

CASE FILES FROM THE NIGHTFALL DETECTIVE AGENCY:

# FINDING THE EYE OF ATEN



DAVID ALYN GORDON



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# **FINDING<sub>THE</sub> EYE<sub>OF</sub> ATEN**

**READER MAGNET**

**DAVID ALYN GORDON**

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For my love Gwyneth  
and  
All the Creative Geniuses in the Literary and Cinematic  
World that Influenced My Imagination



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would like to thank the following people for making this work and series a reality:

My wife Dr. Gwyneth Gordon for her endless support through the years.

My family and friends for their encouragement.

My students, teachers, and staff at Grand Canyon College Preparatory Academy.

Miblar for the cover art.

Ms Tonia Designs for the formatting.

Natalie Bavar for providing valuable feedback by both beta reading and line editing.





July 13, 1921  
University of California: Southern Branch  
Professor Abraham Mueller's Office

***T**his will be a nice change from the war these last eight years,*  
Professor Abraham Mueller thought, as he unpacked his  
boxes in his new office at the University of California:  
Southern Branch.

During World War I, he had worked for British intelligence in Central and Eastern Europe, and from the Balkan Wars to the Polish Soviet War, he had worked for Russia. He also did a tour in the Middle East during the British capture of Jerusalem. He was known as Abraham Masters then. During a mission at the Battle for Warsaw in 1920, he figured it was as good a time as any to fake his own death and start over. War and plague were great camouflage for immortality. In 1920 alone, there was the Great War, the little wars, the revolutions during and afterward, and the Influenza pandemic. He had done this close to 900 hundred times already over the last 7500 years: fake his death and take on a new identity

complete with forged documents based on some child that died at birth or shortly thereafter. He always made sure that the baby had the name Abraham or Abram. If he was consigned to wander the world forever, he should at least be able to keep one of his names. This time around, he decided to grow a beard. He thought it looked more professorial and was actually a fairly decent disguise in the unlikely event someone from his past should somehow see him in Los Angeles.

He was hired to teach both anthropology and criminology at the still-growing southern branch of the University of California. He figured that his years of experience with both subjects would make the job a cakewalk. He hung up his forged humanities degree from The University of Florence on the wall behind his desk.

He was placing criminology books on his shelves when he heard a knock at his office door. He turned around and saw a Los Angeles policeman. “Can I help you, officer?”

“Yes, Professor Mueller. I am Officer Carl Bell. Detective Raymond Sherwood has need of your expertise at the Natural History Museum. There’s been a murder and a theft.”

“Of course,” Mueller replied, not wanting to make a bad impression on his first day on the job. “But how can I be of assistance? Doesn’t the museum have specialists on staff?”

“Yes, sir, but in this case, one of the murder victims is the specialist who knows the most about the artifact that was stolen.”

“I see,” Mueller replied. “What is the name of the stolen artifact?”

Bell pulled out a small piece of paper. “It is called—and please forgive me if I mispronounce it—the Codex of Maximillian.”

That name immediately registered with Mueller and took him back to another time, another life. In the early sixteenth century, he went by Abraham Ramirez. He was an eager explorer who wanted to journey to what many thought were the outer territories of the

Chinese Empire. However, from his vast time on this Earth, he realized quite quickly from reading about Cristofó Colombo and other Spanish and Portuguese missions that this was a new body of land. He joined up with Hernán Cortés and other Conquistadors to make the journey.

Unfortunately, discovery and exploration were not the only goals on the minds of the Conquistadors and the Catholic priests that came with them. Gold and treasure were their priorities, closely followed by land acquisition and new property titles for the Conquistadors. They wanted to establish their own scaled-down empires in the lands already populated by the great Aztec civilization. The Church contingent wanted its own share of territorial influence and used its mission to Christianize what it saw as the heathen Aztecs, and eventually Incans, to gain prominence.

When the local populations rightfully resisted these intrusions into their lives and cultures, the explorers, with the assistance of local allies persecuted by the major empires, resorted to downright biological warfare: they infected the local population with smallpox. To Christianize them and wipe out their sense of history and culture, the Catholic priests led the way in burning all traces of local literature, including many codices that highlighted the history, music, and scientific knowledge of the area.

The Codex of Maximilian should have been one such document. Mueller remembered Maximilian Álvarez primarily for his brutalization of the local population. He had one goal: wealth. The only reason he didn't burn the codex along with everything else is that it reportedly led to a great treasure buried in the jungle surrounding Teotihuacán.

However, Maximilian died before he could find the treasure. His body was found in the jungle, and even in death, he clutched the codex in a vice grip—but half of it had been torn off and lost to the centuries.

Mueller shook his head and returned to the present. "I'd be happy to come with you, Officer Bell."

Bell drove Mueller to the museum, then led him to the room where the bodies of the specialist, Dr. Morris Armstrong, and guard, Vincent Lee, were lying face down on the floor. The coroner, Dr. Scott Morris, was examining the body. Detective Sherwood and the Museum Director, Joseph Sommers, were looking over the broken glass that once housed the codex.

"Sir," Bell said, gesturing to Mueller. "This is Professor Mueller."

Both Sherwood and Sommers shook Mueller's hand and exchanged pleasantries.

"How may I help you?" Mueller asked, eyeing the two bodies.

"What do you know about this codex, professor?" Sherwood asked.

"Just what I've learned in my studies and travels," Mueller replied, internally smiling at his own clever wording. "It's half of a map reputed to lead to a great treasure outside the Aztec Empire."

"And the other half has never been found?" Sherwood asked.

"No, detective," Mueller replied. "It's been lost for the last four centuries."

Sherwood nodded. "Does the half page that was here still have its own value as an historical artifact?"

"It does," Sommers replied. "It could fetch a high price on the black market."

Mueller nodded in agreement. "What do we know about your now-deceased specialist?"

Before Sommers could answer, a journalist barged into the room and started photographing the bodies.

"Who the hell are you?" Sherwood asked, stepping up to block the man.

"William Richardson with the Los Angeles Herald, detective. I wanted to get some pictures of the crime scene."

"Bell," Sherwood said, gesturing toward Richardson. "Get him out of here."

"Wait," Richardson protested, stepping away. "I'm a member of the press. You can't do this!"

"Watch me," Sherwood said. "Bell."

"Come with me, sir," Bell said to Richardson, who frowned but followed, not wanting to be manhandled out of the room.

"And take his film, Bell," Sherwood shouted.

"WAIT, PLEASE," Richardson pleaded while being herded out of the room. "YOU CAN'T DO THAT."

"Industrious sort," Mueller said.

"For a journalist ass," Sherwood muttered under his breath, shaking his head. "I'm sorry, professor. You asked a question."

"Yes, I was wondering why the specialist happened to be here at the time of the theft."

"Good question," Sherwood said, smiling at Mueller and then turning to Sommers. "Do you have an answer to that, director?"

"Dr. Armstrong routinely worked late at night," Sommers said. "He must have heard the thieves and tried to stop them."

Mueller nodded, turning his attention to the guard, Vincent Lee. His weapon was still in its holster, and there appeared to be no gunshot wound on his back.

"How did he die?" Mueller asked.

"Entry wound in the torso," Morris reported. "He bled out."

"And he didn't have his weapon out to investigate a possible break-in," Mueller commented, raising his eyebrows.

"No, he didn't," Sherwood said. "What are you thinking?"

"I'm thinking you may have been too hasty in sending that journalist away," Mueller said. "He may be of use to us. May I suggest a strategy to quickly resolve this mystery?"

Puzzled but intrigued, Sherwood ordered Bell to retrieve Richardson.

When the journalist came back, Mueller asked, “How would you like an exclusive?”

—

In the early hours of the next morning, it was dark in Mueller’s locked office. The doorknob jiggled and clicked. A person wearing a black mask and gloves entered the room, holding a flashlight and peering around in search of something. He rushed to Mueller’s desk and rifled through the papers on its surface, taking care to look at each one beneath the light.

“I’m afraid you won’t find what you’re looking for,” Mueller said, stepping out from behind the door and turning on the light. He walked around the desk and sat down, so he could face the intruder. “Did you really think I’d be stupid enough to leave precious evidence lying around in my office?”

“I had to cover all loose ends,” the burglar said. “If I didn’t find anything here, I was going to search your apartment.”

“Understandable,” Mueller said.

“That part of the news story about the missing piece of the codex,” the burglar continued. “That was all a ruse to get me to come here.”

Mueller nodded.

“I knew it. I told the person who hired me that I got everything. He didn’t believe me because when he put both parts of the codex together, there was still a small part missing.”

“I imagine he’s holding off payment until you deliver the final piece,” Mueller said.

“Exactly,” the burglar said, pulling out a Smith and Wesson model three revolver with a silencer.

“Is that the revolver that killed the guard and the specialist?” Mueller asked.

The burglar nodded. “And you too.” He fired the weapon

twice, hitting Mueller in the chest.

Mueller pressed his hands to both wounds, hoping to stop the bleeding. He still had the strength and curiosity of over 7,500 years to continue asking questions.

"I take it they were working for your employer, and you were told to get rid of them."

"He's a very greedy man."

"How do you know he won't turn on you when your part in this over and you haven't turned over the missing piece?"

"I have insurance against that possibility," the burglar said, hefting his revolver, "which is more than I can say for you... although I applaud your staying power. Most would be gone by now." He aimed his weapon at Mueller's head. "I suppose I should go for the sure shot."

Mueller smiled. His eyes became red, and his nose, mouth and ears started to grow and extend, sprouting hair and taking on lupine features. His mouth opened, revealing sharp, foaming canines. He quietly snarled and jumped onto the desk, getting up in the burglar's face.

"Holy shit," the burglar gasped. Filled with fright, he stepped back, clutching his heart. He tried to refocus and aim at Mueller, but he stumbled, and the gun slipped out of his grasp. He lost consciousness and slumped to the ground.

Mueller returned to his human form and knelt by the burglar, pulling off his mask, and checking for a pulse. He was dead. Mueller went back to his desk, pulled out a clean shirt, and changed into it. By then, his wounds had already healed. He put the torn and bloodied shirt in his drawer then yelled for help as loudly as he could.

Sherwood and Bell, who were stationed down the hall in the next office, immediately came to assist. They were shocked to find the burglar dead.

“What happened?” Sherwood asked.

“I don’t know,” Mueller said. “I turned on the light and he dropped dead of fright.”

“Wow,” Sherwood said. “Did he say anything before he died?”

“No,” Mueller replied. “He just dropped dead at the sight of me. I don’t think he expected to see me.”

“Look at the weapon, sir,” Bell said. “It may be the one used to murder victims.”

“Looks like it,” Sherwood said, frowning. “We’ll take it to the station to have it checked. Wait a sec—I know this guy. He’s Boris Lorre, a suspected middleman for various thefts in the city. We’ve never had enough to charge him.”

“Until now,” Mueller said. “Although he’s now beyond the charging phase.”

Sherwood laughed and looked down at the body again. “Good riddance. Saves the court system some money. Bell, call Morris and tell him or his assistant to come down. He’s got a late-night pickup.”

“Yes, sir. Professor Mueller, may I use your phone?”

“Of course.”

“We’ll check his place out,” Sherwood said. “Maybe the missing codex is there.”

“If he hasn’t already given it to his employer.”

“If that’s the case, we may never find it. Lorre had a well-earned reputation as a master thief. The people he worked for knew how to cover their trails.”

“Unfortunate,” Mueller said.

“Yeah.”

Bell finished his call to the coroner’s office. “Dr. Morris’s assistant is on the way, sir.”

“Good,” Sherwood said. “What can I say, professor, except welcome to Los Angeles. I think you’ll be a great help to us while you’re here.”



“Thank you, detective,” Mueller said.

Later, when Mueller went back to the apartment he was staying in while his L.A. house was under construction, he fished through his file cabinet and pulled out a fragment of a document carefully stored in a paper bag. It was the last piece of the Maximillian Codex. Mueller thought back to 1521, when Maximillian went to search for the Aztec treasure, and Mueller followed him. Mueller was horrified by Maximillian’s plans for conquest, especially with the added financial stability the treasure would provide. In a bid to avoid further brutality, Mueller struck down Maximillian, smashing a stone into the back of his head and fracturing his skull. After he made sure he was dead, Abraham ripped half of the codex out of his dead hand. In the centuries since that event, he tore a small, vital piece off his half of the codex and separated them among his belongings in case he somehow lost part of it, which happened when someone broke into his villa in Florence before the war.

Mueller held up the fragment of the codex. “I wonder if the same person who stole the other half is responsible for those murders at the Museum. Maybe we’ll run into him someday.”

*November 10, 1922*

*Cairo, Egypt*

Cain was a brute but a useful tool. He was Malcom Thorne’s go-to man for acquiring items and completing tasks that many might consider unlawful.

This job was no exception. Cain climbed through the window of Mumar Nasser’s house at 1:00 a.m. The place was cluttered with items Nasser had hoarded, like oddities purchased at local markets, and peculiar but unwanted items salvaged from dig sites. Despite being careful not to wake anyone up, Cain stepped on several

items, making noise with each foot forward. Subtlety had never been his forte.

He heard snoring from the bedroom and nodded to himself. Cain was told that the item Thorne wanted would be around Nasser's neck. He took out his switch blade and slowly turned the doorknob. He peeked through the small opening and saw Nasser sleeping face up. He surveyed the room for any surprises then stepped in, quietly approaching the bed. The amulet Thorne coveted was attached to a thin chain that Nasser wore around his neck.

Cain tried to gently cut the chain with his knife, but just as he was about to grab the necklace, Nasser woke up. His eyes bulged with fear, his mouth opened to yell for help, and his hand instinctively grabbed the amulet.

Cain slapped his hand over Nasser's mouth. The big brute stared down at the man whose only crime was to refuse Thorne. Cain smiled at Nasser, and it appeared for a moment that no harm would come to him. Cain pulled the amulet off his neck, checked the object to make sure it was intact, then looked back at Nasser.

"Sorry," he said, slitting Nasser's throat.

Nasser grabbed his throat to stop the blood from pouring out, but Cain knew his business. He hit his mark. A moment later, Nasser took his last breath.

Cain left the way he came and closed the window on his way out.

*November 11, 1922*

*A café in Cairo*

Archeologist Trevor Grantham was sipping a Turkish coffee and waiting for his patron at a local café.

A mustachioed man in a white suit approached him. "Good morning, Trevor."

"Mr. Thorne," Grantham said, looking up and smiling at his patron. "How are you today?"

"Excited. I've brought a present for you." He took Nasser's amulet from his pocket and, after looking around to make sure no one was watching him, placed it in Grantham's hand.

A waiter came and asked Thorne if he would like coffee or tea. Thorne ordered a cup of Turkish Coffee.

"Oh my," Grantham whispered, pouring over the hieroglyphics on the object. "Looks like eighteenth dynasty. It's... it's a map. My God." Grantham looked up at Thorne, widening his eyes. "Where did you get this?"

"A small-time vendor," Thorne replied.

"Well, I hope you paid him well."

"We paid him *quite* well. What is it a map of?"

"It says it leads to the location of The Eye of Aten."

"An object reputed to have immense power," Thorne said.

"Well, that's what the legends say," Grantham said, taking another sip of his coffee. "According to this, The Eye is somewhere outside of Memphis at the burial site of the Aten Priest Sennefer."

"We must get The Eye," Thorne said. "When can you start the expedition?"

"We need to get the permits from the government first and then line up the excavation crew."

"I'll see to the permits," Thorne said. "We'll see if cash buys us an expedited process. Hopefully, that ass Spade will leave us alone this time. You go line up the crew."

"Yes, sir."

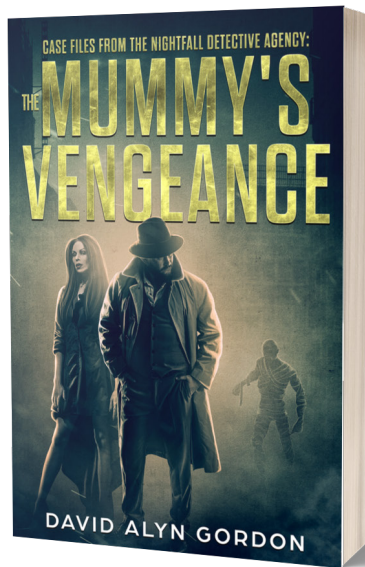
"Go now, Grantham," Thorne said, taking the amulet and putting it back in his pocket. "We don't have a moment to lose. And keep your mouth shut. We don't want Spade's spies to find out what we're up to."

Incensed with Thorne questioning his professionalism and loyalty, Grantham nodded to his patron and rushed out of the café.

A server brought Thorne his coffee. He felt the amulet in his pocket. “It would have been nice to get my hands on that last piece of the Maximillian Codex, but it’s of no matter—to have The Eye is to have power over the whole world.”

We hope you enjoyed this reader magnet.

To find out what happens next, please order  
*The Mummy's Vengeance*,  
now available on Amazon, Kindle, and  
Kindle Unlimited.



**Buy Now**



Los Angeles, 1928. It has been a year since Victoria Tori Jacobsen became a Vampire and agreed to live under the guidance of Werewolf Abraham Muller.

After months of training to control her vampiric urges, Tori asks Mueller if she can accompany him to the opening of the new mummy exhibit at the Natural History Museum.

But what was meant to be a run-of-the-mill visit soon turns into a heart-pounding race against time when they stumble on a murder in progress. Because this isn't just any murder — it involves an ancient artifact and the supernatural power it carries with it.

The duo, with the help of some formidable allies, must sprint to catch the cunning murderer before they can activate the catastrophic powers of the Eye of Aten, and release the curse of the Mummy's Vengeance upon the globe.

If they fail, the forces of evil will bring on a new Dark Age.



**David Alyn Gordon** has been a social studies teacher, principal, and the founding owner and school chancellor of Grand Canyon College Preparatory Academy in Tempe Arizona. He grew up reading and watching science and historical fiction. He is also a big baseball fan. He has combined his various passions in developing the stories set in the Jigsaw Universe, which focuses on time traveling teens and young adults thrust into major historical events-many of which never made the standard history books.

David was born in New York and now lives in Tempe, Arizona with the love of his life, Gwyn. They are both dog people, enjoy travel, and food-Italian, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Indian cuisines in particular.

When he is not writing time traveling historical fiction and time travel, he is a Title One Instructional Assistant in the Mesa Unified School District and a blogger/journalist for Blog for Arizona.