

*The
Last
Of the
Living
Monolith*©

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I felt it against the back of my wet skull, cold & metallic.

"Why did you bring it to this, Jones? Couldn't you've come to me and worked it out?" He was Miller. Five foot nine inch Czechoslovakian with his first American store bought Lee blue jeans and a FUBU leather black bomber jacket he got with me when we hit the local Wal-Mart.

I dropped my arms to my sides. The torrential rain dripped off the ends of ghost white hair that once was jet-black-on top of what may or not be my head for long. My silenced modified EAA Windicator modified barrel .38, dangled from my index finger.

"No, Miller. I couldn't come to you. If you knew the things I knew, you wouldn't have come to me either with it. You know there are some things that you can't even tell the ones closest to you." I felt the barrel of his silenced CZ Model 85 (Combat) pull slightly away from my skull, then return in the same second. Having a gun made in his homeland gave him a sense of pride.

"This isn't about me, Jones. I'm not the one that broke protocol, trying to get from under the mainframe when you know damn well that even trying leads to a tracer hunt. C'mon, you help start this unit, and have been out in the field longer than any of us. You knew the score. You, a 39 year-old black man in his prime; the head of a mainframe unit Hunter Section & one of the most dangerous men this side of Courtland city. You've a life, money, a beautiful wife & success. For god's sake, you know how the universe was created! There's only," he paused. I'd guess he was counting on his left hand how many men on earth knew that secret. Miller was the type that needed a physical response to trigger his implanted instant recall membrane. "Six men who are privy to something like that. Only reason I know how many cause one of them's my father. That's how I got this assignment. I looked up to you, Jones. What happened? What made you revolt?"

He had questions.

Questions-like a child has for his father. Or man would have if he were face-to-face with his god. I was his god, his trainer, & his friend. He believed me the man of stone.

He doesn't know the man of clay.

""

"Jones, please. Answer me, tell me what happened? Maybe I can help? I-I don't want to have to transport you." Erase, delete, or reformat if you really get unlucky. A lobotomy; done via micro-fiber stun gun ran straight to the frontal lobe.

"You do know this isn't even a sanctioned tracer hunt, don't you? Someone else is giving this order. But that's for me to find out who, but you-I'm trying to save you, Miller."

"Someone else, who? Save me? Save me, from what? You're confusing me."

"The truth, Miller-the truth. Sometimes the truth doesn't set you free." *He doesn't need to know, so don't tell him anything. The Transmat systems almost back up. Stall him. We'll get you out of there. Damn cerebral COM system. That's what I get for listening to the Revolutionists. 'The truth will set you free Demitri Miles Jones. Just hear us out'.*

"What truth. You're not making any sense Jones. The truth about what?"

",everything."

Five minutes! Just give us five more minutes Demitri, DAMMIT! DON'T TELL HIM ANYTHING!? 'He maybe able to handle it. He might even come into the fold. Another addition for the Revolution, right'. He's not ready. He may have the potential to become one of us, but not right now, and not like this. He's been intoxicated by the hunt to be rationalized with. His conditioning is too firmly rooted to be broken by your relationship.

'I may have to try. I don't want to kill him'. *FIVE MINUTES, PLEASE!*

"C'mon Jones. The others maybe off in the Corel section, and may be there for a while, but if they Com-link with me-I'll have to tell them I found you. That's the chain of command, that's the orders I have. You know that. You've given them yourself on

occasion. So please, tell me what's going on? What's this truth?"

He may have the stomach for it. The truth. About humans, evolution, god, and everything we've been told by society to be true.....The Monolith.....

My lips were dry as I tried to speak. I licked them out of habit, "There's a place, Miller. A piece of rock floating at the very edge of everything, *(DON'T TELL HIM!? PLEASE! YOU'RE ENDANGERING MORE THAN JUST YOURSELF WITH WHAT YOU SAY! GODDAMIT SPENCER, WHERE THE HELL'S THAT TRANS-MAT BEAM!)* where there.....exists...." My heart started to flutter, increase, chest moving. It was a lot to say in such a small statement. Miller stood staring at me, his gun half up, half down. Doe-eyed. Hanging on every word I tried to get past my lips. His earpiece started to beep. His left hand went up, pressing the flashing red button.

"Miller here-yeah, yeah," his head was tilted down, but his eyes were on me. They flicked from me to the agent speaking to him. He was thinking, deciding. The rain came down on us like being in a shower.

We were standing on the deck of a closed oil refinery five miles off the tip of the expanded Nevada territory connected via a long bridge. When California fell into the ocean five years ago, the remaining land and orbiting islands that were left in the aftermath became apart of Nevada. A vast oil reserve was discovered in the excavation of what was left. Courtland City was one of twenty or so that were created around the population of rig workers, their families, and engineers that had to be placed. A new oil boom had occurred, giving the U.S. independence from foreign oil.

The oil deposit dried up just a little under a year ago.

Miller spoke his location into the earpiece with a cupped hand. The wind and rain-a storm was coming.

"I'm out on the old Dupont oil refiner rig. Huh? Yeah-way out there. Hmm? Did I locate the tracer target?" Miller's eyes pleaded with me for what seemed like hours.

He closed them tight, shaking some of the rain off of his face. I couldn't tell if there were tears or just the rain falling off his cheeks. "Yes, yes I found him." He'd made his decision. "Setting tracker beacon.....now!" And his earpiece began to glow, coming out from his ear, hovering, and then it shot straight up. A large green flare lit

the dark night sky. We looked up, then at each other.

A split second movement.

We were both facing down each other's barrel.

I broke the silence, "There's.....a..place...Miller....." A humming noise. A white glow.

"Tell me, Jones! Please!" But those were the last things I heard. The gun went off. His not mine. I couldn't shoot Joshua Janiceck Miller. He was the son I never had. But I trained him well. I trained him to pull the trigger. On everyone-on anyone that stood in the way of honor and duty; god and country-even friend or foe.

.....even on the man that showed him how.

The world went white.....

Terminal Junction-

"Goddammit Spencer! Why the hell did it take so long to pull him out of there? We almost lost him," Janus was not the patient type. "But, sir, the storm in that region was interfering with the Transmat lock-on system. With the heavy thunder strikes in his general vicinity, plus the iron deposits in the infrastructure, caused DNA recognition not to occur. When we tried, the system slipped, and we blew a neural-subsystem which-"

Janus cut him off.

"Whatever, whatever. Just don't make me wait on something important as this again, understood? And get the medic crew up here, Demitri doesn't look too good."

"Yes, sir," Spencer knew Janus was not the most techno-savvy of the revolutionists. And why was I hearing any of this? I should be dead. I reached my hands out, feeling for anything around me to tell me that I was alive and not reliving some moment when this has happened; in the past there've been situations where I was pulled out by Transmat and heard a similar argument from two different people. Funny how there are always two sets of every type in this world.

I felt nothing with my hands. I still saw nothing but white. The hardness of the floor against my face; the tingle of neurons firing from synaptic nerves shot like sunlight at noon, burning me all the way to the tips of my toes. Battery acid saliva; spastic shakes; I felt like a beached fish and that was what my body started doing. My navy blue trench coat felt like lead covering the wet clothes. My eyes stopped listening, and began to move of their own volition. No image was clear. My .38 was a few feet away on the Transmat pad that I'd just realized I was resting on.

Thoughts.....losing....fo-cus.....I can't think..... "Christ! Call a med team with the quickness. Demitri's going into shock from the forced Transmat. Shit! Spencer, why the hell-"and their voices, faded into the background.

.....

Monolith-

A ticking. Pumping sounds. The smell of ammonia and the scrunching of hard rubber soles against tiled floors. Something spread across & sat heavy against my right leg. Second smell, slightly stronger than the ammonia, subtle, but as recognizable. Jasmine. A thought, movement of my right hand. The pull of something in it.

My eyes decided to listen and I opened them to the vision of a ceiling of squares that were hospital white. The drapes must have been open because the heat from outside warmed my cheek. I gave the I.V. in my right hand some slack so I could feel what was

heavy against my right leg. I reached, and felt-soft and smooth; the smell of Jasmines.

Isis.

She was laid across my lap, sleeping soundly. Her favorite perfume was the sent of Jasmines. I pulled myself up slowly enough not to wake her. She wore a cashmere lavender sweater with a black pair of denim jeans. I moved up a little more to a sitting position, still trying not to wake her. She was a 27 year old Nigerian born New York native with even-toned blue-black skin my mother would have called it. She & I were married when I was 36 and she was 24. She was a web-page builder full-time and a catalogue model part time. She was very sharp, and very strong to come up from being dirt poor. Her family came over and lived in a section of New York that did not foster personal growth. She also avoided becoming a Southeast Asian heroin mule for the West African criminals-that was, in itself, a feat none could believe. But Isis did it, and took care of her elderly parents who now lived in Upper Westchester County in the five-bedroom house she bought for them. They lived off the retirement the mother and father received from Mass Transit. He was a driver, her mother was federal.

I shifted, accidentally waking her. "Demitri?" she said sleepy. "Oh, honey I was so worried. When Janus called late this morning, I was sure you weren't alive. He told me about your reaction to the Transmat retrieval, and how Joshua almost-I can't believe what Josh almost did!" She had anger instead of fear nestled behind those light brown eyes. I stroked her broad forehead. She had long black hair with highlights she'd always kept pulled back and up on the top of her head.

I looked at her and smiled a weak smile. I was still feeling kind of tired, "Don't be angry at Joshua, Isis. It's not his fault. He was just following orders."

"Yeah? But who's orders? Who'd want to see you dead?"

I was scratching the bridge of my nose, trying to blink away the stars that just appeared in front of my eyes. "That's what I'll have to discuss with Janus when I'm more in one piece and my head doesn't feel like it was ran threw a blender."

"Bright spots?" she looked up at me, noticing the look on my face. She's always

been so observant.

"Yeah, they just appeared. Aren't you supposed to be finishing that website for the World-Wide Consortium Guild today?" I asked really concerned that my situation was interfering with her work.

"Miles," she always used my middle name when I was, to her anyway, being very silly. "I can get that done in a snap, but if I ever put my work ahead of you then I give you permission to divorce me as soon as possible. Because I would not be the woman you married. Now, lay back down. I'll get a water basin with cold water. A wet wash-cloth over your closed eyes will help get rid of the spots. You know it's caused from the white effect from the Transmat, especially when you don't know its coming. You lay down now and I'll be right back." She pressed firmly on my right shoulder, helping me down into the light-tan hospital covers, gently placing my arms on the outside of the covers, keeping the I.V arm free. I was looking up, back at that same ceiling. I heard a click, small doors opening then closing. The twisting squeak of metal. Water flowed.

Her voice sounded hollow slightly echoing.

"So, getting back to what brought you to this place, do you know who would want to see you dead? I mean you're apart of 'The Six'. The whole world has come to look upon you all as world treasures. I'm sure it doesn't hurt the fact that one of your group happens to be the president of the most powerful country on the planet. President Daniel Caruthers, U.S.A. You're pretty much considered an important person in the same league as him." The water stopped. I could hear metal slightly scrape metal, and the soles of her shoes crunch. I really needed to speak to Janus and The Founder about this. I loved Isis dearly, and would tell her every secret under the sun. But there were two things I could never tell her.

The first was the origin of the universe.....and the second-
.....was that I knew who wanted me dead.

I did something that I never thought I'd ever do.

I lied to my wife.

"I guess-I was getting too close to finding something out. Using my status as head of the Hunter section was pushing it. My digging must have bothered someone," I hated

this. Her hand came over my eyes, "Close your eyes Miles and let me put this over them." I did as I was told, and the chill of the washcloth made me shiver slightly.

"I'm sure when I get a chance to talk to Janus and The Founder, that we'll find out what's going on. I do have friends in high places." Brave face; maybe I can put enough into this lie to make her believe, because I'm sure as hell trying to believe in it myself. I hope she can forgive me when she finds out, and she will.

I did say she was sharp.

A knock came. The door was pushed slightly ajar. "Demitri, are you awake yet? I saw Isis come in earlier and occupied myself with other things. Fine woman like that would make any man---oh *hi* Isis!" Janus was beet red with embarrassment. He was an albino with dark black hair, blue eyes, flat features, a medium frame holding up a fifties leisure and no visible bulk. He was built like a coat rack.

Isis took the compliment in stride. "Thanks Janus-for pulling Miles out of a very bad situation. I appreciate your looking out for him, though if he wasn't one of the 'Six' your use for him would be nil and you wouldn't've been so inclined to rescue him." Isis did not like Janus. He was an opportunist. Not a bad guy, just one out to make himself look better and screwing it up at every turn. He had his hand on his chest, feigning being offended. "Oh, you wound me, Isis. I'd never use Demitri in such a manor. He's more important to us, not because of his being one of the 'Six', but because of his being a good man, and a good friend. Why do you dislike me?"

A smirk grew on Isis' face. "It must be the murder of crows I see sitting on your shoulders, Janus. Waiting to feed on my husband-like the predator you are!"

His face became pink. I had to break this up. There were important words to be spoken. The Founder must be told.

Time was running out.

.....the Monolith....

I sat up, still careful of the I.V. "Please, Janus, can you go and get the Founder for me? I've important news for him." Janus was more than glad to leave the room just

then. He'd been embarrassed in front of me. An opportunist doesn't like being shown up in front of his one great opportunity. Me.

"You know Miles I can't stand the rat of a man. How you do it I can't imagine. C'mere." Her lips floated above mine. I could feel her body heat first, still having my eyes covered by the wet cloth, then the softness of her lips pressing against mine.

I hated myself even more.

She pulled back; wet cloth falling to my lap. "Demitri, what's wrong?" Damn, shouldn't have been thinking just then. I've always betrayed my feelings to her, or she could tell what I was thinking, by the way we kissed. A minor physical intuitive psychic ability she's always had. One of the other effects I had from being of the 'Six'.

She never needed to know she had that ability. So it wasn't a lie. I changed the subject quickly.

"Isis, could you turn on the FM tuner for me? I want to hear about the War over in Scandinavia."

She looked at me with questions she didn't know how to say. "Okay. I'll also go out and get your breakfast from the nurse. I saw it passing behind Janus. She must've forgotten to stop. Be right back." The Announcer's voice came clear through the tuner speaker.

'The war between the Soviet Union and Ireland over potato subsidies has worsened. Iraq/Iran has called for peace, both presidents offering to sit-down with each to help in the negotiations of an amicable and peaceful outcome to the hostilities. The cause of more conflict occurred when the Soviet Council refused to lift trade embargos against Ireland for the bombing of their Belfast embassy six months ago.

Ireland took a stance of non-responsibility and blamed the actions on separatists. The IRRG (Irish Republic Resistance Group), who were against the Ireland/USSR economic plan named 'Unification'. The Soviet Council has had the same problem with the Soviet branch of USRG, formed from the old Speznat guard also apposed to Unification.'

It was coming. I knew it.

So-did he.

I closed off my ears, moving the cloth from my lap. My eyes had cleared. I shut them, tuning my thoughts inside, reaching for the space-that spark-I don't have the help like I did before. Contact may be for mere moments. Reaching.....reaching.....reaching...

Contact!

There was cold. Rock underneath my feet. Felt like slate. Stars and the darkness of space encircled and were around as far as the eye could see. I stood. My feet bare. A meteor shot by, drawing my eyes toward it. It was beautiful.

'what is it you wish to ask of me'

The voice turned me around to its direction; A force, pulling.

There it stood; mere footsteps from me.....

.....Monolith....

Founder-

I'd been here once before.

Year: 2011- A Chinese philosophy teacher from Caltech approached me six months after the discovery of the 'Six'. He bought me to his class room. His hair was long, white, his skin baize with wrinkles, his eyes looked like they were closed. He asked me, "Do you know the truth behind your ascension, Demitri?" He had a laptop sitting on his desk. "No, Mister?" I realized I'd followed him without asking his name.

My hair was black back then.

He turned the laptop around, pressing the power button. "You will."

The screen came to life with a strange flicker, and then became bright; brighter, brightest.....*flash!*

For a split second I was everything-everything was me. Constellations were my blood. The ether was my body. My eyes were the stars. Meteors were the impulses that

ran through my neural network. The sun was my heart, bursting with heat.
 I was pulled back.
 I stood in front of it.....
 Monolith.....

'what is it you wish to ask of me'

I was back at the present. "There are things I need to know. Things I need to ask."

'once there were six, now there is one, the one must be six once more'

"I don't understand. I need to know-" I-I' losing contact! Not enough KI within me to extend contact. The Founder said this would happen.

"I need to," pulling.....pulling.....pulling....interference.....return!

The radio speaker played the horn styling's of a popular jazz musician. The grandson of Jerome Stanton Brown, who passed away in 2010.

The feeling of starched white sheets frustrated me. I needed to know why. The Monolith was-the only way to describe it, a tall black obelisk, floating on a piece of rock out near what I've guessed is the edge of everything.

The Founder made brief contact with it when as a young Caltech student.

November 11, 1980.

He'd hacked into Voyager 1 via satellite dish as it left the earth. It took fifteen years for the info from Voyager to reach his computer. He'd left his old system connected, and forgot about it. He had it stored in his garage, packed underneath box' and other assorted junk. When he saw the system active, he tried to use it to decipher the incoming information blowing the system. Quickly he connected a more modern computer that was linked to the Internet. Thus, the first contact with the 'Living Monolith'-

was made.

I needed to know why the 'Six' existed. Was there a greater purpose? Was god? Why were we here? I rested my face in my hands. So many questions....so many...

The door flew open. Janus and Isis came rushing in. The Founder walked in even, slow steps behind.

"My god, Demitri! Turn on the flat screen, hurry." I wasn't fast enough so Isis grabbed the remote, hitting the power and flicking through the channels, landing on CNN. The President stood at his podium. Next to him-was him-the Vice President.

'As we reported not more than twenty five minutes eastern standard, the President had announced that the head of Hunter Section had been kidnapped by the terrorists separatists sect, 'The Revolutionists' founded by Chin Kai Lau. The President had this to say, "We have strong Intel and a general location where the separatists are based. We will not stop until our head of national security, and my good friend Demitri Jones, will be saved from the hands of these terrorists. I promise." Reporting now at the top of the hour---

The flat screen reported more, but I didn't care. The Founder spoke, his voice hushed, calm, and focused. "That is he, is it not? The Vice President, Mason Sanderson?"

He knew. It didn't surprise me that he did.

Isis turned from the Founder, to me. "He what? He who? What is he talking about Miles?"

Janus wanted to ask the same thing but kept quite.

"That is the man who wants me dead, Isis." Her mouth hung open.

"He doesn't want the answers to be found if the 'Six' along with the Founder were to make contact with the Monolith. He wants the power he's obtained to remain. Answers from the Monolith, or even the discover of it by the public would cause world-wide shifts in power. He's afraid, Isis. Afraid of the truth."

"There isn't much time. You know he's coming, correct Demitri?" The Founder was by my side.

"Yes. There was some interference when I lost contact with the Monolith. It felt

as though I was being tracked. Like I was in contact with one of the 'Six'. Mason Tracked me."

The Founder turned, touching Janus on the shoulder, "I need for you to sound the alarm. Prepare everyone. They are coming." Janus bowed, "Yes, Founder!" and ran off through the door shouting orders.

"Isis," The Founder smiled whenever he spoke to Isis. "I need you to take Demitri to one of the underground escape transports before they attack. He cannot be found here."

"Why? If you put him someplace where he can be found, then Mason can't-"

I cut her off. "I'm not meant to live the assault by Hunter Section. Mason will be with them. He'll say I was caught in crossfire, but that my body is still salvageable. I'll be dissected by psi-entists back at the Pentagon. The universal secret will still be accessible by the remain 'Five', or so he thinks." Isis held back the tears that her light brown eyes wanted to let rain.

"Please, Isis, hurry. Time is-" The Founder's voice was cut off from my ears....
I've found you, you hiding bastard. Nice try.

.....

A large explosion rocked the side of Mount Rushmore where the base of The Revolutionists had been for five years.

Hidden.

Now, because of me, it may all be over.

Assassin-

.....we hear gunfire as Isis carries me down a side hallway. Hunter Section. Going in with suppression fire first to take way initial resistance, throwing flash grenades and stun pods. Just like I taught them to do.

The sounds...they used the modified Heckler & Koch SP 89's I had a hand in redesigning for Hunter Section. They can now be switched from semi to full auto without overheating or jamming. I learned what made the AK-47 so reliable and applied that to the SP89.

Now, I could hear the results.

Screams from falling Revolutionist soldiers drowned in my ears. The weakness in my legs made me useless to Isis who was breathing heavy from the effort of lugging a 185lbs dead weight around her neck.

"Sounding a little winded there sweetheart? I didn't realize you were getting on in the years, putting on a little weight are we?"

She stopped, turning her head, staring at me with fear I've never seen in her before. Then, she lost that look, and a sarcastic smile twisted its way onto her blue-black face. Her bright-white teeth showing.

"Who's the one that needs to go on a diet? You weigh more than Janus after he's had lunch!" She lifted me back onto her shoulder, pulling me along.

The smell of gun smoke ozone from flash grenades pushed at the back of us. The Founder would not leave his people, nor would he be caught. He'd always escaped from Hunter Section's assaults in the past.

He would escape this time. Something said so in my heart.

The red emergency lights flicked on, sparks of live-wires burst from corridor plastic pipes. The alarm screamed and the repeat order to evacuate and to fight

played....and played....and played.....

"We're almost there, Demitri. Hold on! We'll make it." Isis said with more desperation than I thought she ever had. I was finding out many things about my loving wife that I'd not know before.

Her strength was more than anyone I've ever know.

The entrance to the escape tunnel was just a few feet away. We'd live, and I could put Isis back into the life she was so used to. I'd never involve her in this madness ever again. I thought about that promise.

-Click Clack-

"Hello Demitri. The President misses your friendship. He made it very, very clear that you were in no way to be lost during the incursion. I made a promise, giving my word, though accidents do happen during the heat of combat. He doesn't know about that. The President never saw any action. But you know, don't you!"

Mason stood there. Isis froze, as brave as she was, Mason was a vet of the Iran/Iraq Invasion triple purple hearts. He was a war hero.

He had his Desert Eagle aimed right at me.

"Let my wife go, Mason, and you can do with me whatever you want. Just let her go!"

"No!" Isis yelled "Till death due us part. If this is it, so be it. To hell with you, Mason you coward!"

Mason's eyes blazed red. His finger moved toward the trigger. My heart raced, I couldn't let Isis die for me.....reaching.....reaching.....what's.....happening.....

-CONTACT-

I was falling down a dark corridor. At the end were Isis and Mason frozen. The opening slowly became smaller.....and smaller....before going black!

I was back on that cold slab. The stars all around. The Obelisk standing before me.

The Monolith.....

"Why am I here!" I screamed at the Monolith. I didn't care about universal truth! My wife was about to die!

My legs could move here so I ran, slamming my fists against the cold black Monolith before me. Screaming, shouting, my tears dropping upon it, sliding down its smooth surface. I screamed and cried for what felt like days.

It spoke.

'the concept you call time, has been stopped. No movement within your limited linear existence has occurred since you've come here '

"Why am I here?!"

'to learn'

end