

Alpha Centauri

William Thornton was 55, and he was dying. The cancer had originated in his left lung, but had been discovered too late, and now it was invading his lymphatic system. This was the legacy of a smoking habit which had taken hold when he was 15, and which clung to him as steadfastly as the pungent odour of cigarettes clung to his clothes.

As William drove along the familiar route from his home to the local hospital for one of his regular appointments with the oncologist, he worried about how his family would cope after his death.

Suddenly, everything fell silent, and a sea of brilliant white light filled the inside of the car. The light somehow drew him through the windshield and into what he later described under hypnosis as a celestial tunnel. At the other end of it, he was met by two humanoid figures with steel-grey skin and insect-like heads defined by large, almond-shaped eyes – deep black pools radiating ancient cosmic wisdom.

Incredibly, though he could hardly comprehend what was unfolding, William was not afraid. He knew instinctively that the entities meant him no harm.

They stared into his eyes. He immediately found himself lying on what he perceived to be a mortuary slab – whatever it was, it was cold and hard – in a room that was some sort of laboratory or operating theatre containing medical apparatus the like of which he had never seen before.

“Disease is caused by an imbalance in the energy field surrounding the body. You would call that energy field the aura.” William heard those sentences in his mind as a telepathic communication from the entities. One of them passed its hand across a panel on the wall. Soon, a small, glowing spherical object was hovering over William. Slowly and purposefully, it began to scan up and down the length of his body while emitting a strange, low-frequency hum. After what had seemed to William a short period of time, the object became motionless and then dematerialised. It simply vanished.

“The unhealthy tissue has been corrected,” one of the humanoid figures told William via thought transference. The figure asked him if he wanted to know where he was. Before William could reply, he found himself in another room. This room was empty save for a screen at one end, on which there was an image of a star system.

The figure pointed a slender finger at the screen and said, “This is Alpha Centauri, where I am from and where you are now, a star system four light years from your sun. For eons we have been observing humanity, and we are concerned by its tribal, aggressive nature and its irresponsible handling of nuclear energy.”

Bustling cities and beautiful, verdant countryside started to appear on the screen, only to be obliterated by a flame-red mushroom cloud. The message was chillingly clear.

The screen went blank, and suddenly William was back in his car.