

“THE END IS NIGH!”

...an old man screamed in my face, as I was walking by. It was kind of funny, he had the whole sign hanging from his neck thing, like in the movies. His eyes, bloodshot, his beard untrimmed, the rest of him disturbed me in a way I could not begin to describe. I turned away, and continued on to the bus stop.

Standing underneath the bus shelter, I waited for the bus. Absent-mindedly, I checked my phone. More scientists, deGrass and Billy Neil this time, were ranting on Twitter about the environment. “We’re poisoning the water, we’re filling the air with carbon dioxide, and we’re slaughtering the polar bears. Earth is dying! And we’re the ones with the smoking gun.” Nothing new. I knew they were right of course. Everyone knew it to be true. The world leaders all made a grand show, saying how concerned they were, but with some hemming and hawing about how they would implement some minor policy or another within the next few decades. Too little too late. Dave, I thought, was one of the more sincere of the bunch, but alas his hands were tied by the will of Congress.

The bus came, and I went to work.

I laid next to my wife, staring sleeplessly at the drips and curves of the hideous popcorn ceiling. She hated it as much as I, and we had planned to have a talk with our landlord, see if we could have someone come down to replace it, improve it, objectively-speaking, once the weather got a little nicer and we could go on a trip or something while they worked.

I turned onto my side, looking out the window. Our little New York apartment had the most *charming* view of the bricks at the other side of the alleyway. When I was young, I lived out in the countryside. My childhood bedroom had a window looking out onto a cow pasture, and you could look and see the stars. The *stars*, dammit. It's been months since you've left the City That Never Sleeps, and you wished desperately to see the open sky, unobscured by light or smog.

Standing, and went over to the window, craning my neck for a look at our ever-present neighbor, the Moon. Not nearly as nice as the stars, but pretty all the same. Funny, I thought, it looked a little strange. A little... different? That couldn't be right. I remembered reading somewhere that we only ever see just the one side. The dark side of the moon was a mystery never to be seen by the naked eye. And yet...

I looked over at my wife. It'd be silly to wake her up, get a second opinion, right? "Oh honey, look, doesn't the moon look weird?" We both had work tomorrow morning, and I let her sleep. I went out into the other room, and pulled on some jeans and boots. A good walk would be the cure to my insomnia. I grabbed my phone, and left.

I walked for several hours, occasionally glancing skyward at the moon, when the cityscape allowed it. I became more and more certain that it looked different.

I sat down on a nearby bench, and checked my phone for the first time that night. I intended to look up a picture of the moon, to assuage my paranoia, but I got several Twitter notifications first. *Everyone* was talking about it. deGrass and Billy were speechless. There was

no scientific rationale for the phenomena that was occurring. People measured it, and it would turn completely to the Far Side before the night was through. According to Twitter, the tide was getting all messed up too. Florida was beginning to flood. A little worried, I started walking home.

I had not made it back before I noticed the spin was accelerating. Faster and faster, you could see it move with the naked eye. Dumbstruck, I and the few companions of the night around me, stopped, and stared skyward.

The Far Side was adorned with one major feature, aside from the expected craters: a huge satellite dish, big enough for the naked eye to see. The moon was still now, and above us, electronic billboards and TVs flared to life. On them, was a gray alien, seated at a desk, like a news broadcaster. Then, it spoke.

“People of Earth!” I heard it in my mind, more than my ears. What I actually *heard* was a muddled mess, like many voices overlaid on one another. Many different languages? I don’t know. “We have been observing you for many, many years, and we cannot stand idle any longer. Without our interference, this planet will be devoid of all life within the century. You must change your ways, we will help you.” The crowd around me stood agape, as I was.

Then it happened. The aliens showed themselves. Or, at least, the giant weapon on the far side of the moon. It’s an EM Device that messes with the Earth’s magnetic field, creating devastation.

- *Lucky* deals with the rise of Dave as U.S. President, and the loss of trust in the government by the people.
- *The End is Nigh* deals with the ramifications of our society, the feeble attempts Dave makes to correct them, first contact with Aliens, on the moon, and the implantation of a deadly Virus by the Aliens in the Eastern Countries.
- The *Pandemic Panic* series flashes forward to when the Virus has wiped out most of humanity, and society has crumbled.
 - *The Tower* has you, a survivor of the Virus, loot the Tower, and potentially find instructions to create an antivirus. Potentially, you meet up with your friend Jamie, and no matter what, you return to Hope's Camp, to go see your friend Hope.

Originally Written: *High School, Book 2*

Last Revised: *October 2022*