

Neptune Calling

by Jim Schicatano

"Hello. Can you hear us?"

"What?"

"Please concentrate."

"What?"

"Try harder. Can you hear us, yet?"

"Yes. Yes, I hear something."

"Good. Can you understand us now?"

"Yes. It's perfectly clear now. Where are you? What's happening?"

"We have been trying to contact you for some time. You have been slow to react."

"I don't understand. There are no voices, but I still hear you."

"We are contacting you mentally. We are in your mind. Do you realize that?"

"Yes, I see that now. There you are. But I've never been here before. I've never been in this part of my mind. How did you get here? And how did I get here?"

"You've always had this region of your mind. You just seldom use it. Once you regain consciousness, you are not aware of this area."

"Am I dreaming? Are you a dream?"

"No, you are not dreaming. But you are in some unusual state of existence. Perhaps you can tell us. What is wrong with you? Why are you so different than the others?"

"I don't know. You're right, I don't seem conscious. But yet, I'm not dreaming. Could I be . . . Yes, I remember now. I was in a car accident. I'm severely injured and lying in a hospital bed. Right now, I'm in a coma."

"What is a coma? Think about a coma . . . We understand. This is a serious condition. Can it be corrected?"

"Why aren't I upset? I realize what's happened to me, yet I'm perfectly calm here."

"We are contacting you through an area of your mind that does not experience emotion."

"I see that now. There are no good or bad sensations here – how unusual. But who are you? And what are you doing in my mind? Have I died? Are you God?"

"No, we are not God. Are you well enough to recover from this coma?"

"It is serious. I'm in intensive care. My condition is critical. I don't know if I'll survive."

"Then we may not survive, either. What are you called?"

"My last name is Hunter. But I don't understand any of this. Who are you and what's going on?"

"You are our last contact this year. Our situation is also critical. We are from the planet Neptune. And we have contacted you to seek your help."

"Neptune?"

"Search your mind. You know it to be true."

"Yes, I see that now. But how can I help you?"

"We are dying here. We have contacted beings on your world every year on this particular day pleading for help. But so far, you have been unable to help us."

"You say you are dying. How?"

"We must first explain that on Neptune we do not receive most of our energy from the sun, the way you do. While the sun radiates energy onto your planet, maintaining life, our primary source of energy is internal. Therein lies the problem. All four of what you call 'the gas giants' expend more energy than they receive. That is because the amount of energy we receive from the sun is meager. For millions of years, Neptune has been radiating energy out into space. It is now at the point where the energy level contained within our planet can no longer maintain our life forms. As we said, we are dying."

"Can't you build spaceships and leave Neptune?"

"That would be impossible. We do not possess physical forms such as

you. We are entities – beings of conscious. It is what you would consider to be spirits, only we do not possess spiritual powers as you know it.”

“Spirits? On Neptune?”

“Spirits . . . Souls . . . An essence . . . Call us whatever you like, but if you were on Neptune, you could not see us.”

“And so there’s life on Neptune. That’s remarkable. We had no idea you existed.”

“Nor would you if you were here. But we are able to communicate with you telepathically. That is how YOU know of our existence.”

“May I ask if Neptune has a surface? I’ve always wondered that about the gas giants.”

“Not as you know it. On earth, the atmosphere is separate from the liquid and the solid portions of your world. Here, the atmosphere grows increasingly denser as you near the core of the planet. This is due to gravity and the weight of the atmosphere above. Gradually, we are unable to descend any further and at some point it does become solid. But there is no definite separation of the atmosphere from the solid core.”

“How did you discover our existence?”

“Because we do not possess physical forms, our powers of mental telepathy are extraordinary. We are able to sense life forms throughout our solar system. There are rudimentary life forms on Mercury and Saturn, but they do not have the ability to help us. We know basic facts about the people of your world. We understand that you possess physical forms and communicate by something called speech. You also create great machines that have form – such as the spaceships which you mentioned. They allow you to leave your planet and enter space. This much we have just learned this year, from the three prior people we have contacted . . .”

“You’ve talked to others?”

“Yes, we have spoken to three different people before you. Once a day for four consecutive days during each year, our planets are in the precise position needed to allow mental communication between us. This is the fourth and final day this year. Very shortly, you will no longer be in position. And we will not be able to communicate with your world until next year. By that time, it may be too late.”

"But how can your world be losing energy so quickly? A year doesn't seem like that much time."

"Apparently, you do not understand. When we speak of a year, it is a year on our world that we are referring to. Because of our distance from the sun, a year on Neptune is 164 years of Earth time. That is when we will be in position to communicate with you again."

"Everyone alive on our world today will be long dead by then. But if you can contact us mentally, why do you have to wait so long? Why do you have to wait a full year?"

"The primary problem is the great distance that separates our worlds. In addition, the atmosphere here is dense and does not allow easy penetration of our telepathy. It is very complicated but you must understand that our collective consciousness is contacting you right now. Each of our telepathic powers are converging to intensify the magnitude of the power. And even with such harmony, we are only able to focus our efforts on one earthling. As we have said, you are the fourth and final opportunity for this year. We must move quickly now, because soon you will be moving out of phase."

"But how can I help you?"

"Are those great ships you have made in the past year capable of reaching our planet?"

"Yes, but it'll take many years – that's earth years – to reach you. Even then, we haven't progressed to the point where they can be manned. They will have to be unmanned crafts."

"Perhaps that will do."

"But what is it you want from us?"

"We need more energy to sustain our life forms. When we last contacted you, one year ago – our year – your creation of energy was inadequate. And you did not possess the ability to transport it here. Since that time you have developed the means to leave your world. But can you provide us with great sources of energy?"

"What kind of energy do you need?"

"Think of how energy is produced on your world . . . Yes, we see it now. But your power plants are much too small. And we see that what you call an engine would also be inadequate. Are there any other larger sources?"

"There are some minor, experimental sources."

"Please think of them . . . No, your solar batteries are too meager. Wind power is interesting, but how would we install them here since we do not possess bodies such as you. You would have to arrive on our world and install them for us. That does not seem possible."

"What about dynamite and other explosives?"

"Your weapons of war were inadequate last year. But, perhaps you have strengthened their magnitude. Think of them . . . Yes, you have made them considerably more powerful. But they still do not possess enough . . . Wait a minute! That last one you call an atomic bomb – what is it?"

"It's a very destructive weapon – the most destructive weapon that we've ever developed."

"Yes, we see that. And it emits enormous energy. But we do not understand how it works. Please concentrate on the design of an atomic bomb . . ."

"It's very difficult for me to explain it to you. Most people do not understand the process. It's designed by our scientists under the direction of the governments of earth. It's a very secretive process, since using the weapons could destroy the earth. But it's the most powerful source of energy we have."

"But your thoughts of it are not explicit enough. This is a much larger world than earth. And although this energy source is of great magnitude on your world, it may not be enough to help ours. How large is the largest of these atomic bombs? Please think . . . No, I'm not sure it would be enough. Still, your lack of knowledge on the subject may be the problem. Do you have many of these atomic bombs?"

"Yes, thousands. But they are under the control of various countries here."

"Can they be transported to our world?"

"I suppose it's possible. But there are other problems. These great weapons emit what we call radiation. It destroys the processes of our bodies – it mutates them. I'm not sure that this can help you without destroying you."

"But we possess no such bodies. It may not effect us at all. We need to know more. Please think of radiation . . . We see that this term is not clear in your mind, either."

"I don't understand radiation. I only know of its effects."

"We may have to take a chance. The end is near for us, anyway. It is worth the gamble."

"It won't be easy to deliver these weapons to your world. I'm not even sure they'll explode in your atmosphere. You see, I don't understand much about them. Can you contact someone more knowledgeable?"

"As we have explained, you are the only being we were able to focus our telepathy on during this final day. You are our last chance. But time is running out. You will be moving out of phase in a few moments, so we must hurry."

"What do you want me to do?"

"You must convince your world of our need for your atomic bombs. We will be greatly indebted to you and will pay any price you seek – if it is possible for us."

"But this is a matter for governments and defense departments. I don't possess the authority. And how can I possibly explain your existence to them?"

"We will give your world a sign to show that you are sincere. Our largest satellite, the moon you call Triton, shall be pushed into a longer orbit by our telepathy. Since it is so close to our world, we have the ability to do this. This will occur in seven of your days. It will be a signal to your governments that we do exist."

"But, I'm still in a coma. I might not even be conscious in seven days. You have to give me more time."

"Very well. In forty-five of your days this event shall occur. At the very least, tell your governments to send your unmanned crafts out to our world with audio recording devices. It will be difficult but, using our telepathic powers, we may be able to record a distress signal onto those devices. When it is relayed to earth they may recognize our existence. From there you can begin sending out ships with your atomic bombs. Do you understand the mission?"

"This is a million to one shot. I might not survive my injuries. I could die. And even if I don't, it'll be difficult for anyone to take me seriously. And even if you CAN make Triton move and relay a message to us, I'm not sure our atomic weapons will save you. The radiation may kill you instantly."

"We are moving out of phase. Open your mind further. We are going to enter deeper into your subconscious."

"What are you doing?"

"So that you will not forget your mission, we are going to implant it deep into your subconscious. This will take the remainder of our telepathic powers, so you will not hear from us again. We must thank you, Hunter . . ."

"I can barely understand you."

"We are losing contact. Quickly, open your mind . . ."

"What are you doing? You're going too deep. It's painful there. Where are you? Are you there? I remember. Yes, I will remember . . ."

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Sometimes, it seems, the destiny of a world relies entirely on fate or luck. That belief is inaccurate, however, for it implies that all factors that decide future consequences are weighed equally by the fortunes of the universe. But fate is not determined by the flip of a coin or the roll of the dice.

The progression of the universe, it is believed, is determined by mathematical probability and the predictability that the most logical outcome will ensue. And when the probability of that outcome is too greatly weighted in one direction, the inevitable must transpire.

Hunter never recovered from the coma and passed away four days after his mental encounter. One hundred and sixty-four years later, Neptune was sadly but predictably silent.