

# Walking The World

303

by Kyle Eggleston

## Earth, The Distant Future

Three thousand years had passed since Nokev last stepped foot on his home planet Shuka for the last time. He had spent that time searching the galaxy for a place to fit in. Finally he settled on Earth. There had been some close calls over the past three thousand years. Ever since the Earth had been basically decimated to a pulp, there was nothing left on it. Nothing could grow.

The Moon and Mars colonies flourished. Nokev had spent some time on each of them over the past three thousand years, but never felt quite at home. Earth felt more like home than Shuka ever did to him. It would be his final resting place, if he could ever figure out how to die. That was a curse Nokev had to bear, he could not die. He had tired on several occasions to take his own life, but nothing ever worked for him. He was alone. Doomed to be alone for the rest of his life.

Nokev sat in his home made shelter. He had read every single book Earth had to offer over the past three thousand years. He had originally created the shelter for Bert McDuff when he came through a wormhole. But Bert did not wish to stay. He wanted to go back to his own life, which was understandable to Nokev.

Picking up a book, Nokev dusted it off. *Moby Dick*. He opened the cover and read the first line aloud. "Call me Ishmael ..." He chuckled at the thought. *Oh that white whale was going down*. Nokev thought. Of course he knew that wasn't the case as it was Ahab who would be killed, but he could dream.

Dreaming had never been a problem for Nokev. He was always the optimist, always the dreamer. Being a scientist meant you had to be able to dream and think of new ways to accomplish certain tasks. It was in his blood.

"Hello old friend." A voice came from the door to Nokev's shelter. He was shocked. No one could survive the molten heat the Earth had been experiencing for well over two thousand years. No one.

Obshi entered the dwelling. "Nice place you have set up here. Mind if I have a seat?"

Nokev turned around. Sure enough, it was Obshi. But how? He wondered. Obshi should be long dead. He looked at Obshi with a look of confusion running across his face. Obshi simply laughed.

“It is good to see you again as well.” Obshi said inviting himself inside the dwelling. He sat down on a couch next to Nokev who was still in shock. “We have a lot to catch up on. A lot.”

Nokev asked the only question he had in his mind. “How?”

“The Guardians.” Obshi said. “I ran into them while searching for you out on The Rim. You left in such a hurry, didn’t say goodbye to anyone. We all wondered where you went. I figured you had gone to The Rim, your old stomping grounds as it were. Well the Guardians gave me the gift of eternal life and youth. I haven’t aged a day, in fact I’ve actually lost a few years.” Obshi smiled. “I’m sure you have a similar experience.”

Nokev nodded. “Yes, I consider it a curse. We never age, we never die. We are stuck like this forever. Always on the move, always looking for a new place to settle down before it gets too comfortable and people begin to notice.”

Obshi shook his head. “Not always. Seems you’ve been on Earth for quite some time.”

Nokev agreed. “The Earth has been devastated for a while now. It is safe for me here. Or so I thought that no one would come looking for me, until you showed up.”

Obshi frowned. “Yes, I tried to visit Shuka about a thousand years ago. It has changed too much. The Religious Government that we knew fell a long time ago. They are now governed by a dictatorship. I could not stay there. I had to leave ... and I wound up finding you here of all places. I had heard the Earth had been devastated by destruction and I had to come see for myself.” He paused. “I haven’t made very many friends since I’ve been away. After General Tague killed herself moments after I offered my friendship, I figured it best to avoid such ... nonsense.”

Nokev knew the feeling all too well. You get close to someone, offer friendship and everything goes out the window. There was never a chance he could have lasting friendships, not with the whole not aging thing going on. He even found it possible to walk the Earth in search of, something, without being burned alive. Such a curse indeed.

“Have you been to the Moon yet?” Nokev asked. “They seem to be thriving up there.”

Obshi shook his head. “No, I haven’t made it to the Moon yet. I wouldn’t have found you had you not setup that homing beacon.” He gestured to a small sphere like object in the corner of the dwelling. “You were broadcasting so loud, anyone could hear it.”

“Oh, that.” Nokev said. “Yes I set that up for a friend of mine in case he ever found his way back to Earth. He was trapped in a wormhole for a while. I do wonder from time to time whatever happened to him. Did he make it back to his own time? I do not know. I would like to think he made it back to his family, if he had one. That is a nice thought to have.”

Obshi smiled, it was indeed a nice thought. To lose a friend close to you was no easy feat. He wished he could have spread the joy the Guardians had shown him, their hospitality had been very generous. But generosity does have its limitations. He brushed the thought out of his head.

“But the important thing is I am here now.” Obshi said. “You are no longer alone.” He paused. “You know, they erected a monument of you in front of the Great Hall of Wisdom. Roughly a thousand years ago. One of your descendants petitioned for it to be built and the ruling body approved it.” He smiled. “It is quite a nice likeness of you.”

Nokev smiled at the thought. One of his descendants, he mused. His name had gone on after all. A legacy to be had, to be seen. Nokev’s accomplishments had not been forgotten after all. It felt good. “Thank you dear friend.” He said.

“Tonight we celebrate this news.” Obshi said. “To honor those who have gone on before.”

Nokev nodded. “I know just the place. It’s on the Moon. I wonder if it’s still there. Oh well, if it’s not we’ll find another place to celebrate.”

Obshi smiled. “Yes indeed.”

At twenty-one hundred hours, Obshi and Nokev took off in a small shuttle headed to the Moon. Finding a landing space was no easy task. There were travelers from all over trying to get a glimpse at Earth from the Moon as it was the best place to see the doomed planet. Aliens from all over came to learn of the Earth’s destruction in order to prevent it from happening to their own planets. The surviving Earthlings refused to talk about it, so rumors spread like wildfire. Nokev knew the truth and that’s all which mattered.

Walking into a bar, Nokev and Obshi found a table and sat down. A waitress walked up to them. “What will it be boys.” She asked. “Don’t ask for any of those crazy alien beverages, we don’t serve those here. We’re not called the Old Time Saloon for nothing. My personal favorite is the whiskey.”

Nokev smiled. It had been a while since he had been in an Earth bar. “Two shots of whiskeys, two Guinness beers please.” He slid some money over to the waitress on the table. “Keep the change.”

The waitress’s eyes lit up. “Gee, thanks mister. I’ll be right back with those drinks, and bring a complimentary basket of cheese fries ‘cause I like you.” She walked away.

Obshi looked at Nokev with caution. “What did you just order?”

Nokev smiled. “Drinks. We’re celebrating remember? Just wait till you try the cheese fries, they’re delicious!”

“Cheese ... fries?” Obshi asked. He wasn’t sure he wanted to know. “I’ll take your word for it.”

A moment later the waitress brought the drinks and the cheese fries. Obshi went to grab the beer first. Nokev stopped him. “No, wait. There’s an old Earth saying. Let me see if I can remember it. Ah yes, beer before liquor never been sicker. Liquor before beer you’re in the clear.” He handed Obshi the shot of whiskey.

“Down the hatch!” Nokev slammed the shot. Obshi did likewise.

“My chest feels like it’s on fire.” Obshi said.

Nokev nodded. “That’s the point my friend. Here have some cheese fries. It’ll do you good.” He slid the plate of fries over to Obshi who consumed a handful.

“You are right, these *are* delicious!” Obshi said as he took another handful of fries.

Nokev smiled. “Told ya. Here, try the beer.”

Obshi took a sip of the beer. “Oh my, what wonderful thing is this?”

Nokev simply laughed. They were going to have a good time for sure. Two alien women walked up to Obshi and Nokev. Nokev didn’t recognize their species. *Must be new in town.* He thought.

One of them spoke to Nokev placing her hand on his. “Hey boys, haven’t seen you around these parts before.” The other zoned in on Obshi. “You’re cute.” She said. Obshi blushed.

“You’re pretty cute yourself.” Nokev said to the woman who was holding his hand. “You all regulars?”

The woman nodded. “Yes, been coming here for the past ten years.”

Nokev nodded. “I haven’t been up here in over a thousand years, no wonder why I haven’t seen you around before.” He smiled. “My name is Nokev, and this is Obshi.”

“Myra and Suki.” The alien woman said. “A thousand years? Wow, you must be old.”

Nokev shrugged. “I stopped counting at two thousand.” He said.

“Oh my.” Myra replied. “You really are old. I bet you saw the Earth when it was still alive then.”

“Oh yes.” Nokev said. “It was lush and green, blue skies as far as the eye could see. It was quite lovely for an alien world.” He sighed remembering just how beautiful the Earth really had been.

“What happened to it?” Suki asked. “None of the locals have ever told us. It’s like they refuse to talk about it.”

Nokev nodded. “That sounds about right.” He said. “The locals, or Earthers, won’t tell you a damned thing about what happened to their planet. You had to be there to experience it first hand. A race called the Jalosian came through this system and wiped out all living life on Earth. They didn’t touch the Moon or Mars colonies, who knows why that is. But they decimated the entire planet for their own personal gain.” He paused. “Trouble is, the plan backfired on them. It made it uninhabitable for them too. So they left.”

Myra and Suki both gasped in unison. “Whoa ...” They said. “That’s deep.”

Nokev looked at Obshi, they were thinking the same thing. *Silly aliens*. They wouldn’t say it out loud of course. That would be rude to their table guests. All Nokev did was tell the truth, a truth the humans knew but refused to tell because it hit so close to home. Nokev had thought Earth would have at least started regenerating some kind of life by now. It had been thousands of years since the incident. But that didn’t seem to be happening anytime soon.

“But why worry about the past. Let it lay where it landed. Let’s think about the future that’s before us here and now.” Obshi said with a grin.

Suki was picking up what Obshi was laying down. “I get where you’re going with this, but we’re not allowed to date aliens. Those not of our kind.” She said.

Obshi stopped smiling. “Wait what?”

Myra nodded. “Sorry about that. We didn’t mean to lead you on. Um, thank you for telling us the truth about the Earth.” She looked to Suki. “We should be going now.” They left the table leaving Nokev and Obshi alone.

“So that’s it.” Nokev said. “They flirted with us just to get some information.”

“Oldest trick in the book.” Obshi agreed.

Nokev stared at the beer in front of him it was so coy the way it looked back at him, like it knew something he did not. Nokev frowned. There was something missing from his life. Someone missing. A lot of someones in fact. “I miss Norev and the others.” Nokev said. “She was my descendant. The others are her ... friends.” He sighed deeply.

Obshi nodded. “I know my friend, but that was thousands of years ago. They are all long since dead and gone. I am sorry.”

Nokev frowned again. “I know. I wish we could go back in time, find a wormhole.”

Obshi shook his head. “No, we can’t do that. I fear what would happen if there were two of us in the same space and time. I don’t think we should risk it.” He folded his arms. It was a terrible idea to try and go back into the past.

Nokev put his right index finger up. “You’re forgetting the first law of time travel. Two objects of the same cannot share the same space simultaneously. One object is simply replaced with the incoming object. I think we will be fine.”

“Who wrote that law?” Obshi asked. “When was it written? I’ve never heard of it.”

Nokev smiled. “I did about a thousand years ago. I’ve been working on time travel for a very long time now Obshi. How do you think I got Bert McDuff back to his own time? I worked on it until I got it right.” He paused. Sure it had taken a few dozen times of him meeting Bert further into the future, but he did eventually send the man home.

Obshi shook his head. “I do not know who you are talking about.” He said.

Nokev continued to smile. “If we travel back in time I will introduce you to him.”

Obshi hesitated at the thought. “I don’t want to risk damaging the timeline Nokev. Tell you what, let’s wait another thousand years. If you still feel the same way after that passage of time then we will give your idea a shot. What do you say?”

Nokev thought about it for a moment. A thousand years was a long time. He should know he had lived long enough to know exactly how long a thousand years was. Nokev finally agreed “Alright, I’ll give you one thousand years.” They shook hands.

## March 2248

The senior staff were all seated around a large dining table. Ambassador Grilka and Norev were also in attendance. They were feasting on a large baked ham that Jack had picked out. It had cost a fortune just to ship the meat to the station along with all the fixings.

Standing up, Jack raised his wine glass. “I would like to give a toast. To some of the finest people I have had the pleasure of working alongside.” He said. “Here’s to you ... and absent friends.”

“Absent friends.” The group repeated. Each in turn drank from their glasses. It had turned into a somber moment as they remembered Nokev, Obshi, and those who had passed before it was their time.

“Well, to a new year. We’ll see what she brings.” O’Brien sat down and watched as the conversations started up again. He loved that his crew got along so well with each other. It was a blessing to him. It really was.

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“Security to Lieutenant Killpack.” The voice of Killpack’s right hand man came over the communications line. “You wanted to be informed if Max showed up on the station. He’s here.”

Jeff stood from the table. “If you’ll excuse me.” He said to the others. “I’m on my way.” He spoke into the comm unit. Jeff left the dining room running towards the corridor. “Where is he?”

“Customs.” The security officer said.

“Got it.” Jeff said, he ran towards a transport tube.

Down in customs, a man stood with his hands behind his back in cuffs. “Why am I being detained?” He asked.

The security guard smiled. “Because I said so. Now we wait for the security chief to show up. He shouldn’t be too long. Just sit tight.”

Five minutes passed. Jeff Killpack showed up as promised. “Well well well, what do we have here.” He looked at the man in cuffs. “Max, I thought I told you never to come back to my station, and yet here you are.” He rested his hand on his gun.

Max looked at Jeff’s gun and then to Jeff. “You know you can’t hurt me with that right?” He asked. “We proved that the last time you shot me. The bullet just dissolved into my skin and disappeared. You cannot hurt me.” Twisting his arms, he broke the cuffs off of his wrists. “Nor can you hold me.” Max stepped forward quickly and reached for Jeff’s throat. Making contact, he lifted Jeff into the air. “Stupid humans.”

Jeff grabbed at Max’s hand that was around his throat. The guy was strong for an alien. Max easily stood eight foot tall. He had claws for hands much like a bird. “Tell me why I shouldn’t kill you right now.”

Jeff gasped for air. “Zap him.” He whispered as loudly as he could.

The security guard who had apprehended Max came up from behind, a static stick in hand. He pressed the business end of the stick against Max’s skin and sent an electric shock throughout Max’s system. Max dropped Jeff to the deck immediately as he himself fell to the deck.

On all fours, Jeff gasped for air. “Teleport him to a holding cell. Now!”

Jeff watched as Max was teleported away. His right hand man came to his aid. “Are you okay sir?”

Jeff slowly nodded. “I think I’ll be okay.” He stood from the deck holding onto the security guard’s arm for support. “How did that *thing* get aboard the station?”

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“Came in on the last transport of the day.” The security guard said. “His travel papers checked out and he was clear for travel. It was only then that I recognized his face that I knew who he was and what he came here to do. I should have stopped him sooner than I did. Should have been more alert.”

Jeff shook his head. “No, you did fine ensign. You did your job and I thank you for that.” Looking down at the deck, Jeff noticed a duffel bag. “Was this his?”

The ensign nodded his head. “Yes sir. I was about to go through it when you arrived.”

Picking up the bag, Jeff walked it over to a small counter and opened it. He whistled at the contents in the bag. There was enough explosives to send the station to kingdom come given the right moment to set it all off. The perp known as Max was there to kill everyone on Crimson Gamma.

The End