

Redemption and Illumination: The Way Home is the conclusion of the McGonegal Chronicles. The artifact is searching with Cillian and his party to find its missing pieces so they can save their friends and return home to the present.

Redemption and Illumination

The Way Home

by Terence A. McSweeney

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VOLUME 3
THE MCGONEGAL CHRONICLES

REDEMPTION
AND
ILLUMINATION
THE WAY HOME

TERENCE A. MCSWEENEY

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Characters

Ankhesenamun	Daughter of Akhenaten, wife of Tutankhamun
Adriana Bregante	Time Agent
Archivist	Keeper of Records
Brian McKinnon	CEO VIRGO/ Susanne's Husband
Buck Harton	CHIMERA Inc. Fixer
Chares of Lindos	Builder of the Colossus
Cillian McGonegal	Archaeologist/ Searcher-Patrick's brother
Dervog	Leader of the Stonehenge giants
Deirdre McGonegal	Wife of Seamus McGonegal, great-grandmother of Cillian and Patrick McGonegal
Emmis	?
Everette Waterholm	CEO CHIMERA Inc.
Horus	God of Kingship, son of Osiris /Isis-leads the dead to Judgement
Helios	Greek God responsible for the sun's movement across the sky. Patron god of the city-state Rhodes.
Huitzilihuitl	Second Aztec king of Tenochtitlan
Isis	Goddess of Healing, children, magic-wife of Osiris
James Aranas	Time Agent

Characters (Continued)

Jeffrey Tombs (Scarface)	Mercenary CHIMERA Inc.
Kosey	The Lion, Susanne's Guide. Amenhotep, Akhenaten
Liam Highland	Director of Operations Sinead Inc.
Lowell	Video graphic Technician VIRGO Enterprises
Mary Moriarty	Cillian's Assistant/Archaeologist
Nathan McPhee	Susanne's Companion/Bodyguard
Nefertiti	Wife of Akhenaten, stepmother of Tutankhamun
Patrick McGonegal	Cillian's brother/CEO Sinead Inc.
Osiris	God of the Afterlife, agriculture, fertility, life.
Ra	Egyptian Sun Deity/Creator
Susanne McKinnon	Owner VIRGO-scientist, philanthropist
Samuel Franklin (Eyes)	Owner of <i>City of Blues</i> bar, Operative
Seamus McGonegal	Cillian and Patrick's great- grandfather
Thomas McGonegal	Cillian and Patrick's father
Tutankhamun	Akhenaten's son, pharaoh
Thoth	Egyptian God of Wisdom/Writing/ Recordkeeper

Chapter 1

“Impossible is a word to be found only in the dictionary of fools.”

-Napoleon Bonaparte

At first there was an almost imperceptible rumble as if some great machine was coming to life. It was subtle. It was also a prelude to bolder and bigger things to come. As if on cue the rumbling rose to a shaking and there was a dronelike sound. It was at the peak of this sound that the bombs came. There was a shrill sequence of whistling before a concussive thud that knocked Cillian and his team violently to the floor. More importantly, it also deposited their armed captors about the room. More bombs came, dust flew, and the lights went out. Cillian reached out for Mary and called her name. Mary responded in front of him that she was alright except for the bookcase that had one of her legs pinned as it fell over. He looked in the direction of her voice, but the little that he could see in the dark was only a mountain of books that had tumbled out of that bookcase. The stone and the backpack that kept it contained were still on his back. He reached into the pack and found a flashlight. He switched it on and aimed the beam of light in Mary's direction. Finally, amongst all the books he saw the face of his assistant who was up to her neck in all sorts of bound literature as if it was an outer skin. Cillian was reminded of a turtle laid up on its back. He picked himself up off the floor and worked his way to her. Clearing the books, he made to move the massive piece of furniture from her leg. It would not budge no matter how much he put his back into it. He needed help. He called out for Patrick and Liam. At first there was no answer, but in short time he heard Liam grumbling as he extricated himself from the debris.

“Over here,” he yelled. “Where is Patrick?”

Patrick answered, “I am here.” Over to his left Cillian could make out the form of his brother who was covered in dust and who had a very large rifle pointed at the soldier who previously held that weapon. He grabbed the soldier by his collar and yanked him up jamming the rifle into the small of his back and gave him a persuasive nudge in the

direction of his brother. The soldier, Cillian and Liam all pushed in unison to move the bookcase and release Mary while Patrick stood guard. Patrick, in his best German, which was at best atrocious, ordered his former guard to sit down, but the pointing gesture of the rifle made clear what he was supposed to do, and he sat down.

It was not long before Mary, recovered from her entrapment, started to examine the other bookshelves which survived the blast. Patrick and Liam surveyed the area finding that the remaining soldiers including the officer had not fared as well as their captured brother. At the far corner of the building was a vast hole and in that hole were their remains. Ironically, the red swastika flag lay on top of two of the deceased as if it was purposely laid there. Cillian retrieved the Archivist's tablet from his bag and as he did, he noticed the artifact glowed ever so slightly. He tapped a few keys on the tablet wondering how it always had power and not having any way to charge it. He keyed in his common question, *Where are we?* although he was fairly certain he knew the answer. The tablet displayed the answer:

PRAGUE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA. 10.14.1943 C.E.

Cillian then typed in, WHAT IS THIS PLACE? The tablet displayed:

LIBRARY. OWNER HEINRICH LUITPOLD HIMMLER

The answer on the tablet took Cillian's breath away. They were standing in a mass murder's private stash of books. He looked around and realized that the collection was massive. There were stacks everywhere. He went over to one and saw that each book was catalogued much in the same way as a public library, but this library was devoted to only one subject, the occult. With the exception of the bookcases that had tumbled over in the explosion, each was perfectly straight and maintained in a precise manner. Cillian could envision the killer Himmler perusing the aisles like a schoolboy looking for a book to write a report on. It made his stomach turn. He was shaken out of his thoughts by Mary calling him.

“Cillian, you must see this. Over here.”

He turned back and found Mary sitting amongst a stack of books, but unlike her first encounter, these books were in ordered piles around her. As soon as she saw him, she blurted out,

“Do you know what this place is?”

Cillian responded, “Yes, it is Himmler’s private library. The tablet has pinpointed the date as October 14, 1943, and we are in Prague. The question is why are we here? The artifact does not seem to be having a strong reaction, yet it took us here.” He looked into the backpack and there was no change in the stone. It glowed a soft white light, but there was no vibration or pull.

“Well, then there is something we are missing,” said Mary. “Each time the artifact takes us to a place and time it has a reason. It wants us to retrieve another piece of the puzzle, but why this place? Every book it would seem has to do with the occult. If the stone expects us to search each and every one, we will be here for two lifetimes. We are missing something.”

Cillian thought and finally asked, “Why was Himmler so obsessed with magic, spells and witches?”

Mary looked up saying, “Witches, witches. That’s it. I remember reading that Himmler was fixated on witches, but what was it about witches that consumed him?” She paused then said, “Cillian, ask that question of the tablet.”

Cillian pulled the Archivist’s tablet back out of the backpack and typed:

WHY WAS NAZI H. HIMMLER AMASSING LIBRARY ON SUBJECT:
OCCULT/WITCHES

The tablet answered:

HEINRICH LUITPOLD HIMMLER’S FOCUS ON OCCULT RELATED TO BELIEF THAT CATHOLIC CHURCH RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUBJUGATION OF ARYAN RACE IN SIXTEENTH CENTURY AS REALATED TO WITCHCRAFT PERSECUTION.

Cillian then typed:

WHY?

On the screen appeared the response:

“FAMILY RELATIVE, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY”

“That’s it,” cried Cillian. “That’s the connection. He was using this relative as a means for advancing Hitler’s persecution of religion and the biggest boogie man would be the Catholic church.”

Mary immediately stood up and moved down one of the book aisles. After a few minutes she returned and said, “The shelves are not organized by alphabetical order. They are organized by date. If we were to focus on the 1600s, we might find something.”

Cillian answered, “Better yet. Let’s use the artifact to do the searching.”

Cillian knew all too well the power of the artifact and was careful to firmly hold both its sides as he slipped it from the backpack. It continued to glow a soft white. He decided that he would find the aisle that had books labeled from fifteen hundred and up. After checking four aisles he came upon books that were in this date range. As he walked, he held the stone at arm’s length and aimed it at the books. There was no reaction. He moved further down the aisle getting closer to those labeled in the 1600s. He couldn’t be sure, but he thought he felt the stone stir. It was there, then it was gone. He chalked it up to his overactive imagination and moved on. Meanwhile, Mary had moved up ahead of Cillian and was examining the bookcases. As she did, she remarked, “You know the Nazis believed in the occult as a tie to their ancient Germanic roots. The master race as they thought themselves to be, believed in astrology and some think that Hitler himself was into the dark arts, but a great deal of this is speculation. Still, he used racial mysticism to control the population.”

“Yeah, and he was downright scary when he whipped up the mobs,” replied Cillian. “Totally evil.”

“I found 1629,” blurted out Mary. “That’s odd. There seems to be a book missing.”

“Wait, I am on my way,” Cillian answered, He moved towards Mary’s position. The artifact began to vibrate and glow that familiar red. As he came closer it began to violently shake. Cillian had felt this before. Urgently he called out, “Liam, Patrick come here quickly!” He dared not take a further step until his brother and friend were with him. When they arrived, Patrick had the German soldier in tow. While Liam looked puzzled, Patrick began to relive his past exile in time and knew if the artifact was acting up, he intended to be right by his brother’s side. They moved on together. Just then the soldier knocked the rifle that Patrick was holding on him aside and made a dash in an attempt to escape. Liam gave chase and tackled him at the end of the aisle. After a bit of wrestling and punches thrown, he managed to get his arm around the soldier’s neck. In a brief moment the fighting ended. The former guard lay still. Liam gently lay his head down on the floor and returned to his friends. Patrick asked, “Did you ...” Before he could finish the sentence Liam replied,

“No, I just put the lad to sleep for a time. We don’t want to be taking any extra passengers if the stone gets the notion.”

Patrick was relieved and the group moved on.

The stone began to vibrate as it did on other occasions and that all too familiar crimson glow became more pronounced. When at last they arrived at Mary’s location Cillian was struggling to hold his grip and then the unthinkable happened. The stone flew from his hands towards the gap on the bookcase shelf and then abruptly stopped and hovered.

Patrick said, “Well, that’s a new trick.”

The stone continued to vibrate and suddenly a pinpointed white light shot out from it over the shelf of books and moved from side to side as if looking for something. This went on for a few seconds and then the light returned to within the artifact. The stone continued to hover. Cillian attempted to regain control of it, but hard as he tried, he could not move it off of its current position. He gave up. Mary examined the

books to the right and left of the space. The book on the left was more a collection of sheets than a book. It was loosely bound with leather straps and contained pages made of vellum and what appeared to be hand painted panels. The title on the first page read, Cistercian Legends of the Thirteenth Century and the author was Henry Collins. It was dated 1875. Mary looked through the pages, but many were in poor condition and few details could be discerned. She showed Cillian what she had found, and he pulled out the Archivist's tablet once again and typed:

CISTERCIAN?

The tablet displayed:

**ORDER OF CISTERCIANS (ORDO CISTERCIENIS) CATHOLIC MONASTIC
ORDER FOUNDED 1098 C.E. -BRANCH OFF OF BENEDICTINES**

Cillian said, "They appear to be Catholic monks. Hardly occult or witches wouldn't you say?"

Mary agreed and moved to the other book on the right side of the space. As she picked it up the artifact changed colors. The crimson glow was now a golden yellow. The title of the book was Ostara and the author listed was Lanz von Liebenfels. It was more of a collection of magazines named Ostara bound together than a book. The name meant nothing to Cillian. He typed in the tablet:

OSTARA? LANZ VON LIEBENFELS?

As usual, the tablet presented an immediate response:

**FULL NAME: ADOLF JOSEF VON LIEBENFELS. FORMER CISTERCIAN
MONK, 1874-1954. PIONEER OF ARIOSOPHY-AUSTRIAN POLITICAL/
RACIAL THEORIST/OCCULTIST FOUNDER OF MAGAZINE OSTARA.
DEVELOPED THEORIES OF BLUE-BLOND ARYANISM/LOWER RACES,
AFTER BECOMING ENLIGHTENED FROM FINDING KNIGHTS
TEMPLAR TOMB.**

Cillian typed:

WHAT IS MONK'S CONNECTION TO HIMMLER?

The tablet did not respond. Cillian typed again.

CONNECTION TO HIMMLER?

The tablet then responded:

YOU ARE ASKING THE WRONG QUESTION!

Chapter 2

“There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love.”

-Washington Irving

She felt free, the freedom that one feels when his or her soul has been cleansed through the resignation of giving into fate. She had faced her foils and accomplishments. She had taken responsibility for her life and like a bird whose damaged wing was finally healed she now could soar up above it. This brought a smile to her face which was remarkable considering what might lie ahead for her. Susanne once again looked at the scale and it told a story. It was not in perfect balance and the jaws of the monster were opened to receive her soul. She no longer feared it. She accepted it. She embraced it.

The mighty green faced god of the afterlife was now to pronounce sentence. His mate, the beautiful and impressive Isis watched her king as he stood. It was then that something unexpected happened. Ra appeared before the gathering. His golden glow illuminated the hall and caught the immediate attention of the goddess Maat. She proclaimed,

“Welcome Ra, god of beginnings and ends. It is our honor that you have joined us for the judgement.”

Ra, spreading out his giant radiating arms said,

“It is my honor!” Then he let his arms fall and continued, “and my shame. It is my shame that someone such as this female will be denied the eternal life.”

Osiris asked, “How is this female’s deserved fate your shame, mighty Ra?”

“Ah that is the rub. This female regardless of the studious Thoth’s measurements is not yet finished in life and therefore was brought to you in error. It is my error and therefore my shame.”

There was a murmur amongst the gods upon hearing this revelation. Maat looked the most distressed by the news as she was responsible for balance in all things and clearly the balance of matters was misaligned. Susanne quietly looked on as Ra spoke again.

“I bring forth to you another. His name is Kosey now, but you know him by another name.” He signaled for the giant, jackal-headed man to step forward. Kosey kept his head bowed and knelt before the gods and goddesses. Ra continued. “Kosey is an idolater. He has fallen from grace and is being punished. His loved ones are also being punished. He asks to speak to you not for himself or even his loved ones. He asks to speak for this woman. May you grant him his wish?”

“This is very irregular,” countered Thoth. His book on the woman named Susanne was complete.

Maat, wishing the whole matter was over and order restored, remarked, “By what right does a person such as this have the freedom to speak for the dead?”

Ra smiled for he knew what he would say next would create chaos and a little chaos once in a while was what he liked so much about humans. They were unpredictable. They were the spice of existence. He spoke only four words.

“She is not dead.”

At first there was stunned silence. Finally, Thoth whispered to Horus who was standing by Susanne’s side, “Did he say not dead? Not dead?” It was then that the words had their effect. There was a great deal of confusion and each god present spoke at the same time. It was chaotic. Ra smiled and took it all in until Osiris stood and shouted,

“Silence.” The gods ceased speaking. “This is quite a development Ra. Is it not impossible?”

Ra answered. "It would seem so, but it is still true and that is why I have asked Kosey to speak to all of you."

Osiris signaled with his hand to the giant man that he was free to speak. Kosey stood and addressed the gods. He said, "My master is Atun. I am bound to him for my sins. I wish no mercy in this regard. I was given charge of this woman you see before you and her companion as a guide. My instructions were to offer no assistance besides showing them the way through the gates. I took this responsibility to heart and did what I was commanded. Lords, this woman and her companion faced grave peril as you know, but throughout sacrifice and harm they persevered. Despite the pain that she had to endure she only thought of others. She thought of her companion, she thought of me. They should not be here. She should not be here. I have broken my bond with my master, and I call her friend. I ask of you that I take her place and be consumed by the monster. Free her of this world and allow her to return to the living so that she may fulfill her destiny."

"This is a fantastic story, but how is it possible? How did Atun manage this?"

Kosey answered, "He found the Benben stone, and he introduced it to the living world."

"What? He has the stone?"

Kosey shook his head and said, "He had the stone. It is how the woman before you became trapped here. The stone sent her here."

Osiris continued his interrogation. "Where is the stone now?"

Susanne answered before Kosey could, saying, "It is with my friends, and they are trying to complete the stone by finding its missing pieces so they can set me free. It is the bargain they made with Atun."

Osiris stood up and was very angry. He spit out his next words. "The stone is Atun's jailor. The pieces are scattered throughout time so that he may not escape into the world by restoring them and unlocking his imprisonment. It was created by the Adenaria to end his evil doing in the world of the living. This is a disaster!"

Susanne responded,

“I don’t know anything about the Adenaria, but I do know Cillian McGonegal and if there is a way to find those pieces to free us, he will lift heaven and earth. He has already found one and was on the path to find another. The stone you see is taking him to the missing parts and absorbing them.”

Thoth asked, “How do you know that your friend has found some of the hidden relics?”

This was a term that she had not heard the pieces called before. She answered, “Because, I talked to him.”

Thoth was shocked. “You talked to him?”

Osiris looked at the woman who he now addressed by her name. “Susanne, how did your friend, a mortal, manage to communicate with you from the living world?”

Susanne replied, “He didn’t arrange it. Atun did.”

This caused a stir amongst the gods. Maat was extremely upset and finally made it known with a piercing scream that broke through the din of voices. All turned and faced her as she rose to a great height and spread her wings. She was terrifying and beautiful to behold at the same time. Finally, she spoke with an unsettling calmness often seen in a parent’s control of temper with a child. She said,

“The world of the living and dead can only be maintained if there is balance. This balance is delicate and when tampered with can have a terrible consequence. Time itself can be destroyed. We are the keepers of that balance, and it must be our obsession. This human woman has been placed before us in judgment under false pretenses. She does not plead for mercy or cry that she has been treated unfairly despite the circumstances of her arrival here. She faces her judgement with the bravery of an immortal. She is not even dead. She still has a role to play in the world of the living and she must be allowed to fulfill that role. We must put the worlds back in balance or death, destruction and chaos will prevail.” Osiris clearly understood Maat’s words. He had no choice but

to release the mortal human, but what then? He turned to face the woman he now knew as Susanne and did a curious thing. He left the throne from where he commanded and oversaw the judgments and approached her. By any right Susanne should have been terrified. She was not. The calm of her resolution remained. She smiled and Osiris for the first time in an eternity smiled back. Isis took note of this and she too smiled. After a moment Osiris said,

“Maat must be maintained. You are quite remarkable for a mortal. We do not receive many like you. We do not receive any like you. You are free to go.”

At first, Susanne did not understand Osiris’s words. Then their meaning rushed through. She wept and when she recovered her composure she thought *Go, Go where?* She then thought of where she would like to go. She looked into the eyes of the great green god of the afterlife and asked, “May I choose where I am to go?” Osiris was puzzled by the question. He said,

“I would think that you would want to return to the land of the living.”

Susanne answered. “I would very much like to do that, but not without Nathan.”

“Nathan is your companion?” asked the god.

“Nathan is my friend and he sacrificed himself for me. I will not leave without him.”

Thoth approached Osiris and whispered in his ear. The god listened intently and after a few moments turned again to Susanne. He said, “Your friend is being punished for the sin of adultery. Is this not correct?”

Susanne answered, “He is being punished for my moment of weakness. He has done nothing wrong. It is I who should be punished and that is a wrong I must make right! If you cannot help me, I will find my way back on my own.”

It was then that Kosey startled the gods saying, “She will not be alone. I will be her guide. She is my friend.”

All this time Ra looked on and was once again impressed by the small female human’s courage and steel of purpose, but now he also saw that Kosey too, was made of this same grit. He thought that most likely he was wrong about the giant. He watched the other gods and sensed that they too felt the same. Finally, Isis stepped forward and took Susanne’s hand. Susanne instantly felt an electric glow travel up into her body. Her hair glowed a golden light and, in that instant, she felt she could face any hardship and swipe it aside. Isis smiled and said,

“She is worthy. Dear husband, we must allow her to pursue this noble task. She has earned it.” She let go of Susanne’s hand, but Susanne still glowed and there was an electric feel to the air all about her. Whatever Isis had done to her remained. Her hair once a fiery red was now silver and dazzling. Osiris again spoke, “It is my command that the human female shall leave this place of judgement and return to her friend. Kosey will be her guide back and no harm shall come to either until they have reached their destination. From there they must face any perils on their own terms.” Thoth recorded the command and then closed his book. With that Ra approached Susanne and taking her hand said,

“This is where we must part. It has been an honor knowing you, Susanne McKinnon.”

Susanne’s eyes watered as she asked, “Will I never see you again?”

The mighty god replied, “Fear not. I think one such as you will find a way.” With that he mounted his golden boat and sped off to bring the morning sunrise to the earth.

Kosey once again laid out his hand for Susanne to climb aboard, but before she did, she turned to thank the green god, but all trace of him and his fellow gods were gone. She turned to face Kosey and said, “I guess we are on our own big fella.” Kosey smiled and said, “Not for long.” They left the Hall of Judgment and Susanne settled in for the long journey.

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by Terence A. McSweeney

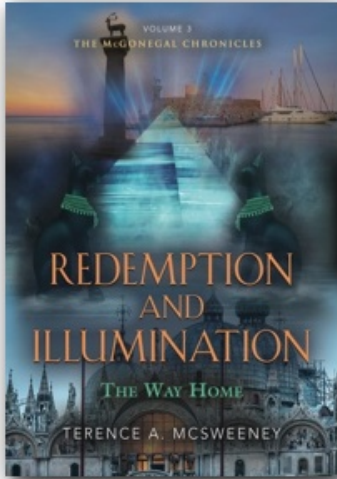
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Green Underwear

Little One's Big Day

The Quest

The Twelve Halls



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