



VALIANT



THE DEATH-DEFYING

DOCTOR MIRAGE

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WHAT'S THE DOWNSIDE?



IT'S ME, HOUSE. ALL IS WELL.

RECLUSIVE BILLIONAIRE? WANTS TO HIRE A PARANORMAL INVESTIGATOR...?



HE COULD BE LOONY AS A DUCK FART. BUT YOU CAN HANDLE THAT.

I DON'T WANT TO TAKE ON A BIG JOB RIGHT NOW. THAT MONEY SOUNDS LIKE A BIG JOB.



LISTEN WITH THE EARS THAT LOVE THIS HOUSE, AND IT SOUNDS LIKE PAYING YOUR BACK PROPERTY TAXES.

JUST TALK TO THE GUY--

FINE. I'LL MEET HIM. SHUT UP.



ATTA GIRL! I'LL GET IT SET UP. YOU WON'T REGRET IT, I SWEAR.

IF IT GOES LIKE THIS THING TODAY, THOUGH? I'M WALKING AND FIRING YOU.





NO, I'VE GOT NO REASON TO BELIEVE SHE RESTS IN ANYTHING BUT PEACE.

IT'S--WELL... HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF OPERATION SOCKEYE?

MAYBE? I KNEW AN ANCIENT LANGUAGES SPECIALIST ONCE...



...SHE'D SPENT SOME YEARS--WAY BACK--TRANSLATING FOR A GOVERNMENT PROJECT. SOCKEYE SOUNDS RIGHT.

THAT WOULDN'T BE CANDACE OVERFELD, WOULD IT? WHATEVER BECAME OF HER?



SOMEONE HIRED HER--NEEDED TO IDENTIFY AN OLD AMULET.

SHE TRANSLATED THE ENGRAVINGS AND SPONTANEOUSLY COMBUSTED.

THAT'S... I'M VERY SORRY TO HEAR THAT.



ONLY MET HER ONCE OR TWICE BUT SHE SEEMED LIKE A NICE GAL.

SHE WAS. NICE, SMART. TRUSTED HER CLIENTS.

YOU?



I'M SMART. BUT I'M NOT MUCH FOR NICE AND TRUSTING.

I MEANT, WERE YOU THE CLIENT--WITH THE AMULET?



OH. NO...



...BUT I DID HELP CATCH HIM.

SOMETHING TO DRINK?



NOTHING FOR ME, THANKS. YOU WANTED TO TALK ABOUT SOCKEYE?

RIGHT. IT STARTED PARALLEL TO PAPERCLIP--AS THE WAR CLOSED OUT--BUT INSTEAD OF ROCKETS AND PHYSICISTS...



...IT WAS THE PARANORMAL. MAGIC, OUT-OF-BODY TRAVEL, TELEPATHY, YOU NAME IT.

THE INITIAL TASK WAS TO... WELL... RECRUIT NAZI OCCULTISTS BEFORE THE SOVIETS COULD GET 'EM.



AND FROM THERE--SHORT HOP TO GRABBING ANYTHING THAT MIGHT BE USEFUL FROM ANYWHERE?

THAT'S ABOUT THE SIZE OF IT.



THIS WAY, PLEASE. THERE ARE SOME THINGS I'LL NEED YOU TO SEE.



WAY OF THINKING WAS, SOMEONE'S GOING TO MAKE A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL...

...WE COULDN'T HAVE IT BE THE COMMIES, RIGHT?



...RIIIIGHT.



THIS FLOOR WAS RECOVERED FROM A BLACK LODGE IN THE CSERHÁTS. ABOUT TWELVE HUNDRED YEARS OLD.

INSTALLED IT HERE MYSELF. EVERY STONE BY HAND. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I THINK YOU'RE STALLING ABOUT WHY YOU NEED ME.



IT'S...
DIFFICULT.
I AM PAYING
FOR THE TIME,
THOUGH.

I'D COME
FROM ARMY INTEL.
MY GROUP'S MISSION
BRIEF WAS FAIRLY
SIMPLE...

...FIND ~~SECRET~~
AND SEE IF WE COULD
FIGURE OUT HOW
IT WORKED.



I SHOULDN'T BE
SHOCKED BY THE KIND
OF IRRESPONSIBILITY
YOU'RE DESCRIBING...

...BUT, MAN.
AT LEAST WHEN THEY
WANTED ASTRONAUTS
THEY STARTED WITH
PILOTS.



YOU'RE EXACTLY
RIGHT. I KNOW. AT
BEST WE WERE KIDS WITH
STICKS TRYING TO FIX
SWISS WATCHES.

EVERYTHING I'VE
DONE SINCE RETIRING
FROM THE SERVICE,
ALL OF THIS...



"...IT'S ALL BEEN ABOUT TRYING TO
UNDO THE DAMAGE. BUT THERE'S
ONE THING, MORE PERSONAL..."



...AND I CAN'T HANDLE IT BY MYSELF. I NEED HELP. I NEED YOUR HELP.

IT STARTED IN THE BACKWOODS NORTH OF CAMBODIA.

"WE WERE PRETTY RATTLED. ALL THE WILD THINGS WE'D ALREADY SEEN HAD NOTHING ON YOUR PEOPLE."



LOT OF MIXED-RACE BERKELEY KIDS UP THERE IN LAOS?

POORLY CHOSEN WORDS. SORRY. POINT IS, WE WERE IN BAD SHAPE, UNSETTLED, WHEN WE FOUND THE EXTRACTION SITE--



"EXTRACTING... WHAT?"

Sending...



TWO OF HIMMLER'S GUYS. WE WERE TOLD THEY HAD FOUND THE TRICK TO REMOTE VIEWING.



WE WERE SUPPOSED TO MOVE FAST. NAZI HUNTERS AND THE SOVIETS WERE LOOKING FOR THEM TOO.



"SO WE WENT IN. BARELY ANY RECON, NO RESEARCH.

"THEN THE WORLD TURNED INSIDE OUT."



I CAME TO IN A POOL OF MY OWN BLOOD. THE MEN WE'D COME FOR WERE GONE. MY TEAM WERE SHOCKY, INCOHERENT.

AND I HAD THIS. CAN YOU SEE IT? MOST PEOPLE CAN'T SEE IT.

I... I SEE A CHAIN AROUND YOUR WRIST.



IT'S A SPIRIT THING. I'VE GOT NO TALENT FOR THAT STUFF.

I NEED YOU TO FIND A WAY TO REMOVE IT. IT--

HEY, YOU KNOW WHAT? STOP RIGHT THERE. YOU KEEP YOUR MONEY. I'M DONE.



NO. YOU HAVE TO HEAR ME OUT.

SORRY, THIS IS A CANDACE OVERFELD SITUATION. I'M NOT THE ONE YOU WANT FOR THIS.



I'VE DONE MY RESEARCH. I KNOW YOU'RE THE BEST--

AND I KNOW WHAT A THRANIAL BINDING LOOKS LIKE. THAT'S OUTSIDE STUFF.

I STICK TO THIS PLANE. AND I WON'T--

YOU NEED NOT BE AFRAID.



YOU NEED NOT BE HIS PAWN.

WHO--

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU PLAYING AT?



OUT OF MY WAY.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE CURTAIN, MARCH?

STOP!



LADY, YOU HAVE GOT A LOT OF DAMN NERVE.

YOU ARE A GUEST IN MY HOME AND--

SHUT UP. PLEASE.



LI HWEN
MIRAGE ABIDES
WITH THE PALE
MISTRESS.



NOW.
YOU SEE WHI
I'M DEALING W
YOU UNDERST



WHAT
ARE YOU?

A PRISONER.

WHY SHOULD
I TRUST YOU?

YOU
SHOULD
NOT.