

d'mok
revival

AWAKENING

By
Michael J. Zummo

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This is a work of fiction. All the characters and events portrayed in this book are fictitious and any resemblance to real people, living or dead, or events is coincidental.

D'MOK REVIVAL: AWAKENING

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*This book is dedicated to my best friend,
Patrick Conley.*

When no one else believed in my story he did. From his constant reviews and brutally honest critiques the foundation of D'mok Revival was born. So, here's that thing we keep talking about—published! ^.^

Author's Note

D'mok Reviel has been a labor of love over a decade in the making. Who knew a short story back in 1996 would blossom like it did. Its first evolution came in late 1999 as the background for a role playing game. By mid-2001, with hundreds of pages in backstory, characters information, key locations, and gameplay dynamics, a co-worker, Lynn Murdoch, suggested I write a novel.

I know these characters like my friends, and truly enjoy delving into their world documenting, what I feel is, their lives and history. There's so much more to come!

This book would not have been possible without the love and support of family, friends, and professionals that helped me along the way. Those people are: Patrick Conley, Elizabeth Zummo, Mark Bender, Yana Malysheva, Michelle Montierth, Lane Beauchamp, Arlene Robinson, Philip Martin, Jake Mace, Rebecca Arnell, Lynn Murdoch, my incredible son Derek, and my dad. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart!

Without further ado, allow me to take you on a journey!

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Prologue

He cowered in the dark, naked, his quivering hands over his ears in a desperate attempt to silence the cries and explosions around him. The dirty air was ripe with death, as the ground rumbled from endless legions stomping into battle. He tried to scream, but only a dry rasp escaped.

His breathing erratic, his eyes scoured the darkness. Were they close? Where else could he hide?

A crunching sound just yards away seized his attention.

A blur approached from the shadows; his body recoiled in fear as he saw another, and another.

One by one, the blurs took shape. Their

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monstrous forms were grotesque; their muted features sagged and bulged like melted wax. Despite their appearance, each haunting face drowned him in memories. Some he had loved, some he had ruined, others were innocents left doomed by his failures. All sought vengeance.

The first to reach him was a woman with jet-black hair. Her pupil-less eyes glared accusingly. Her hand stroked the shoulder of a ghostly young boy who clung to her side.

An ominous symbol formed above them. His eyes were drawn along its ragged, glowing, silvery-blue edges. Heat radiated as its light became blinding. Then, with a powerful blast, it exploded. Tongues of flame enshrouded his tormentors, immolating their already hideous forms, transforming them into hell-spawned demons.

Instinct told him to run, to bolt madly, anything but stay there. But he couldn't. His body collapsed forward, trembling and useless. Fibers sprouted from the ground and entangled his fingers and toes, wrapped wildly around his hands and feet, wound up his arms and legs. The strands wove into cloth that soaked up color like a bandage on a gushing wound. He knew the garment well. It was his Coalition uniform.

The world around him began to warp, and the ground disappeared. He found himself

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floating in a void. The emptiness flooded with stars. In the distance, a battle raged. Coalition starfighters dodged frantically about, blindly unloading their weapons into empty space. When a great ruin appeared before him, he stared in horror. It was his space station, burning. Half the mammoth structure already orbited its carcass as debris.

Ominous crafts marked with the silvery-blue symbol took shape from the empty space, to prey upon the Coalition fighters. Two demons shrieked as the enemy attacked. Their flaming bodies burst into a cloud of ash as the two friendly crafts vaporized.

His eyes were drawn back to the female demon's piercing gaze, desperate and beckoning. She reached out her hand to him.

In the distance, a small fleet of transports emerged from the station's ruins attempting to slip away. With defenses obliterated, the enemy crafts closed in quickly. The little demon cried out, and huddled closer to his mother.

The enemy weapons radiated a hellish glow. He reached toward the woman as cannons thundered, unloading on the transport. The child gripped her side while she shrieked, "*Rhysuuuuuusss!*"

His body radiated with power as his voice

rose like a geyser: “Anakaaaaaaa!”

The pair burst into ash before him as ripples of energy pulsed from his body, destroying the enemy ships in its path. But it was too late. His mind spun as the universe dissolved into a haze of light.

The sounds of battle ceased. The demons, ships, and stars disappeared. He was utterly alone, cradled in a cocoon of energy. He whimpered and felt salty drops streak his face.

The light around him turned greenish-blue. The wetness congealed, and he found himself surrounded by a thick liquid, trapped inside a huge glass cylinder. His weak hands reached up and grasped the tubes that ran to a device over and into his mouth.

Distorted forms surrounded the tank. As the liquid drained, a great weight overcame him. The cylinder disappeared, replaced by a thick fog from which disembodied voices discussed the miracle of his survival.

He was strapped to a bed with a curtain of tangled wires which led from countless machines into inflamed lumps on his skin.

A translucent figure came to his side. “How do you feel, Commander Mencari?”

Too weak to respond, Rhysus Mencari stared at the round Coalition symbol on the man’s lab coat.

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“By all rights you should be dead. I pray we don’t make you wish otherwise . . .”

The world around him blurred as time surged forward. He was poked and prodded. Scientists danced in patterns around him, trying to uncover his secrets. A golden aura radiated from his body after his stewards encouraged him to manifest his abilities. Each time, wild arcs of energy ripped from his hands to destroy targets hundreds of yards away. High-ranking Coalition observers stood speechless while others scrawled notes. Mencari felt only the familiar numbness of guilt.

The surge of time subsided, and he found himself being escorted down a narrow corridor, to a dark end. There, a smiling Admiral Asten, his direct superior, greeted him and motioned to enter the pitch black room just beyond.

“Welcome to your new home, Rhysus.”

The world around him elongated and pulled away as a tingling covered his body.

Author Bio

Michael Zummo was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1974. From his earliest days he was enthralled by computer games, specifically the Sierra On-line adventure games. They inspired his



sense of exploration in strange lands, and interactive storytelling.

In 1996, he graduated from Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin with a double degree in computer science and communications.

Throughout his winding career in interactive marketing, video game design, and creating user interfaces for computers, tablets, and Web sites, each adventure held the same root. What motivated him wasn't just understanding people and crafting digital interactions, but rather, taking people through an experience—on a journey—to be his true passion in life.

Writing has become his ultimate vehicle for this passion.