

## Indian Spice

"I dreamt I was an Indian cook," Jordan IMed his fiancée Karen. "I had a special knowledge of how to combine spices. I put those spices in food and created a masterpiece, which I then sent off into space on NASA's Pluto mission. There, a strange alien life form sat down for dinner to eat my work of art. The alien, having analyzed our species and all of our sciences, complex math, social life, came to an important realization. Only after eating my genius concoction, the alien turned to his comrade and said, 'that four-armed life form on the blue planet *must* be intelligent. It creates beautiful works of art that it then eats. It is so accustomed to its own masterpieces that it will obliterate all traces of its art. It does so by washing it with its own stomach acid. Intriguing!'"

And then Jordan explained that a small vessel came from the sky and took him away. That was the last text message Karen received from Jordan, as his dream was no dream at all. But she had no way of knowing until she received the fateful video transmission a few days later.

She searched for him. She went to his apartment in London, where they had talked about having children. She walked the neighborhood streets at night, with the phone to her ear. While clutching her enlarged abdomen, she called everyone he knew. Not that the neighbors cared, as she often heard rude remarks from the windows above, "Shut up! Haven't you ever heard of people who sleep at night!" Going to and from the subway on those cold and cloudy winter days wasn't any easier. She was worried. What could have happened to him? What was all this about aliens?

Jordan. Haha. She laughed to herself two days later. He's such a joker. The next minute she wasn't laughing anymore. She struggled to call the police, as she was still fighting the possibility that she would never see him again. The detectives came to her apartment, recorded her statement, and left. "We assure you, ma'am. We'll find the bloke." Stupid cops. They didn't believe her story. She told them that aliens probably took him. She had given up trying to come up with stories. Her mind was a whirlwind of sadness, only occasionally interrupted when she

looked at photos of them together, holding hands, her long, straight, black hair, slightly covering his shoulder, smiling in utter happiness.

Then, a few days after his disappearance, she found out what happened. She received an accidental video transmission to her phone at 1743 hours.

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The phone's computer voice was annoying.

"Video Received From Jordan Green's Phone. ANSWER or IGNORE?"

"Answer!"

"Ok...you said 'Answer!' Is that correct?"

"YES! You *stupid* phone!"

"Video via Unknown Location. GPS unable to calculate coordinates."

She watched the video in horror.

There were two aliens, humanoid in form with a few strange features like overgrown ears that hung down to their shoulders. They put Jordan in a large cage, disguised as a kitchen with drywall, outside of which were thick, steel bars. They placed numerous Earthly herbs and spices in front of him. Fresh basil, turmeric, garlic, fennel, cumin, ginger, red pepper, white pepper, black pepper, and hundreds more. Indicating with their hand motions that they wanted him to make Indian spices, they supplied a small, gas stove. Jordan started dicing the onions, chopping the broccoli, mincing the garlic, and prepping all the other vegetables.

Karen noticed Jordan's forehead sweating profusely and constantly scratching his arms, which itched every time he had extreme anxiety. Finally, he got to the step of preparing the spices. He was perplexed. He yelled out to the aliens, "Where's the Indian spice in the bottle?" But they kept observing. Jordan haphazardly added this spice and that one, a dash of salt and a heaping teaspoon of Italian seasoning. He served the food on the plate made from pure silver.

By then there was a group of four aliens. They all sat down on small stools around a circular table, the platter in the middle. Their hands, like duck feet, scooped Jordan's creation. They chewed in unison, they sucked, they moved the food in their mouths to different areas of their tongues. One shook his head. Another took a second taste. A third violently pushed the whole platter aside, off the table, watching it splatter on the floor.

Karen knew what they were thinking. They discovered Jordan really wasn't Indian; he didn't know the secret to Indian spice. What they didn't know was that he was only a manager at NASA, hired to oversee the Indian food project. His name may have been on the food container, but he wasn't the one who cooked its contents. The aliens realized he wasn't an artist. He didn't have the intelligence necessary to produce the art they so desperately sought, as it was the tell-tale sign of an intelligent being. In the next part of the video, Karen was in tears as she watched them dispose of him in their giant incinerator, angry that they could not learn the spicy Indian secrets they had observed in a magical land the humans called India.