

Chapter 3

“The Eye on the Moon”

Dawn's mind drifted back to someone's dream house with a cul-de-sac in front, a double garage, a barbecue deck out back overlooking a duck pond and a lawn that re-grew before it got mowed all the way around. She and Jeff simply hadn't been together long enough for it to be their shared dream come true, and in their hearts they knew the bank had dashed the dreams of some other couple by foreclosing on them. The price was just too low. Maybe it was the suburbs, maybe it was Cleveland or maybe it was the uneasy times all across America, but living here felt like they should be elsewhere.

Jeff had grown up in a small Ohio town a few hundred miles to the southeast, which is why he had applied to work in NASA's Cleveland facility. He felt the same as Dawn about their too-new house. The genius solved it by customizing the ceiling of their master bedroom with a star field when he turned it into his den. He needed the extra space, he claimed, for research on his hobby. He needed his home computer station in the same room with his racks of books, videos and space junk. She seriously questioned the line between genius and goofball since all of it was junk to her.

“Just so you know, we slept in the guest bedroom,” she informed Dorian, who was bound to wonder. “You see his hobby was UFOs or flying saucers. He thought they were real and wanted to prove it, so he collected everything about them. I know they aren't real. Why would aliens come all the way from other planets, and if they did, what's that got to do with me? And that alien abduction flip-flap is the biggest bunk ever.”

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Jeff pounded away at his advance test model G-7 iMac computer. Books, magazines and print-outs about Mars, Egypt, Atlantis, anti-gravity, ghosts, the Philadelphia Experiment and other fantasies threatened to topple inward and bury him. A papier maché Sphinx he had made in grade school sat on top of the complete Earth Chronicles by Zechariah Sitchin.

From the couch behind him Dawn scanned the piles of books and videos that had fanned his interest. Her attention drifted to the small patch of actual wall that held two posters - a real map of lunar landscape and a questionable one showing the infamous Face on Mars. It was the original 1976 Viking image, she recalled, that looked more like a face than any picture since. Sure it had a couple of hollows where eyes might have been, a blunt ridge for a nose and a slash beneath that might pass for a mouth, but the curving ridge that was supposed to be hair



resembled George Washington more than the Sphinx in Egypt. Jeff had lifted the Sphinx theory from someone with equally bad eyesight. A face was just a face....

Dawn caught herself. She had somehow described the bogus face to someone, she vaguely recalled, but not in words. They must be doing that thinking together thing. She blinked hard and shook her head, but the face kept staring back. Trapped inside that day, she did not even know what would happen next. Her sketchy analysis faded as she began to re-live the scene.

Jeff looked kind of cute when he discovered stuff. The gentle bobbing of his hair on the back of his shirt suggested side tracking him to a reciprocal activity. It had worked before without complaint. Tonight she had never seen him so animated or so intent on everything but her. To change that she needed to act excited at whatever he found, as long as it wasn't more rocks. She fidgeted on the couch wondering how to get a little action, other than the 'Hit Return' kind, until her head nodded into a doze. With a yawn she pulled herself up, walked behind Jeff and put her hands on his shoulders. He paused a microsecond to slap her left hand with his right in what passed for affection when his mind was off world. Sure enough, she noticed on the monitor, more rocks. The screen morphed rapidly from one image to another. He threw it into a new program, added some math and colored the image with a range from warm bronze to deep purple until hills and valleys emerged from the chaos and slowly coalesced into utter madness.

“My job at NASA is to find puzzles others miss and solve 'em,” he said to fill the tense silence before the big surprise.

“I know that, but someone already discovered the moon and the rocks up there too.”

“Well, they never noticed this. The old Clementine moon mission back in 1994 mapped the planet and also took infrared scans after sunset of some areas. This data has languished in NASA files for years, just never looked at before me. Sealed files! Amazing!”

She couldn't fathom how he could get so excited at something that had never been looked at. Nothing but nothing on the moon could beat what she had in mind. “Languished?” she breathed heavily into his hair as she caressed his chest from behind and pressed her breasts against his shoulders ever so lightly. “Now there's a sexy word.”

“Is it? Anyway, the surface sands cool quickly when the sun sets while buried structures retain their heat longer, so if I assign colors based on the different temperatures ... doo-de, do-de doo ... and this, Mrs. Dawn King, one-year anniversary in two weeks, is....” On the monitor buried rocks and ridges emerged in bronze peaks over purple valleys to form a distinctive eye

shape with a round pupil framed by two matching lids and a single curly eyelash. Jeff flew out of her arms to the moon map on the wall and proudly pointed at a spot. "Right there!" The real half-moon had conveniently risen to view through their open window, so for emphasis he scurried over and needlessly pointed to it in the sky. "Up there!"

Dawn sank into his vacated chair and moaned, "Up there?" Her distress could have filled a crater, but he probably wouldn't notice unless she smashed the monitor. In his advanced delirium of discovery fever, he wouldn't notice her unless she stripped naked and paraded on the front lawn. No-win, but she'd keep trying. "This thing is up on the moon? No way. Like that silly Face on Mars, it can't be real."

"That's an infrared view of the structure under the surface. It's mostly buried. Computer imaging is part of my job and...." He stopped in mid sentence. "What does it look like to you?"

That put her on the spot. Anyone could see upper and lower eyelids sandwiching a giant eyeball, with a spiraling eyelash to boot, but she didn't want to be blamed for discovering what couldn't possibly be there in the first place. She did know how to dodge his traps by throwing a question back: "How big is the whole thing?"

"Roughly a mile and a half across."

"Yeah, right, buried on the moon!" She felt more confident in the nonsense of it all and refused to get sucked into his joke. "So that round part is what, the size of a football stadium?"

"Basketball."

"Which team?"

"The Cavaliers, of course."

She slapped the joke with the back of her hand and static electricity sparked from her fingertips to the eye. The cartoon outline dissolved into what appeared to be a photo of the unburied eye in convincing shades of gray. Her mind seemed to zoom like a routine special effect through the mountainous dome that formed the eyeball into a cavern within. The zoom continued to descend toward a lighted round stone on the floor. As she got closer she could see that the sizable slab contained a prominent triangle design with peculiar symbols carved inside it. Her eyes widened with apprehension because the details were both unexpected and too real. An overwhelming conviction, like she had never felt before, told her that Jeff wasn't pulling a prank and the bizarre movie was not on his hard drive. Her own fingers still touching and sparking to the screen were somehow causing the vision that she had no desire to witness. Some hidden truth was about to be revealed. She wasn't ready. She didn't want to know. Ever. It

was a monstrous lie, had to be, but her fear was overwhelmingly real. With an effort she shook her eyes shut, jerked back her hand, jumped up and cried shrilly, “Okay, it's a giant eye! Make it go away!”



Jeff rushed to her side with concern, but the screen had reverted to his color-coded rock pattern. “It's not just any eye, it's a symbol. You see that pedestal and long curlicue eyelash going downward? This is unmistakably the Egyptian Eye of Horus.”

“Horus? Oh, from mythology. Did he get cut up into pieces?”

“That was his father, Osiris. His mother, Isis, found the body parts except the phallus.”

“Stop it! Stop it! There shouldn't be anything up there on the moon and, and this is plain silly, but I'm a little afraid.”

“Of that?” he said incredulously, pointing down with his right hand while his left arm finally crept protectively around her shoulders. “It's millions of years old and 240,000 miles away. I'm planning to post the image on a secret website that can't be traced back to me. The world needs to know because NASA sure won't tell them.”

Dawn moved into his half embrace, reached her head up and kissed his chin. He glanced right through the desire in her eyes. Never trusting subtlety to reach any man, she bodied him away from the desk toward the light switch and nudged it off. There was still enough light from the monitor, though they could no longer see the screen, to tug him gently to the couch and pull him down into a deeper embrace. “Don't bring your work home with you,” she whispered. “It'll kill you. I won't.”

Jeff was oblivious to her kisses, her exploring touch and her willing body pressing into his until he finished his story. “I took the eye to Mike Drout today.”

Mike's face flashed into her head more vividly than any face ever had. She had met Mike a number of times and he was okay, but why could she see him so clearly?

“This odd man was in his office, a Dr. Krall, who seemed so assured with himself, powerful, in charge. Mike seemed almost afraid of him. They were discussing what I had found. You know, the eye.”

Now she saw Mike's office and felt a disturbing presence behind the desk. She had never been in the office before. “Please, stop,” she pleaded in a low whisper.

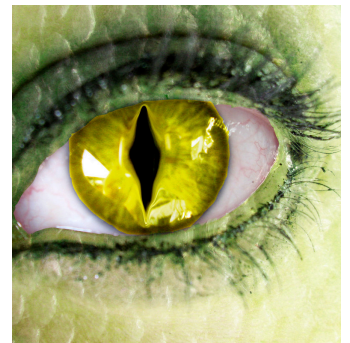
“Dr. Krall asked if I wanted to move to Pasadena to work at the Jet Propulsion Lab. He seems to run it but there is no record of any such man in a google search. Anyway, he must have a lot of influence, but we weren't formally introduced so I...”

She squeaked out an unsubtle, “Shut up!” and smothered his mouth with her most tender kisses. “Just hold me. Not there, here.” As she fumbled to guide his hand to her favorite touching place, her mind flashed white. When it cleared she found herself surveying every detail of Mike Drout's immaculate office at NASA that afternoon while Jeff showed off the eye. His distant jabbering about the event had somehow drawn her mind into his head. The power of suggestion never worked like that. Something totally inexplicable had brought her here against her will and all reason. Before losing herself in the scene, she figured the cause must be related to touching that eye.

Built a million years ago or more, by some one or thing, up on the moon.

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Dr. Krall -- a gaunt, impeccably dressed man in his mid-sixties with manicured nails, a flashy diamond ring and sporting a pencil-thin mustache -- stood towering yet aloof behind Mike's desk. His hissing lisp exuded a snake-like presence when he did more than suggest, “There issss no eye buried on the moon, Mr. King. Do you understand me?”



Jeff's exuberance obviously did not, but still he replied, “Yes, of course. We won't tell anyone until we can prepare the world for the truth. The odds against nature carving this structure are a zillion to one. Someone built it on purpose and so long ago that it could push the known origins of man way back. Mr. Drout, we need to go up there and look closer!”

Mike flitted nervously around. “Jeff, Jeff, settle down. We've still got the big debate. Either God created man or we evolved from apes. People don't want new ideas.”

“Even if they're true?”

“Especially then.”

Dr. Krall attempted to sidetrack Jeff to a favorite project. “I need you to analyze the latest deep radar probe of Jupiter's moon Europa. The public doesn't even know we gathered the data. Look for pockets of warmth in the oceans that might harbor life. Find proof of life elsewhere in the solar system and you can write your own ticket in science, young man.”

Mike handed Jeff a folder and steered him toward the door. “You've been itching to get

into this. Take a few days off first. No, take a whole week off with pay and then it's onward to the frozen oceans of Europa. This is highly confidential, just between the three of us.”

“Think about coming to work for me in Pasadena, Mr. King,” Krall shot after them. “I’ll keep an eye on you.”

At the unintended reminder Jeff broke away and waved his Eye of Horus printout once more in Krall's face. “But my eye, this one? You can verify the data. You can take new pictures. NASA has a reputation for the truth.”

“I see nothing,” Krall answered with a sinister sneer no one sane would argue with.

Mike positively wrestled Jeff to the open door and said, “Absolutely, my boy, NASA is cutting edge as long as the truth supports the established facts.” Jeff’s mouth dropped while he pondered the twisted logic. Mike seized the moment of hesitation, edged him out in the hallway and secured the door.

Jeff considered knocking for another try, but instead glanced in the folder he no longer cared about and shuffled off toward his office. With a sudden inspiration he sprinted to his computer, booted up the eye files from his hard drive and scrolled through image after image. Dr. Krall was right. There was no eye on the moon, not that he could prove anymore from NASA's data. Gone, all of the infrared data was gone. The only remnant of an eye was a curving rocky ridge above ground. How about on his home computer? He had emailed the attached files home before he even knew what they contained. Someone knew now and had altered them here. How long would they be safe at home? Suddenly paranoid and for good reason, he squinted around his cubicle looking for hidden cameras. He started to run an anti-spy scan of his hard drive when a chilling thought struck -- Was Dawn safe?



His fear and confusion had broken the spell over Dawn back in the den of madness. Dumping her on the floor didn't help either. She plopped hard on her bottom and lurched up in the dark smack into the computer desk. She grabbed the screen to keep it from flying off and wrestled it back into place. The monitor that had been in sleep mode lit up showing once again the eerie cavern inside the eye complex on the moon, only this time from ground level. She backed away, but the image remained and grew clearer. People in shimmering metallic robes gathered before the round slab carved with picture symbols like hieroglyphics. A ghost materialized out of nowhere in the center of the platform. “Not to worry, that's what ghosts do, isn't it?” she muttered to herself, mystifying Jeff who could not see the screen from the

couch. "Of course, it's a splatted video playing, a fifties sci-fi clunker." She backed into the hallway with her eyes still riveted to the screen. "Sure, that's it. I've never seen this one and don't want to now." The ghost in an ornate golden robe slowly turned to address her followers. "Dummy, she's not a ghost. She beamed down like on television. I hate that show. So stop looking. Leave! She's coming closer ... looking at me. Don't do that! Shut your eyes, Dawn. Looks like ... no... it can't be ... that's impossible...."

"It's not me!" she screamed out loud.

The screen faded back to sleep mode.

"What?" Jeff asked weakly, hoping for no answer at all.

She heard and vented her wrath at him while hiding her real fear. "Don't ever mention that Krall guy again. I hate him. Can't you see he's the most evil man on earth?" Her certainty closed the subject beyond debate. In a blink she turned and darted down the hall.

"Huh? Where are you going?" he called after her. "Okay, I won't. I'm sorry! My timing sucks. I'm a lunatic! I, I, I..." The slamming bedroom door cut short his confession of idiocy, but he had to have the last word to make any sense from her outburst. His feeble parting shot zinged down the hallway, out the window and into the pond where a bullfrog swallowed it. "I guess you don't like Pasadena."

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Next:
Chapter #4
"Midnight Encounter"