

C1: The Day the Alien Came to My House

Rehoboth, a beach town basking in the golden glow of the setting sun, typically unfolded in a leisurely rhythm, but today held an unspoken tension. I sauntered in from school, the familiar jingle of my keys finding a temporary home on the kitchen counter—perks of being a latchkey kid. The house, momentarily silent without the usual hum of my parents, felt like an echo chamber, amplifying the subtle changes in the atmosphere.

The air carried a hint of salt, mingling with the comforting aroma of leftover pizza warming in the microwave. As I walked across the creaky floor to my room, I couldn't shake the feeling that something was different, beyond the usual ebb and flow of our laid-back town. "Not your typical surprise thunderstorm vibe," I muttered to myself, eyeing the darkening sky outside my window.

School had been its usual blend of monotony, but with summer break on the horizon, the promise of claiming my beach spot added a spark of excitement. It was officially spring, and the beach was about to become my second home.

Seated at my desk, I reached for a case of floppy disks, selecting one labeled "Journal." The hum of my Macintosh IIci came to life, casting a soft glow across the room. Though not a high-end computer, it was my portal to the outside world, a world I shared with my room with the window open to the rhythmic pulse of the waves outside.

"So, all this," I said, fingers dancing on the keyboard, "I'm thinking that I'm gonna head to the beach this weekend and lay claim to my spot." The rhythmic typing echoed the anticipation building within me.

Journaling, a peculiar habit of mine, felt like a quiet rebellion against the ordinary. I wasn't sure why I did it, but perhaps, in the quiet hum of my room, amid the glow of the computer screen and the distant call of the ocean, ideas would take root, and the ordinary would transform into the extraordinary. What I *was* sure of, however, was that I knew *something* was going to happen... something *big*.

When I finished my entry for the day, I gave it one last look-over before saving and closing. I wasn't sure of what to do with the rest of the afternoon, so I mostly just watched TV and, around dinnertime, got a call from Mom to check in on me.

She and Dad were still in Canada on a business trip, so I decided to have a movie night.

The evening had unfolded with a series of movies that lasted for about as long as my bowl of popcorn had. The living room had been filled with the humming of the VCR and the box fan and the cool, blue glow of the TV lit the room with a cozy ambiance as the rewind symbol flashed in the corner of the screen.

“Ngh,” I muttered, stretching myself out as I turned off the TV and VCR and let the warm light from the ceiling fill the room, I could rewind the movie tomorrow morning, “*That was fun.*”

I had taken care of a few things around the house before stepping onto the deck with a mug of tea and a magazine. In the distance, the waves were gently crashing against the shore, the seagulls squawking for the first time in the year, and the salty air filling my nose and lungs from the beach a few miles away.

“It’s funny,” I chuckled, sipping my tea as I looked at the new beachwear, “I probably won’t go in the water that much.”

The sky had cleared since the afternoon, so I’d *probably* be looking for the sunscreen tomorrow morning-

“What the...?” I said, seeing a streak of light fly through the night sky, “Was that...?”

I rubbed my eyes as I looked out in the distance and saw the thing crash into a field just a few miles away towards the mainland before hearing the crash moments later.

“Oh shit!” I said, hurrying inside to get my keys and a jacket, though by the time I got the door inside opened, the phone was already ringing, “To *hell* with that!” I said, getting ready and running out to my Volkswagen Cabriolet.

“Come on,” I said as the thing roared to life and slid into first gear, the salty, night air quickly pelting me in the face as I headed to the spot where I thought I saw it crash. The road stretched before me, dark and winding, illuminated only by the headlights of my car. The jingle of keys, the hum of the engine, and the air rushing past my head were the only sounds I heard as I raced against time to uncover the secrets hidden in the crash.

Soon, I noticed something glowing in a field off the right side of the roadway, so I slammed on the brakes and looked to the eerie, green glow for a few moments before driving into the crop circle and letting the car stall as I sat in front of a dented, metal pod. The hatch was open, I heard a faint humming and beeping sound, and the glowing metal creaked for a few moments as it settled.

“Khutarvy myi!” I heard a guy say as I walked over to it.

“H... hello?” I said, “I come in peace... I mean, I live here in- *what* the hell’s going on here!?”

A blue, humanoid creature looked up at me as I took a step back, its icy gaze fixated as I was unable to move. It looked masculine, with icy, shoulder-length hair pulled halfway back, aqua skin, angry eyes of water, fixated on me through large glasses, and it was covered in a multi-tone blue bodysuit with, in the middle, a yellow box with a square S made from dark lines. He was holding himself up with his arms as he breathed heavily through his teeth.

“My name is Seth Davis, I am a *human*,” I said, pointing to myself before pointing at him, “Who are you? *What* are you?”

“I see how your language is terrible now,” he said, “My name is Azathoth – Sector Khleh Kheeyach 8421. My species calls ourselves Udae-Ceanvin. We call our home planet Tanh Khlokh – Khu'aiy and your planet Khu'aiy Khnee'ee'yeur. I have questions.”

Azathoth fell to his face, so I ran over and quickly helped him out of the pod as he shut it off.

“Wanna grab dinner or something?” I asked, helping Azathoth to his feet and noticing his high-tech boots.

“I have something that I believe originated from your world,” he said, grabbing a golden disc with symbols etched in it and another that read ‘The Sounds of Earth’ and ‘United States of America, Planet Earth’ on the label of both sides, “I’m *guessing* this is your planet’s language?”

I looked on in shock at *the actual Golden Record* that NASA shot *into interstellar space!*

“Holy... *crap*.”

“The 3or3e'nen have labeled your planet as Isolationzonen and my ship was intercepted by a La3øer on their behalf. I need help, and I need it *fast*. They are *not* what you’d call ‘nice’.”

“Help me load your stuff in my car, we’ll head back to my house,” I said as Azathoth, now able to support himself, reached into the pod and grabbed a few other things that ended up going in the back seat of the car.

“We were far past this stage of technology on my world before I was even born,” Azathoth commented as I made sure the transmission was out of gear.

“It’s not fancy space-age, but we make do,” I said, flicking the stick into gear and hurrying back onto the road, “This one is a Volkswagen, it’s German, and the name means ‘People’s Car’. During Nazi rule in Germany, a terrible man by the name of Adolf Hitler wanted a car to be built that was cheap to own and easy to maintain, and he called it ‘Volkswagen’,” I held my hands out, “Manual ragtop, manual transmission... this was one of the first VWs to be built with the engine in the front, watercooled, *and* front-wheel-drive. Hence the name.”

“My vessel ejected a number of decoy pods, though they’ll eventually find and kill me, this I’m certain of. You *may* fare better, but you’ll be taken as property for my aid.”

“Well, I’m just doing what I’d do for *anyone* who looked like they’d need help,” I said.

“We know you’re what you would call a self-warring society,” Azathoth said, “You split yourself into subsocieties and fight among yourselves. You’ll all die by yourselves.”

“We ain’t *perfect*,” I said, glancing down at the gauges, “But we still *try*.”

“I suppose it *is* possible your world is developing differently from ours. Food does sound... *nice*.”

“Azathoth, I’m gonna introduce you to Burger King,” I said, seeing the clock in the car flash 2:37 as he looked at me with his brows furrowed.

It wasn’t a long drive back into town, but this late at night... our options were gonna be limited. At least, however, there wasn’t going to be a long line.

The inside of the fast-food joint was just as sparsely populated as the parking lot was. Still, the inside was colorful and geometric, there were some fake plants in a half-wall, the tea urns were taken back, and someone was moping the floor. Within a few minutes, though, Azathoth and I were sat down at one of the booths, each with my go-to meal for this place.

“What even *is* this?” he asked, taking off his glasses.

“A whopper, large fry, and large Dr. Pepper,” I said, starting on my supper.

“Is it standard that, on your planet, you make decisions for the foreigner?”

“I just thought that you’d like it,” I answered, “I mean, *I* think it’s good, *I* like it. I wouldn’t wanna give you something that I *didn’t* like and just expect you to enjoy it.”

“Khn̄m.”

“Go on, give it a try. If you don’t like it, I’ll get you something else.”

“I- *mm...* wow, this is good.”

“See? I *told* you.”

“Wow, this... I was wrong,” Azathoth said, eyeing the food, “Anyway, my thought, I wanted to establish first contact and experience how your civilizations... *exist* the way that they do.”

“And the Korge’nen and Lakhor are after you because of Earth being a part of an isolation zone?”

“You have words for it?”

“I took German for my second language, so I know a few things.”

“German?”

“Diese sprachen ist die *Deutscher* Sprachen. Meinen grossvater war im Westdeutschland im das Kalter Krieg, er war eine Armeemechaniker,” I said with a laugh as I held my thumb and finger an inch apart, “I had a *little bit of interest* in the language when I had to choose.”

„Is German a common language around here?” he asked me in the language.

“Not really,” I replied in English, “It’s just that whenever I visit my grandeddy or he visits us, he always tells some stories from when he was in Germany, I *do* ask, and there’s some stuff that I like to read and get my hands on that’s, well, *German*. Grandeddy *swears* by Volkswagen, *and* he taught me everything I know about a car engine, he’d show me what to do whenever the engine in his Bug needed work done. One of the things on my bucket list is to drive *as fast as I can* on the German Autobahn. I know *our* Interstates don’t have speed limits, but I’d like to feel of the highway that started it all. Feel a part of history, you know?”

“The 3or3e’nen and Lazøeren, assuming they bring their own reinforcements, are going to try to kill you, I believe you would call yourself ‘martyrer’, for trying to deisolate yourselves. As for the rest of your planet, it’s entirely likely they would force isolation on you. Your word for the 3or3e’nen troops would be ‘bürgerwehr’?”

“Martyr and vigilante, respectively, in English, but yes.”