

A SPACE SAGA BY MICHAEL ZUMMO

d'mok revival



RETRIBUTION

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By

Michael J. Zummo

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D'MOK REVIVAL: RETRIBUTION

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This book is dedicated to my sister, Elizabeth Zummo.

With infinite love and patience, you have listened to my stories about the D'mok Universe. You and Pat Conley now know as much about that fated place as I do. Not only have you inspired me, but your insights and feedback have helped to shape the very fabric of Rhysus Mencari's tale. You are an amazing little sister, and I am truly blessed to have you in my life. Thank you, kiddo! ^.^

Author's Note

Every day I think about the D'mok Revival universe. Each day I'm blessed with another piece of the story. I think I'm addicted, and I love it. After I wrote the original manuscript, that covered the entire Nukari Invasion Trilogy, I thought that would be it. I was wrong—very wrong.

Furthermore, the response from the science fiction community has been amazing. Fantastic feedback helped call out issues with the first edition that have aided in the evolution of this book, and every subsequent volume. I'd like to thank everyone that took the time to share reviews, Facebook posts, or personal emails. Every word from you means the world to me.

This book would not have been possible without the love and support of family, friends, and professionals. I would like to especially thank: Patrick Conley, Elizabeth Zummo, Sam Zummo, my son Derek, Arlene Robinson, Glenn Clovis, Brittany Brauer, Jesi Espie, Tim Lewis, Nathan Sawtelle, Dan Prust, Kim Mayer, Mares Hein, Margaret Nunez, and Morgan Walker. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Without further ado, allow me to continue this journey!

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Prologue

Light from a hundred suns washed over a man on his knees, gently working the earth. He adjusted the sweat-soaked sun garb that blocked the destructive yet life-giving rays. A sensation drew his lizard-like eyes to the honeycombed panels of the greenhouse. From the star-filled space beyond, a haunting female voice drifted into his mind.

Kah-Tae'un ...

He hesitated, indignant, then returned to his labor of love.

A stronger, male voice joined her calls.

Kah-Tae'un ...

The dirt was hard and unforgiving. He would change that, just as he had done with the dry and dead soil in the rest of the greenhouse. After another day of endless toil, his knees were rubbed raw and

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screamed for relief. Yet nothing could deter him.

Claw-like hands ripped at the ground, leaving deep gouges in the hard-baked surface. Dirt packed deeper under his nails, sending shooting pains through his arms. The intense sensation was like a drug; his teeth gnashed in pleasure. Forcing life into the abandoned garden intoxicated him.

Kah-Tae'un, the female beckoned again.

All he wanted was to be left alone. A cool stabbing pulsed through his temples. The more he resisted this, the worse it became. He grunted and flinched as the pain grew.

Channeling the unpleasantness into his work, he clawed deeper, at last piercing into a womb of fertile soil. His gnarled fingers touched a hidden treasure, releasing a wave of exhilaration. Carefully, aware how precious this moment was, he uncovered a pink, fleshy root. Protected by the land's crusty scab it had thrived in hiding, just like him.

Kah-Tae'un ...

The woman again. Still crouched, he distracted himself by looking across the sea of greenery that sprouted with new life. Here he had found home, surrounded by the only things he cherished in the universe. These plants were his companions—his children. The greenhouse was a perfect refuge, one that brought him a peace and tranquility that otherwise escaped him.

Extracting the luscious root, he cradled it with gentleness. The dusty dirt across his face became a muddy streak when his hand stopped a river of sweat rushing down.

The male voice chided.

Kah-Tae'un ... we have all eternity to wait.

Like a wet dog, he shook his head, flinging a shower of salty water across the ground.

The female sighed. *Soon you will listen to us.*

Very soon ... we can tell, the male said, his tone smug.

The man adjusted a crick in his neck, set down the root with care, then dug for more.

The woman said, *We know you well.*

A gentle warmth filled his gut as the male voice spoke again. *Be aware ... feel ...*

The sensation grew into discomfort. He adjusted his lower draping but found no relief.

Water.

A dry tongue ran across parched lips. That must be it, a simple case of dehydration at play.

Poor Kah-Tae'un, the female said.

He dismisses the very thing he was created to feel, the male voice scoffed.

Are you so desperate, my love? said the female.

His heart began to beat in a strange rhythm; his breaths became labored. He pushed to his feet and sought refuge in his shack at the far end of the greenhouse. An entire canister of icy sedation flooded down his throat. The shade also provided a merciful reprieve to his sun-leathered skin.

Seek their destruction, the male voice ordered. *You can run no farther from them than you could from us.*

Kah-Tae'un ... dearest Kah-Tae'un, the female voice pleaded. *Stop this madness.*

The man fanned his draping. Tightness entered his

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muscular chest. Each breath drew with increasing effort. His guts twisted farther as the male and female voices tormented him.

You could not have forgotten ... even after all the time that's passed, the male voice chided.

Your body has not ... even if your mind pretends, the woman added.

Think ...

Feel ...

Remember ...

"Enough!" the beast-man shouted into the empty air.

The female rejoiced. *He acknowledges us!*

As we knew he would, the male voice agreed.

Kind, Kah-Tae'un, the female said.

He cried out, defiant, "Katen! I am ... Katen!"

His words boomed in the empty shack.

We know who you are, Kah-Tae'un, the female's voice echoed unforgiving in his mind.

Our brother, the male voice said.

Our friend, said the female.

Our leader ...

Our lover ...

A powerful nausea swelled from the twisting in his gut.

Did you think you were absolved? the male voice chided.

You cannot undo the past, my love, the female voice said.

The man screamed, digging his clawed digits into his skull until the skin broke. He pondered driving them farther inside, to rip the voices from his own

mind.

End this denial, the male voice said, angry now. *Let your instincts reach out.*

Give yourself to it, the female voice encouraged. *Let it consume you again.*

The mere thought racked Katen's body with tremors. But there was nowhere else to go. Eluding the master's hand could only be done for so long. This refuge, living in the greenhouse of the Nomad ship, only prolonged the inevitable. He spat, and muttered a curse in a final act of defiance.

So be it then, Katen thought.

In surrender, he closed his eyes. The twisted sensation within his gut wrenched one last time before washing into a peaceful bliss. The fatigue of his body faded and his primal senses took over. The very starship around him disappeared as his perceptions reached beyond the confines of his physical body, drifting out into space.

Two shadowy forms kept pace as his gifted senses streaked through the cosmos. They never left his side, even now telegraphing with his essence across the universe; they shared in his experience, bonded like parasites. He would never be free of them.

A collection of muddy-blue auras moving through an ancient nebula drew his attention. The Humanoid beasts traveled bodily in space, surrounded by their protective glows. He felt an instinctive kinship with them.

More work of the masters, he thought.

But not what you were made to find.

Acquiescing to the male voice, Katen refocused,

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allowing his awareness of the beasts to fade.

Sensing deeper into the coldness of space, silver shimmers called to him.

Curious, the male voice said.

The closer he metaphysically drew, the clearer it became these were different from his kin. They were not beasts, and they traveled in ships at unnatural speeds. Yet, his senses told him these Humanoids shared his abilities.

They too are not what you seek, the female voice said.

They are not the ones that call to you, the male voice added. *Reach out to them.*

Once more Katen focused. The silver shimmers became ghostly as his awareness reached further, driven to its limits.

A faint sound, the purest, most lovely tone he had ever heard, rang from far away. He strained, searching for it. As he honed in on the source, it broke into a heavenly chorus. Beautiful chords ebbed and flowed, filling him with elation.

There, the male voice said, pleased.

Then he saw it. Seven golden auras danced in the distance, the source of the tone.

Finally, sighed the female.

The outline of alien figures floated against the darkness of space. As his senses closed in, he perceived a space station housed within a great asteroid. A gentle coolness wafted from their glimmers.

A sinister sneer crossed leathered lips.

“D’mar ...” he said.

D'mar! the female voice echoed.

D'maaaaaar, the male voice said, satisfied.

The very word exhilarated Katen.

Remember your promise, brother, the male voice said.

The children of D'mar have awakened, added the female.

Katen opened his eyes. A tingling filled his belly as his cosmic senses collapsed back within his physical shell. With slow steps, he walked toward the glass panes that separated his greenhouse from the deathly cold of space. Leaving the shack's protective barrier, the repressive sun no longer fazed him.

Hands pressed against the thick glass, he stared with unholy anticipation into space.

He uttered in a raspy, sinister tone, "D'mar ..."

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BOOK TWO OF

THE INVASION TRILOGY

Rhysus Mencari lost everything to the warmongering Nukari. Only his superhuman abilities allowed him to survive their invasion. While assembling a team of D'mok Warriors, powerful aliens with abilities like his, he discovered Nukari entrenched in countless worlds. Together the team disrupted numerous operations, a feat not left unnoticed by his nemesis.

Now a new threat has emerged. Vicious Nukari beasts with D'mok-like abilities have begun terrorizing worlds.

When an unknown group of super-aliens are found battling the beasts, Mencari struggles to discern would-be allies from another powerful foe.

Can his fledgling warriors win against those with abilities like their own? Will the unknown super-race come to his aid or seek his destruction? More importantly, how much longer will the Nukari continue their subterfuge before returning with their mighty armada?

Author Bio

Michael Zummo was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1974. Some know him as a software developer, others as a usability expert, still others as a board and video game designer. One little boy calls him father.

From his earliest days, he was enthralled by computer games, specifically the Sierra On-line adventure games. They inspired his sense of exploration in strange lands, and interactive storytelling.

In 1996, he graduated from Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin with a double degree in computer science and communications.

Throughout his winding career in interactive marketing, video game design, and creating user interfaces, each adventure held the same root. What motivated him wasn't just understanding people and crafting digital interactions, but rather, taking people through an experience—on a journey—to be his true passion in life.

Writing has become his ultimate vehicle for this passion.

