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THE OMEGA FILES

SHORT STORIES

JENNIFER BASSETT



THE OMEGA FILES

SHORT STORIES

Some strange things happen in this world. You hear all kinds of frightening stories. But are they true? Who do you believe? Some stories never get into the newspapers, because governments want to keep them secret. And these are the stories in the Omega Files.

How many people know about the Omega Files? Not many – perhaps no more than thirty people in Brussels. Hawker and Jude know about them, because they bring back a lot of the stories that go into the Files. They have interesting lives. One day they're in London, talking to a young man. He has a strange story to tell them, about a drug company, but is it true? Another day they go to Scotland, to look for a monster in Loch Ness, but of course, there *are* no monsters – are there? Another time they're on an island in the Pacific Ocean, where everybody is talking about a spaceship. But where is this spaceship? And who has actually seen it?

It's all there, in the Omega Files.





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Fantasy & Horror

The Omega Files

SHORT STORIES

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JENNIFER BASSETT

The Omega Files

SHORT STORIES

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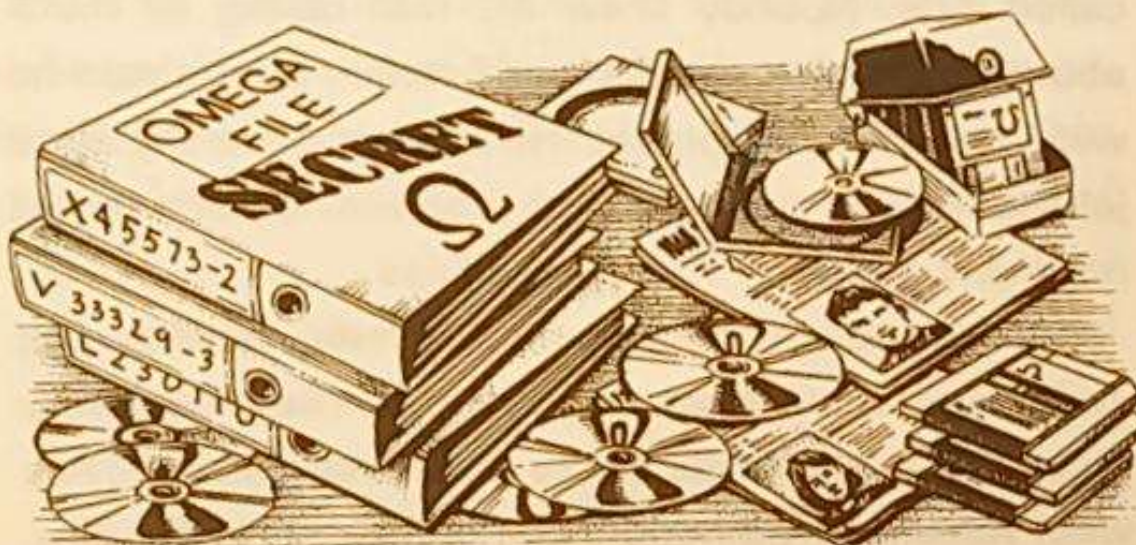
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SECRET

EDI

European Department of Intelligence



There were two of them. Hawker and Jude. They had no other names. Just Hawker and Jude. They were young, fast, and clever. They worked for EDI, in the European Government.

You know about the Americans' CIA and the Russians' KGB? Well, this was EDI – the European Department of Intelligence. Big secrets. Very strange secrets. The secrets of the Omega Files. They don't get into the newspapers, and most people never hear about them. Most people don't know anything about EDI.

In the early years Hawker and Jude travelled a lot. Brussels, Strasbourg, Rome, Delhi, Washington . . . North Africa, South America, Australia . . . No home, no family, just work. They worked for the top man in the Brussels office of EDI, and only for him. He was called Arla. Nobody knew his real name, or much about him. Some said he was Latvian; others said he was from another planet. He always gave the hard jobs to Hawker and Jude. The jobs with questions, but not many answers. The Omega Files.

When I met them, many years later, Hawker and Jude were about seventy years old. They lived very quietly, in a little white house on a Greek island. They went walking, swimming, fishing; they sat in the sun, and slept a lot.

At first, they didn't want to talk about their work.

'We can't,' said Jude. 'Our work was secret. It's all in the government files, and nobody can read them.'

'After thirty years,' I said, 'people can read all secret government files.'

'Not these files,' Hawker said. 'It's a hundred years before people can read the EDI files.'

I looked at them. 'But I don't need to read the files,' I said. 'I can get the stories from you.'

□ □ □

And I did. Here are some of them . . .

The Witches of Pendle

ROWENA AKINYEMI

Witches are dangerous. They can kill you with a look, or a word. They can send their friend the Devil after you in the shape of a dog or a cat. They can make a clay picture of you, then break it . . . and a few weeks later you are dead.

Today, of course, most people don't believe in witches. But in 1612 everybody was afraid of them. Young Jenet Device in Lancashire knew a lot about them because she lived with the Witches of Pendle. They were her family . . .

The Canterville Ghost

OSCAR WILDE

Retold by John Escott

There has been a ghost in the house for three hundred years, and Lord Canterville's family have had enough of it. So Lord Canterville sells his grand old house to an American family. Mr Hiram B. Otis is happy to buy the house *and* the ghost – because of course Americans don't believe in ghosts.

The Canterville ghost has great plans to frighten the life out of the Otis family. But Americans don't frighten easily – especially not two noisy little boys – and the poor ghost has a few surprises waiting for him.