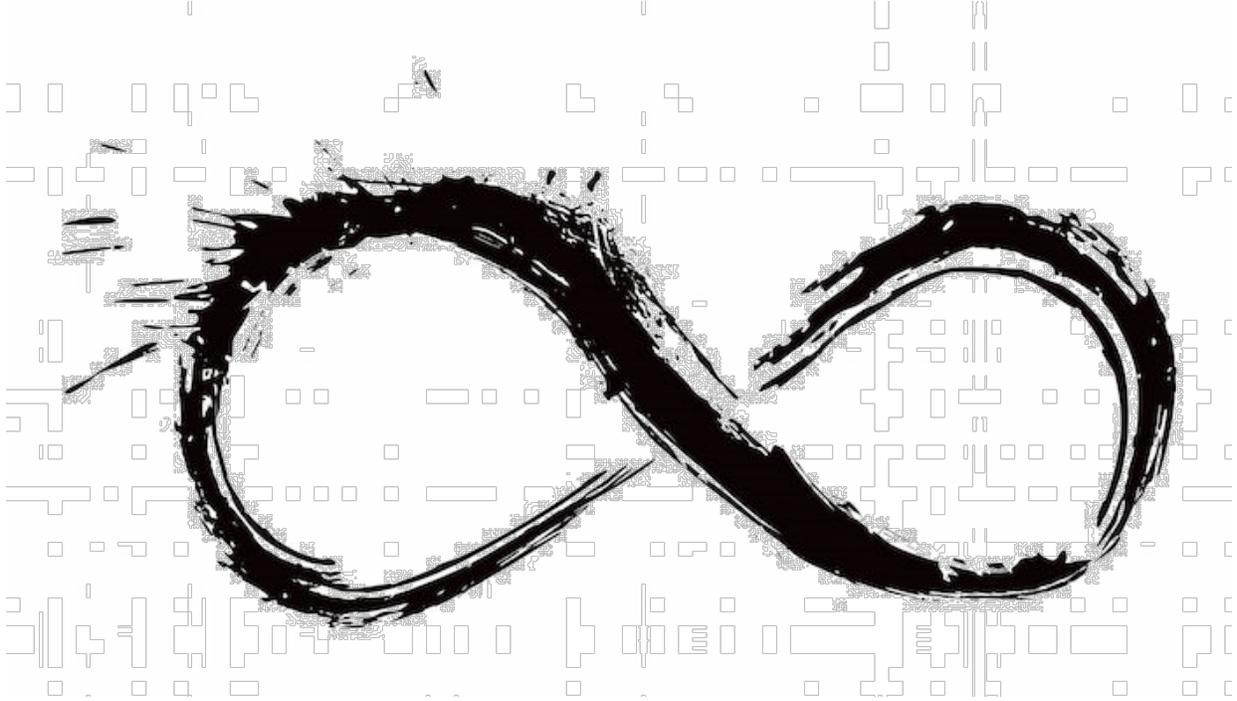


LOTUS



Written by

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Based on, my dreams.

Wakeupmau.com

EXT. DEEP SPACE NEAR THE SUN - NIGHT

Through the dark immensity of the void, where small, fleeting traces of light barely manage to interrupt the blanket of blackness, the outline of a geometrically designed figure is drawn by reflecting the intense luminosity coming from outside the frame.

It is an EXPLORER SATELLITE crossing the cosmos, getting closer and closer until it crosses the screen.

On the metal panel of the device you can read the inscription "SUMMER I".

Following the movement of the satellite, the frame now shows the target of its trajectory.

The immense and majestic sphere of shining light, THE SUN.

ALEX (V.O.)

When you love you wish to do things
for.

(beat)

You wish to sacrifice for.

(beat)

You wish to serve.

The satellite continues to move forward until it disappears in the intense light.

FADE TO:

INT. NASA CELEBRATION AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Descending from the artificial lights in the building's sky, the image focuses on ALEX SHEPPARD (37), dressed in full regalia in front of the expectant audience.

Behind Alex, a group of three astronauts, also dressed in full regalia, smile and wave next to a giant poster.

The giant poster reads "Earth/Sun - 2025/2125".

ALEX

These are the immortal words with
which my favorite writer, Ernest
Hemingway, described the duty of
self-sacrifice.

(beat)

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

And for these words and our love
for our planet, our deep care for
its and everyone's future, it is
that we embark in this long
journey.

(beat)

A mission of a hundred years to
protect life, to protect our
planet.

(beat)

To protect our future.

Explosions of confetti descend from the ceiling, people in
the audience applauding vigorously.

Alex waves once more and then shakes hands with his
colleagues on stage.

Everyone looks excited, but confident and joyful.

Alex continues his step towards the stairs outside the stage,
as celebratory music blares from the speakers.

(Conquest of Paradise by Vangelis).

As he does so, the phone in his pocket vibrates.

Alex takes the call.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hello?

CLAIRE

Alex?

ALEX

Who's this?

CLAIRE

It's me... Claire.

ALEX

Claire? Claire! How... Are you... I
mean, how are you?

CLAIRE

Listen Alex, I just want to say
that I'm sorry.

As Alex passes by the side of one of the big speakers,
Claire's voice is lost in the loud music.

ALEX

What?

CLAIRE
I'm sorry, I'm sorry Alex!

Alex listens this time, he can't reply.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Alex? Did you hear me?

ALEX
I don't understand.

CLAIRE
Listen Alex, I shouldn't have left like that. I still don't know exactly why I did it. I wish things would have been different between us.

ALEX
Claire, wait. Don't talk like that.

CLAIRE
(sobbing)
It hurts too much...

ALEX
(voice cracking)
No... Claire wait, don't do something stupid, okay? Just tell me where you are.

CLAIRE
Alex...

ALEX
Just tell me, please. Tell me where you are.

CLAIRE
I'm home...

ALEX
I'm coming, just wait for me, okay?

CLAIRE
No, Alex, you're half a world away. Your mission...

ALEX
Just wait for me. Listen...
Claire... YOU'RE MY DREAM, you always were my dream, I should have said it before... I love you, okay?

CLAIRE
I love you too...

ALEX
Wait for me. I'll be there with
you, I promise.

Alex cuts the call, and looks up to quickly find the EXIT DOOR to the auditorium in the distance.

He walks as fast as he can, evading all the people who try to approach him to talk to him on his way to the exit door.

Leaving them all behind to walk through the door, being enveloped in the intense light coming from outside.

FADE TO:

I/E. ALEX'S CAR ON HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The intense light coming from the headlights of the car traveling at full speed, evading other vehicles from left to right and back again.

Crossing all possible empty spaces on the three-lane highway.

Alex watches the clock on the dashboard, it's 20:49.

ALEX
C'mon, c'mon!

He honks his horn to warn about the next risky maneuver he executes, evading more vehicles without slowing down.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Move!

Suddenly, an intense roar, it's an airplane descending from the skies.

A sign on the right side indicates, AIRPORT 8 MILES AWAY.

As Alex looks back to the front, he can see the red brake light of the car in front of him.

He presses the brake pedal to the metal, the car skids in an intense screech.

The car in front on top of Alex now.

CRASH!

CUT TO:

INT. TECHNOLOGY TEST SITE NASA - DAY

Alex POV.

Black screen.

SCIENTIST #1 (V.O.)
Alex? focus in my voice, okay?

ALEX (V.O.)
Okay.

SCIENTIST #1 (V.O.)
Is there anything else you
remember?

ALEX (V.O.)
No... that's the last I can think
of. After that, everything is
black.

SCIENTIST #1 (V.O.)
Okay. Well done Alex.
(beat)
Now, on the count of three you're
going to open your eyes, and you're
going to feel relaxed and calm.
Okay?

A beat.

SCIENTIST #1 (V.O.)
One, two, three. Open your eyes
now.

Alex opens his eyes, in front of him, he can see SCIENTIST #1
smiling at him. On the back of him, other two scientists
write down notes on their charts.

Behind them, in the distance, there's a line of reporters and
photographers looking on expectantly.

SCIENTIST #1 pats Alex on the shoulder.

SCIENTIST #1
You did great Alex,
congratulations.

ALEX
Thanks.

SCIENTIST #1 now faces the line of reporters.

SCIENTIST #1
This concludes our presentation,
I'm sure you have many questions...

The voices of all the reporters rise in a deafening noise.
Among them, one rises above the others.

REPORTER #1
Yeah, what the hell is going on
here? Is this a joke?

SCIENTIST #1
Let's calm down first, okay?

REPORTER #2
Calm down?

SCIENTIST #1
Listen, we can't fully explain it
at this point.

REPORTER #3
How can it have these memories?
What did you guys do?

SCIENTIST #1
I assure you, and everyone, that we
didn't do anything to produce this
outcome.

As reporter keep asking questions, SCIENTIST #2 approaches
Alex.

SCIENTIST #2
Come Alex, time for us to go.

Alex nods, yet he keeps staring at the line of reporters.

ALEX
Why are they looking at me like
that?

SCIENTIST #2
Like what?

Scientist #2 helps Alex to get up from the seat, they now
walk towards the exit on the side.

ALEX
Like that.

Alex fixes his eyes on the reporters faces, they look afraid.

SCIENTIST #2
Don't worry for that, come.

SCIENTIST #2 takes Alex to the exits door.

SCIENTIST #1
Our investigation is still on
going, we're gathering much data on
this unpredictable event.

REPORTER #4
What about the mission?

SCIENTIST #1
The mission is still on schedule,
we assure you that, no matter these
developments.
(beat)
Our plans haven't changed, not now
and not for the past 99 YEARS.

Alex peaks one last time while walking through the doorway,
leaving the room.

VOICE OVER RADIO
Alex? Alex!

Door closes.

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMER II VESSEL, NEAR THE SUN - NIGHT

Alex opens his eyes to find red signals and lights on the
dashboard, alarms setting off in the pilot's cabin of the
ship.

ALEX
Alex here.

Responding, Alex presses buttons on the dashboard to stop the
alarms.

VOICE OVER RADIO
Alex, listen. Our indicators show
that the ship has wasted way more
energy than expected.

ALEX
I can see that.

VOICE OVER RADIO
Recommendation is to cut all energy
consumption to the minimal.

ALEX
Agreed.

VOICE OVER RADIO
This means killing radio
transmission from now on.

ALEX
What do you mean?

VOICE OVER RADIO
From now on, you'll be on your own,
Alex.

Alex doesn't reply.

VOICE OVER RADIO (CONT'D)
Alex?

ALEX
I understand.

VOICE OVER RADIO
In approximately two hours you'll
reach your destination.
(beat)
The destiny of our entire
civilization rests on your hands
now.

ALEX
I know. I'm ready.

VOICE OVER RADIO
Command thinks it would be nice if
you could say a few final words for
everyone.

ALEX
Everyone?

VOICE OVER RADIO
The whole world is listening, Alex.

Alex hesitates, as he raises his eyes, he can see the sun
suspended in the middle of the vast infinite darkness of the
universe.

ALEX
 You went through here, did you...
 Claire.

VOICE OVER RADIO
 Alex?

ALEX
 Give me a moment, please.

The intense rays of the sun coming hard now from the vessel's window. Engulfing all into light.

FADE TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS REST AREA - DAY

Rays of sunshine falling over the laptop of ALEX (22), graphs on SURFACE TEMPERATURE OF THE EARTH can be seen in it.

He raises his hand to cover the sunshine passing through the sunshade cloth, sitting on the terrace of the rest area.

At the side of the park, people walking in a relaxed manner.

He tries to stop the sun's rays from falling on his laptop screen.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
 Alex, right? That's not the most
 efficient way to do that, you know?

Alex looks to the voice's source with a kinda pissed off stare.

Immediately regrets is as he lands on Claire (20), dressed in a beautiful one piece flowery dress.

ALEX
 Uhm...

CLAIRE
 Not even the famous Alex Sheppard
 can stop sunshine from falling to
 Earth I guess.

ALEX
 And you are?

CLAIRE
 Your savior, Claire.

ALEX
My savior?

CLAIRE
Yup.

Without flinching, Claire climbs onto the table, Alex immediately supports her so that she does not fall.

Claire smiles and takes her hands to the pillar of the sunshade to turn it, managing to move the cut in the fabric.

The light no longer falls on the computer.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Solved!

She smiles again, finding Alex's smile this time, and takes his hand to get down from the table.

ALEX
Thanks, Claire.

CLAIRE
No problem, always good to help my enemies.

ALEX
Enemies?

CLAIRE
Yeah, I happen to be in a quest to be professor Duncan's assistant next year.

ALEX
Oh, I see. You want my job. You're really straightforward, uhm?

CLAIRE
My dreams can't wait for others, Alex.

ALEX
Which dreams are that, if I may ask.

CLAIRE
Save the world?

ALEX
Save the world? Wow.

Alex laughs, Claire doesn't follow.

ALEX (CONT'D)
You're serious.

Claire nods, confidently.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Okay. I think I'm gonna enjoy
competing with you... Claire.

They both look at each other, smiling tenderly.

ASTRONAUT #1 (V.O.)
You okay, Alex?

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. TRAINING ROOM, NASA - DAY

Alex is standing in the middle of the race track, catching his breath.

ASTRONAUT #1 approaches him.

Other astronauts continue to run around the track, curious about what is going on with Alex.

ALEX
Yeah, I'm fine. Just... give me a second.

ASTRONAUT #1
You sure? What happened?

ALEX
Not sure, I think I spaced out.

ASTRONAUT #1
Where were you?

ALEX
Before.

ASTRONAUT #1 looks puzzled, but he's interrupted by the arrival of SCIENTIST #1.

SCIENTIST #1
What's going on?

ASTRONAUT #1
Nothing, he just needs some time.

SCIENTIST #1
I didn't ask you.

ASTRONAUT #1 looks at SCIENTIST #1 annoyed.

ASTRONAUT #1
You know...

SCIENTIST #1
Be really careful with whatever
you're going to say now.

A beat.

ASTRONAUT #1
Forget it.

ASTRONAUT #1 reproves nodding negatively and looks at Alex
one last time before resuming running through the track.

SCIENTIST #1
(to alex)
We need to run some tests now,
Alex.
(beat)
You think you're up to it?

ALEX
Sure. I'm okay.

INT. TESTING ROOM, NASA - DAY

It's a completely empty white room, except for two chairs in
the center. Alex is sitting in one of the chairs, SCIENTIST
#1 in the other.

On the right side of the room, the wall is made entirely of
glass.

SCIENTIST #1
Alex, listen. I need you to focus,
okay?

Alex nods.

SCIENTIST #1 (CONT'D)
Now, as you focus, bring your
attention to the upper left corner
of your vision.

ALEX
Sure.

Alex focuses.

On the other side of the glass, a panel of scientists quietly takes notes.

SCIENTIST #1
What do you see?

Alex POV.

With SCIENTIST #1 in front of him, Alex focuses on the left corner, where an exclamation point appears.

ALEX
An exclamation point.
(beat)
What's going on?

SCIENTIST #1
Stay calm, Alex. Breathe, okay?
(beat)
Now, really focus and ask a
question in your mind.
(beat)
Question is, "who am I speaking
to?"

ALEX
(confused)
Who am I speaking to?

As Alex says these words, information about SCIENTIST #1 appears on his view.

ALEX (CONT'D)
You're Marcus Aurelius, automaton
and A.I. Lead researcher at NASA.

SCIENTIST #1
Perfect.
(Beat)
Now...

ALEX
Wait.

Alex focuses again.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Where's Claire?

SCIENTIST #1
Wait, Alex...

Information appears on screen, an image of the sun, the address of a museum.

ALEX
What...

SCIENTIST #1
Alex.

ALEX
Which date is this?

SCIENTIST #1
Alex, wait a second.

Information on Alex's pov now shows the current date.

2125.

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMER II VESSEL, NEAR THE SUN - NIGHT

A shot of the vessel, like a small dot compared to the huge flaming surface of the sun, covering the entire horizon.

VOICE ON COMPUTER (V.O.)
Destination will be reached in 10
minutes.

Inside the ship, in the interior walls, water leaks from everywhere because of the intense heat, which maintains a reddish color throughout.

Flames are seen from the windows, passing through and burning the vessel's exterior.

ALEX
Initiate recording.

A beat.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Love brought me here, sometimes my
own, many times that of others.

As Alex is talking, the interior fuselage of the vessel vibrates heavily.

ALEX (CONT'D)
But, what is this thing, this love
I speak about? Is the one that
makes you lose sight of shore, face
the unknown?

Windows cracking with every passing flame from the sun.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Is it the one that makes us endure
even at the face of having lose it
all?

Windows explode now, sun flames entering and enveloping Alex.

CUT TO:

INT. TESTING ROOM, NASA - DAY

Alex stands up from the chair, he's shaking.

ALEX

No... this... this is impossible.

SCIENTIST #1

We couldn't tell you right away,
you have to understand. The first
time you knew about it you reacted
violently.

ALEX

Tell me what?

SCIENTIST #1

We had to use hypnosis to prevent
you /from...

ALEX

/What are you saying!?

As Alex looks to the glass wall on the right side, he can now
see his own reflection.

His body.

Not human.

A robot.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Oh my god...

SCIENTIST #1

Just breathe, Alex. We can give you
some sedative...

SCIENTIST #1 reaches for Alex to help him, but Alex reacts
pushing him away.

Knocking him down.

Door on the back opens hard, military officer coming into the room.

ALEX
Leave me alone!

Alex waves his hand to make the military men stand down, yet he immediately runs towards the glass wall and jumps to go through it.

CRASH!

Alex's body passes straight to the other side, all scientists perplexed by the happening.

Taking advantage of the distraction, Alex runs to the exit door and slips through it smoothly by slamming it with his shoulder.

He continues to run down the hallway, faster and faster.

Alex looks at his hands for a second, amazed at the speed and strength displayed.

He runs towards the window at the end of the corridor and continues at full speed.

He goes through it, jumping outside of the building and facing the sun in front of him, in the sky.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX AND CLAIRE'S ROOM - NIGHT

The light of the lamp on the bedside table comes on.

It's Alex, he is drenched in sweat. Claire, who sleeps next to him, wakes up.

CLAIRE
Honey? What's the matter?

ALEX
Nothing, I... I think I just had a nightmare.

CLAIRE
Are you okay?

ALEX
Yeah, is just... I'm still thinking about my promotion.

CLAIRE
You'll do great, Alex. You've
prepared all your life for this.

ALEX
I know, I know.
(beat)
But what if...

CLAIRE
What?

ALEX
What if I'm accepted at NASA.

CLAIRE
You'll become an astronaut, get a
shot at saving the world, remember?

ALEX
That was your dream, not mine.

CLAIRE
What's your dream?

Alex doesn't answer.

ALEX
I don't want to lose you.

CLAIRE
Don't, Alex. Don't do that, we said
we wouldn't let our relationship
get in the way of our goals.

ALEX
What would you do?

Alex and Claire stare at each other, both hesitant.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLAIRE SUMMERS MEMORIAL STATUE - DAY

Police patrols surround the circumference where the statue is
placed. People watch attentively, some frightened, from a
distance.

On the bench in front of the statue, Alex sits, reading the
inscription on the metal plate.

"I dedicate my life's work to my love, for whom every drop of sweat was fulfilled, to pay for the debt his loss caused. To him, I give the future".

As Alex reads the inscription, SCIENTIFIC #1 walks to him.

SCIENTIST #1

Claire Summers was a genius of her time, her research in A.I. led us to the creation of the first artificial consciousness.

ALEX

Me.

SCIENTIST #1

Yes.

SCIENTIST #1 sits besides Alex.

SCIENTIST #1 (CONT'D)

But you're so much than that, aren't you?

(beat)

You're a miracle, and we really need one right now.

ALEX

I know that.

SCIENTIST #1

I think you do, I think you're the reincarnation of Alex Sheppard. The leader of the research team that predicted our current situation.

ALEX

The sun... is dying, right?

SCIENTIST #1 nods as he reclines on the seat.

SCIENTIST #1

This is year one hundred, Alex.

(beat)

We ran out of time.

Alex nods.

ALEX

What happened to her?

SCIENTIST #1

Oh, she went to the sun.

SCIENTIST #1 smiles as he reclines on the seat. Alex looks up to the sun.

CUT TO:

INT. SUMMER II VESSEL, THE SUN - NIGHT

The windows explode around Alex, the interior walls disintegrate, leaving the cabin exposed.

The seat belts, which hold Alex's body in the command chair, are covered in flames.

Ambiance sound goes off.

ALEX (V.O.)
I think love is every step I take.
(beat)
Because all I want to do is to be
with you.

The whole cabin is now engulfed in flames.

In front of Alex, the intensely burning surface of the sun is disintegrating the head of the vessel.

ALEX (V.O.)
We'll meet again, Claire.

Light.

FADE TO BLACK.