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Budding Writers Contest 2023

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## Contact

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A room of seven people gather inside a modular command post, built in the restricted zone surrounding an unidentified craft dubbed.

Infantry general Smith has been at the crashed spacecraft since it was first discovered by a small camping group traveling through the Yukon boreal forests. He was accompanied by four members of the space agency and two members of defense research from the nearest station once the national government had been notified. Three more people are let into the tent, navy general Johnson, air force general Williams, and prime minister Brown, they make their way around a steel box with a nine inch diameter window that contains the spacecraft.

"Is the media blackout still in place?" Asks general Smith as soon as prime minister Brown walks in.

"Yes, and the only people who know about this are still the people at this camp."

"What about the campers who found this?" General Johnson looks away from the window to General Smith.

"They're inside a tent under constant surveillance."

"Alright, what does it look like? What is it made of?"

"The "Alien Voyager" was made of two parts, one is a large metal web with globs of translucent residue left on the skeleton. The research team claims that the puddles of residue around the spacecraft are the same. The second structure is a smooth cylinder, about half the size of the steel web. The cylinder is the size of a buggy car, the open hatch on one end of the cylinder is -" Dr. Dor is cut off.

"Are you certain this isn't spyware?" Asks prime minister Brown.

"Most likely. The metal cannot be identified, nor can the translucent residue, let alone what's inside the craft." Replies Dr. Gor of the space agency.

"Then are you saying this is alien?"

"I wouldn't discount it. What else would it do?"

"We have to tell other governments then. This isn't a matter of national security, it's a matter of international security!"

"No we can't. We haven't agreed that this isn't spyware." Says General Williams.

"We can find out what this is faster if we bring in our allied agencies at least." Dr. Or of defensive research says.

"And, we have to decipher the code as well." Adds Dr. Dor of the space agency.

"Code?" Asks General Johnson.

"On the walls were rings of glyphs circling the floor, ceiling, and walls, and on the other end is a ring half the size of the back wall made of braided purple metal. We have a team of codebreakers working on it right now."

"Wouldn't a code mean it's even more likely to be spyware?"

"We can't even identify any of the materials used to make the ship. The code doesn't point to anything."

"Then why would aliens send us a code?"

"I'm not sure. It could be an attempt at first contact."

"This sounds ludicrous. You think this unidentified craft is aliens trying to make first contact?"

"It's not impossible. You can't completely discount that possibility."

"But it's near impossible! Why would you-"

They are cut off by a soldier rushing into the tent.

"Sir. The code has been deciphered."

"What? That fast?" General Smith asks, confused.

"Yes. It was repeating one glyph."

"The entire craft was covered in one glyph?" Dr. Gor asks.

"Yes. It was this craft leaving our solar system."

"Well what does that mean exactly?"

"They are telling us to leave."

A bang from the craft interrupts the stunned silence. General Smith looks into the window and does not see the large metal web, nor the cylindrical body. All he sees is the translucent residue and a pile of black sand.