

HOME READING

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**THE SPHERE**

# I. SUMMARY

The story begins when Navy Force brings Norman to the ship in the middle of Pacific Ocean. Norman is psychologist and he is usually called to airplane crash sites - his job is to deal with traumatic problems of surviving passengers. So he was quite upset and surprised when he had found out there was no airplane crash at all.

On the ship he met a team of three scientists: Beth - the zoologist, Harry - the mathematician and Ted - the astrophysicist. Captain Barnes explained them that unknown, almost three hundred years old spacecraft was found under the sea. Therefore the team of four scientists and five staff members went to a habitat, which was a thousand feet beneath the surface in order to investigate this spacecraft.

When they entered the spacecraft, something disturbed them. That was not an alien ship; it was built by men and sent from the future. Scientists found food and beds, but there wasn't any sign of the crew. On one of their excursions Ted found a large, perfectly polished silver sphere inside the spacecraft. The sphere was troubling their minds for a long time; everybody wanted to know what it was, where it came from or what is inside.

Harry was the first who discovered the secret. He went to the ship while others were in habitat and somehow figured out what opens the sphere. He spent few hours inside and when he returned, he was claiming he remembers nothing. He fell asleep immediately. Soon after that strange things started to happening. Animals and plants appeared around the habitat and Harry became kinder and less arrogant. At dinner a swarm of jellyfish appeared. One of the staff members, Jane, found them very beautiful and she went out to watch them. But the animals attacked her and she died. After this event, they received a message on the computer. At first they didn't know what it is, but Harry decoded it. It was from someone who introduced himself as Jerry. They didn't have the connection with the surface so they presumed Jerry was something that was previously inside the sphere and was now released. They were talking to him, but they didn't find out anything new.

Next day Norman and Beth found another person dead – their cook Rose. All her bones were broken and her body was chewed. While they were trying to figure out what happened to her something attacked them. It was a giant squid. During the attack captain Barnes died and the habitat started to leak. Ted wanted to communicate with the squid but he failed and squid ate him. They couldn't stand another attack but Jerry promised he would return. And so he did. The squid attacked again and desperately defending their lives they started High Voltage Defence System. By starting the System they accidentally caused the fire. Two cylinders of habitat were completely destroyed and the last two members of staff died. The giant squid finally fled.

Later Norman was thinking of Jerry and he found a mistake in his first message. Harry had told them it was from Jerry but he was wrong. The author of the message was indeed Harry. Norman soon realized something strange happened to Harry inside the sphere. Harry was causing these attacks with his mind. He told Beth about it and they put Harry asleep.

But their troubles were not over yet. Now Beth was the one who was behaving weird. Norman thought she was in the sphere too, but she convinced him he was wrong. He proved him he was in the sphere and caused the squid. He believed her and she locked him into the room. But then he started to think logical again and escaped. He went to the spacecraft and entered the sphere.

When he returned to the habitat Beth was crying. She was very afraid of her power and she wanted to kill herself. Norman now had the power too and he tried to rescue them all, but Beth was very strong. He woke up Harry and together they brought unconscious Beth to the submarine. They escaped just in time before the whole habitat exploded.

On the surface they decided to forget the power because they weren't prepared for it. After they did that they remembered only an accident where all life-support systems failed. Only three of them survived, everybody else died.

## II. MAIN CHARACTERS

### **NORMAN:**

Norman H. Johnson is fifty-three-year-old university professor. When he was an assistant professor his research interest was group dynamics and anxiety. One day a young lawyer came to speak with him and ask him for help. National Security Council wanted Norman write a report about contact with aliens: they wanted him to predict consequences and behaviour of people. Norman didn't take it serious. It seemed like a joke to him, but it was well paid and he was just buying a house. So he wrote some recommendations, proposed and interviewed the team that would contact with aliens and took the money. He almost has forgotten it, but then one day the Navy sent for him and he suddenly realized this was not a joke.

### **BETH:**

Elizabeth Halpern is thirty-six-year-old zoologist and biochemist. She is tall and angular with masculine quality of her body. Her hair is short, eyes large and voice soft. Her speciality is cephalopods - she is working with squids and octopi. Beth was often discriminated by men so she became feminist, always fighting for her rights even when there is no one threatening her. Her temper is very unstable.

### **HARRY:**

Harold J. Adams is young mathematician and logician. He was a child prodigy and his youth was everything else but normal. He became very harsh, critical and arrogant. The most of the team don't like him because of his behaviour, but his mind is indispensable.

## III. MY OPINION

I really like the book; it is one of my favourites. I have read it before, in Slovene language, but I was interested what like it would be in original. The story is very interesting, there is always something going on. But most of all I like the end which is unusual.

## IV. EXTRACT WITH EXPLANATION

Norman took a deep breath, and looked at Beth and Harry. "Are we ready to forget the sphere, and the fact that we once had the power to make things happen by thinking them?"

They nodded.

Beth became suddenly agitated, twisting in her chair. "But how do we do it, exactly?"

"We just do it," Norman said. "Close your eyes and tell yourself to forget it."

Beth said, "but are you sure we should do it? Really sure?"

She was still agitated, moving nervously.

"Yes, Beth. You just...give up the power."

"Then we have to do it all together," she said. "At the same time."

"Okay," Harry said. "On the count of three."

They closed their eyes.

"One..."

With his eyes closed, Norman thought, People always forget that they have power, anyway.

"Two..." Harry said.

And then Norman focused his mind. With a sudden intensity he saw the sphere again, shining like a star, perfect and polished, and he thought: I want to forget I ever saw the sphere.

And in his mind's eye, the sphere vanished.

"Three," Harry said.

"Three what?"

I liked this extract because they decided they would forget their power, although it was beautiful. They admitted they weren't prepared for it. Thereafter they weren't remembering anything, and the power was gone.

## V. NEW WORDS

No.	WORD	PART OF SPEECH	CONTEXT	EXPLANATION IN ENGLISH	TRANSLATION
1	Grin	verb	The pilot grinned.	smile, showing the teeth, expressing amusement	zarežati se, pokazati zobe
2	Bite	noun	They say his bite is worse than his bark.	cut into with the teeth	ugriz
3	Bark	noun	They say his bite is worse than his bark.	cry made by dogs or foxes	lajanje
4	Reconnaissance	noun	...I started talking about Soviet submarine reconnaissance.	survey about an enemy's position	poizvedovanje
5	Anxiety	noun	Anxiety is no longer a problem in psychology.	emotional condition in which is fear and uncertainty about the future	strah

6	Cephalopod	noun	...I have been working with cephalopods-squid and octopi.	a creature with a soft body	glavonožci
7	Squid	noun	...I have been working with cephalopods-squid and octopi.	kind of cuttle-fish with ten arms round the mouth	ligenj
8	Vessel	noun	...the vessel was located here...	ship or large boat	ladja
9	Fin	noun	The fin was sharp-edged aeronautical-looking...	thing shaped or used the same way as a part of a fish, used in swimming	repno krmilo
10	Damp	adjective	His hand was damp when Norman shook it.	not thoroughly dry	vlažen
11	Creep	noun	It gives me the creeps.	fear, repugnance	groza, odpor, stud
12	Briefing	noun	If you'll just come this way to the briefing, sir...	information, instructions, advice	navodila, dajanje napotkov
13	Awkward	adjective	They fell into an awkward silence.	embarrassed	nelagodno, mučno
14	Threshold	noun	A new threshold in the evolution of the human species.	start, beginning	začetek
15	Plumber	noun	Ah, a plumber's friend.	workman who fits and repairs pipes	klepar, inštalater
16	Disdainfully	adverb	Ted said disdainfully.	dishonourable	zaničevalno
17	Blurred	adjective	The image became even more blurred.	unclear, confused in appearance	zamegljen
18	Posterity	noun	I feel that we should have some briefs remarks for posterity.	future generations	zanimstvo, potomstvo
19	Cockpit	noun	...everything about the room reminded him	compartment in a small aircraft for the pilot	pilotova kabina

			of an airplane cockpit.		
20	Curve	verb	The ball curved and spiralled down the inside of the bowl...	have the form of the line of which no part is straight	zaviti, kriviti
21	Self-sufficient	adjective	...we're entirely self-sufficient...	needing no help from others	samozadosten, neodvisen
22	Shrink	adjective	Shrink talk	be smaller, less	skrčen
23	Cluster	noun	What's that cluster of stars in the center?	number of things of the same kind in a small, close group	roj
24	Distort	verb	...black holes have so much gravity they distort space and time incredibly.	put out of the usual shape	izkriviti, popačiti
25	Iridescence	noun	Norman noticed an odd shifting iridescence, faint rainbow hues...	changing colours as light falls from different directions	prelivanje barv, lesketanje
26	Priority	noun	Priorities (title of the chapter)	right to have or do something before others	prednost
27	Cabalistic	adjective	The cabalistic markings on this side...	secret, mystic	mističen
28	Inscrutable	adjective	You seem like the most relaxed person here. -Just inscrutable, sir.	that cannot be understood or known, mysterious	skrivnosten, zagoneten
29	Will	noun	Did you want to make out your will, too?	testament	oporoka
30	Mildly	adverb	That's putting it mildly.	softly, gently	blago, milo, nežno
31	Subtle	adjective	If so, the change was subtle.	not easily seen or recognized	komaj opazen
32	Intensification	noun	Tina ran her image intensification of the videotape...	making or becoming more intense	zaostritev

33	Groanning	adverb	Norman turned to Harry, still groanning, and said...	making a deep sound forced out by pain or despair	stokajoč
34	Pitcher	noun	Better bring a pitcher.	large jug for holding liquids	vrč
35	Foam	noun	The foam was beautiful.	white mass of small air bubbles	pena
36	Tentacles	noun	Those squid have six tentacles.	long boneless growth round the mouth of certain animals	lovke
37	Cockroach	noun	Octopus learned how to kill cockroaches and	dark-brown insects that come to the places where the food is kept	ščurki
38	Crab	noun	use them as bait to catch crabs.	ten-legged shellfish	rakovica
39	Snort	verb	Barnes snorted.	to force air through the nose, expressing impatience	prhniti
40	Obnoxious	adjective	It wasn't obnoxious.	nasty, very disagreeable	gnusno
41	Tremulous	adjective	The sea floor was alive: crawling and wiggling and tremulous as far they could see...	trembling, shivering	trepetajoč
42	Wiggling	adjective	The sea floor was alive: crawling and wiggling and tremulous as far they could see...	moving with quick, short, side-to-side movements	zvijajoč se
43	Shrimp	noun	It's shrimps. A hell of a lot of shrimps.	small marine shellfish used for food	rakec
44	Saturated	adjective	I've been in saturated environments before.	wet	mokro
45	Dorsal	adjective	What it is? –Extra dorsal plating.	on the back	hrbten
46	Plating	noun	What it is?	covering, shell	oklep

			–Extra dorsal plating.		
47	Gloomy	adjective	This organ music is gloomy.	dark, depressing	mračna, žalostna
48	Smeary	adjective	They leave a smeary streak.	covered with something oily or sticky	masten
49	Streak	noun	They leave a smeary streak.	long, thin line	proga, črta
50	Thimble	noun	The jellyfish were small, the size of a thimble,...	cap of metal, used to protect the end of the finger when sewing	naprstnik
51	Swarms	noun	They could no longer see through the swarms of jellyfish.	large number of animals moving together	jata
52	Rigidly	adverb	Barnes's face was rigidly set, his jaw tight...	strict, not changing	nepremičen, otrpel, tog
53	Jaw	noun	Barnes's face was rigidly set, his jaw tight...	bone structure on the head containing the teeth	čeljust
54	Abruptly	adverb	And then, abruptly, there was silence.	unexpectedly, sudden	nepričakovano
55	Nudging	adverb	...Ted said, nudging Norman.	touching or pushing slightly in order to draw somebody's attention	dregajoč
56	Brass	noun	...explaining it away to the brass.	high ranking officer	častnik
57	Gale	noun	It's 16 hours since the gale hit topside.	strong and violent wind	nevihta
58	Relishing	adverb	Relishing his triumph, he insisted on...	liking	imeti užitek od
59	Unambiguous	adjective	A simple message is unambiguous, friendly,...	clear, with only one meaning, to be easily understood	nedvoumen, jasen
60	Inadequate	adjective	...he feels inadequate.	insufficient	neustrezen, pomanjkljiv, neprimeren

61	Acquaintance	noun	I am delighted to make your acquaintance.	person whom one knows	poznanstvo
62	Assure	verb	The pleasure is entirely mine I assure you.	say positive, with confidence, cause to feel certain and sure	zatrjevati, prepričati
63	Entity	noun	Are you the entity made in the U.S.A.?	being, existence	bitje
64	Awareness	noun	I began at awareness.	knowledge or realization	zavest
65	Pin	verb	We have to pin this guy down!	make unable to move	pritisniti ob zid
66	Petulant	adjective	Norman thought he detected petulant, irritable tone.	unreasonably impatient	zlovoljen, nestrpen, čemeren
67	Irritable	adjective	Norman thought he detected petulant, irritable tone.	easily annoyed or made angry	razdražljiv, preobčutljiv
68	Negotiations	noun	Alien negotiations (title of the chapter)	discussion in order to come to an agreement	pogajanja
69	Crackle	verb	The intercom crackled.	small cracking sounds, as when dry sticks burn	zapasketati
70	Frown	verb	Norman frowned.	draw the eyebrows together	namrščiti se
71	Thumping	noun	...then they heard the thumping again.	striking heavily	udarjanje, trkanje
72	Mattress	noun	The tentacles tore the mattress apart.	long, thick pad of wool, hair, etc on which to sleep	žimnica
73	Sluggishly	adverb	...he thought sluggishly.	inactive, slow-moving	leno, medlo, počasi
74	Overwrought	adjective	I personally feel you're overwrought.	tired out by too much work or excitement	izčrpan
75	Colliding	adverb	...then Harry stumbled into the room, colliding with Norman.	opposing, conflicting	nasprotujoč, spopadajoč se z

76	Tensely	adverb	They stood tensely,...	tightly stretched, strained to stiffness	napeto
77	Dismantling	verb	Sounds like he's dismantling it.	taking away fittings, furnishings...	odstraniti
78	Leaking	verb	The habitat was leaking.	process when liquid pass in or out trough a hole or crack, caused by injury	zamakati
79	Muffled	adjective	And then a muffled thud that might be an explosion.	dull sounds	pridušen
80	Thud	noun	And then a muffled thud that might be an explosion.	dull sound, as a blow on something soft	zamolkel udarec
81	Cozy (=cosy)	adjective	Looks, very cozy, Beth.	warm and comfortable	udobno
82	Shrugged	verb	She shrugged.	lift the shoulders slightly	skomigniti (z rameni)
83	Hostile	adjective	I don't think Jerry is hostile.	feeling or showing enmity	sovražen
84	Palpable	adjective	The heat was almost palpable.	that can be felt or touched	otipljiv
85	Vindictive	adjective	They were vindictive and whimsical, but they didn't sulk.	having or showing a desire for revenge, unforgiving	maščevalen
86	Whimsical	adjective	They were vindictive and whimsical, but they didn't sulk.	full of fanciful ideas and wishes	muhast
87	Sulk	verb	They were vindictive and whimsical, but they didn't sulk.	be in a bad temper and show this by refusing to talk	kujati se
88	Hesitate	verb	The squid appeared to hesitate.	to show signs of uncertainty or unwillingness in speech or action	obotavljati se, omahovati
89	Manifestation	noun	The entity squid is manifestation.	appearance	prikaz
90	Witful	adjective	They are witful.	intelligent, quick in mind	razumno, razsodno
91	Dozen	noun	Dozens of	twelve	ducat

			examples came to mind.		
92	Appraising	adjective	An appraising way, her stare very direct and cool.	like when fixing a price for, saying what something is worth	ocenjujoč
93	Wire	verb	She insisted going outside and wiring the explosives around the ship.	to tie	zvezati, pričvrstiti
94	Novice	noun	Or the novice sailor who cheerfully packed his family...	person, who is still learning and is without experiences	novinec, začetnik
95	Cheerfully	adverb	Or the novice sailor who cheerfully packed his family...	contented, happy	veselo, vedro
96	Merely	adverb	...as what Einstein called the »merely personal«.	only, simply, not more than	samo, edino, le
97	Vehemence	noun	Shocked by his own thoughts, the vehemence of them.	strength, violence	silovitost
98	Shudder	verb	Norman shuddered, pushed her body away.	tremble with fear and disgust	drgetati, zgroziti se
99	Firmness	noun	...the firmness of his own voice.	something that is not easily changed or influenced	trdnost, neomajnost
100	Suffocating	adjective	But those people suffocating,...	having difficulty in breathing	dušeči se