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# THEY'RE AMONG US

A SCI-FI THRILLER

by

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## CHAPTER 2

**T**HE ATTACK CAME without warning. Thousands of Promelian warships filled the orange skies of Cerelea, as horrified Cerelean citizens watched and then scrambled for their lives. The armada was so massive, the ships casted an ominous shadow over the Cerelean cities from orbit as it eclipsed one of the planets two suns. Taken by surprise and not much weaponry with which to fight, the Cereleans were no match for the invading force.

Missile strikes from the warships were the vanguard of the attack. Thousands of missiles hit the streets and buildings of the Cerelean cities as Cereleans ran for cover. Most of them did not make it to safety, as the force of the explosions incinerated them. Their screams for help went unanswered. Their begs for mercy were ignored.

The warships leveled ancient buildings that had stood for thousands of years. Temples of worship, symbols of their race's history, everything the Cereleans stood for, everything that they were, was all destroyed in a matter of minutes.

After what seemed like an eternity, the missile strikes stopped and hundreds of thousands of Promelian infantry troops were teleported to the cities across the planet to begin the ground campaign.

The Promelians were ruthless; killing every man, woman and child they encountered. Mothers escaped and hid with their children in the basements of their homes, while fathers took up arms and engaged Promelian troops. A futile effort, as Promelian soldiers easily dispatched with the "rebels".

The soldiers went from door to door, searching for Cereleans to kill. Many times, they found the Cerelean homes empty. Other times, they found those mother's clinging to their children, begging the Promelian soldiers for mercy.

No mercy was given, as they fired their rifles at both mother and child, instantly disintegrating them both.

There was no stopping the onslaught. In a matter of hours, millions of Cereleans were killed; their cities were reduced to rubble. Those who remained sought to escape the savagery of the Promelians.

Cerelea is lost.

Escape was the only option.

Only a few thousand Cereleans remained to make it to the ships. The men hurried the women and children aboard to safety, unsure of their destination. Not even having a destination. Escape was all that mattered.

The ships were filled to capacity as those unlucky Cereleans who did not make it to the ships in time, looked on as the ships ascended to the skies. They begged the ships to come back and get them.

Too late.

The departure of the Cerelean ships did not go unnoticed by the Promelians though, as they attacked the ascending ships. Several Cerelean ships were destroyed, but the remaining ships broke through the planet's atmosphere and accelerated to transwarp drive.

They escaped, but to where?

The Cerelean ships roamed the galaxy for months trying to find a place to hide from the Promelians. They knew the Promelians would not stop until all Cereleans were eliminated. After months of wandering aimlessly in space, the Cereleans found a wormhole on their long-range sensors.

Finally, there was hope.

## CHAPTER 3

**T**HE YEAR WAS 213 AD when the Cereleans first arrived on Earth. The lights were witnessed all over the world; worshipped by some, feared by others.

The Bambuti tribe of Africa viewed it as a sign from Arebati, god of the sky, while the Chinese considered it a sign from Chu Jung, god of death, and they looked upon it in despair.

These were primitive times, lacking the scientific technology to investigate the streaking lights in order to reach a scientific conclusion.

It was perfect timing for the Cereleans. They could easily blend in with our species.

The ships came by the hundreds. Thousands of Cereleans hoped for sanctuary and a chance to return to their home world. The worm hole they came through would not occur again for another 1,800 years. Earth was home to the Cereleans now.

The ships submerged in Earth's oceans and seas at depths that could not be reached by humans. There was no substance like water on their planet, but their scientists assured them that it was not harmful to them.

Each Cereleans appearance was cloaked to give them the appearance of being human.

Coming to rest on the floors of earth's oceans and seas, the commanders of each ship gave final instructions to their crews and passengers before they disembarked to populate the Earth. The most important instruction of all: avoid exposure of their true nature at all costs. Even if it meant their death.

And so the Cereleans began to live their lives as humans. A generous race, they made subtle contributions toward agriculture and engineering. They longed to provide much needed advances in technology and medicine to help ease suffering and improve the quality of life of their human hosts, but they could not expose themselves. Instead, they were forced to watch as diseases and plagues ravaged mankind, killing millions. They were forced to watch as mankind waged war on each other over the years as easily and callously as the Promelians had on their home world.

With the exception of appearance and a longer life span, the Cereleans are not much different than humans— they eat, they sleep, they procreate, and they die. As the years went by, their population across the Earth grew to over one million. Unfortunately, with the passage of time, the Cereleans grew apart from each other.

The generations that came after the first settlers rejected the old ways of their people and chose to embrace the ways of mankind instead. They began to grow comfortable in their new home, believing that they would never return to restore their home world.

But they took comfort in knowing that in spite of the best efforts of the Promelians, their race would live on. The Cerelean people would live on, knowing that they have escaped the genocide of their people. They escaped the Promelians.

Or so they thought.

# CHAPTER 4

*August 15, 1962...2 a.m.*

**T**HE *USS FRANKLIN D. Roosevelt* was on a routine mission off the coast of Tunisia. Seaman First Class David Peterson had just concluded his watch duty and decided to take his usual evening stroll on the deck to relax. His nightly stroll was his time to himself; his time to think of home, his marriage, and a baby on the way.

The night air blowing ever so gently off the Mediterranean onto his face, this was his time to get away from the cramped spaces and the loud chatter from his fellow seamen. Peterson leaned up against a pole, took a pack of cigarettes from his pocket and made himself comfortable.

He put a cigarette to his lips and lit it. To him, the first “drag” was always the best; inhale deep; hold it a moment, and release. If his wife could have been there with him, he knew what she would have said; *Those things are gonna kill you someday.*

He smiled at the thought of his wife chewing him out. In fact, he longed to hear those words. Any words, as long as they’re coming from her.

*Ok baby. You win,* Peterson said to himself as he flicked the cigarette into the sea.

Crossing his arms, Peterson took a deep breath and looked up into the crystal-clear night sky. An aspiring astronomer, his goal was to know every star in the constellation. He began his ritualistic naming of the stars as he pointed at each one; “Sirius, Vega, Canopus.”

As Peterson continued to name each star in the solar system, he noticed one that was unfamiliar to him, and a little brighter than the others.

“Hmmm. I don’t know you, little fella,” says Peterson as he pulled himself off the pole. Putting his hands on his hips, he stared at the star and wondered if he missed it all the other times. Peterson noticed that the “star” seemed to be getting larger and brighter. His mentality changed from curiosity to concern as he tried to make sense of what he was seeing.

*Too slow for a missile strike,* he said to himself. These were, after all, hostile waters, so the theory was plausible but quickly rejected. Peterson began to consider a series of possible answers to what he was seeing;

*Did we launch an aircraft?*

*Did I just overlook that star?*

“Damn. That ain’t no star. That things getting bigger by the minute.”

Peterson knew it was his duty to immediately report anything out of the ordinary, and he intended to do just that, but he couldn’t seem to take his eyes off of the object. An object that kept getting closer.

CLOSER!

Without warning, the “star” picked up speed and headed directly for the naval ship. What was once a single bright light, turned into multiple bright lights moving in unison.

“OH MY GOD!!!” said Peterson as he witnessed what he used to believe was impossible. The “star” rapidly approached the ship and came to a complete stop just yards away from the *Roosevelt*.

The ship hovered over the Mediterranean without making a sound. Peterson started to back away, but he was far too intrigued to run away completely. He had heard others tell stories about UFO’s and dismissed those stories as fabrications; people just looking for their few minutes of fame. His curiosity kicked in to overdrive as he moved toward the stern of the ship to get a closer look.

“Ah man. Nobody’s gonna believe this. Wish I had my camera.”

Peterson moved as close as possible to get a better look at the object, being careful not to obstruct his escape route, just in case little green men started to emerge.

Little green men.

Peterson couldn’t believe that he was actually considering it as a possibility. But he had to. Something was flying that craft and it wasn’t any type of aircraft that the military had in its arsenal.

As to the question; *Is there life on other planets?*

That’s a big yes.

## CHAPTER 5

**W**ITH THE SHIP silhouetted by the light of the moon, Peterson could clearly see the smooth, cylindrical shape of the object, which appeared to be approximately the size of a football field. The ship had bright lights across the outer edge of its hull that blinked in various colors.

Still no sound.

Peterson was also concerned that there hadn't been an alert from the radar operator. Surely this had been spotted on radar.

He watched the ship for a few more minutes, anxious to see what it would do next. The ship just sat over the water as if it were waiting for something; quietly sitting.

Scared out of his mind, but equally captivated, Peterson decided to go for help, if for no other reason but to have some witnesses to the sighting. He knew no one would ever believe him. Probably, not even his wife.

He kept his eyes on the ship and began to walk away when suddenly the ship emitted a bright light from its underbelly. The light seemed to be concentrated on the water as it moved back and forth in an almost circular pattern as if searching for something.

The light startled Peterson, as he stumbled backward, falling to the deck of the ship. He scrambled to his feet in a panic, and ran inside to call for help. Fortunately, he did not have to look far, as the watch officer, Ensign Drew Reynolds, was just a few feet down the hall from him.

"SIR! SIR!" Peterson yelled in desperation as he ran towards Ensign Reynolds.

"Calm down Seaman," said Ensign Reynolds as Peterson approached him in a panic. "What seems to be the problem?"

"Sir! Outside. You gotta see this!"

Peterson grabbed Ensign Reynolds by the arm and pulled him toward the exit.

"Wait a damn minute Seaman!"

"Can't wait, sir. It might be gone. Hurry!"

The ship apparently completed its search and turned off its search light just as Peterson and Ensign Reynolds made it to the stern of the ship.

"Look sir," Peterson said quietly, believing that if he yelled too loudly, he would scare off his visitors.

Ensign Reynolds was stunned at what he saw. He just stood there with his mouth open in disbelief.

Finally, Ensign Reynolds said, "Oh...my...god!" as he stared at the object, unable to react.

"Come on sir, let's get a closer look."

"No...I...I mean...we..."

Peterson ignored his superior officers stammering and hurried to the stern of the ship to watch and wait; waiting for something.

Anything.

The ship continued to hover without making a sound and eventually descended gradually into the water as if a decision had been made. The ship's contact with the water caused the water to ripple three hundred and sixty degrees, causing the *Roosevelt* to sway back and forth. Peterson could still see the lights of the ship as it descended deeper into the Mediterranean. It continued its descent until the lights were no longer visible.

"Holy shit sir!" Peterson anxiously said with a smile as he turned to Ensign Reynolds. Reynolds was still frozen in place and unable to speak. Peterson ignored him and turned back to the water, hoping something else would happen.

"Wait'll the guys hear about this!"

Unbeknownst to Peterson and Reynolds, this was not an isolated sighting. The Promelians were here. Thousands of Promelian ships arrived on Earth; their passengers tasked with one mission: kill the remaining Cereleans.