

BOATS

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“It’s a Sci-fa!”

BOATS

By

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“What I have written I have written.”

John 19:22

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Chapter 1

Francis

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Hello, my name is Francis and I am going to tell you a story about what happened to me recently.

Alright, let's start shall we?

It was a very pleasant cold morning. Pleasant, because it had been raining all night. I wore my best clothes that morning. Black suit and black tie.

There was me, which is Francis. And there were many people, which were the people in the town's only library. I sat in the row farthest from the entrance door. The table nobody else sat in. I like to be alone. I'm a bit of a loner you see. I think people are best left that way. Being alone. The book I was reading was "*How To Socialize*". Ironic, I know. Maybe too ironic.

Then again, what was not those days. There was a wide selection of books. From nothing to everything; literature, newspapers, geography, science, history, politics, music, arts, etcetera, etcetera. Very well balanced the library was, and well organized too.

Ah! And who doesn't know the best aspect of libraries. Silence. The place was so silent, somebody's breathing sounded like the sound of panting. When their breathing combined, it sounded like the Sex Philharmonic Orchestra. And you could hear it kilometers away. Even beyond the

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vanishing point. It was a very big library, thus everything echoed.

So, back to the people, the same old folks I see every time I went there. In the corner next to the window, a group of young blokes which I reckoned are college students, judging by the way they dress. The other corner, an old man. Spectacles, cardigan, white moustache and beard. He looked like a professor that you see on the telly. And the librarian, a woman. She was quite pretty, really. Not the typical type which people visualize when they refer to a librarian; skinny, wearing big glasses, and overlong skirt. No. Our librarian here had fair blond hair, very fair reflection. She was as white as snow. Although, albino she was not, her cyan veins were visible beneath her transparent skin. As if she were plucked from the womb of Scandinavia. She was wearing a Sunday dress with sparrows as pattern like they were flying around her body. Beautiful. She was sitting all alone at the counter at the center of the lobby.

I never talked to anyone of them, though. Like I said I'm a loner. At that point, I had to go because the panting was getting too loud.

I returned the book I was reading to where I took it from and adjusted my tie while examining the people through the gaps between the books on the shelf.

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As I walked slowly along the aisle to the main entrance, they stared at me. As though I had something on my face. I pretended not to notice their staring but I did. They always do that. It's really uncomfortable when people are staring at you with their big eyes. Sometimes, I just want to grab them by their collar and shout in their faces: *What the fuck are you looking at, you worthless shit!* I'm sorry, I just hated it when people stared at me. Why couldn't they just mind their own business?

I was halfway to the door when I thought I heard the librarian said; "Weirdo."

I turned around and looked at her back, busy writing. I did not feel offended or surprised though. It could be just the wind.

I opened the door and felt the chill air vacuumed into the house of knowledge.

When I got out of the library, I loosen up a bit. It was too tense in the there.

I stopped at the side of my car, a blue Volkswagen, to unlock the door. As I was unlocking it, there was a crash of thunder, so I looked up and thought: *It's beginning to rain again. Sweet rain.*

I had always liked the rain ever since I was a young lad in primary school.

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Every time there was a thunder up in the heavens, and it gets dark, I'd get excited because by then there would be a chance that there would be a flood, therefore I didn't have to go to school.

It was like an addiction. Once you start liking it, you'll never stop.

I got in the car, and drove off to work. While I was quietly driving to work, with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Divertimento in D major, K 136*, "Salzburg Symphony No 1", *Allegro* filling the whole car, intertwined with the tempo of the repeating movement of the wipers as though they were a pair of metronomes functioning simultaneously. I had something else in my mind other than focusing on the road. A conversation was taking place in my head.

Our next guest is an artist who had just finished his masterpiece called "untitled". Please put your hands together for Francis Bailiwick.

Applause.

So you've just finished your masterpiece. I understand it took you about a year to finish it?

First of all, Guinness, I'd like to thank you for inviting me to your show, it is an honor.

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Applause.

Yes that's correct, Guinness, old chap. It did take me about a year to complete this project.

I've looked at your painting and what I saw is a picture of a vagina. Why did it take you about twelve months to paint a vagina?

Painting a twat can be quite complicated.

The model was moving a lot huh?

Exactly.

The audience laughs.

And we had to wait for the crabs to clear off too.

The audience laughs.

Why the vagina? Does your painting mean anything? Does it symbolize something?

Sigh. I don't know, I guess I was just doing it for a laugh.

Thank you for being here. Francis Bailiwick!

The audience cheers.

"Oi! Get your arse moving!"

I looked at the rear-view mirror and saw a man in his car menacingly

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pressing the car horn.

I looked up and thought, “Oh, I see. The traffic light had turned green,” so I then drove away without apologizing to the poor man behind me.

The sweet smell of the rain gave me energy to work that morning.

When I arrived to my workplace, my secretary greeted me.

“Good morning, Mr. Bailiwick. Didn’t expect you to come so soon,” she said sitting in her desk under the fluorescent light.

“Good morning. Any messages?” I asked, folding my umbrella and shaking it a bit.

“None.”

I nodded my head once.

After I entered my office and opened my briefcase, the phone rang.

“Bailiwick art gallery.”

“Hello, is this Mr. Bailiwick?”

“Yes, this is he.”

I had been an artist for more than five years. Never thought about doing something else, really. It was either that or living in the city with millions of people. And all the pollutions. I can’t even imagine.

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I made a stop at the grocery store after work to buy some things. I was at the end of the queue when I noticed a pyramid of detergent boxes and thought it was ingenious. I mean, the man was not even trying.

I went home to my lonely house, which was surrounded by trees and nature, and away from people. The perfect location for an introvert.

That midnight I was watching Late Night with Guinness Ripley in my pajamas. The show which my fantasy *tete-a-tete* was based upon.

I tell you, there was nothing like watching the Guinness on a rainy night. Especially on a rainy night.

“Thank you for watching this show. We’ll be having more guests tomorrow. Good night.”

The end credits were rolling up when I said good night to my comedian ‘friend’.

“Good night, my friend.”

Click. I switched off the telly. And slowly headed to bed after brushing my teeth.

Lying in my bed, I was thinking about the late show that I previously watched. Remembering the jokes Guinness told. My imagination just went

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wild after that.

Laughing in bed in the darkness as time passed by. Just like every other night.

“You crack me up, Guinness. Stop!” I said laughing.

I was like a madman, talking and laughing alone hysterically. But at least it made me tired. I slept soundly that night. Oh how I did.

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Chapter 2

The Abduction

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The sun rose from the horizon. Birds were chirping. Another morning had come forth.

The next morning was different than any other morning of my life because that particular morning changed it.

It all started with a ring, literally.

The alarm clock rang at 9 a.m.

I didn't come awake with a jerk. It only took approximately one second for me to be awakened by the ringing. Another after-rain morning to kill off my appetite for breakfast. I sat up, looked around, a few seconds later, swerved my leg and stomped my feet on the floor, turned the alarm off and walked straight to the shower. I put on my usual attire, black suit and black tie.

Breakfast didn't do me any good. Troublesome to my stomach.

I didn't have breakfast because it gives me stomach discomfort. Which probably was the reason I'm as skinny as an anorexic in a critical stage.

After grabbing my briefcase, I walked out the door, locking it with a padlock and got in my car. After carrying out my daily routine, I was all ready to go to the library and faced my ordeal of being stared at as usual. What kept me going to the library? I don't know. The librarian? Perhaps. The

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books? Definitely.

While driving, I listened to “*Little Fugue*” in *G Minor* by Johann Sebastian Bach. That piece was a perfect crescendo and perfect for that particular morning as well.

I noticed it was getting dark so I got excited because I thought it was going to rain. I soon realized that it was not clouds but something else. I looked up through the windshield but couldn’t really verify what it was. I wanted to get a clearer view so I braked and got out of the car. Coincidentally, when the fugue entered its finale, I started to realize it was a huge, massive craft. The moments were in unison with the music. As if the music was the score for that particular scene. The craft then shone a light on me and the light carried me up into the floating craft. And the fugue ended. Like I said, perfect for that morning. One minute you’re driving quietly in your small car, the next, you’re abducted by a huge unidentified flying object.

Later that night, I woke up in my car. Cricking of crickets echoed all around me. I looked around then at my watch. It was eight fifteen at night. I remembered the bright light incident, and knew that it had something to do

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with my being not conscious.

I tried to remember what happened to me next, but to no avail, couldn't.

Checking myself for injuries, I felt relieved because there was none.

I quickly started the car, steered it around and sped home.

When I arrived to my house, I got in the house quickly after I got out of the car. I double-locked all the doors and took a hot shower. I wiped the steam off the mirror and looked at myself. "What happened?", I said sotto-voce. A pang struck my head.

I squeezed my head with my two hands. I was shutting my eyes hardly and gritting my teeth. I was not able to stand up properly so I held on to the sink for support. Amidst the pain, I had a blurry vision of a place unknown to me. It then suddenly stopped and I sighed in relief.

"What happened to me?"

Again, I looked at myself in the mirror, sweating.

The next morning, just after the sun rose fully, I sat in my favorite sofa, drinking vodka. I had not been asleep, because I wanted to remember. I felt like I was raped after being offered a spiked beverage.

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I stared blankly at the painting on the wall, my painting. My *piece de resistance*. There are also sculptures, which I made, in my room. As an artist, I liked hanging my paintings on the wall or even my sculptures.

The phone rang and it startled me.

I dropped the glass I was holding, and it broke.

“Hello?”

“Mr. Bailiwick, you didn’t turn up yesterday, are you well?” It was my secretary.

“I wasn’t feeling well.”

“Can I do anything for you?”

“No, I uh I’m OK now. Don’t worry.”

“Alright, what ever you say. I’m just concerned. Good bye”

“Goodbye.”

After an hour passed, I had decided to see a doctor. I walked out the door, and drove off to a hospital.

At the hospital, I complained to a doctor, Dr. Inkhorn, about the headache and the vision I had. He did some standard medical procedure and x-rayed my head.

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“According to these x-rays, there is nothing wrong with your brain. It is possible that you crashed your car and suffered delusions and minor case of amnesia after being unconscious.”

“But the car is fine.”

“You said you were taken up by a floating craft?” he asked, “I have received similar cases, but not many though. Mister...” he referred to his notes, “..Bailiwick, I’m sending you to a friend of mine.” he reached for his shirt pocket and gave me a card.

“U.A.T...U.F.O Abduction Therapy?” I read.

“Yes. I believe Dr. Rowntree can help you. You are not alone in this and certainly not the first either. Here’s something for the seizure.” he handed me a bottle of medications.

The doctor walked out the door, leaving me sitting alone on the bed.

Right after that, I drove and arrived to a flat(apartment) building-like structure. It said on the card, “UAT, Empire Building, 3rd floor.” So I went up to the third floor.

There was a door which had “UAT” written on it, I opened the door, and everybody in the room stopped talking and turned to me.

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“Can I help you?” asked Dr. Rowntree, he was the only one who was standing while his patients were sitting down.

“Dr. Inkhorn sends me here...”

“Ah yes, you must be Francis. Take a seat please.”

I walked to the corner, at the far end of the room. There were a motley group of people there. There were five including Dr. Rowntree, but God, again with the staring.

“Do you know why you are here, Francis?”

“Not really.”

“You are here because you were abducted by aliens from outer space.”

I paused for a while, surprised at his straight answer. “But I don’t remember a thing.”

“We all didn’t at first. That’s the reason you are here, so I can help you remember what happened to you.”

“I was sent here to receive treatment.” I interrupted.

“Francis, medically there’s nothing wrong with you. We are here to understand and learn to cope with the existence of aliens from another planet and their purpose here.”

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I just sighed silently.

“I believe you have visions. As time goes by, they won’t be much of a trouble for you.” Dr. Rowntree promised.

After the meeting adjourned, everybody walked out the main door and some were talking to each other.

“So, Dr. Inkhorn sent you here,” said someone behind me in a feminine voice.

I turned around and asked, “Excuse me?” to a short black haired female peer in a gray sweater and a long skirt.

“I’m Dolores. What’s your name again?”

“My name is Francis.”

“Nice to meet you, Francis. How come I’ve never seen you in this town before?”

“Because I didn’t want to be seen?” I wisely answered. “So you’ve been attending this meeting for a long time?”

“Two years. Let’s go to the coffee shop and get to know each other”, she pointed to the shop opposite us.

“Sure, but you’re buying,” answered I after considering for a while.

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Inside the coffee shop...

“Thank you,” Dolores said after paying the cashier. She walked towards me carrying a tray with two cups of coffee on it.

I sat next to the window, looking at her, thinking how similar she looked to the librarian.

She sat down.

“Here you go,” she handed out a cup of coffee from the tray to me, after putting down the tray on the table.

“Thank you. So, how did you get involved in this U.F.O meeting?”

“U.A.T.?”

I nodded my head.

“Two years ago, I was driving on Coroner road,” she started.

“I was around that area, when I was abducted,” I interrupted.

“Yes, in fact most of the people who attend U.A.T. were abducted at Coroner road. Anyway, while I was driving, a huge U.F.O was above me and it turned the day into night. Then as if it was the sun appearing after an eclipse, it suddenly turned bright then the light picked me up. After that, I woke up in the car at night.”

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“The exact same thing happened to me,” I said softly, as I sipped from my cup.

I looked at Dolores drinking, for half a minute.

“Dolores, do you really think it was a U.F.O that abducted us?”

“Yes. What other explanations are there?”

“Well it could be mentally related,” I interrupted quickly “it could be just our imagination. I’ve read about this in the library.”

“You’re saying we are all crazy?”

“Not crazy or insane. Only delusional. Interference on the brain’s normal activities. I mean memory loss and illusions are scientifically proven but UFOs?”

Dolores looked down and then, looked at me, “You’re a skeptic. But I don’t blame you. There’s nothing you can say or do to change my beliefs,” warned Dolores. She picked up her coat beside where she was sitting, stood up and looked at me. “It will come to your senses.”

I regretted Dolores’s departure as I watched her walked away.

In my home studio that evening, I painted as usual while listening to Dvorak’s *Slavonic Dance No. 3 in A flat major, Op. 46, “Polka”* but

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suddenly, I had another episode, just as the piece entered its first accented interlude. I dropped my brush and squeezed my head with both hands.

I had a vision, it was slightly clear. The fit stopped. I decided to paint it on canvas, abandoning my current project.

At the end of the day, I had finished five paintings based on what I saw when I had an attack.

I headed for the kitchen to fix myself a drink or two.

“Maybe having this condition wasn’t such a bad thing after all.”

I drank the whole thing at one go to satisfy my yen for a glass of vodka, after swallowing the headache pills.

The next morning, I drove off to the U.A.T. meeting. On my way, I stumbled upon a dead deer blocking my path on Coroner road.

I got out of my car to move the dead deer out of my way.

I opened the boot and grabbed a shovel out.

The sound of the boot slammed devoured the silence.

I walked towards the dead deer, and when I got near it, I squatted down and noticed the animal was breathing softly thus observed it carefully while squinting a bit.

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I moved my head closer and closer to the animal's until the deer suddenly woke up. I, who thought the deer was dead, had the surprise of my life. I then fell down backward, dirtying my back.

I watched the animal entering the woods and vanished into the mountains. I then walked quickly to my car, got in, and drove off.

At the U.A.T., I sat where I sat yesterday; at the back. I waited very quietly and patiently for the session to end.

When it finally did, I confronted Dolores and told her about the incident earlier this morning.

"Dolores, I have to tell you something," I said before realizing that I was upsetting her yesterday. "Look, I apologize about yesterday when I opposed to your belief in UFOs."

"It's OK. At least you have your own opinion," she seemed to have forgiven me.

We walked to the same coffee shop that windy day.

"Thank you," Dolores said with a smile as I handed her a cup of coffee.

"So what is it?"

"I stumbled upon a deer this morning. On Coroner Road. I thought it was

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dead.”

“You stumbled upon a dead deer?”

“No. I thought it was dead.”

“So, it was not dead?”

“No... I mean yes...”

Dolores showed a confused impression on her face.

“What I’m trying to say is that I stumbled upon a deer this morning, lying on the road which I thought was dead. So I tried to move it to the side of the road. But suddenly it woke up.

“So?”

“What do you mean, ‘so’?”

“So what if you found a deer on the road? It could had been hit by a car...”

I was stumped by her reply. At that point it felt like she seemed to have her revenge on me.

I looked at her and she started to smile. I smiled back and replied,

“Animals are merely food anyway.”

And we both burst laughing.

We went to my house after that. I reckoned I should invite someone who

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faced the same fate as I did.

I unlocked and opened the front door.

“Come in. What do you think of my house?”

Dolores looked around. “Frankly, it’s quite messy...”

“Well, tidiness is a sign of insanity,” Answered I with the least of wit I possessed.

She noticed there was no pictures of loved ones in the house.

“You don’t mix around much, do you?”

“No. And I like it, mind you. Call me an anti-social or whatever you want to call me. It’s my life.”

“Why do you live that way? Don’t you get lonely?”

“I had my own way to keep myself in company,” I answered referring to my imaginary interviews.

“What do you do by the way?” she asked while looking around.

“You are staring at it,” I said, pointing to a painting she was looking at entitled “despair”.

“You’re a painter?”

“Artist.” I reproached.

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“I see.”

“Please, have a seat.”

We sat down on the sofa.

“So tell me about your childhood, since you don’t have a life,” asked Dolores sarcastically, smiling, whilst toying with the statuette she took from the table in front of us.

“Well, I didn’t have a happy childhood either. I was born and raised in the city nearby. I moved here for peace and quiet. At school I was bullied for being different because I could move things with my mind, predict the future and read thoughts.”

“Right,” She said unconvinced.

“No, really.”

“Alright, what am I thinking of now?”

“But I can’t do it anymore. I’ve lost it.”

Dolores rolled her eyes and shook her head.

“It’s getting late. I have to go now. See you at the meeting tomorrow,” she got up from the couch and went home but left her presence in the living room.

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The next morning, at the U.A.T., Dr. Rowntree introduced a method of therapy to me, which was called hypnotic memory recall.

“Francis, come. Lie down,” Said Dr. Rowntree presenting a long lying couch.

“What are you planning to do to me?” I asked lying down with the other abductees, including Dolores, watching.

“I’m going to try a hypnotic method on you. But before we begin, let me explain what hypnotism is.”

“Hypnotism is derived from the Greek word *hupnos* which means “sleep”. So basically, you will be in a sleep-like state,” continued Dr. Rowntree after taking a deep breath.

“Let’s begin, shall we?”

“Let’s,” answered I.

“Shut your eyes, Francis. Relax,” said Dr. Rowntree in a low tone.

At that moment, I had become a zombie. Descended into the depths of the unconscious.

“Francis, can you go back to the time prior being abducted?”

“Yes,” I answered with my eyes closed.

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“What are you doing now?”

“I am driving down the road.”

“What’s happening now?” asked Dr. Rowntree.

“Darkness.

I am out of the car now but I can still hear the music in my car.

The light, the bright light! It’s picking me up! I am afraid. Help,” I said, softly.

“Francis, where are you now?”

“I am on a bed or table. Shadows are surrounding me. Dark figures. They are touching me. Drilling my neck. It hurts,” I whispered. “Stop it, please,” I begged in tears.

“Francis, you are now awake,” Dr. Rowntree snapped his fingers.

I woke up and sat straight and wiped the tears off my face, “That was intense. But, why didn’t I remember any of them before?”

“They were actually there all this while. But only hidden. The human brain stores memories but never loses them.”

“Welcome to the club, Francis.” Dolores said softly.

I wiped my face and covered it with my hands and just sat on the sofa.

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Silence surrounded the room for a while.

When it was time to go home, Dolores and I chatted up a bit as usual.

“Dolores. I’m sorry that I didn’t believe you. It’s just hard to believe, that’s all.”

“It’s alright. At least you know the truth now,” she said, smiling.

“I want to make it up to you. I know. I’ll take you out tonight.”

“That would be fine, but in the mean time, do you want to join me for a cup of coffee?”

“No, sorry. I have to go home. I have something to do.” I had to go home to paint. “I’ll see you tonight.”

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Chapter 3

Dolores

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An ambulance rushes through the quiet desert in the middle of the night followed by a black sedan. Sand flying in the air.

Inside the ambulance, paramedics trying the best they can to save the life of the crash victim.

“Don’t you dare die on me...” one of the paramedics mumbles.

“How the hell should we know what to give this guy?” the other one asks.

“Just do your job!”

The driver of the ambulance peers through the curtain, with wide opened eyes.

“Oh my God!”

He couldn’t believe his eyes, couldn’t believe that he’s driving to save perhaps the most important person.

This could be the most important duty in his career.

In fact, this is the most important duty in his life.

“It’s true! What they say... It’s true!” he thought while focusing on the road.

The ambulance goes on faster.

As the ambulance reaches its destination, a big gate opens for it to pass. It

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then pulls over right in front of the military hospital main entrance.

Hospital staffs then hurry to the ambulance with a stretcher and the victim is carried into the hospital.

The black sedan too pulls over, next to the ambulance. As the door opens, a respected sergeant gets out of the sedan and walks into the hospital in a rush.

“How is he?” the doctor asks as he walks with the other hospital staffs. The doctor isn’t as surprised as the others as if he’s been notified of the victims’ arrival.

“Not too good, Doctor.”

“Pressures down.”

As they enter the operation room, the staffs immediately ready the instruments required to perform the operation. As the light shines on the victim’s face, his identity is revealed to us.

His big black shiny eyes shimmer as the light touches them.

Big oval shaped head. Nostrils with no nose.

A very small mouth.

And a very small body.

He appears to be naked.

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Short legs.

Long fingers.

Yes, it's the description of some one or some thing we all are familiar of.

The description of an alien. A space alien.

It seems to be in pain. Not physical pain but emotional pain. It's longing for it's loved one.

It seems to be remembering something...

Earlier before

In space, not far from Earth, a spaceship zooms down to Earth. Obviously, it's malfunctioned as you can judge by the smoke.

Inside the spaceship, there are two aliens. A couple you can say. The other one, the female, is pregnant.

Her lover is holding her hand and stomach in an emotional state. Their spaceship is going to crash on Earth in a few seconds. They are very terrified.

The space ship is in flame. It falls faster and faster. It looks like a falling star from an Earthling pedestrian point of view.

Finally it crashes.

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He then wakes up. Not remembering where he is, he looks around. He's in a room. Lying in a comfortable bed in a warm room, covered in a blanket. A tube runs through his right arm.

He sees his reflection in the wall mirror in front of him.

The door opens, the doctor, the general and a nurse enter.

"Ah! You've woken up," says the doctor.

They stand beside him.

"So how is he, Doctor?" asks the general.

"Well, he's in a good shape so far. But he needs to undergo for more surgery."

"Can he hear us?"

"Yes."

"Hello, my name is General Robertson. You were involved in a crash. You are in good care now. This is Doctor Franklin."

Dr. Franklin stretches his arm to the patient to give him a hand shake.

"Nice to meet you."

They shake hands.

He tries to get up.

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“No, no, don’t get up,” Dr. Franklin and General Robertson try to calm him down.

The protagonist seems to be wondering where he is, wobbling his head side by side.

“Look! He’s trying to tell us something,” the nurse cries.

“Doctor, is he capable of speaking?” asks General Robertson.

“I don’t know.”

“Are you trying to tell us something?” asks General Robertson loudly.

“Where am I?” asks the alien patient.

“Did he just talk?” asks the nurse.

“His mouth didn’t seem moving,” says Dr. Franklin. “He’s talking through his mind. Amazing!”

“You are in a hospital. You were in a crash,” says the doctor. He then pauses, “You speak English!”

“I don’t speak your language, I have psychic powers which can convert the things I tell you to English. Where’s my wife?”

“Your wife?” asks Dr. Franklin.

“Yes, my wife.”

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The Dr. Franklin turns his head to General Robertson and the nurse.

“We’re sorry, we didn’t find anyone but you in the crash site.”

The alien is upset and saddened by the news.

Behind the wall mirror were men in military uniforms. Observing the alien and the conversation.

“I still can’t believe this. What do we say to the public?” asks a military official.

“Say nothing! This is confidential. Nothing goes beyond this building. Is the president informed yet?” asks another official.

“Yes. He’s coming over,” answers the first official.

“Sir, the president is here,” announces a private as he enters the secret room.

“About fucking time,” says the second official.

“You need your rest,” says Dr. Franklin to the patient.

Dr. Franklin, General Robertson, and the nurse left the room.

“Um, doctor, when is he going to be fully recovered?” asks General Robertson.

“In a few days I hope...”

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“We all do, doctor,” says the nurse.

Meanwhile, outside the hospital, the president arrives in his limousine.

“So how did you like the movie?” I asked Dolores, walking out of the theatre with many other viewers.

“Hmm. I guess it was alright. Seemed kind of familiar.”

“Yeah, it was. Wasn’t it?” I chuckled.

“Maybe they should make a movie about us next,” said she while chewing on popcorn.

It was raining that night. Luckily I had an umbrella with me. I unfolded the black umbrella and walked Dolores to the car. One could never leave home without an umbrella in that town that month. “It’s been raining lately has it not?”

I opened the door for her and she got in. We didn’t say a word. We only smiled to each other. Like characters in a silent movie speaking in body language. “So, where do you want to go now?” asked I.

“Home, please,” she politely answered.

I drove Dolores home. While in the car, I asked her out again by inviting her to my painting exhibition.

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“I’m holding an exhibition of my new paintings. They are called “Visions”.

I would be really chuffed if you could come.”

“When is it?”

“This Saturday.”

“Sure.”

“Really? Alright then.”

“What time?”

“Um, eight o’clock? Post meridiem.”

She just nodded.

“My life is a silent movie,” I thought.

I looked at Dolores. She seemed like she had something on her mind. I was about to ask what the matter was.

“Francis, have you ever wondered which planet UFOs come from?”

“I don’t know. Why do you suddenly ask?”

“Oh, must be the film we just saw.”

I thought about it for a while, “No, I have never really thought about it.”

We finally arrived to her house. “Let me walk you to the house,” I grabbed an umbrella from the back seat and walked her to her home, “So, goodnight.

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See you this Saturday.”

“Okay,” she said as if expecting a goodnight kiss but I walked away and she entered her home.

Psychics, clairvoyants, soothsayers, shamans, necromancers, mediums, and witches. These people claimed to or do have special abilities to summon, to see, to contact, to talk to, to command spirits from another realm or scientifically speaking, dimensions. But none of them ever claim to have been or have contacted aliens from the nearby space.

The gallery was full of people all cheery, chatting, drinking. They seemed to react appropriately to the music, Handel’s *Harp and Harpsichord Concerto*. I watched the entrance door, waiting anxiously for her to come.

When she finally did, in a fancy dress, I felt happy. Something I had not felt in years.

“I almost thought that you would never come,” I said approaching her.

“Don’t be silly. I would never do that to you.”

I was showing Dolores the paintings and explaining the details.

“I’ve never had these visions before. They have far more complex and intricate details,” said Dolores referring to the paintings.

BOATS

I dropped the glass I was holding and it broke.

“Francis!” cried Dolores.

I had another fit. I couldn’t stand up properly.

The visions were getting vividly clearer though. It was a mountain site with many trees and a cave.

Everybody stared at me.

Dolores opened her purse and took out a bottle of headache pills and poured some into my mouth. I loathed them out onto the floor.

The headache stopped but I was still not stable. They were still staring at me and I couldn’t stand it.

“Let’s get out of here,” she suggested and helped me to the door. The concerto faded as I was carried away outside.

She then helped me getting in her car. I remember lying in the back seat watching the lampposts above through the back windshield. Moving backwards swiftly. The lights were so beautiful. They somehow soothed me to sleep.

When I came to, I was in an unfamiliar place; Dolores’s house, lying in her sofa in front of the telly. Dolores had just ushered the babysitter to the door

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and said thank you and good night.

“How do you feel?”

“I’m fine now. A bit dizzy though. What happened?” I asked whilst massaging my temple, sitting up.

“You had an attack and fainted. I gave you some pills, but I brought you home anyway since it’s the closest to the gallery.”

Dolores introduced to me a little girl sitting in front of the television. “This is my little sister, Eugenia.”

“How are you? That’s my favorite show,” I said while pointing to the telly which the late show was on.

But she just kept quiet.

“She’s very quiet,” Dolores explained.

I replied with an “Oh.” Then a smile.

“How old is she?” I asked.

“Seven in a couple of months.”

“Why isn’t she in bed yet?” I concernedly asked.

“She’s not sleepy yet,” Dolores carried her to the sofa.

“Doesn’t she go to school tomorrow?”

BOATS

“No. She’s home schooled instead,” Dolores kissed her little sister’s forehead.

“What happened to your parents?”

“They died in a car crash a while ago.”

“I’m sorry.”

We laughed every time Guinness made a joke.

It was perfect. Watching my favorite show with the people I like.

But suddenly, it all came back to me. The old Guinness Ripley.

And again for the tenth time, Francis Bailiwick.

Cheer

So Francis you got yourself a family, huh?

Chuckle.

But wouldn’t you prefer your life then? What happened to your principle in life, Francis? You should be watching my show alone. Remember the good times we had, Francis. Come back to me, Francis.

I realized that I was beginning to miss Guinness.

I excused myself to the bathroom. I was washing my hands when I got curious on what was behind the mirror. So I opened it.

BOATS

There were many medicine bottles and one of them was a bottle of migraine pills as labeled, exactly the same as the one I had at home. I grabbed it and looked at it in my hand. I kept quiet for a while. The bottle, I felt, represented the similarity between her and I. Will I betray her by leaving her? Won't she need me? Or will I need her?

I was closing the shelf when suddenly when I looked at the mirror, Guinness was behind me.

I turned around and he was right in front of me.

“What are you doing here? You shouldn't be here,” I said

“Francis, I'm here to save you.”

“What are you talking about?”

The small, cramped bathroom then magically changed into the Late Show set.

This is Late Night with Guinness Ripley!!

“Sit down Francis.”

“Let's take a look at a 'clip' we have on your future with Dolores.”

The clip showed a scene of Dolores and myself arguing.

“She will run off with another man because you will not get used to

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married life. You will yearn solitude eventually.” Guinness was moving closer and closer to me from his seat. “End your relationship with her now. I know the reason you keep going to that bloody therapy session is because of her. You don’t have to do that any longer and meet people. You will be free again.”

I looked at Guinness in the eyes. I agreed with him.

“End this now before it gets too complicated,” ordered Guinness.

The clip of Dolores and myself arguing was still running when the ‘interview’ was cut short by knockings on the door.

“Francis, are you alright in there? I heard some talking.”

“Yes, I’m alright, Dolores. I was just singing,” I continued, relieved that everything was back to normal again.

I opened the door and she stood there worried.

“Are you sure you are fine? Did you have another attack?”

“No, I’m fine.”

She observed my face with a serious expression on hers.

“I have to go now,” I concluded. “Could you drive me to the gallery to get my car?”

BOATS

“You can stay if you want to. I have a spare bedroom.”

“No. I should go. My house is not secured. I have not locked the doors,” I lied for Guinness’s sake

“Alright. I’ll get my jacket,” she walked to the coat hanger next to the door and turned her head to her sister, “Come on Eugenia.”

We just kept quiet along the drive. I was just looking out the window.

“Thank you for the hospitality,” I thanked, “Bye, Eugenia,” Eugenia just looked at me and quickly turned her head back to the comic book she was reading.

I was lying in my bed later that night talking to “Guinness” in the dark.

“Ah. You pulled it off perfectly, my friend but it’s not over yet. You’ll have to leave her tomorrow,” Guinness’s voice echoed from the darkness.

“We’ll be together again when you do.”

The next day, I called Dolores up.

“Dolores can I meet you sometime? I have to see you.”

“Sure. I’m free this evening.”

“Let’s meet at the grocery store. I have to buy some groceries. Sorry for the inconvenience.”

BOATS

“It’s no trouble. No trouble at all,” she said, smiling, I assumed.

“See you then.”

I was waiting for her next to where they placed the shopping carts, holding a bag of groceries after I had done my shopping.

She arrived just when I was going to give up and she seemed happy. I felt reluctant to tell her.

“So what is it?” she asked.

“I think we should no longer see each other again,” I said emotionlessly.

“What? Why?” her mood suddenly changed.

“It’s hard to say.”

“Oh, come on tell me.”

“It’s just that...”

“What?”

“I want my life back.”

“What do you mean?”

“I miss being alone again,” I immediately turned my back and walked away.

“Perhaps I can help you, Francis. You don’t have to shun anymore,” she

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said after a second of trailing after me.

I turned around and looked at her, “I don’t need help. I’m fine. Now leave me alone!” I raved.

She was a bit shocked because I shouted at her. “Life? You call seclusion a life?! That is absolute bunkum with a capital B!” she shouted angrily.

“Yes. So what?!” I said likewise.

I walked off but she chased me and pushed me to the floor. I knocked the pyramid of detergent boxes I saw earlier. Should had known better not to criticize someone else’s work. Everybody was looking.

“What’s wrong with you?!” I shouted.

“Nothing! You’re the one with a problem!”

There was silence in the store. The whole place had frozen.

She looked at me in disgust and walked away. I was still laying on the floor with boxes of detergent scattered around and people were still looking at me, but somehow I didn’t care. For the first time, I didn’t care that people were staring at me.

Perhaps it was because I felt sorry for Dolores. Or myself.

BOATS

Chapter 4

The truth

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Late that night, I was watching old Guinness on the telly but with less enthusiasm. Well, actually, none at all. I felt miserable about leaving Dolores and the fact that she could be right.

I was sitting in my sofa with one hand against my cheek as Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* lingered in my head.

"Well Francis, things are not going too well, are they?" the camera zoomed-in on Guinness.

"Oh no, Guinness old chap."

"Well, at least you still have me, mate," he patted me on the left shoulder.

"What do you mean? She reacted violently," I stood up from the chair and pointed at the telly. "It's all your fault, Guinness! I never should have listened to you!" I raved, when all of a sudden I screamed. "Ouch!"

Another fit. It was so severe that I thought my head was going to explode. However, the sonata was getting louder though.

I collapsed to the floor with both hands squeezing my head.

I crawled and gradually got up then ran to the front door to get out of the house and just *knew* that I had to go to a hill nearby.

I ran through the woods while struggling with my migraine. Pushing the

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branches, which were in my way, with my hands.

Crash!

Thunder, prelude to a natural symphony. It was beginning to rain again and that made me felt a bit better. It rained heavily almost instantly.

When I finally got out of the woods, I entered the main road. A car speeded towards me then skidded off from the slippery wet road to the pasture.

I kept on running anyway.

I reached the foothill and climbed up. The pain was excruciating. The sonata was heard throughout the torturous ordeal. I finally reached the peak. When I arrived at my destination, which was inside a roofless cave, there was the same light that shone on me in the first place and the headache had stopped.

When I looked up, I could see a UFO amidst the rainy night sky. It landed smoothly right in front of me and the aforementioned sonata had ended.

My fingernails were blue and my breath could be seen every time I exhaled. The rain seeped through my jumper and my shirt then finally into my body.

The hatch opened.

BOATS

A silhouette of a short skinny big headed being walked out the craft and appeared before me.

“Are you an alien?” I asked poignantly.

“Not quite,” it said in a heavenly voice without opening its mouth.

“Then what are you?”

“I am you and you are me. We are the same.”

“No we are not.”

“I am your future.”

I was soaked and didn't say a word.

“Forgive me. You expect more explanations.

After the apocalypse, Earth was totally destroyed. So man journeyed into space seeking for a new home. When we finally settled on a planet, which is beyond Earth's solar system, which we now call Earth II, we evolved into the next step. It took approximately three million years for the process to complete. We have become smarter and more intelligent. Our brains are so complex, we are able to communicate telepathically. We live in peace and order. A hundred years later we accomplished time traveling with the help of a wormhole, the labyrinth of time. Curious about our origin, we took

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advantage of our time traveling technology to travel to the past and learn about our history, to understand more about the ancient species of human and animals. We travel by space boats which are sub-ships from the main mother ship.”

I kept quiet for a while.

“Human but not earthling,” I whispered. “That explains the abductions.” I continued. “What about the seizure, what kind of experiments are you doing on your ancestors?”

“It’s an implant to transmit visual messages to your brain. We were trying to communicate with all of you, but you are the only successful one so far. You could even be the only one.”

“Why me?”

“It must have something to do with your being a psychic when you were a child.”

“How did you know that?”

“We know everything about you, we scanned your memory when we abducted you.”

“So why am I here, then. Why did you summon me?”

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“Francis, would you like to join us on our journey and provide more information regarding our history? Your presence here certifies you as being the one who will help us. You are the only one who answers the signal call. We cannot communicate with anyone telepathically but you.”

I thought about Dolores and her sister for a while and how I will miss them. But I decided to go anyway. They were better off without me.

I also thought of how Dolores left me in the supermarket. How angry she was. Everything was so snafu there. Might as well start a new life with the people who really need me.

Who would have known aliens are our future? No one had the slightest idea and here I am with mankind’s greatest legacy, forever sailing in this infinite dark sea of stars and destinies.

So the next time you see an unidentified flying object, just wave hello.

BOATS

THE END

BOATS facts:

1. The title is actually an acronym for “Based On A True Story”.
2. BOATS begins and ends with the word “Hello”. When you read the first word, you are also reading the last word. Which is like time traveling, reading the future in the present. And when the last word is read, you go back to where you started or symbolically going back to the past

