

The Cursed Phallus of Baalak-Ra

Book One of the Baalak Trilogy

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To my lovely bride, who inspires me simply by waking up.

Prologue

Somewhere in the Egyptian desert, c. 3325 BCE

The man scrambled across the endless waves of sand as fast as he could, nervously clutching the heavy dark object in one hand and a razor-sharp copper dagger in the other. The high arid desert swallowing him up extended to the horizon in every direction. He could hear the woman – his betrothed – screaming hoarsely behind him as she tried to catch up. He fought the urge to look back and kept running, sweat and tears blurring his vision.

Then he saw the dark hole in the rock pinnacle at the edge of Empty Quarter and the large cover stone next to it. He also saw the petite yellow-haired woman standing close by. He stopped before her and bowed, heaving in great gasps of labored breath. She smiled and placed her hands on the sides of his head.

“You have done well so far,” the woman said in his mind. “You know what you must do.”

“Yes, my Goddess,” the man panted, carefully avoiding her eyes, which glowed with divine fire.

“Remember,” she intoned as he felt the strange symbols enter his mind and engrave themselves on his brain. He didn’t understand what they meant and furrowed his brow. “The meaning does not matter,” he heard her say. “If this is ever found, the meaning will be clear.”

“I understand,” he said softly.

“Go now, and finish your task. I promise your sacrifice will be remembered forever in the afterlife,” the woman said softly. The man nodded his head and turned resolutely toward the entrance. He ran down the few stone steps into the tiny chamber below, wisps of dark sand trailing behind him. Aside from the entryway, the only light came from a small oil lamp in the back of the chamber.

Hearing footsteps behind him, he turned and saw the woman he had loved with all his heart running toward him, her eyes fixed on the lengthy object in his hand. She ripped her clothing from her body and grabbed the phallus from his hand as he held it out to her. She didn’t stop long enough even to acknowledge his presence.

He wasn't surprised by her reaction. She had been like this ever since she found the long black object. He watched as she dropped to the sandy floor of the chamber and licked the length of the thing, her eyes glazed over in pure lust, worshiping it the way she used to worship him.

She set it on the floor and screamed out in equal amounts of pleasure and pain as she obscenely impaled herself on the long, thick phallus and began riding it like a woman possessed, her bare breasts wildly bouncing as she gyrated up and down. He had seen her do this before and still couldn't believe she could accommodate something so massive without tearing herself wide open — no wonder she didn't want him any longer.

He fought his primal urges, realizing he had a task to perform, an oath to keep. He needed to wait for the right time, so he palmed his dagger and knelt in front of his beloved, watching for the signs. He knew it wouldn't take very long.

Looking down, he saw dark gray liquid drip down the black phallus as it oozed from her gaped female parts. The time was coming. He looked at her face and saw her eyes begin to glow with a virulent green malevolence. Soon, the thing inside the phallus would take over — just a few more moments.

Then it happened. Her eyes grew wide and burned bright as she let out a soul-shredding scream. The time was now. With hot tears pouring down his face, he thrust the dagger into her chest to the hilt. She gasped explosively, and her eyes widened in pain and terror. He held the blade and twisted it as her lifeblood soaked both bodies.

He gently laid her on the sandy floor and held her head in his arms as he cried for the loss of his life's love. He heard a coarse grinding and then a loud thud as the rock filled the entrance to the tiny room. He now knew there was no escape — for them, nor for the monster that lived in the phallus. Now, the only light that remained came from the flicker of the tiny lamp.

"I... I'm sorry," he whispered in his beloved's ear. The hideous light faded from her eyes, and she smiled at him and nodded her head faintly in understanding. With a shudder, she breathed her last. Leaving the phallus and the gore-covered knife in place as his Goddess commanded, he mourned his love's passing, his agony keening in his heart, then realized his time was short. The light from the lamp wouldn't last long, and soon, there would be no more air in the small chamber.

Turning in the cramped space, he saw the blank piece of damp clay his Goddess provided and the tool he would use to make the strange markings. He was surprised at how easily he remembered the marks the woman had placed in his mind.

He frantically worked the tool in the dimming light and had just finished a mark when he took his final breath. The message wasn't complete, and he hoped it would be sufficient. As the darkness claimed him, he wondered if his love would be waiting for him in the afterlife and if they could forgive each other.

Chapter 1: Assignment

Present Day

Terry Fletcher sat in the first-class window seat and studied the countryside far below. He loved the view from this altitude and took in everything he could. Terry looked at his wife's sleeping form and smiled as he inhaled her beauty – her angelic face framed by long dark hair, her slim form accentuated by her nicely rounded breasts, and her long shapely athletic legs. He considered himself lucky to be married to such a beautiful woman.

They had been married for 12 years, and for Terry, they were the best years of his life. They first met in their second year of college and began dating. One thing led to another, and they married after receiving their four-year degree. They remained in college, helping each other earn their Master's degrees and, eventually, their doctorates.

Both of them shared many interests, the first being a love of ancient history and a desire to help uncover and decipher as much of its mysteries as they possibly could. They both became archaeologists and were hired by their shared mentor, Dr. Malcolm Edwards, a British expatriate currently serving as the Executive Director of the Gadsden Pacific Archaeological Institute in California.

Over the last eight years, they spent roughly half of their time in the field, working on sites worldwide. They had traveled to remote locations in Africa, South America, the Middle East, and several islands in the Pacific. The other half of their time was spent in their home office, not far from the headquarters of the Institute.

They were at one such site when Terry received a text and an email from Dr. Edwards "asking" them to return "straight away." No explanation was given for the urgency of the "request." Still, Terry and Eileen knew that it had to be essential for Malcolm to request their immediate return.

Eileen stirred and stretched as the aircraft descended into the San Francisco International Airport. They both sat up and buckled their seat belts when the notification dinged above their heads.

"Get a good sleep?" Terry asked his wife, who was busy brushing her long disheveled hair into her preferred ponytail.

"How long was I out?" she asked.

"I'd say about five hours," Terry said.

"That long? Wow. I must've really been tired. Anything interesting?"

"Nah," Terry said. "Watched a movie. Read a book. Looked out the window. That's about it."

"What did you watch?" Eileen asked.

"That old Brandon Fraser movie – 'The Mummy.'"

“Seriously?” Eileen laughed.

“Hey, it was good for a laugh,” Terry responded.

“Any word from Malcolm?” Eileen asked.

“Just a quick message, that’s all,” Terry answered. “He’s arranged for transportation from the airport. Wants us to report straight to him when we get there.”

“And to think I was going to take a shower first,” Eileen quipped. Terry chuckled.

“Yeah, and I was looking forward to taking a nice long shower with you,” he said.

“Just wait till I get you home, Dr. Fletcher,” she told him with a wink. “I’ve got just what the doctor ordered.” Terry smiled at that.

“Oh? And what’s that, Dr. Fletcher?”

“Something warm, tight, hot, and wet,” she whispered with a sultry look.

“Oh, my!” Terry exclaimed. She returned his smile and sat back in her seat. When the plane stopped, they got off with the rest of the passengers, went into the terminal, and gathered their “luggage,” which consisted of two heavy backpacks and two stuffed duffel bags. Terry carried their briefcase and laptop bags while Eileen grabbed their shared overnight case and clothing bag.

“Need any help with all that stuff?” Eileen sarcastically asked as Terry helped adjust her backpack. He knew she was joking, but he always admired how she carried her load without complaint. Once situated, they exited baggage claim and saw a man in a black suit and hat holding a sign that read, “Drs. Fletcher.”

“That looks like our ride,” Terry said. The uniformed driver eyed them cautiously as they approached. He expected to pick up two respected scientists, but this couple looked like they were on a camping trip with their backpacks and casual khaki shorts.

“Gadsden Pacific?” Eileen asked the driver.

“Uh, yes, ma’am,” the uniform replied, somewhat puzzled.

“We’re the Fletchers,” Terry said with a wan smile.

“Oh, yes, of course, sir,” the driver said with a smile. “Do you need help with any of your baggage?”

“You can carry this if you wish,” Eileen said, handing him her heavy duffel bag. The driver

wasn't expecting the weight and nearly dropped the bag. Picking it up with both hands, he carried it to the long black limousine. Opening the trunk, he wrestled it into place. Terry and Eileen added their packs and other luggage to the sizable load.

"You're such a naughty girl," Terry whispered to Eileen after they were safely inside the limousine. Eileen flashed a small smile in response. The driver took them on a nice afternoon drive across the bay to the seaside compound where the Institute was located. After parking the limousine, the driver opened the door and stood quietly as Terry and Eileen got out.

"Dr. Edwards said I am to take you home after your meeting. I'll be in the lobby when you're ready," he said.

"Thank you," Terry said. They went inside the large wooden building that was once the home of Dr. Arthur Gadsden. He started the Institute in the mid-1880s in this building and bequeathed his entire estate to it. After he died in 1895, the Institute was renamed to include "Gadsden" to recognize his contributions to science and archaeology.

"Welcome back, doctors," the pretty receptionist said when they walked into the lobby.

"Thank you, Janice," Eileen said. "It's good to be back."

"Dr. Edwards is expecting you," Janice said. "I'll let him know you're here. Please, go on up."

"Thank you again," Terry said. They walked up the ornate, 19th-century staircase to the second floor, where Malcolm's office was located, and saw the 63-year-old man in his ever-present three-piece suit and went into his office.

"Dr. Fletcher," Malcolm said, shaking Terry's hand. "And Dr. Fletcher," he said again, shaking Eileen's hand. "I trust you two had a lovely flight."

"Yes, rather long, however," Terry said. Malcolm nodded his head at that.

"Would you two care for a spot of tea before we get started?" Malcolm asked.

"That sounds good, Dr. Edwards. Please," Eileen said.

"One lump or two?" Malcolm asked after he poured them each a small cup of tea.

"One, please," Terry said. Eileen echoed Terry's request. While they both liked his tea, they found it a bit strong. Malcolm plopped a sugar cube in each cup and briefly stirred the hot liquid before handing the drinks over. They each took a small sip and set the cups down.

"So, what prompted you to call us all the way back from Egypt, Dr. Edwards?" Terry asked. "Your message seemed to have a sense of urgency."

"I have a bit of a mystery on my hands, and I wanted my two best people on it," Malcolm said as

he opened the small safe next to his desk. He pulled out a wooden box that appeared to be about a foot and a half in length, six inches square, and a folder. He looked at them carefully for a few moments before opening the box.

“Please brace yourselves,” Malcolm said. They looked and saw something covered with a white cloth. Malcolm donned a pair of latex gloves and slowly unfolded the fabric, revealing the object underneath.

Terry and Eileen were stunned when they saw the box’s contents, but for different reasons. Terry’s embarrassment was evident on his face. He wondered why the normally straight-laced Dr. Edwards would have what looked like something from an online sex shop.

Eileen’s embarrassment was primarily due to her body’s response to seeing the giant phallus. It seemed to be calling out to her, and she felt... wetness... forming between her legs. She had seen and used dildos before, as she and Terry had incorporated various toys in their trysts many times. But something about this made her feel quite uncomfortable, like a curdling dark desire deep inside. She looked away, but Terry could see her face turning red.

“No offense, Dr. Edwards,” Terry began. “Please tell me you didn’t call us all the way from Egypt for what appears to be a belated April Fool’s joke.”

“Now Terence, you’ve worked with me long enough to know better than that,” Malcolm said reproachfully.

“Of course, Dr. Edwards,” Terry said. “My apologies.”

“I understand your discomfort,” Malcolm said. “I was rather... gobsmacked... when I first laid eyes on this... thing.”

“What can you tell us about it? And what do you need from us?” Eileen asked, shaking herself back into focus.

“This was found in a solitary chamber by an Egyptian survey team mapping out a possible route for a new motorway,” Malcolm said. “There were a few other items in the chamber, including a tablet, a knife, and the remains of two individuals – one man and one woman. The room did not appear natural, nor were the usual tool marks present to indicate it was worked. A bit of a puzzle, really.

“This object was found lodged in the woman’s pelvic bone. A knife, typical of the very early Egyptian bronze age, was also found in her ribs in the approximate location of her heart,” he added.

“So, you think this was a murder or some kind of ritual involving a sex object?” Terry asked.

“I don’t know,” Malcolm said. “Take a look at this,” he added, gingerly picking up the base of the long phallus. Terry and Eileen looked and saw some form of writing engraved in the base.

“Does that look familiar to you?” Malcolm asked Terry. Terry shook his head.

“It looks like a mix of ancient Sumerian, Nordic runes and Cyrillic. I’ve never seen anything like that before,” Terry said. Malcolm put the object back down.

“Precisely,” Malcolm said. “None of our people can make anything of it, either.”

“Have you been able to date any of this?” Eileen asked.

“With radiocarbon dating, we were able to place the remains and the knife somewhere between 3200 and 3400 BCE,” Malcolm said. “That’s where the real mystery begins.”

“Oh?” Terry asked cautiously.

“We got a rubbing from the tablet. Take a look,” Malcolm said, pulling out a folded piece of paper from the folder. Terry was shocked when he saw the markings.

“This looks like... Latin,” Terry said in amazement.

“That’s also our consensus,” Malcolm said.

“Correct me if I’m wrong, Dr. Malcolm, but Latin wouldn’t have been developed as a written language for at least another 3,000 years,” Terry said.

“Exactly,” Malcolm said.

“What does the Egyptian government have to say about this?” Eileen asked.

“They want nothing to do with it,” Malcolm said. “Couldn’t rid themselves of it fast enough. Said it contributes nothing to their historical record. Almost paid us to take it off their hands. The artifact export paperwork, which usually takes months, was done in a matter of hours.”

“What else can you tell us about this... thing?” Terry asked.

“Everything we know is in that folder, Terence,” Malcolm said. “Your assignment is to unravel the mystery.”

“Why us?” Eileen asked. The discomfort she felt upon seeing the object had not abated.

“As I mentioned before, you two are our best at this sort of thing,” Malcolm said. “Terence has a way with languages, and you... Well, let’s just say your research played a role.”

“I... see,” Eileen said, slightly embarrassed. Her doctoral dissertation focused on ancient sex cults. At the time, she simply wanted to shock some of her stick-in-the-mud colleagues. Still, she enjoyed the work and created a body of unique research.

“I know at the time you wrote that you were being somewhat cheeky,” Malcolm said. “But now, it appears your knowledge in that area will help us unravel this mystery.” He covered the large phallus and closed and locked the box.

“Here is your assignment, Dr. Fletcher,” Malcolm said, handing Terry the key to the box. “If I remember correctly, you have a safe at home.”

“Yes, we do,” Terry said.

“Good. Keep it under lock and key and not a word to anyone. This could be as anomalous as the Antikythera Mechanism, but possibly more ... explosive. The initial lab work on these artifacts uncovered – peculiar – results, but I will let you read that on your own. Report to me directly. Understand?” Malcolm asked.

“Yes,” Eileen said. Terry and Eileen were aware of the Antikythera Mechanism, believed by some to be the oldest analog computer and reportedly used to predict astronomical positions and eclipses decades in advance. The ancient mechanism had been dated as far back as 205 BCE.

“Very well,” Malcolm said, “Good hunting,” he added, shaking their hands. Knowing this was Malcolm’s way of ending the meeting, Terry picked up the box and found it heavier than he expected. Eileen picked up the folder, and the two of them left the office. They met the driver downstairs and left the Institute for home.