

THE
BOOK OF
DEMONS

KEVIN MOORE

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ISBN: 978-1-95386553-3 (Paperback)
ISBN: 978-1-95386554-0 (eBook)
ISBN: 978-1-95386555-7 (Audiobook)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2022902406

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Dedicated to Pat, my wife and Soulmate.

PHILIPS

Mr. Philips—Philip—did not always go by that name. Before he was able to shapeshift, he was Seymore Hunter, a good-looking man on the other side of thirty working in a haberdashery before World War II broke out in England. His goal was to leave London for Los Angeles and become a film star. At first, Seymore was more into blackmail than black magic. Then he met Dr. Cecil Dels. Dels was a fancy dresser who became a regular customer and held deep knowledge of numerology, astrology, and Enochian magic. All of this was fascinating to Seymore, but Dr. Dels' involvement in black magic and the occult really made Seymore come alive. Seymore believed in nothing really, other than the magic of sleight of hand. Since he was nine, he was able to lift wallets without ever getting caught. Dels offered a completely different education from anything Seymore had been taught in school or life; he became a sponge. Not because he believed in any of it but because he felt it could be a great tool to make money, especially when he arrived in America.

Dels had invited Seymore to be his guest at the very famous, but hush-hush séance of Alice Walker. Alice was an expat American with a dubious heritage, having been married to an Eastern European count and a German duke. A widow twice over, she resided in London, where her mystique was further enhanced by the many wealthy people who came to her home hoping

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to contact dead relatives or place spells on enemies. It was all donation-based, but if you wanted to be invited back or needed a reading, your donations would be very well-placed.

Alice Walker did not greet guests when they arrived. Instead, her staff handled it. Drinks were simple in nature—a French 75, sherry, whisky, or a glass of Bordeaux. Guests were directed to the main drawing room and its high ceilings with crown molding, a beautiful large Venetian crystal Chandelier, and white and black marble flooring. Murals covered the walls instead of paintings. The women sat at the end of the couches and chairs, sipping their drinks. The men stood by the stone fireplace, which was lit, even though it was not a cold night.

Seymore felt out of place. He wandered around the parlor, sipping his wine, then made his way back to the entry and the only painting that hung on the walls. It depicted a beautiful woman standing alone in a garden. There was nothing unusual or even special about it until Seymore noticed the woman's shadow. It was not close enough to her body to be her own. Knowing nothing of art, he thought of it as a mistake by the artist.

"It's not a mistake. It's learning how to use shadow energy to your advantage. To do your bidding." The voice was firm, strong, deep. Southern?

Alice Walker. He knew the moment he laid eyes on her his life would change.

She was not tall, but her hair was dark, as were her eyes. Not beautiful but very attractive. Seymore stood there, speechless.

"You're very good looking. As good looking as any movie star." She said it with no smile or hint of flirtation.

"And you..."

She stopped him before he could return the compliment. "Let's join the others. We can get to know each other later."

The party moved into a room in the middle of the house so removed from the living area that you could get lost trying to find it or leave it, which was the idea. On a large round table sat a small bowl of soup, a small glass of sherry, and three candles in the center. There were twelve guests; Seymore learned later that the ideal number was to be divisible by three. A late cancellation allowed Dels to invite him in order to get the number right. Serendipity. Once the doors closed, the room appeared to be soundproof. Alice Walker

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lit the candles, while the guests were told to place their left hands up and right hands down on those of their neighbors. Seymore watched her intently, looking for tricks or theater. There were none.

It was all very understated until the spirit of Moses began to move through Alice Walker. The energy in the room changed once Moses, through Alice, began to speak. She immediately zeroed in on the couple who had been talking to Dels earlier in the evening. Her voice changed slightly, the accent and speech pattern most notably. Moses-through-Alice began giving very specific insights, conveying information from the man's mother. The private information made him highly emotional. Several others at the table were given minor messages before Alice ended her channeling.

The guests were not encouraged to linger. They left their offerings in a crystal bowl, whispering to one another about how wonderful the evening was. No verbal thanks to Alice was needed, nor expected; their gratitude was reflected in their gift. Seymore looked to Dels, who was meandering in the foyer.

Alice touched Seymore's arm. "A glass of wine?"

She guided Seymore into the large drawing room and poured them both a glass of Bordeaux. "Do you like art, Mr. Hunter?"

"Yes, but my art education is limited." As an afterthought, he added, "Call me Seymore."

She led him to the mural dominating the drawing room. "Would you like me to tell you about the murals?"

"It's beautiful, but may I ask you, why murals?"

Earlier in the evening, Alice had been all business; now she was relaxed, charming. "Why not murals?"

"Well." He paused, trying to choose his words. "I would think a painting would have more value."

"You are talking monetary value."

Of course, Seymore thought, *what other value is there?*

"These are what are known as architectural style or illusionistic images. They were from the Romans—found in Pompeii."

Seymore sipped his wine while looking around the room at the murals. "They are stunning."

"Yes," Alice said, spinning around to view them herself.

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She was not acting like a mysterious channeler. He knew women like this—from a distance. They were much smarter than the men in the room but felt they needed to keep a level of gaiety, so they didn't lose their femininity.

"It's to trick the viewer," she said, as if she was reading Seymore's mind.

He took a step back. "What is?"

"The style of painting. It is intended to shift the eye of the observer. They are looking outside at a fountain, or a hillside in the distance, not fully realizing that they are still in a small room."

Seymore stood in front of the mural. There was no fountain outside, no distant landscape. The scene was outside on the patio, the sun was a tarot card, and there was a man—his eyes only white—looking at a beautiful woman with mysterious symbols on her gown.

Seymore finished his wine. "Is he blinded by her beauty?"

"Pour yourself another glass."

Seymore walked to the bar and realized the servers hired by Alice were gone. After pouring the wine, he asked, "Well, is he?"

Alice looked at the painting. "Could be. He's blinded by something." She sat on the couch, joined by Seymore.

"Are these particular murals painted to create a feeling of mysticism?" he asked. She smiled but did not answer. "And the canvas with the shadow? Does all the art set the mood for your guests?"

Alice curled up on the sofa, draping her hand on the back, close to his shoulder. He looked at her and smiled, then picked up her hand, pretending to read her palm.

"What do you see?" she asked.

Seymore caressed her hand. "Unlimited happiness and adventure." He kissed her palm gently. "So soft."

Alice caressed his face in turn. "And what does this unlimited happiness look like?"

He smiled. "It must be discovered."

She gently slid her finger across his lips. They stared intensely into each other's eyes. Seymore leaned in, captivated, then kissed her very slowly, for a long time. She stood and looked at him on the couch, then bent over, her hands holding his face. "I am the first room at the top of the stairs. Come up in ten minutes."

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Alice's hands moved slowly from his face, lingering on his neck and shoulders before she left the room. Seymore watched her eagerly.

He jumped to his feet, excited at the feast awaiting him. He paced the room and poured more wine but never drank it. He walked to the fireplace then stood in front of the painting with the shadow, puzzled, sure the shadow had moved. After waiting a moment, he checked his watch and immediately headed for the stairs.

Seymore Hunter could not get enough of Alice. He found himself spending more and more time with her. He quickly grew jealous of the relationship between Alice and Cecil Dels—a very close, very secretive relationship. Although Seymore was her lover, he was the outsider when the three were together. They'd travel to the English countryside, then to Paris, and eventually to Romania. Alice and Dels were in search of mystics; the occult; and more importantly, the fountain of youth. Along the way, she conducted readings, while Dels would offer financial or political tips that were really breadcrumbs to get little pieces of information to help Alice with the readings and perhaps help Dels as a financial advisor back in London. There were always money and contacts to be made, and they always figured out ways to make them.

Meanwhile, Alice laid out small gestures of seduction for Seymore. She gave him little gifts of chocolate, a man's scarf, fancy writing paper, a tiny bottle of cologne. She explained to him about the shadow in the painting, alluding to its magic that she could use to control the shadow to lean in and get information on people who came for readings. In that way, she learned their secrets and their fears. He found much of this to be mad, but Alice did possess insight. He wasn't quite sure what Dels and Alice were after, though. In the beginning, he thought they wanted him for sex, perhaps a *ménage à trois*. But it never came up. Both were of a certain age and seemingly wanted to turn back time, or at least pause it. The trip to Romania was supposed to uncover an elixir of some sort that would help them do just that.

When they arrived in Romania, a virus was breaking out in Europe and Russia. People were very nervous at how fast and deadly the virus seemed. They began whispering the word "pandemic." Memories of the Spanish flu and the millions killed by it created suspicion of anyone with a cough or a sneeze. If that wasn't enough to worry about, concerns about Germany rearming

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itself triggered an even higher level of paranoia. People were suspicious of everything and everyone.

None of this seemed to bother Dels or Alice.

The three spent the first night in Romania, having dinner at the Count and Countess Vladimir's house. The Count and Countess were rumored to be decedents of Count Kazikli Voyvoda, who may or may not have been the inspiration for Count Dracula. Seymore found all of it great theater. Everyone was so dramatic. He also found himself in love both with Alice and the excitement she provided.

As he listened, he found himself much more interested in their upcoming trip to Pester Lilicalor than anything the Count and Countess had to say. Pester Lilicalor was known as the "Bat Caves." After being very evasive, Alice finally confided in him over drinks in their private suite that they were going with a guide to find a bat species that, when eaten, prevented aging and increased sexual energy. She assured him that he did not need any more sexual energy. "But wouldn't you love to look and feel like you do now for the next twenty years?"

She moved her lips to his ear. "You have to eat the bat while it is still alive in order for it to work, and it needs to be the heart or liver," she whispered.

Seymore could hardly believe his good fortune. This was much more exciting than anything he had done prior to meeting her. He was going from trying to match ties at the men's clothing store to the fountain of youth.

It was a long drive to the caves. As Seymore sat in the front seat with the guide, he noticed Dels had been moving slower all morning; at first, Seymore thought it was because of the early start. However, during the drive, he began noticing a change in Dels' skin and speech. The closer they got to the cave, the more lethargic Dels became. They did not speak about what they knew: Dels was infected with the mysterious virus. Alice wrapped her scarf around her face, moving as far away from him as possible in the back seat. Seymore kept his window down. The guide spoke broken English and spent a good deal of his time smoking cigarettes.

By the time they arrived at the caves, Dels was sweating through his clothes and had fallen into a deep sleep. Neither Alice, Seymore, nor the guide spoke of changing plans and getting him to a doctor. They simply laid him down on the back seat; took the cages, nets, water, flashlights, and other

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supplies from the trunk of the car; and headed into the caves.

Inside, the interior walls looked like gray granite through the darkness. The damp caves smelled musty, earthy. The guide carried a gun. “Why the gun? Do bats attack?” Seymore asked.

“Other poachers.” Through his teeth, a cigarette hanging from his lips, the guide’s accent sounded like a bad interpretation of Dracula in a B movie. His voice echoed off the walls of the cave.

Seymore needed to keep his wits and directional aptitude; the gun was making him suspicious. Not to mention Dels being left in the car with a possible killer virus. What if he took their money and left them in the cave to die? There were so many turns and smaller caves into which they kept walking. Not to mention Seymore’s anxiety about bats. He went on high alert.

Stepping into another section of the cave, Seymore noticed light from another entrance. “Why didn’t we come in that way?”

“Must travel over mountain,” the guide replied.

As they walked deeper into the caves, the smell of earth and soil was replaced with the scent of urine and guano. Before Seymore had a chance to ask about it, the guide pointed up. Hundreds of black and brown bats stuck to the ceiling. They made a lot of noise; apparently, bats like to talk, with a language of their own. They even fight over sleeping position, mating partners, and food—and sometimes, just for the fun of it.

Seymore waited for direction as the guide began setting up the cages. Alice watched from a distance with apparently no fear; though, Seymore thought she looked pallid.

The guide took out a long BB gun and another object that looked like a water pistol and began shinning his light onto the wall. It started slowly, like a choreographed dance building into a steady movement. The bats began to move, to make noise. As if to announce the arrival of divinity, they began fluttering around in a frenzy. Slowly, from behind the wall of black bats, an albino bat emerged, glowing in the dark. Its arterial system was completely visible, as was its beating heart. All three gasped at the sheer magic of the creature.

The guide saw an opportunity for an even larger payday. “This is a mystical creature, only in folklore,” he said. “Ten times more powerful than

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the ones we came here for.”

He picked up the water gun and pointed it at the bats, handing Seymore and Alice nets.

“Is that water?” Seymore asked.

“No. It is a compound that will paralyze a small mammal. Be ready.”

With one blast, the liquid hit the albino bat, as well as several others. One immediately fell directly at their feet, but the albino flew directly at the guide in Kamikaze fashion, followed by an army of bats. Seymore and Alice swung their nets, with Alice catching the albino and Seymore getting a black and brown bat. Within moments, mayhem ensued. The bats did the exact opposite of their typical behavioral response—they attacked! Panicking, Alice and Seymore hurriedly tried to get the bats into the two cages. The plan was for the albino to go in one cage alone, with the others in the second cage. Seymore packed his two bats into the cage quickly.

He turned to find Alice struggling. Immediately, he went to help and found her extremely pale and sweaty. Seymore took the net from her and began working to get the albino bat into the cage. In the process, the bat bit him, but he held onto the magical creature until it was in the cage. Once inside, the bat covered its face and head with its wings.

The guide was covered in bats, spinning and screaming in his native language trying to get them off.

Now very unsteady, Alice grabbed onto Seymore. He took hold of her, as well as the caged albino bat, and began to make his way to the original entrance. There were multiple stops and starts, turning one way and retracing his steps, while trying to hold Alice up. She leaned against the wall, falling to her knees. Seymore tried to help her back to her feet. He then realized that Alice, like Dels, was infected with the virus. She was becoming dead weight. He began to panic, afraid of catching the virus and being stuck in the cave to die.

“Alice! Alice!” he yelled.

She was lost in a high fever and began to mutter. Seymore put the cage down next to her and cradled her head as he looked behind them, hoping for the guide to come and help.

“Feed me the albino bat,” Alice said. “It will save me.”

Seymore looked at the bat and slowly opened the cage. He needed to steel

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himself—*but against what? Fear? The virus? From all this madness?*

Carefully, he reached into the cage and took hold of the bat as Alice began to vomit violently and struggle to breathe. She began her death rattle, and then her face went motionless, eyes open, jaw still. She was dead. There was nothing he could do for her now. The albino bat surprised Seymore by biting his hand. It then flew out of the cage, attacking his face. Alice's words echoed in his head: "Feed me the bat; it will save me." In one furious motion, Seymore grabbed the bat and bit deep into its chest, ingesting its heart. He dropped to his knees and held his mouth closed to keep from spilling any of its blood. This was his salvation now, and he needed to eat it all. The albino bat shivered in his hands, then went still and silent.

Getting to his feet, Seymore started to make his way out of the cave until he was hit with seizures. He tried to fight through them, but they rolled through him violently like continuous earthquakes. The cave shook beneath his feet. He fell to the ground in a maddened state, rolling in pain, crawling. Hallucinating. The walls in the cave called his name. He twisted in pain, for how long he didn't know... *hours? Days?* He hoped and prayed to die. "Kill me already," he screamed.

Seymore felt his body being torn apart from the inside out like an intensely primal birth. He screamed in pain; his chest ripped open; his legs shriveled into his body. He reached for his chest but found his arms and hands were now wings.

He fully exploded, metamorphosing into the albino bat. He flew around chaotically, bouncing off walls before disappearing deep into the cave.

The room was dark. Seymore tried to sit, but his head was heavy. He was on a bed, maybe a cot. Still feeling confused, he found the floor with his feet, realizing his hearing was never this good, this clear. Seymore touched a small table with a lamp on it and turned on the light. The cot, table, and lamp were the only furniture in the room. There were no windows, nothing on the walls, and one small door. He could not remember anything but a vague memory of flying. Must have been a dream. Images of feeding on mice, rats, and maybe even a cat flashed before him.

He got to his feet and walked like a newborn fawn to the door. Outside the room was a long hallway; its walls were filled with art. A beautiful chair sat at the center of the blue foyer. It was a complete contrast to the dull

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room he had left. At the end of the hallway, there was a red door that he presumed led outdoors.

He opened the door. An older couple sat on the porch, surprised to see him. "You're up," the man said.

Seymore nodded his head.

"You've only been getting up at night," the man said.

"I don't mean to be rude, but who are you?"

"I'm Philip Philips. P. Philips. This is my wife, Victoria."

"Where am I?"

"Scotland."

Scotland? How the fuck did I get to Scotland?