

Working in his lab one Halloween night, Doctor Jericho October attempted to open a portal to another dimension using scientific methods on an ancient magic ritual. He overestimated the amount of power needed to open the portal on the night when the veil between worlds was thinnest, and created a massive portal between our world and that of the Astrokraken! Many powerful creatures slipped through before Doctor October could seal the pathway. Today he hunts down the Astrokraken's minions using magic and science, to prevent the Astrokraken from entering and then destroying our world.

Our fate lies in the hands of Doctor October, Master of Scientific Sorcery!

**Doctor October: Master of Scientific Sorcery in
Rogues & Ruins**

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Prologue

One magical disaster can change your life, three however...

What started as a normal Halloween soon turned tragic once Doctor October augmented a ritual with a power supply. He had everything correct, or so he thought: candles at the cardinal points, a large summoning circle ringed with salt, the proper sacrifices of wine and food. But it wasn't correct. Was the translation wrong? His computer took the text from the ancient tome and compared the words with other, non-magical contemporaneous texts. The result was not only an English translation so Dr. October knew what he was getting into, but also the correct phonetic pronunciation guide for the original text to ensure the words were spoken correctly.

But something was wrong.

The ritual called for a blood sacrifice. He had learned wine was an acceptable substitution, as was bread for the flesh requirements. But for the source of energy, he decided not to use a goat. Granted the goat would provide all three necessary components, but the animal would never survive to the end, and Dr. October had taken the Hippocratic Oath. Sacrificing a live goat was out of the question.

That's where his love of science came in. He calculated the exact power requirements based off the size of an average goat at the time the tome was written. He then spent a month in preparation, building an organic robot that approximated the same energies flowing through it as a living animal.

But the calculations had been wrong. No, the calculations had been right, but the date was wrong. To open a doorway to another dimension, one required the power provided by sacrificing an adult goat. However, on Halloween night, the veil between dimensions is thinnest, and far less power is required.

He had essentially used a sledgehammer to tear through a paper screen; rather than opening a doorway, Dr. October broke down a wall.

Things escaped. Things that had no business being in this dimension. Merely looking upon some of these creatures would drive a normal person insane. Dr. October was no mere mortal, and he stood watching in horror as these creatures slipped through singly and in groups. He named these monsters Breachers. He did what he could to repair the damage, and was able to seal the dimensional breach before the worst dimensional creature, the Asrtokraken, was able to step through

Enough of the lesser creatures managed to penetrate the breach to give Dr. October worry. He captured a small creature that hadn't escaped the lab. After months of testing, The sorcerer was able to send the creature back to its own dimension using a special Vortex Pistol that projected a beam of the necessary spells in an instant. Larger creatures required a larger charge, and he only had fifty units available before he was forced to perform a ritual to reload.

Dr. October tracked down other mages and scientists throughout the world. He used their assistance to track down and return these creatures from whence they came. For one of the more intelligent beings worked towards re-opening the breach on Halloween night, with the goal of bringing the Astrokraken across!

Chapter One: Dorothy Morgan

Record snowfalls in February. Coldest day on record in Midnight City. And through it all, Doctor Jericho October hunted. He couldn't rest, he couldn't give up. The fate of not only the world, but reality itself, relied on him. After the Breach, Dr. October had discovered that seven large creatures of power had gotten through and remained at large. Six had already been sent back. Tonight he hoped to return the last one.

Dr. October pulled up the collar of his coat, pulled down the brim of his fedora, and trudged through the snow to his destination. His thoughts returned, as they often did, to the past Halloween.

After tracking down and removing six, he had accumulated enough research to create his tracking device. It was accurate to within 100 feet, which left a lot of space, especially in a city the size of Midnight City. The only good news from the tracking device was the last of the original seven Breachers operated in Midnight City. However, the bad news was if they were all together, they may have been working together. One or two he could take down with his Vortex Pistol. Three at a time, not so much.

On top of that, the Breachers attracted human minions from the scum of humanity. So there was no telling how many foes he'd be up against.

The warehouse rose in front of him out of the swirling snow. He walked with his head down due to the snow and hadn't expected it, so he almost stumbled into the wall. Dr. October looked along the wall to either side,

searching for a door. When he spotted one to his left, he moved towards it. Unlocked.

Inside the warehouse, stacks of crates rose to the ceiling. In the distance, a gruff voice chanted in a tongue Dr. October knew all too well. It was the same spell he had used to open the Breach. He had found the one of the three Breachers, and it was attempting to reopen the Breach!

"Not again," Dr. October said to himself. He pulled his Vortex pistol and crept forward.

He peeked around the corner of a crate stack and saw a woman tied to the top of a table, hands and feet bound to the table legs, a Breacher standing over her. He looked like a large, muscle-bound man with the head of a badger. His elongated arms ended in furry hands holding a wicked curved dagger, poised above the woman's heart. Four human minions stood around the table, watching with anticipation. One appeared to be drooling.

The Breacher raised the knife even higher, and Dr. October recognized the part of the ritual they had reached. He raised his Vortex Pistol and fired. The spell blast hit the Breacher square in the chest. He howled as his body was sucked into the tiny vortex, dropping the knife. The four human minions' heads snapped in Dr. October's direction. Knowing his Vortex Pistol was useless against the humans, he put it back in its holster and readied a fiery binding spell.

The first minion--a teenager dressed in ripped tee shirt and jeans, his head sporting a bright pink mohawk--ran at Dr. October, hands raised like claws. The scientific sorcerer chanted the binding spell incantation, manifesting a ball of green fire, which he threw at the

minion. The young man tried to dodge, but it caught him in the shoulder and spread around his body, wrapping him like a mummy in green flame. He howled in fury as he dropped to the floor.

The other three minions--two of them young women in their early twenties, and a man in his late thirties, all dressed in professional business attire--charged as a group. Dr. October cast two more spells, one from each hand, and caught the man and one of the young women. The last woman dove at his legs, knocking him down. She climbed on top of him and clawed at his face, a wordless scream full of rage assaulting his ears.

She clawed his left cheek before he kicked his legs up under her armpits and flipped her backwards onto her shoulders. Holding her down with his foot, he cast another binding spell, enveloping her in the green flames.

Stepping away from the fallen minions, he approached the table. The woman struggled to get herself free and redoubled her efforts when she saw Dr. October approach.

"Ease up, miss, I'm not here to harm you," he said.

She calmed her struggles, but still looked at him warily. She nodded.

He picked up the ceremonial knife where the Breacher had dropped it. When her eyes shot wide in fear, he said, "I'm using this merely to cut your bonds." She settled enough so he could free her hands. He then set the knife on the table beside her and backed away with his hands up in a placating gesture.

The woman ripped the gag from her mouth with one hand while snatching up the knife with her other. She immediately began to saw at the bonds at her ankles.

"Who are you? Who were these guys? Were they even human?"

"I am Doctor Jericho October. The creature with the face of a badger was a Breacher, a being from another dimension. The other four were his human minions."

"Dr. October, huh?" she said. He was able to get a look at her without the fear masking her features. She was older than he first thought, maybe early to mid-forties, with auburn hair just going gray at the temples. Her hazel eyes didn't miss much as she looked him over. "I've heard of you. I'm Dorothy Morgan, Witch Hunter. Call me Dot."

"You hunt witches?"

"No, I am a witch and I hunt guys like that... 'Breachers.'"

"So you are a hunter witch?"

Dot stopped cutting the bond on her right ankle, having already released her left one. "Okay, I'm a hunter witch." She resumed freeing herself and hopped down from the table. She tossed the knife back onto the table.

"How did you end up here?" he asked.

"I work here, driving a fork truck." She took a red bandanna from her hip pocket and wiped off her face. "How'd you find them?"

"I have a tracking device that can lead me to within a hundred feet of them."

"You'll never stop us!" cried the teen with the mohawk. "The Astrokraken is coming!"

Dot turned disbelieving eyes to Dr. October. "'Astrokraken'? Is he serious?"

"Very much so," he responded. To the young man he said, "I have removed all the Breachers from this city. Your master was the last."

The four bound people started to giggle. It grew in intensity, becoming raucous laughter bordering on hysterics. "You know nothing, Jericho October!" the young man screamed. "Others are coming! Cazguro the Dominator is coming! He will usher in the Astrokraken, and we will all be submitted to eternal oblivion!"

His laughter increased in intensity, and the minions burst into flames.

"What did you do to them?" Dot asked as she watched the bodies burn. The laughs morphed into screams.

"This was not me," Dr. October said. "My spells only bind them. This is the work of the Breachers."

The four bodies became quiet with only the crackle of the now quickly dying flames the only sound in the warehouse. When the flames disappeared, nothing was left of the human minions except four black marks on the concrete floor.

"Why do you call them Breachers?" Dot asked.

Dr. October told her the story of how he opened a doorway into the dimension of the Astrokraken the past Halloween. He told her of how he did it, how he realized his mistake too late, and how he now atoned for that mistake.

"I knew I felt something happen," Dot said. "Like there was a sudden evil loose on the world. My ex-husband dismissed it, saying 'It's Halloween, Dorothy,'" dropping her voice to a deeper tone. "'You're supposed to feel scared tonight,' and then he laughed it off."

She paused in thought a moment, then looked up at Dr. October. "I'll help."

"You cannot," Dr. October said. "This is my doing, I must set it right."

"You cannot be in more than one place at a time. I will help you. I am not without abilities."

She turned towards the table that had almost been her sacrificial altar, raised her hands and chanted something under her breath. Blue witchfire shot from both hands striking the table and causing it to collapse in on itself, much like the Vortex Pistol had done to the Breacher. She turned to Dr. October with a smug grin.

"But can you do that under pressure?" he asked.

"I can. These yahoos caught me at work while I was listening to my headphones. I'll not make that mistake again."

Dr. October thought for a moment, then nodded.

"Fine. You will do as I say, when I say it. Your life, and the fate of the world, reside on this promise."

Dot held up her right hand, three fingers raised and together. "Scout's honor, Dr. O."

The scientific sorcerer grunted an acknowledgement then looked to the spot where the teenager had died.

"What did he mean by 'others are coming' I wonder. Surely there are no more Breachers in Midnight City."

Before Dot could reply, a beeping sound came from Dr. October's inside coat pocket. He frowned and pulled out his Breacher tracking device. "What? No..." he said.

"That your tracker?" Dot asked. Dr. October nodded. "What's the noise then?"

"Four more Breachers just popped up in Midnight City."

"Okay, we can take them down, no worries."

"It's not just that there are more, look at the pattern," he said as he showed her the screen.

Dot looked at the screen and wrinkled her eyebrows.
"What gives? Are those four the same distance apart?
Like equally?"

"They are, and if you add our position for the fifth point, it completes a perfect pentagram. The center of which is the ruins of the abandoned amusement park."

"So?"

"If even one of these other four can complete the ritual, it will open the Breach again and bring forth something even worse. Maybe even the Astrokraken itself."

Chapter Two: Bonding

Doctor October and Dorothy sat in the doctor's panel van. The interior walls in the storage area were filled with all sorts of spell components and other magical instruments, from powdered herbs and dried animal parts to salt, chalk, and a spare Vortex Pistol. Dr. October handed this last to Dot.

"This is the Vortex Pistol," Dr. October said. "Shoot a Breacher anywhere with this and it sends them back to their own dimension."

"What if I shoot one of their human cronies with it?" Dot said, taking the pistol.

"It turns them inside out. Not a very pretty death, and very painful."

Dot's face blanched. "Oh. No shooting the humans then."

"And you only have fifty shots. If you need more than that, you're in more trouble than this can get you out of."

"Now let's get this bonded to you so no one else can use it," Dr. October said. He grabbed a piece of chalk and a canister of salt, then hopped out the back of the van. Dot followed him.

The van had been parked in an alley a few blocks from the warehouse where he discovered Dot. He moved the van into the warehouse to get it out of the snow before letting Dot enter. It was a combination mobile lab and office.

Twenty feet from the rear of the van, Dr. October drew a large pentagram on the warehouse floor with the chalk. He then used the salt to draw a circle around the

five-sided star. Before he completed the circle, he gestured for Dot to enter. Once she did, he completed the circle.

"Whoa," Dot said. "I could feel a change when you closed that."

"Good," Dr. October said. "It means you are attuned to magic and not another hedge witch who read a few books and stopped shaving her armpits."

"I need you to sit cross-legged in the center of the pentagram and place the pistol on the ground in front of you. Then put your hands on your knees, palms up." Dot complied. She opened her mouth to ask a question, but Dr. October interrupted her. "No talking unless you are repeating something you are instructed to say. If you accept, nod your head once." She did. "Good."

Dr. October walked around the perimeter of the magic circle, examining the pentagram and reassuring himself everything was correct. When he was satisfied, he stood in front of Dot, outside the circle, facing her. He pulled an eighteen-inch yew stick from an inside pocket of his long coat and raised it over his head in his right hand.

Dr. October chanted strange words that Dot couldn't understand. Not just a different language, but the pitch of his voice sounded as if someone—or something—else was speaking through him.

The yew wand began to glow a bright green, similar to a glowstick. She looked down at the Vortex Pistol in front of her and saw the same glow emanating from the weapon. She gasped.

Doctor October lifted his face towards the ceiling and closed his eyes. He continued the chant and the wand glowed brighter, as did the pistol. Dot looked back

and forth from Doctor October to the pistol and back. She fought down an urge to ask a question, to cry out, to make any kind of sound, but felt that would break the doctor's concentration and disrupt his ritual. Instead, she found herself reaching her left hand towards the pistol.

She picked it up with her left hand and examined the barrel. As she did, the glow expanded up her arm so that in moments, her entire body glowed with the same green as the pistol and Dr. October's wand. She gasped.

Dr. October continued his chant, but opened his eyes and looked down at Dot. His eyes widened, but he could neither speak nor gesture for her to drop the pistol. He panicked, spoke the final words too quickly, and pointed his yew wand at Dot.

A great flash of green light shot up from inside the magic circle, completely obscuring Dot inside. He had finished the spell, but did he get it right?

The column of light retracted, growing smaller in diameter, until it became a thin beam shooting towards the ceiling, revealing Dorothy Morgan in the center of the circle. She no longer looked human, but rather elvish in nature. Her face was longer, she was rail thin, but with a wiry strength about her. From the back of her left hand, a protuberance extended looking similar to the barrel of the Vortex Pistol.

Dot looked down at her hands, examining the gun barrel at her left wrist. Tears spilled down her cheeks. "Doctor?" she said, her voice unchanged. "What happened to me?"

"You stupid, stupid woman," the doctor said, but not without sympathy. "Why did you pick it up?"

"I... I don't know."

"The bonding ritual completed, but not as I intended. The pistol was supposed to only be magically bonded to you, not physically. By holding the pistol as I completed the ritual, you have become one with it. You are now a living magical weapon."

"How do I get it off me?" Dot said, panic edging into her voice.

"I don't know if I can, but we have more pressing matters." Dr. October stepped forward and swiped his foot across the salt circle, breaking it. "We must stop these other Breachers from creating more openings into their dimension."

"Then can you help reverse this?" Dot asked as she stepped from the circle.

"We can try. That is the best I can answer for now."

Dot looked at the doctor for the first time after the ritual and she gasped. "What?" Dr. October said.

"Your eyes," said Dot, a note of fear in her voice.

Dr. October reached up and touched his face. His eyes felt larger, the eye sockets rounder. He ran to the driver door of the van and looked in the mirror. He stared for a moment, seeing large black eyeballs, with dark purple irises, and no pupil. He rounded on Dot. "Do you see what you've done!" he shouted. "You changed the ritual, and because of that, you changed yourself and you changed me!"

He spun slowly in a circle, an angry wordless cry escaping his throat. He stopped suddenly when he faced east. "What is that?" he said, calmer, curious.

"What is what?" Dot asked, still trembling from the doctor's verbal assault.

"There, in the distance," he said, pointing at the warehouse wall. "Can't you see it?"

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