

Full Circle

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CHAPTER 9

Mary and Major Garcia continued walking to a smaller conference room on the same floor where the introductions had taken place the day before. It was equally well-equipped as the other room, but much more intimate. They entered the room to find Lt. Xiong already sitting at the conference room table. Special Agent Mackey was standing, facing a dry erase board with notes scribbled on it.

After they took their seats, Special Agent Mackey began. “Good morning, all. Dr. Chrysler, welcome to your first day. All morning briefings will be held in this room. I will not typically attend these briefings, but will from time to time as necessary. Today, it’s most necessary, because today we explain your assignment. I suggest you take notes.”

Fortunately, and not coincidentally, there was a small, neat stack of white three-hole-punched paper in the center of the table. At each seat, there was a pen and one sharpened pencil. With Special Agent Mackey’s cue, Mary took a pen and some paper, and prepared to take notes.

“Dr. Chrysler, are you familiar with the events in Roswell, New Mexico in 1947 when the wreckage of a weather balloon was rumored to be that of a UFO?” he asked.

“Not very, but yeah,” she replied a little hesitantly.

He added, “It wasn’t a weather balloon. We needed to maintain that cover in order to ensure the security of our assignment. It was, as the media and conspiracy theorists have speculated, an alien spacecraft.”

Mary took a deep breath and added, “I guess I’m not surprised, but a part of me is.” After a long pause, with everyone looking at her she said shyly, “Perhaps because I’m involved with it now somehow.”

“It’s nothing to fear. This incident has opened up unimaginable doors for us and will undoubtedly have a hugely positive impact on all of mankind,” he said.

“So, where do I fit in?” she asked.

“Well, we’ll get to that in a minute. There’s more to this story. You see, we’ve been studying the remains of this crash for 60 years. Each new discovery brings

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new opportunities. Each time we learn something new about the material of the aircraft, we can contemplate how to produce it ourselves. Each navigational or technological discovery can lead to radical new means of transportation or possibly communication.” He paused, and then added, “It’s amazing. More importantly, it’s crucial to our own progression,” he said, this time almost showing some emotion.

“The most difficult part of this discovery is quelling the idea that we recovered an actual alien life form,” he said as he looked down at the table. When he slowly raised his head to look at Mary, he said, “Dr. Chrysler. We have. And that’s where you come in.”

Mary felt her stomach begin to tense up as she realized the gravity of what he said. “Was my sample taken from the wreckage?” she queried.

“Yes,” he replied almost before she finished her sentence.

“But that sample’s human, it’s not alien,” she asked in a confused tone. As the last word left her lips, she quickly tensed up, realizing that she hadn’t previously confessed to any of them that she even had a sample, let alone had it tested. She could feel her expression reflecting her regret.

“Yes, we know,” he said, and paused for several seconds, looking intently at her. It seemed clear that he and the rest of them were slightly surprised by her admission.

Ignoring her comment, he continued, saying, “Dr. Chrysler, we have reason to believe that ‘aliens’ as we know them, are actually human. Of course, they aren’t just like us, but they are an evolved form of ourselves,” he said. With that last comment, Mary looked around to find everyone in the room was focused intently upon her face.

“Holy shit,” Mary whispered quietly to herself.

“I’m sorry, what did you say?” Special Agent Mackey inquired.

She took a moment before responding, “I see. But how? I mean, why aren’t they here, where’d they come from?” She paused momentarily and then softly said, “I mean, it doesn’t make any sense!”

Special Agent Mackey broke a brief and faint smile and said, "It's a simple matter of evolution, Dr. Chrysler. The universe is larger than we could ever have possibly imagined. When you consider all that is unknown to us, this is entirely plausible. In fact, it's downright obvious."

"Okay. So, there are aliens, and let's say that these aliens are actually an advanced form of us," she said while looking down at the table, clearly trying to concentrate, "Why are we so quiet about it? What's the point of that? What's so dangerous?" she asked.

Major Garcia calmly turned to face her, and said, "Mary, do you realize that we're sitting on the answers here? Other countries have speculation. We've got the truth. If we share this information, there will be no control over how it's used."

"Please don't tell me it's a mere matter of competition," she said with a serious face.

"Of course not," he replied. "But to relinquish this finding without further exploration would be reckless."

"Forgive me for being such a skeptic. I mean, I did only just find out about this, but haven't we had, I don't know, like 60 years to explore the ramifications?" she said with a slight chuckle.

With a very serious face, Special Agent Mackey replied, "There is more to this discovery than you know at the moment. Your first obligation right now is to trust in your government's decision to keep this quiet. You are working for us now, Dr. Chrysler, and although your questions are reasonable, please don't misunderstand your obligation to us. As you work on this classified, or 'black' project, you will come to understand the severity of the situation in due time. Until then, you must have full faith in us and your mission and remain obedient to that."

"I'm sorry, but I'm sure you understand it's a bit of a shock," she said, equally shocked by the revelation and his stern lecture.

"Of course," he replied, his expression unchanged. For a moment, Mary regretted blurting out her reservations about the silence, not to mention the fact that she knew the sample was human. As she scanned the faces of everyone in the room,

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she could read the seriousness in their expressions. She certainly didn't want to lose their trust on the first day.

After a moment of awkwardness, Lt. Xiong spoke for the first time. "Mary, please don't underestimate the seriousness of this discovery. I know it must seem silly on the surface, to hide this from the world, but you'll soon discover it's our only choice."

Mary was surprised by her comment. Not only did she just repeat what Special Agent Mackey had made clear, but she referred to her by her first name. At least Major Garcia worked up to a first name basis. Mary replied to her comment with a slight nod as she focused her sight back on Special Agent Mackey.

"We'd like you to begin by examining some tissue samples. Further orders will be given as needed, and will come directly from me or Major Garcia. Is that clear? Do you have any questions?" he said.

"Only about a million, but I imagine most of them will be explained as I get to work," she said with a smile. Nobody returned her smile, making her feel uncomfortable.

"I'll show you to your work area," Major Garcia said as he rose and pulled out her chair for her.

"Thank you, Dr. Chrysler. On behalf of everyone, I'd like to thank you for your participation," Special Agent Mackey said as he stood still, his hands folded behind him.

"Yes, thank you, Mary," Lt. Xiong said while remaining seated.

As Major Garcia escorted her out of the room, Mary whispered to him, "Boy, I hope I didn't clear the room with my comments."

"No worries, all of the meetings are brief and end abruptly. No one could expect you to react in any other fashion. In fact, we'd be concerned if you weren't confused," he added with a warm smile.

He led her to a large laboratory that she had been briefly shown the day before. Like the well-equipped conference rooms, the laboratory contained all of the equipment and supplies that she could ever imagine. The room was extremely

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large, extremely sterile, and extremely overwhelming. Although it was clearly not intended for performing autopsies, it was still a dream facility for someone in her field. At least she would be able to investigate materials from pieces of specimens, which was good enough for now.

“So, is this strictly my space, or are there others here to help me,” she asked as she scanned the large space.

“You will be working alone for the majority of the time, but Lt. Xiong will join you twice a week. If you need any assistance at any time, please call me,” he said. As he continued to point out all of the room’s amenities, he also showed her the walk-in cooler containing the tissue samples. There must have been hundreds of them.

“Who are the deceased and what specifically do you want me to look for?” she asked.

“Anything and everything that you deem relevant. Anything we can learn from these samples, no matter how minute, is important. Be sure to clearly document everything,” he said as he pointed to a computer. “All of your log-on information is detailed in this sheet,” he added as he handed her a piece of paper.

“So, like I said, who are these samples from? Is this alien stuff or human?” she asked, annoyed that she had to repeat her question.

He replied, “Remember, Mary, that aliens and humans are one in the same.”

“Yes, of course. You know what I mean,” she said, maintaining eye contact and forcing him to respond.

“These samples are human,” he said.

“How old are they?” Mary pressed further.

“Well, I’m sure you can tell me that with greater accuracy once you’ve explored the samples, but I can tell you they all died within the last 10 years,” he said, clearly not interested in answering more questions about the samples. “Now, why don’t you get started and you can help us learn a lot more about these individuals than I could ever tell you.”

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Like just about everything else involving the government so far, it was unbelievably frustrating as it felt as though information was constantly being withheld. However, Mary had to pick her battles intelligently. If she made too big of a deal over something like this, she may not win their trust to challenge larger issues.

As he left the room, Mary felt overwhelmed for a moment. When it came right down to it, this was a potentially undaunting task that could hold global ramifications for generations to come. She sat silently on a stool for several minutes, still trying hard to digest what she had been told. That sensation quickly subsided as she felt a surge of energy at the thought of what she could do and what she may find. She grabbed the first sample and got to work.

Although she was certainly capable, Mary was not accustomed to exploring old, already-harvested samples. It was such an important part of the autopsy process to first survey the body, almost trying to tap into the mind of the deceased, before methodically dissecting the tissue, removing the organs and making notes of every little nick and discoloration. So much of the story is told through that initial exterior observation before any of the microbiology is studied, it seemed like a tremendous inhibitor.

Mary began her task by starting with basic laboratory testing, recording a physical and physiological description of each particle. She decided to thoroughly exhaust all tests one sample at a time, figuring that she could later review the findings and look for some sort of pattern, red flag, anything. It was in keeping with her typically pragmatic approach and, in this case, applying structure to an otherwise completely unstructured process.

Trying to assimilate into the lifestyle that they'd laid out for her, Mary made sure to break for lunch and dinner, and Major Garcia joined her for these meals as he said he would every day. Surprisingly, the conversations were not as awkward as she'd anticipated. In fact, she found him to be quite interesting, without getting into too much personal information. Perhaps it was because military personalities were so often similar to those in law enforcement, and she had always worked so well with those groups while at the OMI. It was a broad stroke to lump everyone among those professions together, but to her it made sense and provided a needed source of familiarity, perhaps even comfort. However, these circumstances were still unique at best. Even though she was fairly at ease with Major Garcia, all the while she had to assume that he knew far more about her than what he'd ever reveal.

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Late that night after returning to her apartment, Mary microwaved a bag of popcorn and flopped down on her couch. Staring down at the bag, without even taking a bite, she paused. In one overwhelming moment, the reality of what she'd learned earlier that day hit her. How could aliens be advanced generations of present day humans? Sure, aliens supposedly have two arms, two legs, and a head, but how could this be? And more importantly – how could we be sure?

After throwing away the uneaten bag of popcorn and retiring to her bed, Mary spent the majority of the night awake, staring at the ceiling. None of this made sense, and she knew that any real answers were hers for the taking. These government officials, or so-called 'colleagues' were clearly going to remain mum on many issues, and Mary didn't have the patience to wait until they were good and ready to share. With the gravity of the situation, coupled with the doubt that she'd made the right decision to abandon her life again, Mary began to cry. She sobbed for nearly an hour, finally releasing tensions surrounding Albuquerque, Toni, and now this startling revelation.