

A man from beyond the stars

by

Nikita Ivanenko

Two possibilities exist: Either we are alone in the Universe or we are not. Both are equally terrifying. Arthur Clark.

INT. ALIEN STARSHIP - OPEN SPACE NEAR EARTH - 3000 B.C

Giant illuminator of a starship. Astonishing view of Earth - it's blue and green, glooming in the sunlight. Camera moves backwards, revealing a small man figure standing in front of it. His stands back to us, reaches his hand to planet, as if he wants to touch it. Other people are stepping to him from the back, making a crowd of 50-60 men. They all staring at Earth. They wear very siple cloth, or just loincloth. Some noise from behind. A couple of massive creatures, each one is twice as tall as any human, comes to them. Fade out.

INT. KEPLER - CAPTAIN'S BRIDGE - 2088 A.D. - BORDERS OF SOLAR SYSTEM

Giant illuminator of a starship. Astonishing view of Oort's cloud. Millions of small asteroids blicking in the eternal darkness of the space. Our sun is just a bright point in the void, slightly more visible among the other stars. Captain James Parson (male, white, 42 y.o.) looks at this picture. Benjamin Wood (captain's assistant, 23 y.o.) comes to him, stands nearby and looks the same direction. They stand for some time, without saying a word.

BEN

If you had in your life a moment like this... probably, your life worth something. Captain.

JAMES

Your life is too short for such conclusions, Benjamin.

BEN

Still, now i see the view no man had ever seen. And won't see for... i don't now how many years.

James hems. They look at the stars for some more time.

BEN

Honesty, Captain. What do you think of it?

Pause.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

Beautiful. But alien. Too alien.

BEN

The conquistadors were once saying
this about America. Humans adopt.

JAMES

Not to this. It's not for us.

View of the space once again. Cold. Dead. Beautiful.

BEN

You sound pessimistic today.

JAMES

Lee said we'll get into contact in
340 hours.

BEN

That's great, isn't it?

JAMES

It should be great, Benjamin. It
should be. Go to Mary and Michael -
tell them to awake our sleeping
beauties.

BEN

At last. Michael speaks about it
for the last week. I mean, if we
had weeks here...

James stares at the illuminator.

BEN

Anything else, Captain?

No reply. Ben leaves.

EXT. RUSSIA'S PRISON - CELL - DECEMBER 2085

Alexander Orlov (40 years old, ex-military) lies on the bed
in a single cell. The cell is almost empty, but clean.
Several books are under the bed. The door is being opened
from outside. Alex doesn't move, just looks. A guard appears
in the opened door.

GUARD

(speaking Russian)

Prisoner. Out.

Alex stands up lazily.

EXT. RUSSIA'S PRISON - QUESTIONING ROOM - SEVERAL MINUTES
LATER

Alex sits on the chair in front of the big round table. He's in cluffs. Room is empty. The door opens and an old man in military form of Russian army enters. He is accomplished by a man in expensive suit and glasses. Alex recognizes the first one.

ALEX
(with surprise, speaking
Russian)
General?

The men sit on the chairs in front of.

GENERAL
(speaking Russian)
Hello, Sasha.

He doesn't offer him a hand, neither does the second man. General points gently at the man in the suit.

GENERAL
(speaking Russian)
This is Mr. Robert Mallone, he's
from NASA. He came here to talk to
you.

ALEX
(speaking Russian)
And does he...

General slighty shakes his head, meaning "no". Alex signs. Then looks at Mallone.

ALEX
(in English)
What brought you here, Mr. Mallone?

Pause.

MALLONE
Have you ever heard of Kepler, mr.
Orlov?

ALEX
The guy who studied the orbits of
the planets? I haven't.

MALLONE
Kepler is our newest starship.
We'll launch it beyond the borders
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MALLONE (cont'd)
of the Solar system, for the first
time in human history, with a crew
abroad...

ALEX
(interrupting)
Oh, i heard something about this
then. Before... the war.

MALLONE
Yes. This project is being made by
the leading countries and it is
ready at last. We're planning to
launch it...

ALEX
(interrupting)
Well, it's not necessary to invite
me on the ceremony of the launch.
You'd better get a TV in my cell.

Pause.

MALLONE
Actually, i'm here to officially
invite you to this expedition. As
the participant from Russia.

Long pause. Alex looks at Mallone and general again and
again. He's surprised. Finally, he stares at General.

ALEX
(speaking Russian)
What the fuck did he mean? I
believe there are still austronauts
in the Motherland, general.

GENERAL
(calming tone)
Listen, Mayor, try to calm down.

Alex raises hands above him, they're chained.

ALEX
(angrily, in Russian)
If you forgot, General, i'm a
convict, a military criminal. You
offer a space voyage to ME? I'm not
signing in, even if you both fucks
are not kidding.

(CONTINUED)

GENERAL

(loosing patience)

Listen, many important people made a lot of efforts to include you into this expedition. It wasn't easy. They want to take you out of here. Simple math: flight there will take 3 years and 3 years back. You'll return to normal life in 6 years. Think of it.

ALEX

(still in Russian)

Really? It's so simple to you. You condemn and forgive too easily, general.

GENERAL

I'm more a politian now, than a soldier. I have to be.

ALEX

I think i know the moment you've become this political sh...

Mallone coughs, reminding them of his existance.

MALLONE

Mr. Orlov, i made a long way here. We need your answer now.

Alex looks at his chained hands. He considers his position.

ALEX

(in English)

Agree.

General breaths a sign of relief.

MALLONE

It is done then.

He stands up, goes to Alex and opens his cluffs. Alex stands up, he's supriised.

MALLONE

The flight will be in 65 days since today. We'll take you to Space center for training and infromation. The rest of your team is ready.

Alex is massaging his hands.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
Anything else i should know?

MALLONE
(after a slight pause)
No. All details you'll get there.
All you need now is to... wake up

Fade out.

MALLONE
(voice changing)
Wake up... wake up... wake up...
Damn, somebody, help him stand up!

INT. KEPLER - CRIO-CELLS COMPARTMENT - 280 HOURS BEFORE THE CONTACT

Alex opens his eyes - he's half naked, just out from one of the crio-cells, a big man helps him to stand, holding his arm. He looks around - sees a young woman (Mary Bonnet, French, medic and biologist, 30) who looks with interest at him.

JAMES
(from behind him)
Welcome aboard, Alex.

Alex recognizes the voice. Slowly turns. The big man (Otto Hartmann, german military, 35) let him go. Alex looks at James. It's obvious that they now each other.

ALEX
Get me back into the crio-cell.

INT. KEPLER - DINING ROOM - 260 HOURS BEFORE THE CONTACT

Alex is going to the stand alone table with his. Some other members of the crew are also there. Helena (Helena Alonso, florist, biologist, 34) sits in the corner of the room, she's wispering a pray before eating. She notices Alex, her face changes. A grimace of anger and little dislike. But she continues. Suddenly she sees someone in the entrance to the Dining room and smiles. Alex doesn't care. A couple of soldiers (Paul Sallivan and Ralph Johnson) are having dinner. Alex pays no attention to anyone else. He sits and starts eating - all food is syntethical. He sees Mary approaches to his table with the tray.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

May I...?

Alex nods, Mary sits in front of him.

MARY

We weren't introduced to each other, so...

ALEX

(interrupting)

Dr. Maria Bonnet. You're here from France. The main medic and biologist on the ship.

Mary nods with enthusiasm.

MARY

I share this position with Dr. Michael Bennet, so, actually, he's in charge.

Alex's not listening, just eating. Mary looks a little dissatisfied, so they both eat in silence.

MARY

How do you like in here?

Alex looks at her, not understanding.

MARY

On the ship?

ALEX

Better than in the cage.

Alex stands up and leaves.

INT. KEPLER - DINING ROOM - SAME TIME

James is sitting 15 yards from Alex's table and has been watching the whole scene from the beginning. Ben is eating and looks at him, watches Alex goes away.

BEN

Has he always been that tough?

JAMES

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Why did you take him on this ship?

JAMES

The initiative about him came from above, i wasn't involved.

BEN

But you agreed.

JAMES

I had my reasons for that.

James stands up.

JAMES

Get him to my cabin in 20 minutes.

INT. KEPLER - CAPTAIN'S CABIN - 20 MINUTES LATER

Alex is standing in front of James's table. James is looking at the holographical pictures of space, that are projected by the surface of the table. Alex looks at his right hand for a long time.

ALEX

They say artificial limbs are always worse then the real once.

James looks at him finally.

JAMES

They lie.

Long pause.

JAMES

Let's make it clear. I didn't want your participation in this. Just your government pressed mine. That's it. Some people there still consider you as hero.

ALEX

Yes. Just like those who thinks the same about you. In the end, it was your mistake that cost lives.

James's face shudders, but he keeps control over his emotions.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

Past remains past. Here, you must remember, that i lead this expedition.

ALEX

Can't believe you brought me here to say such a trivial thing.

James pushes a button and a 3d model appears above the surface of the table. It's a sparship in a form of a drop. The color and the size of the ship can't be estimated, the model is pretty unclear.

ALEX

I saw it on Earth. Our destination.

JAMES

It is. The zondes we sent half a year ago finally reached it.

James pushes another button. The model changes, becomes more detailed - different spikes and semisheres can be dustinguished on the outer surface of the ship.

JAMES

It's 100 times beigger than our ship. Lee will send the zonds inside in several hours, then, when we arrive, your team go.

Alex whistles silently.

ALEX

Half of the team are militaries. Doesn't it surprise you, James? Aren't you sure that there's no creatures aboard? Alive?

JAMES

The data we have states clearly that the ship is on its former orbit for over 4 centuries. Everything inside must be dead. Otherwise...

Alex looks at him.

ALEX

I got the idea.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

Meet your squade downside. And
visit the rest of the crew. It's 13
days before we contact with it,
so... Dismissed, Mayor.

James turns off 3d model. Alex goes to the exit. Stops near
the door, turns to James.

ALEX

That's not my business, but... this
Mary... isn't she your
ex-girlfriend? I mean, the one from
hospital?

James doesn't answer. Alex leaves the room.