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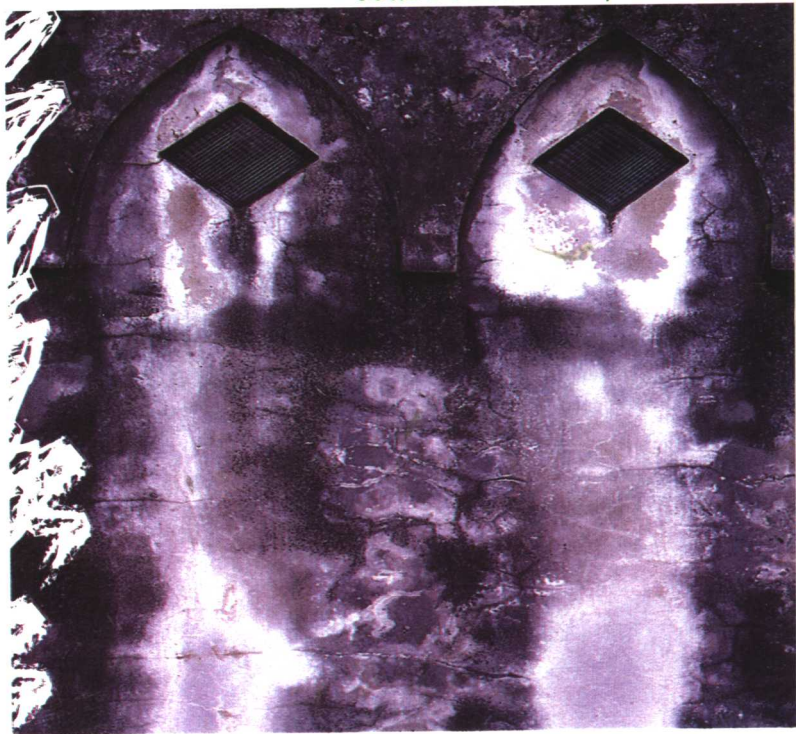
科幻小说系列(二)

BLACK AURAS

— ALIEN CONTACT AND INVASION

黑色光环

外星客入侵地球故事集
Oscar De Los Santos, Ph.D.



上海外语教育出版社

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总 序

继《漫游科学天地,解读生命奥秘》(*Questions of Science, Answers to Life*,上海外语教育出版社,2004年)之后,美国科普作家 Oscar De Los Santos 又向中国读者隆重推出《浩然奇境》科幻小说系列。

在这套系列里,作者以厚实的功底、独特的视角、丰富的想像、潇洒生动的笔触,引导读者在无尽的时间、空间里漫游,展示宇宙和生命的浩繁、绮丽和奥秘,融知识、娱乐、启迪于每一篇故事。系列中的每一部作品既有自己独立的主题,又相互关联,组成一个个连绵不断、意趣无穷的浩然奇境。

作者在书末对科幻小说、电影等有关问题做了进一步论述,并附上详细的文献单,为对科幻小说研究感兴趣的读者提供了难得的参考资料。

书中的脚注也为中国读者提供了方便。

腾飞的中国需要数以千万计的具有现代意识的高精尖人才。这类新型人才不仅专业知识要扎实深厚,而且要富有想像力,能以极大的热忱和敏锐的眼光关注着有关人类世界及天地间所有根本性的问题,而这种对于整个宏观世界的关注和感悟,必将为其专业的发展提供无限的灵感和动力。这套科幻小说系列将帮助和激发读者去思考、关注和感悟那些有关人类自身和生存环境的根本性的问题,从中得到无限的启迪和乐趣,并汲取鲜活的当代美国英语的养分。

愿你早日捧上这本难得的好书,在科幻小说提供的浩然无尽、绮丽奥秘的宇宙里尽兴地神游。

Bon Voyage!

祁寿华

2004年秋于美国康州

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Once again, I extend heartfelt thanks to Professor Shouhua Qi and Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press for giving these stories a place to come alive.

And as always, special thanks and love to Kelly — my Number One cheerleader — who always believes in me.

For David G. Mead

— *Teacher and Friend*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
DEAR SUSIE	3
THE LONELY	10
MAY WE HELP YOU?	20
BLACK AURAS	42
BELOW THE DEPTHS	66
THE JADED	84
Afterword	94
Works Cited and/or Consulted	106
About the Authors	107

Introduction

Welcome to *Infinite Wonderlands 2: Black Auras!*

Our first volume focused on time travel, a favorite subject among science fiction fans.^[1] This time we will immerse ourselves in stories of extraterrestrials and invasions from outer space. Unlike *Infinite Wonderlands 1*, whose tales functioned as individual segments of a single story arc, *Infinite Wonderlands 2: Black Auras* features stories that function independently. Consider each a variation that works with the same subject and themes.

Stories of space aliens and alien invasions appeared in countless pulp magazines,^[2] paperbacks, comic books, motion pictures, and television programs throughout the twentieth century. While there were fair amounts of alien visitor stories before mid-1947, their popularity shot higher around the time of “the Roswell incident” (more about Roswell in the afterword).

Today, tales of ETs^[3] and alien invasions are as popular as

[1] See *Infinite Wonderlands 1: Sailing the Seas of Chronos*.

[2] pulp magazines: fiction magazines printed on cheap “pulp”-like paper stock. Pulp magazines provided the everyday man and woman with a great deal of inexpensive reading material in a variety of genres including science fiction, horror, western, romance and mystery.

[3] ETs: extraterrestrials

ever, in print, in cinema and on television. We have grown accustomed to hearing about “visitors” with teardrop shaped eyes abducting individuals in the dead of night and subjecting them to frightening, humiliating and painful experiments.^[1] The aliens’ motives remain murky and subject to intense debate among ufologists,^[2] but the supposedly secret visits aren’t so secret anymore. Extraterrestrials are part of the global pop culture mainstream.

Some people take stories of secret alien invasions very seriously. Others laugh and completely reject the claims of UFO abductees and extraterrestrial spotters. Still others step back and enjoy the ongoing circus of debate between believers and scoffers. Science fiction authors enjoy the revelry — a revelry they may have started! They continue to write about visitors from other worlds.

Perhaps we can get to a better understanding of the history of alien invasion fiction in the afterword of this book. We will also try to pinpoint the reasons for the ongoing popularity of such stories.

For now, turn the page and enjoy the following stories. Some deal with their subject subtly. Others do so blatantly. Regardless of method, I hope you find every tale to be a worthy addition to the ever-growing catalogue of space alien stories.

[1] Throughout *Communion* (1987) and its sequels, author Whitley Strieber refers to the entities which supposedly abducted him in the night as “visitors.” Strieber’s supposedly true-life book series is largely responsible for ushering a new wave of alien abduction stories into the American pop culture mainstream.

[2] ufologists: people who study UFO sightings, stories about alien abductions and alleged encounters with extraterrestrials.

DEAR SUSIE

After supper last night, I turned on the TV and watched *Jeopardy* and *Wheel of Fortune*,^[1] as usual. Then I was all set to watch a couple of sitcoms, but the network ran some stupid show about UFOs instead. It centered on Roswell, New Mexico and what the UFO books call "the Roswell incident."

Roswell! Can you imagine? The mystery of Roswell is sixty years old now but it won't die. Some folks actually believe that a UFO crashed there in July 1947 and others say the Roswell believers are idiots. These days, Roswell is a lot more than the name of a city in the state of New Mexico. It's a code word for conspiracy theorists.^[2] The very mention of Roswell triggers flashes of anger

[1] *Jeopardy* and *Wheel of Fortune*: two of the most popular game shows in United States television history. Both shows have been on for about twenty years or longer. They continue to be broadcast Monday through Friday throughout most of the nation.

[2] conspiracy theorists: people who study strange & unsolved mysteries or mysterious events. They frequently find bizarre and convoluted plots to further complicate the mystery. Sometimes they uncover what they claim to be a massive cover-up behind an event — an assassination, for example — that seems easily solved. Whether they are right in their claims or simply paranoid about the world and its systems of organization is often debated.

in a lot of people. For them, the name "Roswell" signals government lies. It signals cover-up on a massive scale. These people truly believe that a spacecraft piloted by extraterrestrials crashed on a ranch outside of Roswell and that the armed forces and the United States government concealed the truth from the American people — and the world.

Other folks laugh at these stories. Nothing short of a flying saucer landing outside their house and little green men knocking on their door will convince them that aliens from outer space exist. They do not believe in UFOs, space aliens and visitors from outer space crash-landing in Roswell or anywhere else in the world.

And then there are people like me. We're scarce and getting scarcer with each passing year, but we know what was really going on at Roswell during the first and second week in July 1947.

We know, for instance, that certain parts of "the Roswell incident" are true. Rancher Mac Brazel really did find a lot of foil-like material and balsa-wood^[1] scattered across one of his fields. Brazel eventually drove into town and told the sheriff. The sheriff told the radio station newsmen and called the military base. The base sent out a small recovery unit (two men) to the Brazel ranch. They collected all of the alien "flying saucer" crash debris and then flew it to Dallas, Texas for a press conference. At the press conference, military brass pooh-poohed the initial reports that a space saucer crashed near Roswell. The debris was nothing more than what remained of a downed weather balloon, said the officers. The initial press release about a recovered flying saucer was a foolish error.

I know the truth.

There *was* a cover-up in Roswell in July 1947, but the government wasn't trying to hide a crashed UFO. The debris that Mac Brazel found scattered on his ranch was actually what was left

[1] balsa wood: a tropical American tree or the wood from this tree, which is very light.

of a Top-Secret device — one of several long trains of balloons and surveillance equipment that belonged to Project Mogul.

The purpose of Project Mogul was to spy on the Soviet Union. The American military wanted to know how close the Russians were to developing a nuclear weapon. If they set off a nuclear device for testing purpose, Project Mogul would have instantly relayed this fact to the ongoing surveillance team monitoring the balloons high above the earth. For decades, the former members of Project Mogul laughed at all the talk about UFOs in Roswell in 1947. They were sure they were privy to the inside story. And they were right — but only partially right.

You see, there's a smaller group who laughs at Project Mogul insiders even as they laugh at common citizens and conspiracy theorists. Sure, what crashed on the ground was a Project Mogul device, but all the reports of flying saucers in the area were not the fault of Project Mogul. There was *another* Top-Secret government experiment going on at the time — one that the Project Mogul boys never knew about.

I was part of this other project. It involved the development of wingless saucer-shaped flying machines. We tested them in rural areas all over the southern and western United States, including Roswell. The government was developing these space-saucers with one goal in mind: to make it possible to fly high over the earth — into the stratosphere and out of radar detection — in order to drop nuclear bombs onto the Soviet Union.

In other words, we were making flying saucers to bomb Russia and we actually got pretty far in their development.

Naturally, these ships had to be tested again and again. That's when people started sighting UFOs all over the place. A month before the Roswell incident, Kenneth Arnold was flying a small plane near Mt. Rainer, Washington when he spotted nine of our test saucers flying ahead and slightly below him. In a later interview, Arnold said the round discs looked like saucers skipping across a pond. (It's true. Our space-saucers used to bounce a bit.

Even guys with cast-iron stomachs took anti-nausea meds when they flew them.)

The whole nation went flying saucer crazy. We didn't fly our saucers in the Midwest or the Eastern United States, but there were still saucer reports coming in from Ohio, Washington D. C. , Florida, New York, Connecticut. For a little while, we figured people in the Midwest and the East Coast just wanted to be part of the excitement.

I actually flew one of those wingless birds, but eventually, I grew restless and wanted to do something else. I heard about yet another Top Secret project that involved parachuting to earth from extremely high altitudes. The U. S. wanted to be able to secretly drop platoon after platoon of soldiers over Enemy Territory. The soldiers would do all sorts of clandestine damage before we launched a more public infiltration.

It didn't take a lot of paperwork. I was always good at my work and they knew I always kept my mouth shut. Pretty soon I was part of the "high-jump" team. Before I transferred yet again, into another still secret project (we had so many going back then), I got to make five jumps.

How high were our jumps? Special planes flew us to the very rim of the earth's stratosphere! We jumped out and came down forever, it seemed. You could see the darkness of space above you and the curve of the earth below. Sometimes all I could see below me was a massive blanket of puffy white clouds. It was stunning — the world's biggest and most comfortable mattress. I'll never forget that image.

It was quiet, at first. All I could hear was the sound of my breathing inside my oxygen mask. Gradually, the sound of the wind invaded my mask and I was tossed in all directions as I plummeted. By the time I broke through the cloud cover, the world was roaring all around me and I was too awestruck by the view to really notice anything else.

Every one of my jumps brought a spectacular view, but I

remember my last jump more than the rest — more than most experiences of my life.

It was early July, 1947, a few days before the Roswell chatter erupted. I jumped out of the plane and took in the incredible space panorama for the final time. The government restricted all of us to five jumps.

(Even one was probably too many. In the years that followed, I would run into a fellow high-alt jumper from time to time. He always had a scary story to tell about one of our peers. Most of the talk revolved around cancer and brain tumors. Guess I lucked out. ^[1])

I was freefalling, tumbling end over end, being blown in a long and lazy zigzag. My oxygen was working fine. I had complete faith in my parachute, which I would eventually have to use.

I turned to my right and looked up. Far away, on the slope of the horizon, the plane I leaped out of was disappearing into a cloudbank. I looked higher and marveled at the starlit heavens. It was two o' clock in the afternoon down in Roswell, but up here, I relished the vastness of the cosmos, the winking stars, and the perpetual night.

And then it happened. Something twinkled to my right, much brighter than any of the brilliant stars overhead, and I caught sight of a silver platter smoothly rounding the curve of the earth. Let me tell you, that sight mainlined adrenalin through my veins! ^[2] I knew a lot about secret military aircraft back then, and I suspected there were secret planes I knew nothing about, but this round and wingless machine was different. It was flying higher than any of our planes had yet to go. It flew smoothly, without all the bumps and skips of our own high-altitude models. And it made some amazing Z-patterns and forty-five degree angle turns that we could only dream of achieving some day.

[1] luck out: to be lucky

[2] mainlined adrenalin through my veins: cause me to feel nervously excited

The ship's size was equally astonishing. Even though I couldn't do a proper triangulation estimate with my tumbling and the black sky above, I would say a fair guess would put the saucer at around the size of two football fields.

I heard a terrible noise — a mechanical rhythm that sounded like something was about to blow up. Then I realized I was making it. I made myself stop panting and tried to breathe normally.

The craft moved closer. Seconds before I dropped into the first wispy clouds, it accelerated, stopped within an inch of my helmet and then plummeted alongside me — round, silver, completely seamless. And it really *was* as big as two football fields!

I screamed inside my helmet. I kept screaming until I finally came out of the clouds. When I did, I was alone again, staring at a patchwork of plowed fields growing ever closer. I popped my parachute. By the time the recovery jeep picked me up, I had composed myself and wiped away my tears.

I never reported the incident. I know it sounds stupid but I didn't. I don't even know if I would have admitted to it if my superior officers had questioned me about it. The military knew something weird was going on over U. S. skies. Not every UFO sighting could be blamed on our Top Secret experiments. Sometimes your Commanding Officer appreciated what you had to say. Other times he ridiculed you. Some of my friends saw weird stuff up there, too. A few reported their story and were promoted. Others were demoted, transferred and in one case, simply made to disappear — forever. So I kept my mouth shut about it all these years — *sixty long years* — until tonight.

Why start talking now? Well, old age creeps up on all of us, and I haven't been feeling so hot lately. Besides, writing in a diary isn't breaking my secrecy oath. Not exactly. I figure certain government reps may come around and dig through my personal effects as soon as I die, but then again, they may not. I've lived an honest quiet life. Maybe they'll leave my stuff alone.

If so, then I know my daughter will retrieve this old diary and

the other three I have stashed in my nightstand here by the bed. She knows where I keep my life logs, even though she's polite enough to pretend she doesn't when she comes by to help me clean the house. But I know that some day she's going to pull them all out and start reading about her father. That time may be coming very soon.

Dear Susie, don't think your old man a senile fool when you get to the end of this, his last entry. I know what I've written. It's bizarre but very much the truth as it happened and as I remember it tonight, in sorry health but sound mind.

It's true, Susie. They're out there. They're watching us. And some day, I'm guessing that watching isn't going to be enough. Some day, everyone will know that not all unidentified flying objects come from Planet Earth. Some come from elsewhere.

How can I be sure?

Because there's one thing I haven't mentioned yet. The ship had portholes — little round windows circling its hull. I looked inside one of those windows as the craft plunged down with me, Susie. I saw Them.

And nothing like Them exists on our planet. Of that I am quite certain.

THE LONELY

Angel Garcia was on his morning walk when he saw the man fall out of the sky. It was his third day in the dense Oregon forest. Up to now, except for sporadic clicks and hums from his recording equipment, the area had been free of any mechanized sounds. This morning he heard the plane's buzzing long before he spotted it. Finally, a white piper-cub^[1] appeared from behind a thick copse of pines in the distance. Moments later, a man tumbled out of the plane's cabin and began a long plummet.

Angel was hyper-conscious of sounds. Although he was blessed with twenty-twenty vision, he saw as much with his ears as with his eyes. Angel was a sound recorder. He spent many weeks of the year traveling around the country, capturing the noise of existence, domestic and rural, human-made and natural. His favorite journeys were his trips into the wilderness.

As a kid, he filled endless cassette tapes with the chatter of family and friends, his dog's howls, the cat's hisses, the cacophony of his Houston neighborhood. Many children become fascinated with

[1] piper-cub: a small single-engine airplane.