

NECRON

BEYOND
EINSTEIN'S
BARRIER



BY

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Necron: Beyond Einstein's Barrier

By Oliver Strong

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Contents

[Copyright](#)

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)

[Chapter Four](#)

[Chapter Five](#)

[Chapter Six](#)

[Chapter Seven](#)

[Chapter Eight](#)

[Chapter Nine](#)

[Chapter Ten](#)

Chapter One

Victor gazed into the void ... there it was again, a point of light arched, a bow string drawn taught on its missile ... then it vanished. Travelling to meet gruesome fate beyond the speed of light, Einstein's rules of time dilation shattered. Rather than five years at near light speed then decelerating to find thirty had passed on Earth, they travelled beyond a barrier considered unbreakable in the 20th century, proven otherwise by the 27th century. Super computers micro-managed laws of physics, five years passed as five minutes at the rendezvous.

Victor whiled away personal time seizing brief glimpses of starlight, universal gatekeepers exposed their divine frame just for him as the S.S. Charon defied atomic age physics.

A young lady stood on her toes observing ancient light trapped between Einstein and Necron Industries training vessel, 'Read your file?'

Victor didn't turn away, 'I did.'

'Notice anyone?'

'I shouldn't have looked.'

Diana, a bright young girl of twenty eight years on death, defied old world science along with thousands more hurtling on the razor edge of time, 'Come on, we're drinking before basic training starts.'

'I think I'll pass.'

'Come on Vic.'

He focused on flashing bows of light, bright bridges spanning the distance between him and normal time. Victor need only travel its luminous crescent to return to his previous life, the stars both beckoned and taunted in equal measure.

'I guess you'll be dwelling in self-pity. If you change your mind I'm getting drunk in the Mess until downtime.'

Victor grabbed her cold necrotic hand, Diana Zeng had been a good friend ever since this journey beyond death began, 'Forgive me, it's hit me hard.'

'It hit us all hard, but try to enjoy the here and now,' she pulled his attention from the porthole and into the Mess.

My woes began more than five years ago, I lived in New York, I had a family, a wife and two kids along with some crushing tax bills, in about a month we'd be destitute. One night I went over the galactic net and through a bottle of vodka looking for anything I might grasp onto. Scams and schemes were ten to the penny, you know, crap about winning the Epsilon A lottery, just forward ten thousand in fees and we'll send you your cheque for five million Epsilon Tax Rights, rich relatives etcetera, I was dumb but not that dumb. My wife didn't know about my ... our troubles, I'd spent my, our tax rights on gifts for her and good times for me instead of paying local government its extortion fee.

'Why don't you come to bed honey?'

'Just a few minutes ... say have you ever heard of Necron Industries?'

My wife leapt out of bed like there was a fire under it, 'Turn it off Victor, you don't wanna go anywhere near those brain butchers!'

'It seems pretty equitable. They pay any outstanding debts and look after your family once you've died.'

'In exchange for your body!'

Victor turned to face his wife, 'But I'd be dead, it's not like I'd care.'

'What about your family, burying an empty coffin while they butcher you on a slab, I couldn't bare it.'

'Don't worry it was just a thought.'

'Are you coming to bed now?'

'Sure,' he hit the send button delivering a request to Necron Industries.

The next morning Victor arose before his wife, a hologramatic monitor silently flashed. He tapped the soft rubber keyboard opening a message board. A beautiful smiling lady greeted Victor, 'Good morning, your application has been accepted. Necron Industries would appreciate a face to face meeting with one of our representatives.'

A list of interview slots popped up for the rest of the week, 'Please select a convenient time slot.'

Victor selected a slot during his lunch break, 'Thank you, you now have an interview with Necron Industries at one thirty this afternoon at our nearest office in Central Park, please be punctual,' her image disappeared. His wife

groaned searching for the cold part of the pillow. Victor wiped sweat from his brow ... little did he know this heart rendering moment would not be the last.

That afternoon Victor entered an atmosphere breaking tower that was the Trump Sky Lift, an orbital elevator exclusive to high profile occupants prepared to pay grotesque rental fees. The year was 2682, humanity populated several close by star systems in its first attempt to make a mark on the galaxy. Yet like all well planned and carefully co-ordinated government endeavours ... it had gone tits up.

Victor checked in at reception, his work buddies warned against Necron, told him he'd have to be crazy to sign up, yet they didn't have the government mafia poised to take his apartment, throw him in prison and leave his wife and kids on the streets.

'Mr Zellmann?' said an attractive receptionist.

'Yes,' replied Victor rising from a comfortable seat.

'Doctor Kaufman is ready to see you now,' she gestured toward her left, 'third room to your right.'

As Victor walked past her desk she smiled, 'I hope you'll be staying with us Mr Zellmann.'

He nodded his head and continued until reaching a placard stating the Doctor's name, before he might press the bell a German accent emanated from within, 'You may enter Mr Zellmann.'

Inside Victor was greeted by a spic and span surgery room, a short man with a bald streak and glasses stood hand extended.

They shook hands, 'Please sit Mr Zellmann.'

The Doctor pulled files from his memory banks, examining Victor's medical records via hologram. Victor wondered how they obtained his medical information since not even corporations were authorised access.

'Yes, yes, very good Mr Zellmann, have you abused your body in any way since your previous medical?'

Victor felt a little violated, 'Certainly not!'

Kaufman peered over his glasses, 'Then you won't protest if I certify your honesty?'

'Well that's hardly a way to treat someone ...'

'Mr Zellmann, no offence is intended, please understand this is a treacherous business, we must balance risk against reward and Necron

Industries is taking all the risk. Besides that I have every bum, heroin fiend and solvent abuser in New York City lining up to strike a deal. Not to be terribly blunt they aren't our ideal clientele.'

The atmosphere of Kaufman's surgery began to stifle, 'I'm sorry I was just shocked to see you possess my medical records.'

Kaufman smiled, 'A little grease on the wheels of bureaucracy gets the machine moving along its correct path.'

'So can you help me?'

'First I want you to understand exactly what we do here; we are the largest cryogenics company in the galaxy today. We freeze your body, harvest its organs, tissue, nerves, hair follicles ... anything salvageable then auction it on ... usually after you're dead,' Victor's eyes widened, 'ONLY JOKING!' Kaufman laughed yet Victor's breathing tightened.

'I understand that but what about my tax bill?'

Kaufman made a grim expression, upset that his moment of comedy was brought to an abrupt end, 'Yes well, once we confirm you're not a fiend our computers will assess the net worth of your corpse on today's market. Afterwards we will make an offer, you may accept or refuse, if you accept RFID nanites shall be injected into your bloodstream so if you require an ambulance you'll be sent to the nearest hospital with a Necron Industries cryogenics facility.'

'You mean if I'm already dead.'

Kaufman locked eyes, 'We need to freeze you ASAP Mr Zellmann but have my assurance you will not be frozen until pronounced dead by a physician.'

'Provided it's not a Necron physician!'

Kaufman gave a big belly laugh, 'Very good Mr Zellmann but I'm afraid not, if we had to factor in legal costs such as law suits we might as well sign up bums. No, we need healthy compliant corpses Mr Zellmann, why I myself have a plan with Necron Industries.'

'So that's it I sign my corpse over to you and you pay my tax bill?'

'If everything goes as it should, yes,' Kaufman paused, the room was quiet for a few seconds, 'Perhaps there is something else I might interest you in?'

'You do tea and biscuits?'

'Please bear with me a moment, Necron Industries has a new project to be launched next year. If your corpse qualifies for the plan you'll get extended benefits.'

'I'll be dead, how would I get extended benefits?'

'Your surviving family, wife and direct blood children would receive a cheque from Necron Industries each month.'

'If my corpse qualifies?'

'And that assessment can only be made on death.'

'Are you signed up for it?'

'In fact I am although I may not qualify anymore.'

'Why?'

'Hmm, it's complicated but a young man below the age of thirty will certainly qualify, provided his corpse has only minimal damage.'

'Okay hit me with it Doc.'

A hologram jumped out from the desk, a beautiful young lady dressed in military hot pants, perfect make up, red lips, long blonde hair displayed an attractive smirk, 'Have you ever desired to journey the stars? Discover new species? Engage in alien cultures beyond your wildest imagination?' she pulled a large assault rifle from out of shot, 'Then blow the motherfuckers back to the shithole they came from?' she fired her weapon to the sound of alien screams, foreign howls hit a crescendo before dying down. She rested the smoking weapon on her hip, tossed a perfectly sculpted hairdo back in place then continued, 'And all the time keep those you love financially solvent? Then Project Necron has a place for you,' the picture faded to a large space cruiser perhaps a battleship, Victor couldn't tell without another object to provide scale, its engines lit up behind. The vessel was different from the standard sleek military cruisers and battleships in news releases, this was a block with smaller blocks attached to it, the only thing discerning its fore and aft were massive engines at one end and a group of long thin constructions protruding out the fore end. As the camera swung around the vessel's insignia appeared, rather unusual since all military vessels were entirely black for obvious reasons. This ship had painted in large white letters "S.S. NECRON".

Victor was confused, 'What on Earth was that about?'

'I'm sure you're aware of the war in the colonies, yes?'

'And?'

'Well at Necron Industries we believe there is profit in conflict.'

'How's that?'

'Oh there are many engagements resulting in derelict space ships on both sides. Colonies pay very well for assistance when their government is unable to offer tax funded protection,' he laughed.

'I heard all nations agreed to rule ... forty something, it was announced by the President, right?'

Kaufman nodded, 'Rule forty eight Mr Zellmann but when a legion of seven foot psychopaths are closing in to murder your children, the President's words are worth very little insurance ... not that they're worth anything on Earth.'

'So what's this got to do with me, I mean I'll be dead right?'

The Doctor placed a legal document on the desk, 'This is totally optional, the space cruiser you witnessed is Project Necron, we intended to man it and profiteer, for want of a better word.'

'And some bimbo with a gun is supposed to convince me, come on I'm not that dumb, I've heard about what goes on out there, besides the journey to the nearest colony is like ten years at near light speed, my family would be thirty years old before I even got there!'

'First of all if you're dead it wouldn't matter, second we intend to get around time dilation by travelling beyond light speed.'

'That's not possible!'

'We did it six months ago Mr Zellmann. Necron mastered faster than light travel, we are already licensing it to others, civilian pigeon carriers are being upgraded with FTL as we speak. Necron Industries possess the only military vessel able to travel beyond Einstein's barrier!'

'So what does this have to do with me and making extra money for my family?'

'Necron intends to widen profit margins, if a colony is in trouble the colonists will send an FTL carrier pigeon delivering a distress message. The S.S. Necron will respond within minutes, repel the enemy and claim any salvage. The only snag being that time dilation at faster than light is the inverse of near light speed.'

'You mean time travels slower for the crew rather than everyone else?'

'That is why we intend to crew the Necron with the deceased. They may spend years training for a single engagement to arrive a minute after the carrier pigeon departed and strike the enemy, without aging a day.'

'But I'm not dead.'

'You will be, we all will be, and if your corpse fits parameters you will be revived and take your place on the Necron.'

'I didn't know they could revive people after death.'

'Not entirely, we're still working on it Mr Zellmann, in fact it may never happen.'

'What do you mean?'

'Many have no memory of their past, training them for even the simplest duty is a great task, post reanimation.'

A nurse entered the room, 'Mr Zellmann has passed toxicology.'

'Thank you,' he pushed two documents forward.

Victor examined the documents, signed the first by placing his palm upon the tablet. It scanned his prints, blood vessels and DNA. Victor hesitated over the Project Necron tablet while a nurse injected RFID nanites into his blood stream.

'What the hell,' Victor signed it, 'I'm twenty two, married with two kids, I wake up most mornings feeling like a zombie as it is!'

Kaufman laughed, 'That's the spirit young man!' he tapped his desk, 'There you go your tax arrears are no longer a problem Mr Zellmann.'

Victor let out a sigh of relief, he was keeping his home, his wife would only discover the truth after he'd croaked, heh, she'd have to bitch at someone else this time, besides Victor wasn't planning on kicking the bucket before forty years of age so from his perspective it was win, win.

That was eight years before I was hit by a car and knocked into a coma. Necron improved its technology and I'm making the journey to Tau Ceti. Boot camp is five years. I'll arrive five minutes after I left from the galaxy's point of view. It'll be five years on this ship but since I'm already dead I guess I don't have to worry about losing my youthful looks. We regenerate in what look like traditional sleeper booths used for suspended animation during the long haul to the colonies.

Everyone is scrambling to achieve faster than light however we're the only people with a crew and vessels fully fitted for it.

A bell went off, lights changed colour, 'Boot camp starts today!' said Diana in an excited tone.

Victor followed her into an office where queues of men and women were sorted. Improved revival technology meant recruits retained much of their

past skills, ex-pilots, medics, engineers and technicians filled the room. Victor was an architect in his former life, not much use aboard a military vessel. He and Diana were directed down a corridor with Marines written above its doorway. She smiled at him happy to see the first face to greet her after death.

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