

There's that *we* thing again. How many were involved, and how many will reveal themselves to me, or be revealed by Core or the General? I wonder if learning this information now will create a united front, or strain relationships.

"I have just one simple question in all of this Core," I responded, "who are the *we* in this operation?"

"General Anderson first and foremost," he began, "because he has been following the movement and activities of the Cultists since their exodus from Earth. Once it was established that the exodus was to Monria, and that the previous colony was in jeopardy, the operation took on a whole new direction."

Wait, something isn't adding up here. How could General Anderson be following the Cultists since their exodus from Earth to Monria? That was in 2346 and this is 3015. That would make him 669 years old. This has so many implications that I don't know where to begin. Thoughts and questions are coming far too fast, and I can't even imagine how all of this is going to be explained.

I can see now that my next conversation with General Anderson is going to be one of, *lay it all out on the table*, or we're going to have issues. I have to feel beyond a shadow of a doubt that I am not being kept out of the loop anymore. He's going to have a difficult time of trying to convince me I should have been left out this round.

"General Anderson learned that Goth and I were not, how should I say, the *usual* or *normal* colony members," he began, "and that we were trying our best to help the human inhabitants of Monria, but were in desperate need of support."

"Are you and Goth not human," I asked, "and what about General Anderson since he seems to have aged quite well since the exodus of the Cultists from Earth?"

"We are not," he responded, "but before I reveal any more about that, it's important for you to understand a few other things first."

My thoughts have now become a blender of things I can't believe I'm thinking, but I now know how Core got into the building. I can only surmise that he and Goth are both aliens and original inhabitants of Monria before the invasion of the Moon by the Cultists and all of the other entities, including Cthulhu, but what about the General. Are Goth, Core and the General all mind readers, shapeshifters, able to move through solid objects, and who knows what else that I have yet to discover? If my thinking is correct, why did Core need to be rescued?

"While the current colony is doing well with defending Monria," he continued, "there is a rising evil from the dark that will try your resolve and continue being relentless in efforts to control the Moon and its human inhabitants. There is a frenetic energy at times that drive the Cultists to engage by any means necessary to make your existence a living hell, because their ultimate goal is to awaken Cthulhu."

"I'm doing my best not to feel incredibly manipulated right now," I said, "and terribly concerned about how this is going to work going forward. Now that I know what you have told me so far, which I'm sure is only the tip of the iceberg, I am finding it difficult to wrap my head around the impact this is going to have on relationships."

"Hopefully you will find it a comfort to learn that everyone involved was dedicated to protecting you, the colony, and Monria as a whole," he stated, "and they still are. There is no difference in their loyalty or mission to defend the Moon against the evil darkness that continues to rise. They are loyal allies in the preservation and survival of Monria."

"I'm going to surmise that Colonel Wang and his TopOps Team were involved as well," I replied, "so who else?"

"Yes," Core responded, "the off-Moon maneuvers during the St Patrick's Day encounter was intentional and devised to minimize any suspicion that there would be defensive forces in play. General Anderson and Colonel Wang coordinated their efforts with full confidence that Colonel Wang's TopOps Team would be able to take care of any intrusions."

Now I'm wondering about the supposed mole in the military ranks, and if Colonel Mitchell is also part of this whole sting operation. I'm sure Jennifer isn't part of it because she showed herself to me during our earlier conversation, so how is all of this connected, and are there any other community members that I should be aware of before interacting with them again?

"We have been able to guide this operation pretty successfully," Core continued, "and you have been quite instrumental in helping us get this far, even though you were unaware of the covert details. It all played out perfectly until Jennifer became suspicious of my interactions with her. Some things I was just not willing to do."

"I'm almost afraid to ask what they might be," I replied, "but I'd like to know how Jennifer is connected to all of this."

"It was easy for the Cultists to persuade Jennifer to join the dark side," Core began, "as she was tiring of her work without any significant promotions or rewards. She was expecting to move into the position you hold DM, and became angry when she was passed over. The Cultists are keen to who are loyalists and who are fence-sitting enough to make an attempt to draw them to the dark side. Jennifer was prime, so I had to play a role I wasn't too keen on doing in order to stay close and learn how the Cultists were using her."

Somehow, I don't think the entire complexity of this situation has come to light, nor the extent to which others have been engaged, but if I'm going to be actively involved now with this operation, I need to know *everything*. My next chat with Goth should be an interesting one too, so if you're tuned in Goth, get ready.

"DM," Core said, "Goth will speak with you when the time is right. We need to focus on a few other things before that happens."

Just as I suspected, Core can read my thoughts as well, so he and Goth must both be native inhabitants of Monria and quite alien. It concerns me that this mind-reading takes place, but so far it has been more of a benefit than a hindrance. Now knowing of General Anderson's involvement, and how long he's been tracking the Cultists, I wonder if he reads minds too. If he can tap into my thoughts, what part did that play in the overall scheme of things that led to my discoveries?

"Do you and Goth do this mind-reading thing with anyone else," I asked, "and are none of my thoughts sacred?" At this point, I was becoming a bit annoyed.

"Of course DM," he responded, "but I'll share more another time about that."

"So how did the whole Kipling thing come about," I asked?

"Someone at ISMA is a huge Kipling fan," he began, "and came up with the idea of using one of Kipling's poems as a means to get your attention and to promote a storyline that would engage the Cultists. He based it on the WWI scenario related to Kipling's son John, because during the course of that time, there were reports of UFO sightings and would fit with the prospect that John could have been abducted and transported to Monria. The specific poem was also very relatable to one of the creatures on Monria as well, which helped to generate your curiosity."

"Quite the elaborate scheme," I replied, "but how did you know it would work?"

"Like I said," he continued, "General Anderson was emphatically confident that you would lead us in the right direction based on your instincts. He also knows more about you than you know about yourself, but we can't discuss that right now. Goth and I had to intervene at some level in order to protect you and the colony so that the same thing didn't happen to you like it did with the previous colony."

His words are fading as I take a moment to reflect on the timeline of events that have occurred since that poem on the parchment paper was brought to me. Goth made himself known to me that very day as well. I am now beginning to feel like I've been under some kind of mind control, not knowing what is real or what has been orchestrated through me by others.

Have my decisions been mine, or the result of telepathic persuasion? I also keep hearing that others know me better than I know myself, and I have yet to find out exactly what that means. Also, that I will discover over time exactly what my purpose is for being on Monria. I'm hoping Core, Goth or the General will shed some light on this soon because I feel way too disoriented right now.

"We knew of the file cabinet and hidden journal," Core continued, "so we needed to flush that out and get it into your hands and away from the Cultists. If the Cultists found the ancient journal that we think has a clue to where the grimoire is, that could have been catastrophic to the Monria colony. The incantations alone can cause serious damage if they bring forth certain entities, but the dark spells that produce an even more evil consequence are irreversible. However, we didn't know where the journal was hidden, and hoped that you would make that discovery."

I am feeling an immense amount of responsibility, but why me, and why now? I don't know where this begins or how it will end. I just need answers to a lot of questions to help sort out where I go from here. The implications of what is being revealed right now is extremely broad, and has the potential of producing a very real corrosive dynamic if we don't keep it anchored.

Despite the mounting confusion from all of this revealed information (if any of it is to be believed), and the ever-increasing level of questions in search of truth, I have one very important question that rises above them all now ...

Who am I, *really* ...

## Ch 8 | The Inquisition

My conversation with Core was revealing, but not enough, and before the chat was over, it became increasingly clear that I would have to find the answers to the rest of my questions elsewhere. There was enough in content to the information that Core shared that left me not knowing implicitly whether I believe him or not.

After Core left my office, I waited around a bit to see if Goth would show up. He was generally tuned in to when I needed to talk with him, but apparently, it doesn't seem that this is one of those times. I can only surmise that he is giving me breathing room and an opportunity to explore things on my own, but he has always been a source of information and direction, and despite my assumption of why I think he is not coming forward, it has me quite curious.

I called General Anderson hoping that he would have time to expand upon all of this head-spinning information that Core just dumped on me, not to mention where we go from here if in fact all of this new-found enlightenment is true. I'm not sure where all of this will lead, but it has to lead *somewhere*. I don't see myself lasting too long in limbo without exploding if not.

"Hello General, this is DM, are you available for a chat?"

"Well hello DM, how are things?" he replied.

"Things are quite confusing, and I was hoping you could help to sort them out," I responded, "is there a place where we can talk in private? I mean *really* private?"

"This sounds rather curious, but sure," he said, "we can use the [SCIF](#) room at the DSEC Military HQs. I'm not there right now, but can meet you there in 20."

"Ok, thanks General," I replied, "see you soon."

There's another 20 minute marker invoked. I now find it odd that almost every time I want to have a meeting with someone, it's going to take them 20 minutes to meet me at the location of the meeting. I have learned over time that paying attention to every single detail that would ordinarily not be attention-getting is rather crucial. It appears to be another means of connecting the dots beyond normal perception and awareness. I definitely won't dismiss *anything* anymore as inconsequential.

While waiting outside of the DSEC Military HQs, I noticed Colonel Jacob Mitchell talking with Jennifer. I was in a position next to the building where they couldn't see me. I found it quite curious that it would be taking place so openly given the nature of what was discovered about Jennifer, but I haven't heard from Colonel Wang yet about the surveillance of Colonel Mitchell and why he was at the forensics lab.

Next thing I know, I was being tapped on the shoulder by General Anderson. He told me to follow him because there was a hidden entrance into the SCIF room. How many more new things will be revealed to me today is anyone's guess. I just need answers to a multitude of questions that have my thoughts fragmented and far too uncertain about things. I hope the General will be able to help.

This is the first time I've been in the SCIF room. I've heard of it, but never saw it, so this is a rare occasion indeed, but I'm sure the General heard the urgency in my voice when I asked for a *really private* location. I'm also sure that he is curious as to why I requested this meeting, but if he is an alien like Goth and Core, and an original inhabitant of Monria who can shape-shift, walk through walls and read minds, then he's probably not so clueless.

"Have a seat," the General offered, "this room is completely secure. It's nothing so fancy as perhaps other areas of the headquarters, but it serves a purpose."

He was right about the *nothing so fancy* part. The room felt a bit clinical in nature but not white. It reminded me more of a khaki color which is used in military gear, but then that makes sense. The array of technical equipment in the room gave it more of a presence, but I could see that all of the monitors were on standby. I'm guessing that these were for surveillance, and perhaps communication of some sort, but with whom. If the General is also an alien and an original inhabitant of Monria, to what degree do these communications extend out into the universe?

"So what is the nature of this private meeting?" the General asked.

"Are you really going to make me go there?" I asked in return.

He sat there observing my facial expressions and body language, which I sort of fully expected given what I now know. However, I wasn't sure whether he would portray innocence to my response, or reveal to me the kinship I was almost certain he had with Goth and Core, and the abilities they all share.

"You must have had a conversation with Goth, Core and/or Colonel Wang. I can only assume that you have more knowledge now than you did the last time that we talked, so it would probably be best if you just asked me questions," he responded.

The General's response was rather confirming to me with regard to my suspicions, but only his answers to my questions will put it all into perspective for me. If I can't be settled in my own thoughts about what's been going on, then it's going to be a challenge for me going forward and how I relate to our community and beyond.

"Thank you General," I replied, "I *do* have quite a few questions that I hope you'll be able to answer in order to set the record straight, and also to help me understand what I have learned that is ... well, quite *shocking* to me. So far, I have only spoken to Core who surprisingly showed up at my office after Jennifer came to talk with me. That too was rather surprising given the nature of her story."

"It will be interesting to hear what Jennifer had to say," the General responded.

"It wasn't so much what she said," I began, "but what occurred during the chat that could have been disastrous had I not been able to stop her. It was the most intense pins and needles I had ever experienced because I knew if she was even a bit successful in her efforts, things would be quite different right now."

"Now I am even *more* curious," the General responded, "tell me your experience with Jennifer and then I will answer your questions."

I am now wondering if he *doesn't* know that Jennifer is a Cultist convert and able to invoke the Maladrite Elixir in order to inflict chaos on a human's mind. I'm actually surprised that she tried to do that with me, but perhaps she doesn't have all of the properties under control yet. If the Cultists wanted me under their control, they have had ample opportunity to affect that outcome, but never tried.

That thought alone brings into question why I have been spared. Perhaps like the mind-control efforts on Cyrene by Supreme Commander Will Winters, some are immune, and why his wife Zorra escaped with her life. On Cyrene, it's a mind-altering drink made from a purple flower that puts you under the control of the Supreme Commander to do his bidding.

On Monria, it's an elixir made from Maladrite Stone that has to be mixed with something else because Maladrite is white, not green. I have suspected that it's perhaps the Zoldenite Dust that is also plentiful on Monria, and green, but there is no scientific proof of this yet. If the forensics team at the forensics lab haven't destroyed the residue evidence from Core's supposed death at the Monria Hub, then perhaps we might get the answer, but with Jennifer supervising all of the investigations at the forensics lab, I'm not sure this will happen.

I shared my Jennifer experience with the General. He sat there still, and quite intent on hearing every word. I could tell nothing from his facial expressions or his body language because he didn't flinch once. That almost made me nervous. I also couldn't tell whether the look on his face meant he already *knew* about Jennifer, or if what I was sharing was raising even *more* concern than he might already have. It didn't take long to learn what he was thinking.

"We had suspicions about Jennifer," the General began, "but we have been unable to confirm what you just shared with me."

"You mean that I know something that you don't," I responded with what I felt was justified sarcasm given the circumstances.

"I deserve that," the General replied, "but hopefully I will be able to put your mind at ease with regard to all that has transpired in our efforts to keep you and Monria safe from the evil threats that rise from the dark now and then. It is our goal going forward to devise a plan solid enough to reveal all of the invading dark forces that have yet to show their hand. Only a few have come to the light."

I found his phraseology curious, *come to the light*, but as I have mentioned before, paying attention to how things are conveyed to you, as well as word choice, leaves it open to more than casual interpretation. I learn a lot about people not only with what they choose to share, but also their word choices and how they share what they want you to know. Granted, we have a universally-diverse community, so that must always be taken into consideration. Interpretation is very much subjective, and could have different meanings for some. I think we tend to forget that at times, and it causes a bit of tension in communication that is unpleasant. I have been so wrapped up in strange occurrences lately, and find myself on edge far too often.

"I am in search of the truth right now General," I began, "because without it, I don't think that I can continue being as effective as you felt I could be during the time that I was blindly led, and especially since everything is now out in the open."

"Not everything," the General responded, "but it is important that you now be more informed since we need your conscious involvement going forward. I know you don't know what that means yet, but you will, and hopefully it connects some critical dots for you to the point of a clearer understanding of why we approached this covert operation the way we did."

"Initially," I responded, "I felt betrayed because we had an unbreakable trust during the years we have known each other and worked together on covert ops across the universe. When Core revealed that all of this was initiated by you, I had a hard time accepting it, because I didn't think that you would ever do anything like this. I couldn't fathom why I wasn't included in this operation. I'm still uncertain where my thoughts and feelings are right now, so I'd like to know more."

"I totally understand," the General replied, "and don't blame you for your reaction, so I think it's best if I start at the beginning and bring you current."

Finally, maybe things will start making sense and I can relax a bit more, but that will depend on what I'm about to learn. Life has always been precise with the General. No uncertainty, tells it like it is, but also considerate in the process. This time, I need to know *with certainty* that my being out of the loop on this covert ops mission had a valid purpose. He has a lot of explaining to do.

"First of all," the General began, "I am an original inhabitant of Monria, the same as Goth, Core and Colonel Wang. As I am sure you are aware by now, we have unique abilities. We are alien, but can shape-shift into human form. We, and our collective military, are defenders against dark forces across the universe. We have been involved for centuries, except for Wang, he joined us in 3006 and has been on the front lines ever since. He is extremely dependable and gets the job done no matter where it takes him or what needs to be accomplished. He put together a Monria TopOps Team that turned into the DSEC Military TopOps Team when the new governing body took over."

While I sit here listening to the General, I am making an effort to connect what he is saying to the experiences I have had while being blindly led through their covert operation. I wonder if aliens are better actors than humans because I was totally fooled and clueless. My pretend Oscar just faded, because these guys are good.

"Prior to the changes taking place on Monria beginning in 3010 with the first colony," the General continued, "everything was quite peaceful. Even after the Cultists and the other creatures arrived in 2346, we managed to coexist without any issues. I kept a close watch on their activities both on Monria and on Earth, and actually saw their presence as a benefit based on the underground tunneling by the Yogs that produced usable resources. I was on Earth prior to their exodus to Monria and witnessed the devastation. I wasn't sure where they were headed until I got a message from Goth. It was then that I headed back to Monria."

"How was it you were all able to coexist with the Cultists and the others without any issues like the first colony had when they came along in 3010," I asked.

"We had no reason to transform into our human selves on Monria," he responded. "The first colony didn't come along until centuries later, so as long as we presented ourselves in our alien form we were accepted. It's the humans that they have such an issue with because the humans want to establish a more dominant presence and claim Monria as theirs."

During this chat with the General, I am being cautious not to tip my hand about the discovered ancient journal because I don't know how much of that he knows about. Core said that they knew about the file cabinet and journal, and that it might have a clue to where the grimoire is, but I don't know if they know anything about the contents as yet.

"When we discovered the purpose for the Cultists making their grand exodus to Monria from Earth," the General continued, "that's when I started paying closer attention. We kept eye on them on Earth because of their evil interactions with the humans. We are immune to their Maladrite Elixir activities, so while in human form on Earth, we were not concerned about our own safety, and it gave us an opportunity to observe their behaviors in much closer proximity."

From everything I've read in the ancient journal so far, it has become perfectly clear that the Cultists want to awaken Cthulhu from his dream-like state. What the result of that will be is anyone's guess at this point, but I just know it isn't going to be good, and we need to remain on alert. However, I also know that the Cultists won't be successful if they don't find the grimoire that is purported to have the dark magic spells necessary to invoke the awakening. It is absolutely crucial that the grimoire be found before the Cultists get their hands on it.

"So what are the Cultists up to," I asked, "besides causing disruption and chaos for our community members?"

The General looked at me with a grin, and then leaned forward.

"We know you have the ancient journal," the General responded.

I sat stone-faced while I stared at him and his smirky grin. I was laughing on the inside because I had a feeling this was the case. I just didn't want to speak first if in fact he *wasn't* aware. Stupid thinking on my part.

"Perhaps this might be a good time to share a few other things," the General said, "which most likely will answer at least a few questions you might have."

Oh I have questions alright, and I won't be satisfied until I have all the answers. That might be wishful thinking on my part, but I need to be fully informed before we even attempt to move forward with whatever it is that we need to do now. No more secret covert operations that relate to Monria without me knowing. I don't have to be involved if it isn't necessary, but I just need to know. No more surprises.

## Ch 9 | The Flood Gates Open

While General Anderson and I continue our discussion in the SCIF room at the DSEC Military Headquarters, I was aware of certain things as a result of my chat with Core, but the information that the General is sharing has me overwhelmed. It's going to take some time to wrap my head around this stuff.

"Are you ok DM," the General asks, "shall I continue?"

"I'm a bit overwhelmed at the moment," I responded, "but yes, I would like you to continue. I need to hear as much as possible. Don't leave anything out."

I'm sure the General could tell from my tone that I was struggling, even though he was doing his best to be considerate in how he shared this information with me. I'm also sure he had his own struggles thinking about this day and when it would come. He *knew* it had to come eventually.

"Before I move on to other things," the General began, "the end result of this covert operation was for the ancient journal to end up in your hands. It was critical that every calculated maneuver led you to finding it. We couldn't leave it in the hands of the Cultists and have them find the data chip that has the encrypted code that reveals where the grimoire is, that would be disastrous."

I remember reading about some sort of data, and past and current technology not being compatible enough in order to decipher records, but also that some of the records were in really bad shape after being hidden in the church wall for so long. I wonder if the data chip is still in the file cabinet, or actually inside of the ancient journal somewhere. Advanced data storage technologies have given us more options, and when I was at ISMA for a short time working with the General and Senator Calvin Neff during the Cyrene covert ops missions, my office was about as high tech as you could get at the time.

Data was already being embedded in nanostructures within glass discs the size of a quarter in five dimensions. Storing data on these glass discs was very desirable because they could hold 360 terabytes and withstand heat up to 190°C (374°F). Since the data is stored within the structure of the 5D glass, it is protected from scratches and other damage, and believed that this method had the potential for storing data for up to 13.8 billion years, the [age of the universe](#).

In 2345, Decca claimed she had documented proof that the St Edwards Church in Teaksbury, England, founded by Frederick Waverly in the 1500s, was turned over to her family specifically for the *Cult of Shut'thend*. The Cultists as an alien race at that time already possessed advanced technologies beyond anything humans were capable of. It's anyone's guess what medium was used to record their history, other than the written word in the ancient journal.

As General Anderson continued *spilling the beans*, my attention was less than optimum because I kept thinking about the data chip.

"Wait," I said, "let me take a crack at something before you tell me anything else. When I came to you about the breach of the room at the forensics lab where the file cabinet is being kept, and showed you the alarming documents about the plans for the Valentine's Day human sacrifice that magically appeared on my desk, was that your doing?"

"Yes," the General responded, "but it was Core who put them there. Goth keeps a low profile at all times to minimize exposure and questioning, but Core established a relationship with Jennifer, and if any security would see him, he wouldn't be questioned."

"He didn't use the front door though, *did* he." There was no way I was going to let this one slip by. Goth, and now Core and the General, and most likely Colonel Wang, all possess special abilities as Monrian aliens that allow them to shape-shift and pass through solid objects, not to mention able to tap into someone's thoughts when I suppose they find it necessary.

"Correct," the General replied, "some things we discovered were more urgent than others, and bringing the Valentine's Day information to you was definitely an urgent matter. I knew you would bring the information to me when you found it."

"I see," I responded, "so I'm not the only one digging through the file cabinet."

"That is correct as well," he said. "Almost immediately after Goth established a relationship with the Cultists and they accepted him as a fellow Cthulhu worshipper, he became a member of the cult. He doesn't participate in any official capacity, but rather provides for their administrative needs during their council meetings. Over a period of time, he learned of their disturbing rituals. As long as they kept to themselves and didn't bother us, we didn't interfere. Their main objective is to awaken Cthulhu, but they have not been successful as yet."

"I'm assuming it's because they don't have the data chip with the encrypted code that will lead them to the grimoire and the dark magic spells they need in order to accomplish this objective," I replied. "Do you know where the data chip is?"

"We do not," the General responded, "but we have more than the Cultists to deal with regarding the data chip. I know that you are aware of the two factions who are operating from the dark side of the Moon and claiming they are allies of the Cultists. They are not. The *Esoteric Order of Dagon* is a centuries old order with members who worship Father Dagon, Mother Hydra and Cthulhu. They are closely aligned with the *Deep Ones* who serve them. The *Cult of the Skull* is known to worship Shub-Niggurath, but also claims an alliance with the Cultists. This too is not the case. However, we learned that Yidhra DreamWitch works with both in an effort to disrupt Monria, and it is *she* who has the connection to the Cultists. That isn't the end of it though. We also learned that Decca has arrived on the Moon and is taking back leadership of the *Cult of Shut'thend* from the *Guardian of R'Iyeh*."

"So is everyone on the hunt for the data chip," I asked, "or just the Cultists?"

"The two factions don't know about the ancient journal or the data chip, but the Cultists are very well aware of it and desperate to retrieve it," the General replied. "The factions are actually competing for dominant position on Monria, and while their activities can be beneficial and contributory, they are not beyond causing a bit of chaos to show their ability to be disruptive. I suppose it's their way of showing strength instead of weakness and a warning to those who might challenge them."

"I knew about the *Esoteric Order of Dagon* and *Cult of the Skull*," I replied, "and have dealt with their attempts at disruption and chaos. As a result of a recent attempt by EOOD in July to put us in harms way, I came face-to-face with Dagon. Well, sort of, he appeared holographically in the cave, and I was held captive while he too warned me of interfering where I shouldn't be interfering. It was at the end of this encounter that I learned that Decca was on the Moon. In August, both factions joined forces and attempted to lure community members to the dark side with the help of Yog-Sothoth and Shub-Niggurath. In September, Istasha, the Mistress of Darkness made her appearance. She presented herself as one of the Great Old Ones warning that evil will continue to rise from the deep, and that one day she will lead us into the darkness."

"This won't stop DM," began the General, "it will only continue to escalate. We only need to remember the encrypted writing on the back of the file cabinet to bring that into focus ... *The Moon Shall Rise* ... and know that we have more challenges to face. I attribute that to a strong and united Monria colony with her allies who have shown the dark forces that we won't surrender, at any cost. The human inhabitants of Monria have become a real threat to the evil that wants to be rid of us. Well, you humans anyway, but we're in this fight with you because this is our home."

"Did you try to engage with the previous Monria team," I asked, "because I was surprised to find that Pinthas was still around, even though a bit disoriented."

"We did not," the General replied, "I needed to make every effort possible to get you and Anhithe together as a team and to Monria. The two of you are driven by the same principles, but there are a couple of other factors at play here that made this effort even more urgent. However, one of them I cannot share as yet."

Why am I not surprised that I find myself the recipient of more shadowed mysteries and secrets. I'm not letting this one go either.

"General," I began, "I appreciate that you are very protective of me, and have been a great friend and confidante for many years, but why is it that you and Goth find it necessary to keep specific information from me?"

"It's done with respect DM," the General responded, "because there is history and information that you must learn on your own. Advancing the information quickly can be too disruptive and potentially harmful."

"Putting me in a state of intense curiosity doesn't help either," I said, "it makes it difficult to focus when I have all these questions encumbering my thoughts. Goth continues to say that I will learn my purpose on Monria in time, but this is tiring."

"I'm sorry DM," the General said, "this isn't meant to cause you stress or worry, it's just that certain things need to take their course for it all to come together. I can tell you this much. Pinthas will play a key role in helping to sort out the unknown."

Ok, this is interesting. I asked Pinthas to join our Monria Media Team to help with recording Monria's evolution when I discovered he had already recorded Monria's beginning history as a member of the original Monria team. It was very helpful because I could not find any recorded history anywhere after we arrived.

"Are you telling me that Pinthas knows about all this stuff," I asked, "and how is he going to help sort everything out?"

"That's rather complicated," the General replied. "Pinthas is going through a bit of a tough transitional period right now. He is not who he thinks he is, but recognizes that and is navigating his experiences in hopes of opening up his memory to the point of remembering his past. And no, Pinthas is not aware of what I shared with you. He will have his own story to tell over time, but there will be a connection with your self-discoveries, as well as revealing that of another."

"Great," I said, "just how am I supposed to step outside of this whirling vortex of the unknown long enough to make sense of it?"

"You won't have to make an effort DM," the General responded, "just continue with your normal routine and it will all fall into place as a result of your experiences."

"I'm laughing at that General," I replied, "because my routine is definitely anything but normal. I never know from one day to the next what cloak and dagger activity I'll find myself in the middle of, and now I'm not sure who I'm talking to anymore."

"I know it's unsettling," the General said, "but I'm going to ask you to trust that this will all work out, not only in *your* best interest, but Monria's as well."

"Ok, then back to the questions," I responded, "is Colonel Mitchell part of all of this, and what is his relationship with Jennifer?"

"He's not involved in any of this," the General replied, "and we're not sure about his relationship with Jennifer. It was good that you shared the incident with the results of the fingerprint analysis with Wang, and that Jennifer gave them to Mitchell. He has no business being at the forensics lab whatsoever. We're still keeping an eye on his movements and will get back to you on this. In the meantime, since you interact with Jennifer on a more frequent basis, let me know if anything out of the ordinary occurs. She may be a Cultist convert, but we don't know when that took place. Do you have any background on her that might help?"

"Not really," I said, "she was in place as the lead forensics tech at the lab when I arrived on Monria. We worked well together up until the file cabinet was extracted from the West Crater. It was then that I noticed a bit of a change in her behavior, but nothing too extraordinary until I caught her in a late-night meeting at the lab with Core. That was when I raided her desk to view the information in the folder Core gave her, and when I subsequently discovered the ancient journal."

"Core has not been able to learn of her background," the General responded, "because her thoughts cannot be read, which was quite strange, but after you revealed your experience with her at the research center and the green aura, it makes sense now. We cannot read the thoughts of the Cultists or any of the other creatures on the Moon. This is why Goth is on the inside, because we need to know their movements and plans so we can alert you to be prepared."

"I will see if there's anything I can find out about Jennifer," I replied, "but knowing what I know about her being a Cultist convert, this is going to be tricky. It seemed that only when she felt threatened the green aura started to appear. I can see now that I'll need to tread lightly when engaged with her. I don't want to go through another incident like the one I did that could have turned out disastrous."

"Ya, about that," the General said, "you don't need to be concerned because you are immune. However, you can't let Jennifer discover that, or any other Cultist you may come in contact with."

"That was probably the most shocking thing I've heard so far," I responded, "and it definitely has implications that are boggling the mind right now. Who in the HELL am I General, and how is it that I'm immune from the Maladrite Elixir?"

"I'm really sorry that I can't be more forthcoming about this DM," the General said, "it's important for you to learn your truth as you navigate your experiences, which will also reveal the importance and purpose for being on Monria. You and Pinthas are basically going through a process of discovery right now, and it's critical that specific information be learned on this path of enlightenment. It will reveal crucial details that will be invaluable to the survival of Monria, our home."

Wait, did he say *our* home? Could it be that I am an original Monria alien too? If I am, I am clueless, because I have no memory of ever being on Monria before I accepted the team position with Anhithe and moved here. However, it might explain the intense energy draw I experienced after arriving, and why I am in and out of telepathic transmissions that leave me drained.

"Do you know anything about the telepathic transmissions I receive now and then General," I asked, "and who it is that is feeding me information?"

"I do not," the General replied, "because we are not involved in any of that, and it is something you need to let play out in your discovery process. The same with Pinthas. We have no means of directing your course of activity, it has to happen naturally and progressively. Learning too much at once can be harmful."

"Do I interact with any others in the community who are Monrian aliens," I asked, "and can you tell me who they are?"

"Yes, and no," the General said, "there are quite a few that you interact with, but they must remain anonymous in order to continue supporting Monria's efforts to fight the evil forces that rise from the dark. You may learn of more over time, but for now, Goth, Core, Colonel Wang and myself will be your source of communication when it comes to Monria activities."

"What about Anhithe," I asked, "does he know about any of this at all? I know that he wasn't involved in the covert ops mission, but I don't want to move forward if I can't be open with him. That's not how we operate. We make decisions about Monria as a team, and if I'm going to be making all of these discoveries that you say I am, then I need to be able to share them with Ant, because it will affect how we make our decisions."

"The two of you work well as a team," the General began, "and we wouldn't want to do anything to disrupt that. We know Ant's history and his character, not to mention his integrity, loyalty and dedication to Monria. What I can tell you, is that Ant has his *own* story, but it is not my place to tell it. That is something the two of you will have to explore if you choose to disclose what you have learned, but let him be the initiator of when and what he reveals to you."

"I'm tired," I said. "I know I told you I wanted to know *everything*, but I'm feeling a bit disoriented right now with all of this new information. I need to take some time to sort through it so my mind is more settled, but first, can you tell me where we go from here? Is there anything special I need to be doing right now?"

"Goth is ready to talk with you if you feel up to it," the General replied, "he's waiting at the research center, but if you'd rather wait until another time, that's ok too."

"No," I responded, "I'll talk with him now because I only have a couple of questions to ask. I'm assuming he's kept his distance for a reason, and I not only want to know about that, but also the status of our arrangement regarding alerts."

It's been a while since Goth and I have had a chat, but then it's also been rather quiet with regard to disruptions. Just attempts initiated by the *Esoteric Order of Dagon* and the *Cult of the Skull*, but those were rather minor compared to the more intense assaults during our bigger events. Halloween is getting close, so I wonder if we have anything to be concerned about.

"Before I go though, can you tell me anything about the re-emergence of Narissa Thompson," I asked. "Core said she rescued him from a hidden cave where he was being held captive by the Cultists, but now knowing that he is a Monrian alien and can move through solid objects, I'm assuming he had to play along in order not to reveal who he is. It's surprising to learn that she's about, because it was presumed that she was still missing, or even dead."

"Unfortunately, I can't shed any light on that either DM," the General responded, "that will be another exploration I'm sure you will encounter. We know Narissa's history with the original team and DSEC Security, but we can't interfere in that, and we can't reveal who we are to her. This one you'll have to handle when the time comes, and I hope you'll be able to understand more clearly as you have these experiences why it's necessary they not be rushed."

What I understand right now is that I'm caught up in so many unknowns that my head is about to split. I'm finding myself on the receiving end of something our community usually benefits from ... *Expect the Unexpected* ... this time it's me.

## Ch 10 | Where Do We Go From Here



The General was right, Goth was waiting in my office. I stood there for a moment contemplating how this would play out since this is the first time we'll be chatting after I learned everything that has my head spinning right now.

"Hello Goth," I said, "it's nice to see you again, I think."

"Hello DM, it *has* been a while hasn't it," he responded.

"I will warn you that I'm overwhelmed at the moment after my talk with both Core and the General, not to mention my encounter with Jennifer, so I think at this point, it would probably be best to keep this a bit short. We have our Halloween event coming up the end of this month and I'm wondering if there's any kind of an alert we should be aware of."

"Core filled me in on his chat with you while you were talking with the General," he replied, "and the General gave me a quick call to give me a brief summary of what he shared with you, so I'm good with regard to that. As far as an alert is concerned, yes, I learned that all four creatures are banding together once again to create chaos during your Halloween event. However, I also learned that they are planning an additional distraction because they want the ancient journal and the data chip. They will be engaging Jennifer since she already has access to the forensics lab. She now knows that Core is missing, but not how he escaped."

"I suppose I'll need to chat with the General again to make sure we have military in place for support," I responded. "Our friends and allies will already be on the Moon for the event. Maybe the General already knows and I can skip a step."

"Yes, he knows," Goth replied, "and now you can take comfort in knowing yourself that when there is an alert, the General will already know and be preparing to have everything in place before the event."

"Does that mean that every time I went to the General to share alerts that you passed on to me he already knew," I asked.

"Yes," Goth said, just a simple yes. I was too wore out to push it any further.

Maybe I'll find more relief and minimized steps as a result of knowing that Goth, Core, the General and Colonel Wang are all highly evolved and tuned into each other. Perhaps as things settle down and I can make more sense of everything I won't feel so stressed. I wonder if I'll ever learn who the other Monrian aliens are that I have interacted with, or if they might slip somehow and it gets revealed.

I'm incredibly curious about how my experiences will unfold that will teach me who I am and why I don't remember. I also want to know why it has to happen this way, rather than being told.

"You have to take things slow DM," Goth chimed in, "because every encounter will reveal memories. The telepathic communications you've been receiving have been the beginning of your transitional period toward learning your truth. Just keep in mind that not all telepathic transmissions are genuine, and that there will be those who want to persuade you to believe untruthful things. I think at this point in time, based on the information that has been shared with you, deciphering what is real and not real should be easier for you, but if you ever have an issue, let me know."

I need to know how he does that. Tap into my thoughts. Is it everything at all times, or just under specific conditions that my mind gets invaded and picked apart. I'm incredibly tired, but I'd like to know the answer.

"Here's how it works DM," Goth responded. "We don't invade every thought, but during personal conversations like this, we are more present in that respect so that we don't miss addressing things that need our attention. We also develop a deeper sensitivity to those we become close to, and we can sense when we are needed, even from a distance. However, we also make decisions with regard to timing and the importance of the need, so we may not be readily available. It's not a case of dismissing someone, but rather a confidence that they will figure it out on their own. It's part of the learning process."

"I'm not sure I'll ever get used to this," I replied, "but I guess it's useful. Right now, my need is to go to the penthouse and get some rest. I'll start sorting all of this out tomorrow when my head is more clear. Thank you for your time as always."

"You're very welcome DM," Goth said, "it's always my pleasure."

As Goth got up to leave, he stopped in the doorway and looked at me with a very curious grin before speaking.

*"By the way, I recently learned who Colonel Mitchell and Jennifer are ..."*



The human behind DME is a 13 year veteran of Entropia Universe, an MMORPG online virtual universe with a Real Cash Economy. She is a member of the Monria Management Team and serves as their Community Manager, CFO (Chief Fun Officer), a Forum Administrator, and manages the Writing and Media Teams, as well as the Community Initiative Programs (CIP). Her extensive virtual background in writing and media lends itself to bringing Monria to life.

**Monria is a Horror 3D MMORPG within the Entropia Universe expanding upon the Cthulhu Mythos and set in the distant future where an evil exists so stealth that one is unaware of how subtle and pervasive the Cthulhu effects can be on one's mind until it is too late. The Cultists are driving the dark forces that leave this Moon community on constant alert, and facing dangers that could cause them to lose control of Monria.**