

How My Next Door Neighbour Discovered Life On Mars

written by  
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Draft 2.0  
17/02/05

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FADE IN:

A young BOY lies on a rug in front of a television, his chin resting on a sleeping dog. His captivated eye reflects a monochrome spaceship.

There is a bad 1950s science fiction movie playing on the screen in black and white.

Mock heroic music scores the scene on the television. The voices are somewhat tinny.

T.V. SPACE CADET

(on television)

Well, Captain Oleander. I believe this draws our adventures here on the red planet to a climactic conclusion. If only someone was brave enough to face the desolate deserts of Mars in search for intelligent life. Until we witness such bravery the question of life on the red planet shall remain but a mystery.

The boy watches and listens. The glow of the television illuminates his face with dancing patterns of black and white.

The boy walks out into the middle of his backyard cradling a telescope almost as large as he is. He stumbles it is so large.

He clumsily sets the telescope up in the fading light next to a doghouse. He climbs its side and stands up on top, eye level to the viewfinder.

He excitedly looks through the telescope into the heavens. The night sky teems with bright stars and colourful galaxies, but there is nothing to suggest life on Mars.

In the upstairs window of the house next door we see a DARK SILHOUETTED FIGURE looking down upon the little boy and his telescope.

The figure stands motionless before violently tugging at the curtains, which pop off their hinges and into his arms.

He moves away from the window. The little boy looks at the sky.

3 INT - KITCHEN - MORNING 3

The boy sits at his kitchen table eating cereal. The box sits nearby, an offer for a free pair of 3D glasses on its front.

A shortwave radio sits on the table next to his cereal bowl. As he eats he slowly tunes the radio through all of the stations. He gets a wide array of bizarre and swirling radio sounds.

He talks into the antenna as though it were a microphone:

BOY  
Is anybody out there? Hello? Over.

He gets only whizzes and pops and sports results.

He frowns slightly as he works out his next logical step.

4 INT - THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR - MORNING 4

Click!

The light of a small and overfull closet switches on.

The figure that stood at the window is a MAN. We can see the back of his balding head but never his face. He wears a pale green cardigan. He rummages through a closet; searching for something.

He climbs up a small stepladder and pulls down a BIG BLACK BOX.

He climbs down the ladder and moves to the table. We focus on the case and never on his face.

The case is slammed violently on to the table.

5 EXT - BACKYARD - DAY 5

The boy walks slowly across the yard.

He is dressed in layers of plastic wrap and aluminum foil. He wears gumboots. He carries a motorcycle helmet in one hand and the 3D glasses from the cereal box in the other. His face is stern and determined. He is disciplined and brave.

T.V. SPACE CADET (O.S.)  
When we came to this planet in search of Martians we knew that it was not going to be easy. It was not a task for the faint of heart. It was not a task for those among us who were yellow.

## T.V. SPACE CADET(CONT'D)

It was a task that could not allow for fear on any level. At any stage.

The boy arrives at a collection of refrigerator boxes that have been constructed into a ROCKET SHIP. It has been freshly painted white with overlapping red and green buttons and gauges. With careful precision, the word EXPLORER has been written across the front of the vessel.

## T.V. SPACE CADET (CONT'D) (O.S)

It was a task for the courageous and true of heart. The masters of the universe. It was a task for those of us who were brave. It was a task for those of us who were brave.

The boy climbs into the spaceship.

His eyes are cold and focused as he puts on his motorcycle helmet.

He scans the illegible instrument panel with trembling fingers. They retract a moment and he puts on the 3D glasses.

Through the boy's 3D POV, the mishmash of overlapping red and green scribbles suddenly converge and form a perfect control panel.

He concentrates as he presses a button now clearly read as 'ENGAGE'.

The sounds of his neighborhood morph from lawn mowers and chirping birds into engines roaring and alien soundscapes pulsating. Into sewing machines sewing.

He holds on tight and braces for takeoff.

6 EXT - BACKYARD - NIGHT 6

The sleeping boy is carried back across the lawn by his father. He does not stir.

The sky is littered with stars.

7 INT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 7

The boy is asleep in his bunkbed; a veritable fortress with walls formed from overhanging blankets and a solar system diorama hanging inside.

There comes a gentle tap-tap-tap from somewhere downstairs.

The boy stirs.

There it is again: tap-tap-tap.

The boy opens his eyes and pulls himself out of bed.

8 INT - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS 8

The boy walks down the stairs in his astronaut-lined pajamas.

9 INT - FRONT ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS 9

The little boy walks up quickly in the way that little boys do to the door, which he unlocks quickly and swings open.

A CREATURE stands at the door.

Light pours in from behind it and mist loiters in the background. The Creature is a lumbering composite of organic mishmash, aluminum foil and something that looks distinctly like a curtain.

The eyes of the little boy open terribly wide. He gasps.

THE CREATURE

You have tried to contact me, oh brave human.

The boy nods quickly and silently.

The Creature gestures with his hands awkwardly.

THE CREATURE (CONT'D)

Do not think that your efforts have gone unnoticed. You are indeed a true intergalactic explorer.

The little boy takes a step forward before taking an awkward step back again.

He softly speaks his request:

BOY

Will you stay?

THE CREATURE

No. I must return to my planet presently, little one. But remember me and that I once visited you here. Live in harmony with your kind, oh brave human. Live long and prosper. May the force be with you.

The boy nods. This is profound.

The Creature backtracks and turns his massive bulk around. As he shuffles away, a metal object drops from his back leg and falls to the ground with a soft \*clink\*.

The boy waits to see if the Creature takes notice. When he doesn't, the boy leans down to snag the object and disappears back into the house.

10 INT - STAIRCASE - NIGHT 10

The little boy climbs back up the stairs, hands firmly cupped together.

11 INT - THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR - NIGHT 11

The Creature enters and removes his head.

The old man that hid underneath it moves to the fridge and removes a beer.

He cracks it open. As he smiles, the objects within the room emanate a subtle glow.

12 INT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 12

The little boy sits next to his window and slowly uncups his hands. He picks up the shiny metal object from within and holds it up to the heavens and the stars that sit within it.

It glows.

He is awed by the world.

T.V. SPACE CADET (O.S.)  
One day that man shall come,  
Captain. One day that man shall  
come.

FADE TO BLACK