

# ZEROETH CONTACT

By Jeff Dunne

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## CHARACTERS

KEITH	An easily-angered space scientist at NASA.
ALLAN	A generally incompetent space scientist at NASA.
SSSTHSSS	A newbie space scientist from a lizard-ish race on a distant planet.
RAATHSSS	A veteran space scientist from the same distant planet.

Note: All names and genders can be adjusted as desired.

## SETTING

A split stage, with one side representing a small research lab at one of the NASA facilities, and the other is a space monitoring facility on a planet in a distance solar system.

SCENE

*(The stage is set with two parts. On one side a pair of scientists in white lab coats are huddled over a computer terminal. On the other, we see an alien facility, with two lizard-ish aliens, also in white lab coats.)*

KEITH

Alright, that's enough for Tau Epsilon Five. Reorient the array point oh two degrees— no, the same direction. For god's sake, what the hell's wrong with you, Allan? Why would you go backwards?

ALLAN

You didn't say what—

KEITH

Just... just... lemme. *(Shoving past Allan to type on the keyboard.)* Now transmit.

*(Allan hits a button.)*

How'd you even get this job?

ALLAN

My father's best friend from college—

KEITH

Real scientists are desperate for jobs at NASA, and you... *(shakes his head.)*

ALLAN

What? Me what?

KEITH

Forget it. Just forg— *(he looks at the screen and sees that Allan did not start the transmission)* I said to start the transmission. You're so totally... Never mind.

*(Keith pushes Allan aside again and hits a button. He then huffs away from Allan, presumable to avoid throttling him, just as a light starts flashing in the aliens' lab.)*

SSSTHSSS

*(Noticing the light...)*

Hey, Raathsss! We're getting a signal. Repeating Fibonacci series, by the looks of it.

RAATHSSS

My tea's almost ready. Just start logging it and all that.

*(Ssthsss makes some notes, then does something to his equipment and a second light comes on next to the first. On the Earth side, a light comes on a moment later, and Allan sees it.)*

ALLAN

Keith!

KEITH

Go away, Allan.

ALLAN

But Keith, we're getting a response to the signal!

*(Keith comes rushing over to look at the same time as Raathsss goes over to Ssthsss with a cup of tea in hand.)*

RAATHSSS

Alright, show me.

*(Ssthsss points to the screen. Raathsss sighs.)*

Oh. Them again. We just ignore— *(he notices the second light, then agitated...)*  
Turn it off turn it off turn it—

*(Ssthsss has hit a button, and the light goes out. Raathsss breathes a sigh of relief, and on the Earth side the 'signal received' light goes out.)*

KEITH

What did you do? Where did it go?

ALLAN

I didn't do—

KEITH

Did you hit the reset button aga—

ALLAN

I didn't touch anything!

*(Keith starts trying to diagnose what happened.)*

SSSTHSSS

*(Recovering a little from his confusion.)*

I thought we were told to respond to any signals.

RAATHSSS

Yeah, but... not *them*. That's the ape planet.

SSSTHSSS

Ape planet?

RAATHSSS

Trust me, we don't want them to know we're here.

SSSTHSSS

*Ape* planet? There's a civilization evolved from *apes*? How—

RAATHSSS

I'm not sure I'd call it civilization. You really don't know about Sol Three? Irritating little primates. We all just ghost 'em.

SSSTHSSS

They can't be that bad.

RAATHSSS

Oh yeah? Pull up some of their past emissions?

*(Sssthsss goes to search for them whilst...)*

KEITH

Well, it all seems to be working. That's really weird.

ALLAN

I told you I didn't do anything.

KEITH

Putz.

RAATHSSS

There. That one.

SSSTHSSS

Jersey Shore? (*Puts on a pair of headphones and listens for a moment.*) This is... this is what they're like?

RAATHSSS

As far as we can tell.

SSSTHSSS

What's a Snooki?

RAATHSSS

We think it's some kind of laxative. Try one of the news channels. They're even worse.

*(Sssthsss makes a selection and starts to listen, soon shaking his head in disgust.)*

ALLAN

Must have been a fluke.

KEITH

You're a fluke, moron.

ALLAN

All this searching, and we never find anything. I'm sure that if there was life out there, we'd have heard something back by now.

KEITH

Probably. Alright, shift the array another point oh two degrees— no, the *same direction*, you putz! Honestly, what the hell's wrong with you, Allan?

*(Lights out)*