

# Alien Diaries

S. K. Garriott

# I wish I knew

what caused the crash. Not that it would have made any difference but out of curiosity. I couldn't have stopped what happened. I'm a pilot.

One minute I'm in orbit above this big blue water sack of a planet. There aren't all that many of them out there. And there are even fewer with intelligent life. Plenty with life. But I have extremely high standards for defining life as intelligent. Then again, I do make exceptions; I've cut dogs a lot of slack. I include them because they possess a set of noble traits, traits, I'm afraid, most humans have consciously abandoned. Like? Like a sense of family, order, and community. Dogs are always looking for a place of rest, and that involves understanding their place in the world. If you watch a group of healthy dogs, within a few minutes they already know who's in charge and how they fit. They recognize one leader who takes all the stress and the rest relax until such time as another leader needs to take the old leader's place.

Humans? They have enough intelligence to be creative but not enough to overcome their prejudices and this totally obnoxious trait of avoiding facts if they conflict with their unreasonably conceived world view. Then most of them blame it on some abstract concept of a supreme being, as if their fractured intellects could possibly understand what a supreme being could be like from such an eco-centric position of victimhood! And don't get me started about them being victims!

How did I get started on this? Right, Earth the waterbag.

Everyone in the universe who can actually traverse cosmic distances has to depend on some mechanical conveyance. I don't know of any race that can transport themselves instantaneously. There could be some, but they just don't talk to me. If they did, I'd ask them to get me help. Chances are they wouldn't care. If you have that kind of power, you don't have much patience for those who don't.

Just because you're a pilot doesn't mean you have knowledge of how your vessel works. I knew everything I could about mine, but, like pilots on this planet, catastrophes happen. And a catastrophe did. Earth's gravity well pulled me down like a whirlpool. I prepared as best I could for a crash landing. There wasn't any reason to worry. Worry takes up a tremendous amount of time for humans. Forecasting the future using no data and only your imagination is like trying to predict the exact spot where a single raindrop will collide with the ground as if drops from a cloud! Then you pretend the final outcome was somehow influenced by you or the stars. Or God has chosen you out of all the beings on this planet to be the one upon whom his wrath and misery will be exacted! No one has any control of anything. You barely have bladder control. You certainly don't have control of what comes out of your mouths. And what comes out is rarely worth listening to.

I've listened. For a long time, I listened. It was the only hope I had that eventually I'd find the right person, some freak of genetic mutation, the result of random processes. Enough monkeys with enough typewriters. Someone who could say the words I needed to hear: I know how to get you off this fucking planet!

I don't remember much about the crash. There are a few reasons for that. Mostly the obliteration of my ship resulted in the disassembly of my own components. It blew me into tiny pieces. I have no recollection of that time, because my body—comprised of millions of self-aware pieces—was busy locating all my parts and putting themselves back together correctly. Conservation of mass comes into play. Each bit calls to all the other bits until they get back together and put me back together mentally. Some bits may be corrupted but they still call. Once they're back together and my *me-ness* reasserts itself, the healthy bits fix the corrupted bits so I don't end up a blithering idiot... at least no more than I currently am. And I'm not the brightest. I'm miles above every creature on Earth, of course. But compared to others of my kind, I'd probably be considered below average. A disgrace to my parents if I was human... and had parents... which I don't.

My bits induced a coma so I didn't get in the way. Industriously like ants, the bits reformed me, and I finally got the all-clear to rejoin this new world I've been introduced to in a most cataclysmic way. Here's Earth moving at xxx miles per hour; here's me moving at terminal velocity. Slam together thusly. Scatter my parts around. Mix them with pieces of starship and sand and rock. Pull them all back together again. I reassembled in my natural form, one no human will ever see, not because I'm hideous; I'm just non-descript. Functional but of no real use among humans except as a distraction. But it doesn't take much energy to maintain, which after all the time and effort it took to put me back together, I didn't have much extra.

My ship was a total loss. No recoverable pieces. Like I said, I'm a pilot, not an engineer. A good pilot, maybe even a great pilot despite the fact I rammed my craft into your planet. I didn't have to cover anything up considering the remoteness of the crash site and the level of obliteration. Also, I would come to understand, Earth culture had not progressed to a point technologically where finding wreckage would do much more than provoke religious reactions. I'm probably the closest thing to a deity any human will encounter. And you can touch me. If I let you.

It was desert all around me, barren and alien. I could sense rugged, tenacious life forms. I needed food. I found and consumed some of the life forms, but I still needed more. My systems adjust depending on the need. So my physiognomy shifts so I can digest food or travel. I'm very rarely the same internally. It has a lot to do with the communal aspects of my body. Every part of me to a certain extent eats and thinks and moves. No one I know of ever had an adequate explanation. There is spirituality associated with it. Some embrace it more than others. I don't know what I believe and living among humans hasn't made the decisions any easier.

I don't know how long I traveled. I did know there was intelligent life on Earth. From orbit, I saw the cities and villages, roads connecting the units together. But I didn't know what to expect. I had no clue what humans looked like, so it wasn't surprising the first contact went wrong.

I found an oasis in the desert, a place of life in the midst of harsh terrain.

As I said, considering the amount of energy it took to reconstitute me, I was famished, more literally starving. While there are only a few ways available on Earth to permanently disintegrate me, if I am not able to keep up a certain energy level, my systems shut down, and I go into a coma. My body will eventually extract the nutrients I need from the air, ground, and any passing source, but it is a slow process. I become very similar to the *Dionaea muscipula*, the Venus Fly Trap.

I heard the sound of a large creature splashing in water. Stealthily I approached the water hold and found a most unusual creature. It was larger than anything else I had encountered, partially covered with a highly-inadequate pelt, bi-pedal, opposable thumbs... You get the picture. But I was new to the planet, starving, so I ate it. I won't go into the sheer ecstasy of feeling all the nutrient being distributed throughout my body. I don't, as a rule, dine on sentient creatures. It's a rule I break occasionally, but only out of self-preservation and only if there are no alternatives. I'm not some lumbering B-movie monster draining the blood from unwitting, nubile, expendable females.

It was only after my higher-level reasoning returned to me that I found the creature's—the man's—clothing folded neatly on the bank. As an adventurer, I pride myself on my curiosity and my willingness to go native to understand

the indigenous, intelligent lifeforms in the universe. They all have something to teach even my race, as advanced as we are. We are not gods; we don't claim omniscience.

I was utterly appalled and disappointed with myself when I discovered my mistake, justified as it might have been. Not on this planet, of course.

Of all the taboos out there, even incest doesn't hold a candle to cannibalism. While you can all vaguely—while still being shocked—understand the sexual aspects of incest enough to still apply the label 'human' to such an incident, when it comes to eating the flesh of your fellow man with its associated media coverage of pots and pans simmering on stove tops, and future fine dining preserved in plastic wrap in the refrigerator or freezer, the greater majority of you go straight to "monster," inhuman.

I am no monster. Those who know me and have known me would describe me as amoral or immoral, ruthless, manipulative, without conscience, egotistical, but also sophisticated, cultured, charming, generous, inquisitive, caring. And while there are monstrous aspects to my motives—certainly it's very self-centered—and I have murdered and ordered the murder of... many, I do not eat sentient beings. I do not eat porpoise or whale or even octopus, primate, canine, feline, or equine. I try to stay with fish as my major protein; hatchery-bred whenever possible to remove even that vague bit of williness inherent in natural-born creatures. I would be a vegetarian, but I personally can't handle it. Nothing personal.

I hope that settles that. I ate a man, but I didn't mean to. Ignorance of the law and all that notwithstanding. If I were to do it over again, I would still do it, but this time I'd apologize first.

It was a vast oasis in the center of a sea of sand. Over time, I would discover where I was and more importantly when I was. For someone with an exceptionally long life span, time has little meaning. The cycles of day and night end up being more of an inconvenience sometimes than a significant event. But I was here now. I had the impression I was amongst sentient beings. They were fragile from my perspective considering how easily I had killed this first one. And while I could have spent my time on Earth dispatching these creatures, living in secret, avoiding detection with my abilities, I knew that direction was not for me.

Survival is a trait of most creatures, at least of those with which I've come in contact. But the next trait appears to be curiosity, whether it's gazing up into the night sky of whatever world you're standing on or sitting by a pond and watching the critters that pass for midges and tadpoles wriggling about. Life intrigues me more than death, considering I possess an abundance of the former.

So what was my next step? I am a practical sort as are many of my kind. My plan was to infiltrate and learn. I have two real abilities at my disposal: adjusting my component parts consciously to take any shape I want—a shape-shifter, drawing upon a large amount of energy—and an advanced ability to quickly learn almost anything given enough time. I can, if forced, fake many things as well, but I try not to as it often leads to a long recuperating time and a loss of continuity. I must admit I've learned human have on trait I am envious of: creativity, the ability to imagine what is not there, to extrapolate solutions based on very little competent data and still be successful, engage in leaps of fancy.

If I was going to get off this planet, I would need to align myself with those who had the greatest ability to discover the means, no matter what they might be. I would be of little help as I was just as mystified by the processes of intergalactic spaceflight as humans were.

I took the form of the creature I had eaten. Fortunately, the human had been naked, so I had the opportunity to view the full exterior. My memory is quite good, so recreating its... his appearance was not difficult. I used the reflection of the water as my mirror. My only concern was the amount of energy it would take to maintain such a shape. I would require time away from humans so that I could recuperate and avoid revealing my true form. I did my best to clothe myself, analyzing the material I found at the pool, the possessions of the human. I'm certain I wasn't close, but it would do well enough for my plan. If they were any bit as intelligent as I thought they were, I would succeed.

The sun dropped toward the horizon; on Earth, to the west. Shadows lengthened when a few other humans appeared. I didn't initially understand anything they did or said. By the amount of contact, none of which was

harsh, it was clear the human I was impersonating was known to them, perhaps even family. I could not read their facial expressions yet, so I couldn't tell if they were suspicious or fooled by my interpretation.

After a short while, one of the humans began rearranging my clothing, putting them on me in the correct manner. It was my first lesson. Remaining mute and allowing myself to be moved about appeared to work best. Once I had finally learned to communicate, which was a long, frustrating process, I discovered the first encounter had been interpreted as a religious experience to the humans who had found me. It was presumed by my acquaintances I had been visited by a supernatural being who had robbed me of my wits. To them, it explained why I could have suddenly lost my ability to speak, my ability to recognize my family—including my wife and children—and my total unfamiliarity with their culture as they understood it.

I had had some experience with this phenomenon of spirituality. Among my people, there was curiosity as to how we came to be: an amalgam of individual, intelligent pieces that, when finally assembled, become greater than the total of the pieces. Some conjectured we were a result of genetic engineering by some previous super-race who had given us extreme longevity and the task of exploring the universe. There were a number of cults with various belief systems from the mild to the absurd. I had never participated in any of them, but I was familiar enough to understand how the humans could have adopted such beliefs and used them to explain this bizarre behavior I was exhibiting.

It worked out well considering where and when I was. Once I had learned enough of the language to finally begin asking rudimentary questions, I determined I had crashed in the great Western Sand desert. I had wandered into Sekht-am, palm land, what would also be known as Siwa oasis in Northern Egypt, about 300 kilometers south of the Mediterranean. It was the 18th year of Amasis II's reign as pharaoh, the 26th Dynasty. My adopted family treated me like a wise man, for surely I had been touched by Amun the Great!

This would be the beginning of my grand plans to do whatever it took—manipulate on a worldwide scale, kill if necessary—to direct world events as best I could to develop a culture and people with the ability to get me off this planet. I decided I would learn to act when necessary, but also to follow the winds of genius no matter where they would lead me. I would haunt the halls of the great while keeping my ears open to the whispers of the lowly. The great do not have a monopoly on genius, of course; in many cases, they are the epitome of laziness and stupidity. But they have the money and the ways to make more of it. And genius needs funding to make its dreams a reality.

I've known many of the greats of wealth, power, and genius—traveled, eaten and drank with, debated against, fought with and against, even fucked some of them. Many of the things I did would not make much sense to me until I read about them much later. I even like to think I'm the origin of many of the great conspiracy theories passed on throughout history. I am not the prime mover of history, but I played a crucial part in one aspect of it. Who knows? All I am convinced of is that human beings are the most difficult, exasperating creatures to manipulate in the entire universe!

I had a dilemma: unless I became a despot or ruler, there was no way to truly exert the kind of pressure I needed to direct the intellectual study necessary to perfect spaceflight. From spaceflight, I would then require advanced thought to eventually produce interstellar and intergalactic spaceflight. It's one thing to get from Earth to the moon—which you've done successfully; it's quite another to get from Earth to Epsilon Boötis in a reasonable time frame.

My tools—longevity and shape-changing—would be stretched to the limits. With long life, I could wait out those in my way if I did not outright kill them. I had a fairly good idea of what could not kill me, if kill meant the complete disassociation of all my component parts, their total inability to communicate with each other and reassemble me correctly. Given the abilities found in Egypt at that primitive stage, I was invulnerable. I could probably be disassociated, my body dismembered and scattered to the ends of the Earth like Asar. But given time, I would be whole again. My components were tenacious, each realizing it carried a tiny bit of who I am.

I could outlive them all, which in most cases was a surprisingly short amount of time. Twenty-five or thirty years was often enough time to get rid of a whole generation. I could become anyone, so I didn't have to be a ruler, which would give me a freer hand. I could become the ruler for as much time as I wanted, communications being what they were. It would require a loyal group of followers. That could be tricky.

What was set before me? If I was truly to accomplish my goal, I would need a multi-generational plan. Technology was a cumulative thing; elementary theorems support the more advanced theories. How long would it take for humans to discover the building blocks to intergalactic travel? I wasn't even sure I knew what they were; as I said, I could pilot any ship but lacked the knowledge to understand how it would work. I'd need help with that. With the multi-generational aspects, there would need to be a continuity plan as well. I would supply the ultimate continuity; my presence throughout the entire process would be the key, the driving force, the final authority. But the knowledge gained from age to age needed consistency, avoiding corruption, and be sufficiently explained so the next generation could take up the mantle without having to recreate the previous generation's research.

It became clear once I understood human society I needed money, extensive intelligence-gathering services, a certain amount of secrecy to prevent being countermanded, and as many smart people as I could find. I couldn't depend on the randomness of genetics. I probably didn't have billions of years to do this. I'm sure, like a star, I have an end-point. But I may still have to settle for thousands.

Throughout my planning, it was painfully clear I had my limits. I wasn't a technologist or a geneticist, I had no context for how humans did things. (I would be a student of human behavior for several hundred years before I even engaged my plan; you humans haven't changed much. The traits you had in ancient Egypt you still have in downtown New York City in the 21st Century. I learned a lot from dogs: experts at reading human behavior, even if they normally misinterpret it.) I'm not omniscient, omnipresent, and I don't read minds. Things would have been much simpler if I could. I have a healthy respect for the wily nature of mankind. I have been robbed of millions by those who were skilled at manipulating me and those I trusted. Many men and women have grown wealthy at my expense, mainly because I am not of this planet and do not completely understand the machinations of humans. If it fit in my plan, I made sure they regretted their choices once I hunted them down. Mostly, it was more costly to recover what I had rightfully stolen myself. I was only one person trying to move the history of this planet in the direction I needed it to go. And honestly, I wasn't concerned about all of history. I concentrated on one aspect with laser-beam obsession.

But everything touches everything else. You wouldn't think so, but from my multi-millennial perspective, I assure you it does. Music, fashion, literature, food production, banking, war, governments, entertainment, architecture... Anything you can think of all forms a synchronicity. As Jung wrote, "When coincidences pile up in this way, one cannot help being impressed by them -- for the greater the number of terms in such a series, or the more unusual its character, the more improbable it becomes." Oh, yes, I'm well aware of all your great thinkers down through the centuries, some first-hand and others like anyone else would be, through his or her writings. Ultimately, if you want to move one stick, be aware they will all move to a certain extent.

If I was writing a cookbook on how to direct the world to your own ends, I would have to add a chapter on opponents. I discovered how quickly humans mount opposition to what I was doing, no matter how ultimately benign it might be. I wasn't going to take over the world as some believed; there were plenty of humans trying to do that. I just wanted to leave it behind. No matter how fascinating a place it might be, give yourself enough time and you'll grow tired of it. One of the charms of mankind is you don't really live long enough to get bored, not if you take some initiative and create a life for yourselves. Unfortunately, because I was so absorbed in my plans, I rarely had time to sightsee. If I'd been in charge of my comings and goings, maybe I would have had a chance to enjoy the place. I did gather some impressive insights into how the human creature works. I could write a book about it if it didn't infuriate me so much. But it was all in the reasoning: my obsession overshadowed everything.

And by the way, most of your theories about humans are wrong.

If you're still following this account, if you haven't been completely alienated by this... alien, if you are fascinated by the concept of human events being co-opted by an external force, that some of the far-fetched ideas of conspiracy theorists may actually have some validity, by all means read on. I must emphasize, though, in only a very few cases did I direct human history. I am and ever shall be a stranger in a strange land. I will never totally understand mankind, nor will I ever feel fully comfortable around them. I suffer from intense loneliness often.

But my plan was always uppermost in my mind. I would spend every conscious hour, every conversation in moving, inching forward with the plan. Initially, history became my foe. I was locked in combat with it as I tried to predict the course of events. But it didn't take me long before I understood how useless that was. History then became a partner in my quest. I learned early that history is a juggernaut, fueled by titanic forces, whether Jung's

collective unconscious or something else, pushing human endeavors at a speed and direction I could not possibly change. It would be like trying to deflect an asteroid from a collision course with Earth using only a pea-shooter.

My few attempts at redirecting human events by assuming the role of a monarch ended disastrously. In one case, all my work ended with me becoming a ruler with no power. I discovered the neighboring kingdom had allowed me to take the throne!

I've never proclaimed I couldn't be hoodwinked by humans. There are just so many of you. You have the home court advantage and the numbers.

Even a hyper-intelligent being can be conned. Another case involved me being assassinated by a surviving member of the previous administration (little shit had eluded all my attempts to find and capture him, probably because everyone was on his side). My body was burned, and the resulting residue was scattered all over the countryside. I determined it had taken me about 125 years to reconstitute that time, longer than my first time after the crash on Earth. Peasants can be quite resourceful and vindictive.

As I mentioned, learning how human society works took me hundreds of years. You still surprise me, like a parent whose child displays a leap of cognition apart from any direct training: realizing the square block goes in the square hole and not the round one. Human actions have a level of predictability in large groups, as Isaac Asimov postulated in his writings. But, as he further noted, the single individual can muck things up for everyone. Add an Alexander to the mix and all your plans can be set back for hundreds of years. Or a lack of funding from one monarch can postpone the appearance of the computer.

I became a money man instead of a ruler, covert operations using every trick I could devise, capitalizing on every human vice: drugs, extortion, murder, prostitution, political corruption, stock fraud, con games, illegal gambling... I spent time in prison when the plans of my patron went awry, but with my abilities it didn't take long before I escaped and established myself somewhere else with a new identity.

I leaned about numbers much quicker than I did about human nature. Human mathematics, while not totally universal, is the closest you can come to the language of the cosmos. I am unparalleled when it comes to gaining, hiding, laundering, and losing money. Sometimes you take a risk, especially when you are in need of it, when you simply must have the most up-to-date facility for quantum research. I have gathered wealth beyond any man's dreams. The reason you haven't heard about me is because of the plan. I was never in it to take over the world or make a name for myself. I had no desire to be noticed at all. Sometimes, having no money or all the money makes you invisible; that's what I was after: perfect anonymity.

Additionally, my assets are so diversified and scattered over many of my historical personas someone investigating me would almost need to know who I was, including my whole history to trace everything, to tie everything to me. You'd need to know the answer before you knew the question, like a twisted conspiracy Jeopardy answer: This extra-terrestrial-- the only true one anywhere near Earth--has been siphoning money from the world's monetary system for millennia to fund his plan to develop intergalactic space flight.

I am like Dr. Who with all his incarnations but without his ability to leave this ruddy world. I do not age and have nothing to measure my final lifespan. I can only ascertain I will be around when the sun goes supernova unless my plan works out. I am certain it will. Humans are a resourceful bunch. They thrive on praise and encouragement. And the geniuses only need the proper playground in which to solve their tedious puzzles.

While there are few things that can permanently disassemble me (I think of the word *kill* as being more of humans), the primitive forces on this planet have still provided many instances of waylaying me. Waylaid is my term for the time while I have no single form of awareness. One metaphor that might explain my physical makeup is a hive. I am composed of a single hive. Each bee is a component of my consciousness having a working knowledge of how to keep the hive alive. No one bee can possibly maintain the hive alone. Though the queen has certain abilities, she would soon die if not for the other bees. I am a hive-mind of sorts, yet I have never thought of myself as we. I have always been the singular pronoun: I.

There are those among my race—whether because they are brain damaged or truly enlightened, no one knows for sure—who cling to the idea that our components, each with their tiny bit of sentience and *me-ness*, are all separate beings. I am not me, they say. I am we. By not acknowledging that truth, I am, by their pronouncement, deluded.

I have little time for anything other than the plan, though. Little time to philosophize about *me-ness* and *we-ness*. But it seems putting together this account of my life on Earth cause me to jump from topic to topic randomly, stream-of-consciously. Perhaps this is my release, an opportunity to allow my chaotic tendencies—ones that assist me so well as a pilot navigating the intricacies of space but help me very little in the task of managing this vast undertaking, keeping all the pieces in synch and communicating with each other—give them a chance to breathe and race around for a while until I cram them back into their box. This exercise may also help me to think better.

My first experience with being waylaid occurred with the first family I was a part of after my crash. As I said, the superstitious nature of the people made it very easy to pass myself off as touched by the gods. As I began the arduous task of learning an alien language, I had to also adjust my anatomy considering I was human only at a very superficial level. Inside, I was very different.

The children were easiest to study as they had as much free time as I had. At the moment, I was mute. I understood the concept of the optic nerve as they were similar to the way I already saw. But I was not physically prepared to communicate like a human. I watched as the children spoke to me. I watched how their mouths moved, how their tongues danced, twisting and shoving around their oral cavity. I reformed my physical form to create a tongue, hard and soft palates, all the structures in the mouth by which humans speak. I created an elementary bellows system to act as I thought lungs might work (having as yet no knowledge of lungs or what they were called). They worked to force air out of my newly-formed mouth, so I could make sounds. I delighted the children with my first noises, which were best described as burping. They squealed each time I tried to copy their sounds and sought me out for my ability to make them laugh.

I am sensitive to vibrations; this is the primary form of communication among my race. With humans, it is a combination of sight to interpret body language to some degree, and through hearing as spoken words and the way in which the words are spoken are translated.

Conservation of mass makes it so that I can only give the impression of what I am portraying. I could possibly take the form of an elephant, but I would not smell like one, nor would I weigh the same as one. If I were an elephant, I would be like a sail, stretched tight to its limits; a decent breeze would blow me away and spoil the charade. So I stayed with my impression of the man I had killed.

Taking care not to be seen, I formed tiny filaments from my body and sent them down the children's throats, and into the ears, nostrils... every open I could access while they slept, tracing carefully millimeter by millimeter the internal structure of the body, attempting to mimic them in my own. I understood I could injure the children with even this smallest of intrusions. I didn't know how it would affect them. Would some organ cease functioning if some doorway were held open long enough?

I was able to explore almost every internal organ in the human body. I attributed my success in great part to the vitality of the children. Infant mortality being as high as it was, those children were survivors and extremely resilient. I also understand the horror some may feel at my taking undue advantage of the children. Again, I was at the beginning of my inquiries and still considered all humans as only vaguely sentient. I do have feelings; I do not stand proudly concerning my actions, but I did do them to survive. Since that time, I have done much more terrible things. I have also seen terrible things done by one human against another. Your race also has little to be proud about.

Before too long, I had mapped a fair approximation of the human body and transferred the knowledge into my own body. I had to make adjustment considering my relative size compared to the system. I am not sure why I decided to duplicate much more than what humans around me could see. They could not see my heart, but they could hear it beating. They could not see my stomach, but I had formed on even though I didn't use it to take in nutrients. I am an explorer, inquisitive; the whole reason I had taken to the *starways* was to find answers, to study. Rumors of the planet Earth had circulated for millennia, but its location, far from most centers of civilization as if intentionally hidden away, made a search for it too unpalatable to most travelers. I was up to the challenge, being a sort of rebel among my kind. I suffered the consequences for my curiosity.

With my new insides in place, I followed along with the children, learning as they learned. Unknown to me, the Oracle of Amun had given me the title of *godschild*, so it made sense to the adults that I would act like one. It seemed absurd given my mental capabilities, but I look back fondly on those days with the children. The wonder they each had for their simple existence has never been duplicated in all my interactions since then, except in my dealings with dogs, which id jumping ahead.

When I uttered my first word—I think it was “eat”—I was given an ovation of applause and delighted shrieks from my diminutive companions. Soon the adults gathered around me. I performed for them as well. They were astonished, never expecting me to be much more than a cretin, a child-mind in an adult body who would need to be taken care of and watched for the rest of his life. My grasp of the language grew with increasing speed. I was soon way beyond the children in comprehension. I joined the adult society, sadly leaving the children, and my own earthly childhood, behind. My schooling in the ways of man had begun.

During my recovery, I was a ward of the Oracle of Amun. My human family came and went from Sekht-am. Their permanent home would be to the east in Memphis where the men were stone masons. Their task was the completion of the tomb of Amasis II. When I was returned to what they all saw as a right mind, the Oracle released me, and I traveled back across the desert to their home. I lived with my wife and children, though I became more of a guest than a husband or father. I had the form of a man but was sufficiently alien in every other way. My wife had accepted the fact it would be no other way. She would live with the *godschild*, which had its advantages. We would regularly receive gifts. I considered it beneficial. My inability to read my wife's reactions would keep me ignorant until it was too late.

[AUTHOR'S NOTE: PDF version contains story through Alien Diaries: Part 18 on <http://murder3rivers.blogspot.com>]