

STEPHEN LEIGH

Author of *Dark Water's Embrace*

SPEAKING

STONES



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To Susan
For the smiles

And, as ever, to Denise

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Miccail “Lullaby to a Sa Child” is based on a Zuni lullaby quoted in *Daughters of the Earth: The Lives and Legends of American Indian Women* by Carolyn Niethammer (Collier Books, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1977). I highly recommend Ms. Niethammer’s book to anyone interested in Native American culture as seen from the female viewpoint (a difficult perspective to find among historical books on the subject of Native Americans), and I have “borrowed” a few customs quoted there for the Miccail society.

From *The Book of the Hopi* by Frank Waters, I borrowed aspects of the Miccail mythology and language, as well as some details grafted onto the QualiKa sect.

I also read *The Dull Knives of Pine Ridge* by Joe Sarita (Putnam, 1995), which gave me insight into generational cultural conflicts. The Valentine T. McGillicuddy quote which starts the “Circumstances” section is from this book.

In researching the subject of prejudice on the internet, I came across the Anti-Defamation League website, from which I look the Farrakhan, Netanyahu, and Arafat quotations.

Yet another book important to the development of this novel is *Rebels: The Irish Rising of 1916* by Peter de Rosa (Ballantine Books, 1990), a fascinating study of the beginnings of the end of seven centuries of British rule of Ireland, and a cultural conflict with which my own ancestors were intimately familiar.

The Patrick Pearse and Sean Heuston quotes are from this source.

I'd like to thank Dr. Rebecca Levin for her input into the biology of the Miccail and the Sa. Any errors of extrapolation and science are mine, not hers.

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If you're connected to the internet, please check out my web page at www.sff.net/people/sleigh/—you're always welcome to browse through!

A MICTLANIAN GLOSSARY

THE LANGUAGES OF MICTLAN, HUMAN, AND MICCAIL:

The crew of the *Ibn Battuta*, drawn as they were from a multinational crew, adopted English as their *lingua franca*. However, most of the crew were at least bilingual, if not relatively fluent in three or four languages. Inevitably, words and phrases from other languages crept into their everyday speech. Well before the *Ibn Battuta* was launched, during the period when it was being constructed in orbit and the crew members were learning their roles, a subtle *patois* of many languages had come into common use among the crew and support personnel. The emerging language was almost a Creole, though the largest portion of the vocabulary derived from American English. By the time of their arrival at Mictlan, despite the ship-decades of LongSleep, this convention was firmly in place. New terms and descriptions might as easily be drawn from Cantonese, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, or Kiswahili as English, or even (as was the case with the world-name itself) an ancient Native American language such as Nahuatl. For the most part, we have stayed with English for the sake of readability. However, where it seemed appropriate, the terms used by the colonists have been appropriated here.

The sections from the viewpoint of the Miccail themselves contain words drawn from their own language, again where it seemed appropriate. As in Japanese (for instance), the Miccail created conglomerate words composed of smaller, monosyllabic nouns. Thus, “nasituda,” the word for the carved stelae which were the first, most visible signs of the Miccail presence is Stone (“na”) Carved (“si”) Past

(“tu”) Speak (“da”): literally, the Carved Stone that Speaks of History, or as we have (more romantically, perhaps, and certainly more freely) translated it here, Telling or Speaking Stone.

The list of human and Miccail words below is by no means exhaustive, and is provided only to give some insight into derivations and meanings.

- aabi Miccail. Literally, “Ears hearing.” An acknowledgment that you’ve heard and understood what was said to you.
- AnglSaiye Miccail. The island, sacred home of the Sa
- brais Miccail. Literally, “Sun’s Eye”; the pupilless third eye set high on the forehead of the Miccail. The brais cannot focus and the Miccail do not properly “see” with it. Instead, it serves as a “skylight” and warns them of sudden shifts in light which might signal the approach of a predator.
- Cha’akMongTi Miccail: The “crier with a god’s voice” or GodMouth. A prophet, one who speaks with divinely inspired words.
- Chali Miccail. The larger of Mictlan’s two moons, dubbed Longago by the human colonists.
- Che’Veyo Miccail: Spirit Warrior.
- CieTiLa Miccail. Literally, “Those Touched By The Gods.” More simply, it means “The People,” referring to the Miccail as a whole.
- culear Human. From Spanish: literally, one who has sexual intercourse with the rear. A gay male.

da	Human. Etymology uncertain. The closest meaning is perhaps "Uncle." Da refers to any male of a person's Family who is of a generation or more older.
danjite ikenai	Human, from Japanese: "Absolutely not"
dottó	Human, from Italian: a contraction of "dottore," or doctor. The English equivalent might be the colloquial "Doc."
Geeda	Human. Etymology uncertain. The eldest male of a Family
Geema	Human. Etymology uncertain. The eldest female of a Family
hai	Human, from Japanese: "Yes."
hakuchi	Human, from Japanese: "Idiot."
hand	Miccail counting: a "hand" equals four.
Ja	Miccail. A suffix indicating a female in servitude
Je	Miccail. A suffix indicating a male in servitude
jitu	Miccail. A narcotic drink used in Sa rituals.
kahina	Miccail: the spirits or minor deities who control the earth, the wind, and the waters. These spirits are responsible for rain, for storms, for floods, for earthquakes. The earth kahina dwell in rocks and trees and sometimes take on animal aspects as well; the water kahina live at the bottom of lakes and underneath the sea, and sometimes manifest themselves in fish; the air kahina live in the clouds, and may sometimes speak to the Miccail through the birds.

- kami Human, from Japanese: a local spirit or minor deity, often inhabiting particular trees or stones. Kami are usually confined to a specific location, and could be helpful or not, depending on whim. Sometimes the souls of particularly strong dead people could become kami, inhabiting a place or an object special to them.
- kasadi Miccail. Ducklike amphibians who congregate on shorelines during their brief spring mating season.
- kav Miccail. An herbal tea
- khudda Human, from Syrian (vulgar): used as a profanity: human excrement
- Kiria Human, from Latin: Priest or Priestess. Probably derived from Kyrie.
- komban wa Human, from Japanese: "Good evening."
- KoPavi Miccail: literally, "Open Door," or the religious rits and etiquettes of the Miccail which opened their souls to the ShadowWorld where the gods lived. The QualiKa believed that strict adherence to KoPavi was necessary to sustain the Miccail's well-being as a people.
- lansa Miccail: spear.
- lavativo Human, from Italian: "Lazybones"
- mali cvijet Human, from Serbo-Croatian: "Little Flower"—a term of endearment.
- mam Human. Etymology uncertain. "Mother." Since it was entirely unlikely that anyone could be certain of the father, there is no analogue word for the male parent on Mictlan.

- marset Miccail. A small mammalian animal hunted for both its food and fur.
- mi Human. Etymology uncertain. The closest meaning is perhaps "Aunt." It refers to any female of a person's Family who is older than you, and of whom you're not a direct descendant (i.e., not your mother, grandmother, etc.)
- Miccail Human, from Nahuatl: "The Dead." On Mictlan, the extinct race of sentient beings who perished a millennium before the arrival of the *Ibn Battuta*.
- Mictlan Human, from Nahuatl: "The Land of the Dead." In Aztec/Mayan creation myths, this is the Land of the Dead, from where the god Quetzalcoatl brought the bones of man. This was used as the world-name after the bones of a sentient race were found here.
- mojo ljubav Human, from Serbo-Croatian: "My love"
- nasituda Miccail. The Speaking Stone of the Miccail, the carved stelae of crystal which are the most prominent remnants of that extinct race.
- nei Human. Etymology uncertain: "Absolutely not!"
- Njia Human, from Kiswahili: "The Way." This is the principal religious/philosophical belief system among the humans on Mictlan.
- Quali Miccail. The smaller of Mictlan's two moons, dubbed Faraway by the human colonists.
- rezu Human, from Japanese via Europe: a lesbian.

- Sa Miccail. A suffix indicating a Miccail midmale. Nearly all the rare midmales belonged to the Sa sect, a religious colony based on an island.
- shangaa Miccail. The long, caftanlike robe that was the main item of clothing worn by the Miccail. Shangaa, woven from the pulp of a native plant, were dyed many bright colors, and varied from plain, utilitarian robes to fine ceremonial costumes.
- sib Human, from English: "sibling." On Mictlan, a sib is anyone of your Family of the same generation, regardless of who the mother was.
- Ta Miccail. A suffix for the dominant female in a Miccail tribe, also known as the OldMother.
- Te Miccail. a suffix indicating that the person is the OldFather of a Miccail tribe, the dominant male.
- terduva Miccail. A segment of time equal to 512 (or $8 \times 8 \times 8$) years. The Miccail, with hands consisting of three fingers and a thumb, counted in base eight.
- Ti Miccail. The suffix used for a deity.
- Tlilipan Human, from Nahuatl: "place of black water." Name given to a peat-stained lake near the colony site.
- Tu Miccail. The suffix used to designate the head of the Community of Sa.
- una tortillera Human, from Spanish: in extremely vulgar usage, a lesbian.
- VeiSaTi Miccail. One of the gods of the Miccail, the one most sacred to the sect of the Sa.


- verrechat Human, from French: "glass cat." A small, catlike marsupial with transparent or lightly tinted skin and muscles. Sometimes domesticated.
- wizards Human. A contraction of "winged lizards"—a type of flying reptile found near the human settlement.
- Xa Miccail. A suffix indicating a female of the free caste
- Xe Miccail. A suffix indicating a male of the free caste
- xeshai Miccail. Literally, "Second Fight"—a ritualbound two person combat that was the usual method for solving severe disagreements between Miccail tribes. Each Te or Ta would choose a champion from among the Xe or Xa to represent them. In rare cases, *xeshai* might be group combat, but even then there were specific rules limiting how the conflict would be handled.

And I say to my people's masters:
Beware.
Beware of the thing that is coming,
Beware of the risen people.

—PATRICK PEARSE
First President of
the Irish Republic

PRELUDE:

CosTa

 COSTA'S BELLY ACHED, HER STOMACH MUSCLES drawn taut from lack of food over the last three days. The sips of water she allowed herself did nothing to stop the constant burning in her gut. The vision still refused to come to her. Colors pulsed behind her eyes and hidden shapes drifted mockingly just at the edge of her sight, but there was no clear image, nothing she could claim as the sign she must have. Every year, since the first time her moon-driven bleeding had begun, she had undertaken this dreamquest, and every year had held disappointment.

She knew she was to be called, yet her god, GhazTi, would not answer.

CosTa fell to her knees under the stars and the razored crescent of the moon Quali, the cold salt wind whipping her as she wavered at the edge of the precipice overlooking the bay and the distant island. She prayed again to GhazTi, begging for a sign that the time was now, that CosTa should at last take up the unfinished task of her grandfather NagTe and defend their land from the humans' plundering. The moon was falling to the west behind the island—once it had vanished beyond the sea, this year's dreamquest would end. Though CosTa could fill her stomach once again, her deeper hunger would still go unfed for another turn of the seasons.

Sudden brilliance fell across her *brais*, the third, light-sensitive eye on her forehead, and CosTa looked up. Between the horns of the moon, a new star had appeared, flaring brighter than anything except the moon. As CosTa watched, the star tracked across the sky, streaking higher

until, overhead, it exploded in a fireball and vanished.

The track of its passage was a spear of red in CosTa's vision, the dying fireball its fiery head.

CosTa cried aloud and fell prostrate on the ground, the nagging emptiness of her body forgotten. Unbidden tears tracked down her cheeks. She stayed huddled on the cold stones, giving thanks to GhazTi until Quali had left the sky behind the island, as the shapes and visions which until now had remained hidden filled her mind with the path of her destiny. Then, the memory of GhazTi's spear-star still burning in her eyes, CosTa left the cliff and slipped into the forest.

She would go to her people and she would tell them what GhazTi had spoken.

At last, she would take her grandfather's legacy and fulfill the long dream.

The QualiKa, those dedicated to defending the birthrights of the CieTiLa, the people, could now return, and CosTa would be their Cha'akMongTi.



CIRCUMSTANCES



“It is a mere waste of time to attempt to teach the average adult Indian the ways of the white man. He can be tamed, and that is about all.”

**—VALENTINE T. MCGILlicuddy,
First Agent assigned to the Oglala Sioux,
report to Washington, 1879**