

# The Metaphysician III

*Witches of the Desert*

*by E. M. Nicolay*

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*This is a semi-autobiographical work of creative nonfiction. It represents the author's perspective, interpretation and present-day recollections of events over time. Some names, characters, characteristics, dates, locations, corporations, companies, organizations, descriptions and other identifying details have been changed or modified to protect privacy, maintain anonymity and ensure literary effect. Some characters, locations and events represented may have been compressed, modified or supplemented, and some dialogue has been recreated and is not intended to represent exact conversations or precise descriptions or remembrances. The author has attempted to retell his story in a way that preserves privacy and anonymity while evoking the unique feeling, meaning and essence of what he personally experienced and remembers.*

ISBN 978-1-7334182-7-0

Forethought Publishing    La Quinta, CA 92248

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**Metaphysician:** [medəfə'ziSH(ə)n]

*An expert in the fundamental and energetic principles of a super-reality, particularly an understanding of abstract concepts related to the Multidimensional Universe and the nature of Being.*

**Witches:** [wi'chuz]

*Those who practice sorcery or magic, sometimes of a malevolent or harmful nature.*

**Extraterrestrial:** [ekstrətə'restrēəl]

*Originating, existing, or occurring outside the Earth or its atmosphere;  
A Being from another world.*

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## 1. *The Desert Beckons*

The California desert stretched before me like an endless sea of sand and jagged rock formations. I was on the last leg of my 2,600-mile trek across the country to our new home in the Southwest. The old Jeep rattled over the final stretches of desert highway carrying me forward like a trooper. I began to feel that familiar mix of excitement and unease that comes with moving to a new place.

This move had been sudden—intentional in some strange, predestined way, yet chaotic in all the logistical ways one could imagine. Things at Dean’s law firm had begun to change dramatically. It was only a matter of time before the firm would be completely undermined by its new managing partner, as I had predicted.

Dean and I agreed that he would stay behind in Philadelphia and wrap up his clients’ legal affairs. Even with the firm’s imminent demise, which I alone foresaw, his enthusiasm for the long-distance move made me question whether he might still be working for *someone*, as my “handler.” I chose to ignore the possibility, and truthfully, it had never really mattered to me. Our feelings for each other were real, no matter how they had come about, and we were closer now than ever.

He agreed he would commute from coast to coast, finalize his client obligations, and then sever ties with his law firm as soon as he could. To me, it was confirmation that Dean had faith in

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what I had psychically remote-viewed and seen as the fate of the firm on the future timeline.

Oddly, a house advertised for sale in the California desert had appeared in my email—unsolicited—just as we were getting ready to leave Raubsville Manor for good. When I followed the link and saw the listing, something resonated deep within me. Without even knowing the name of the town it was situated in, I took a quick look using my intuitive abilities. It seemed perfect, and the house drew me in.

We purchased it sight unseen—virtually overnight—without ever leaving Pennsylvania. The relative ease with which the sale, and then the move, came together seemed to indicate, once again, that I was being guided. But as it all came together, I had the eerie impression the whole thing was being orchestrated by the same unseen hand that had led me to Raubsville Manor. I wondered what might be waiting for us when we arrived in the desert.

With Dean still busy finishing up at his firm, I was left to take the reins of organizing the move. We agreed that I would drive out from the East Coast, bringing a few paintings, antiques, and personal belongings too fragile to ship, and settle us into our new desert home.

It was a peaceful, relaxing cross-country journey, even if somewhat monotonous. Still, I relished the long hours driving alone, replaying everything we had experienced over the past few years. My thoughts of the recent past included travelling the globe working for a company that was a front for several covert intelligence agencies. I had written reports about what I remote viewed on the future timeline, until their nefarious plans be-

came too much for my conscience to bear.

We had moved into an eighteenth-century country manor house in a remote region of Pennsylvania to escape surveillance only to encounter an evil, hidden history buried in the bowels of the house. I worked feverishly with a team of psychics to clear that house and close an energetic portal there—known by geomancers as the *Gates of Hell*—that had unleashed a bevy of demonic spirits into this plane of reality for nearly two-hundred years.

Leaving it all in the rearview mirror, I felt as though I was finally on the verge of finding peace.

The feeling didn't last.

Almost immediately upon arriving at the house after my long drive, my plans were disrupted. Just as the journey reached its completion, the old Jeep, faithful for over ten years and 165,000 miles, began to protest the long drive out west. I found myself periodically blessing the old machine as I got closer to my destination, and breathed a sigh of relief pulling into the driveway of our new home.

But as soon as I put it in park, a loud clunk came from the rear axle that stopped me cold. When I got out of the car and looked underneath, pieces of the differential appeared to have literally fallen away. I started it again, and put the car in drive to pull forward. Nothing happened. The car shifted into gear, but the wheels wouldn't budge, no matter what I did.

My first thought was disbelief. My second was a frustrated laugh at the irony of it: after crossing the entire country, miles upon miles of desolate desert driving through Arizona and California,

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the last few yards were the undoing of my dependable car.

It was as if it had waited.

Stepping out onto the dusty driveway in front of the house, I looked at the mountains rising before me and the desert stretching in all directions. I immediately felt the pulse of something beneath the sand and rocks—something alive, ancient, and aware. It was as if the ground itself hummed with attention.

My psychic senses picked up threads of energy, swirling in spirals, eddies, and concentric circles. They shimmered like prisms in the sunlight, rising from out of the desert into the air. At Raubsville Manor, we had dealt with similar vortices and energy portals. Having survived the Gates of Hell portal, I recognized the signatures immediately.

In the desert, these vortex points were numerous, raw, and uncontained. But they were also different. They are often spoken of in places like Sedona, Arizona, but the ones in this desert were untamed. They didn't just exist—you could almost feel them breathe.

I sensed it clearly: even a single thought, a fleeting intention, a careless whisper of emotion, when funneled through these energy vortices, could gather weight and momentum it wouldn't normally have, expanding into reality with an intensity far beyond ordinary measure. Here, cause and effect didn't follow the rules—they were the rule.

Thoughts and emotions didn't fade here—they gathered and magnified, exponentially. Energy and feelings quickly propelled into reality. Vortices in the desert act as natural amplifiers.

Lawrence Chandler, the geomancer who mapped such portals and their associated ley lines across the planet, had schooled me well during our work cleansing and exorcising the geomantic energies at Raubsville Manor. But this felt unique—less malevolent, perhaps, but also stronger, more immediate, and less forgiving.

To anyone familiar with it, it becomes clear the desert reflects back the essence of consciousness, magnified—sometimes twisted. I inhaled deeply, tasting the dry, mineral-rich air, and reminded myself to be extra careful with my thoughts, cautious with my intentions, and mindful of my emotions and desires. Even the most innocent ideas could spiral out of control and find a place in reality here.

As I walked across the hard, sunbaked earth toward the quiet street, I felt the desert observing me—calculating who I was, quietly awaiting my next move. This desert was alive in a way that demanded respect.

Noticing again the Jeep sitting in the driveway filled with boxes, I brushed dust from my hands, trying to calm a mix of irritation and worry. That's when a car slowed in the street right behind me. A woman rolled down her window.

She was tan, blonde, and ageless, a look plucked from the pages of a California lifestyle magazine. But beneath the polished façade, there was something I questioned about her gaze. She stared at me a moment longer than needed. I felt her look go through me, as if she already knew who I was and had been waiting for me to arrive.

“Hi neighbor,” she called, smiling.

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“Yes—hi there... I guess I am,” I replied, “... your neighbor, I mean.”

“I’m Stacey,” she said. “I just closed on my house last week, the one right across from you.”

She pointed to the house across from mine.

“Good to meet you, Stacey. I’m E.M. Nicolay,” I said, extending a hand.

Before I could ask anything about her or the neighborhood, she noticed the Jeep.

“Did that just happen?” she asked.

I gestured helplessly toward the rear axle, suppressing a groan.

“Yes, I just drove across the country. Lucky for me, it waited till I got here to break down.”

“No worries,” she said, smiling. “I know exactly who to call.”

She handed me a slightly worn business card.

“He’s cheap, fast, and fixes things the way they should be fixed. Spyro—best mechanic in town, and a legend—at least by military standards. Better than using magic... almost.”

I fumbled over what she meant for a moment. Better than using magic? It seemed an odd thing to say.

“Anyway,” she continued, “my boyfriend—who actually *is* in the military—swears by him. The guys at the base know who’s

who around here. You'll find that out, and you'll definitely want Spyro for this job."

I thanked her and tucked the card into my pocket, ignoring what some might take as a warning. I was unsure if I should thank her, or thank the Universe for sending her my way at this particular moment.

Early the next morning, I dialed the number on the frayed card. The accent of the voice on the other end of the line was unmistakably Greek. It was heavy, guttural, with a deliberate cadence that made every word feel like it carried something beyond its meaning.

"Spyro Car Repair," the man on the line said.

"Hi, Spyro. My name is E.M. Nicolay. I got your number from a friend and neighbor... Stacey..."

"Ah... yes... yes... very good," he said. There was a pause as though he was sizing me up, deciding whether to trust me. "Stacey and Major Clark Deniver... from the base, right? Do you have a problem with your car?"

I explained the Jeep's clunking, grinding, and inability to go into gear after my long road trip out west. Spyro listened, rarely interrupting, and when he did, it was to repeat a word twice for emphasis, in a way that somehow made his already complicated accent even more deliberate and difficult to understand.

"Okay... okay... I see... bring it to me... I'll take a look. I can fix it."

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I arranged for AAA to tow the Jeep to his garage on the outskirts of town, a hangar-like structure that smelled faintly of grease, gasoline, and desert dirt. It looked like a resurrected military outpost, an oversized Quonset hut sitting on the edge of town, just before the open desert. Inside it was heavily insulated and dark, an effort to protect itself from the desert heat.

AAA dropped the car in front of the building, and when I walked in, Spyro greeted me like an old friend. I became immediately absorbed in his stories, and quickly learned they spanned from what most would consider classified secrets to legendary feats that sounded more mythological than real.

He had been an intelligence operative for NATO, worked officially in the Greek military, was fluent in several languages, and carried secrets across multiple borders. He became famous at NATO when he slipped across enemy lines, pretended to be an enemy mechanic, and rigged their tanks so they would stall and fail on the battlefield.

After that, the Americans swept him up and brought him to the US, where they set him up just outside the base in the desert. In exchange, they still called on him to accomplish small *jobs* that no one else would do—or so he said.

I listened, enraptured, realizing that Spyro was revealing far more than most would dare to say out loud. His tales were thrilling, cinematic, and terrifying—filled with the kind of moral ambiguity that made heroism and villainy blur the lines. Yet even with the danger he talked about, he carried himself with an almost casual serenity. It was as if all those years of espionage had hardened him to the point of invulnerability.

After spending an hour with him, we walked toward the front of the garage where he said he could loan me a car until mine was ready. As we walked, he stopped behind a plain white military police sedan that sat there with its trunk open. I stopped with him and caught him looking at the military sedan with a disgusted grimace.

“They bring that shit here once a week from the base,” he muttered under his breath. “I clean out the trunks.”

Confused, I frowned. “What do you mean... clean out?”

Spyro leaned closer, his voice low, almost conspiratorial. “Hair... fingernails... blood... sometimes worse.”

I stared at him. My mind churned, cautiously absorbing what he was saying.

“Why... why would anyone—what do you mean...?”

He shrugged and his face hardened.

Out at the base... things go on... things that should not be.

They clean the paperwork—I clean the cars...”

He hesitated.

“Some things can’t be explained,” he said. “Unnatural things... going on, deep in the desert.”

My pulse quickened.

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“Unnatural? Like... what?”

Spyro shook his head in thought.

“I’m getting old, and I’ve seen too much of this stuff. You’re younger... maybe it’s your turn now.”

He laughed. Then his eyes narrowed and he looked away, as if speaking to himself.

“There are groups out there in the desert... groups that gather at night. Not tourists. Not spiritualists. People who worship what lives out there—in the desert, near the base, underground.”

He hesitated.

“Not just them. Not just military. Something *not* human—at least not the way you and I understand it.”

I was unsure what to think or whether to believe what he was saying.

But one thing was certain—he was dead serious.

He paused, looking at me as if he saw who I *really* was.

“I can tell you understand these things,” he said, knowingly.

He pointed out at the desert horizon and took another pause.

“*You need to be careful out there.*”