

KUNDALINI CONSPIRACY

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THE MYSTIC MALL

People call me a dismal loser, but the truth is that I have a rare talent. Like Charles Fort, Immanuel Velikovsky and Erich von Daniken before me, I have an uncanny ability to see through the plodding banality of everyday life to the great vistas of weirdness that lie beyond. Not everyone has a gift like that, and I finally realized it was my duty to apply my skills to the good of the community. I decided to turn professional.

I looked again at the small card I'd produced on my home computer. *Byron Bland, investigator of the Paranormal, the Unexplained and the generally Weird. No job too small, rates negotiable.* That would bring the work pouring in, especially in a quirky place like Blastonbury. This corner of rural England was a veritable nexus of weirdness, with more than its fair share of hauntings, crop circles, cattle mutilations and UFO sightings. And I knew exactly where to put the card to reach the kind of market I was looking for.

The Mystic Mall was an old Victorian courtyard in the heart of Blastonbury that had been taken over by a number of New Age businesses. There was a psychic bookshop, a health food store, a place that sold crystals and several other shops of that kind. I liked to hang around the Mystic Mall for two reasons: (a) because it was a magnet for the weirdness to which my life was dedicated, and (b) because the clientele was largely made up of kinky-looking women who merited close scrutiny. Some of them were well into middle-age, and many of them were overweight, but their kinkiness was beyond dispute. There was a preponderance of tattoos and body piercings, and a distinct

preference for black clothes and silver jewelry. I could stand and watch them all day long.

At the center of the Mystic Mall was a Victorian Gothic meeting room, where public lectures on New Age subjects were held every Tuesday evening. Today was a Tuesday, but it just said *Speaker and subject to be announced*. Next week's lecture, however, was going to be a major event -- *Chaos Theory and Sacred Resonance*, by none other than Nik Shaman. Dr Shaman was a New Age celebrity, having written several books and appeared on TV. It was rare for him to appear in public outside London, and I made a prominent note of the event in my diary.

In the entry porch of the meeting room there was a large bulletin board. That's where I was going to put my card, in among all the ads for Tarot readers, aromatherapists, clairvoyants and Reiki practitioners. *Byron Bland, investigator of the Paranormal....*

The glass window covering the bulletin board was locked. There was a small note in the corner saying *Key with Eric and Val*. Eric and Val Moonblade were the proprietors of the Mystic Mall's health food store, and the organizers of the Tuesday evening lectures. Eric was a tall, bony man with long, wild hair and unkempt beard, while Val was a short, plump woman with large breasts and close-cropped hair. The physical disparity between them led to some interesting speculations about their sex life. I tried to visualize dumpy little Val bouncing up and down on top of Eric's elongated body. They probably went in for kinky sex magic, Aleister Crowley style.

I went into the health food store. Val Moonblade was plumped on the stool behind the counter, dressed in a long floral skirt and yin-yang T-shirt. Her hair was dyed an unnaturally bright shade of orange, and from the relaxed shape of her bosom it was obvious she wasn't wearing a bra. I nodded inwardly to myself -- there was no doubt this was a very kinky woman.

She looked up at me. "Oh, hello -- your name's Byron, isn't it? What can I do for you today?"

"I'd like to borrow the key for your bulletin board," I said, ogling her breasts. "So I can pin my card up. I'm a paranormal investigator, you see." I showed her the card.

"Oh, how interesting!" she said. She rummaged through a drawer, breasts jiggling, and handed me the key. "I saw a UFO last week."

"Really?" I took out my notebook and pen. "That's exactly the sort of thing I ought to be investigating. Can you give me some details?"

"Well, it happened last Thursday evening," she said. "It was dark -- about eight o'clock, I think. I was driving along minding my own business, when I suddenly realized there was this light bobbing around in the sky ahead of me. I stopped the car and watched it. It swooped about for a few seconds, then disappeared."

I scribbled away in my notebook. "Whereabouts was this, exactly?" I asked.

"Oh, right out in the middle of nowhere," she said. "Near that old disused airfield."

I looked up. "You mean RAF Ovalon?" I said. "Not everyone believes that's as disused as the government says it is. It's still guarded by dogs and fenced off with razor wire, you know. There may be all sorts of top secret projects going on inside. Perhaps that's what your UFO was."

"Oh, I don't think so," Val said, shaking her head. "It didn't move like any earthly craft. And anyway, I know exactly where the UFO came from. I had a vision."

"A vision? I asked. I was still having visions of her in bed with Eric.

"Yes, I'm psychic," she explained. "After I saw the UFO I had a mystic vision in which a shining angel appeared and told me that the UFO had come to bring love and light to planet Earth. The angel said the UFO came from a star system called Capella."

"Oh, of course -- Crapellia!" I said, nodding knowingly. "Earth has had a lot of visits from the Crapellians, recently. They're one of the more benign races in the Galaxy. There's nothing to worry about." Actually, I'd never heard of the place before, but it's important for a paranormal investigator to put witnesses at their ease.

I went and pinned my card to the bulletin board, then returned the key to Val.

"Are you coming to the lecture tonight?" she asked.

"I don't know," I said. "What's it about?"

"It's called *Sex and Science in Ancient India*," Val said. "By Jishnu Mitra, a lecturer from Blastonbury College. We didn't advertize the title because we didn't want to attract the wrong sort of people. Because of the word sex, I mean."

"Very wise," I said. "You can't be too careful -- the world is full of perverts. But the science part sounds like it's right up my street. I'll be there."