

The ALIENS Are Coming! THE ALIENS ARE COMING!

By Tim Kelly

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DRAMA SERVICE

For preview only

THE ALIENS ARE COMING! THE ALIENS ARE COMING!

A Far-Out Farce in Two Acts

By TIM KELLY

SYNOPSIS

The action takes place in and around the Meteorite Inn, which is located on a deserted stretch of highway in northern Arizona. The time is the present.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Speaking)

	<i><u># of lines</u></i>
PEGGY ALBRIGHT.....co-owner of Meteorite Inn	105
ROSIEUFO conventioneer	30
ALICEanother conventioneer	30
HAZELwaitress	33
DOUG.....Peggy's brother	80
BERNICE.....maid	28
CAROLanother UFO conventioneer	24
MAYOR MINTWEED.....local politician	33
MRS. CYNTHIA WILLIS.....local citizen	45
HYACINTH MUGGLEWORTH...in charge of convention	57
SUSANNA BROOMher assistant	29
COMMANDER COBURN.....on patrol for UFOs	45
GERALDINE.....souvenir seller	31
CARLconventioneer	27
JACKconventioneer	30
BILLconventioneer	29
SHERIFF CHICKAMAUGAlocal lawman	103
DEPUTY MURDOCKworks with Sheriff	41
LAVINIA DUDLEYtalk show host	24
ESTHER HEDBURNtabloid editor	49
RITA ARMSTRONG.....member of her staff	37
MABEL SHOEMAKERabducted by aliens	17
CHARLIE WHITEFISH.....another abductee	18
PRIVATE CROWLEY.....military	10
PRIVATE RIDLEYmilitary	11
CAPTAIN DAVIS.....military	76

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BETTY ROSS.....	terrified teenager	17
LEONARD WEBBER	her rescuer	14
MARGARET JONES	Leonard's friend	14
DR. TRUEBLOOD.....	another	24
NURSE HOUNDSTOOTH.....	surgical nurse	8
DR. HAWK.....	surgeon	25
ALIEN #1	visitor	4
ALIEN #2	another	4
EXTRAS can be utilized as additional CONVENTIONEERS, SOLDIERS, SPACE VISITORS.		

THE ALIENS ARE COMING! THE ALIENS ARE COMING!

ACT ONE Scene One

SETTING: The lobby of the Meteorite Inn, which is a motel that has never seen better days. A weird combination of plastic and Old West. DOWN RIGHT leads to various guest rooms. RIGHT is an optional fireplace with a fireside bench. UP RIGHT is the main entrance from the outside. UP CENTER are two display tables. On the table, RIGHT, are mineralogical rock specimens and crystals. On the table, LEFT, some radio recording equipment has been set up. There is a chair nearby. Behind the tables is a bulletin board covered with notices, personal messages, advertisements. Above the bulletin board is a large banner that proclaims: "WELCOME UFO CONVENTION." UP LEFT leads to more guest rooms. LEFT is the registration desk with a lamp, telephone, registry, pen, etc. Also on the registration desk is what looks like a rock, supposedly a piece from a meteorite. It's displayed inside a glass box. Behind the desk, if possible, is a mail and key rack. The exit into the office is behind the desk. DOWN LEFT leads into the dining room/luncheonette. RIGHT CENTER is a small sofa. LEFT CENTER is a table with three chairs. Additional stage dressing as/if desired: Rug(s), lamps, overhead fan, flowers, animal hides, Indian blanket over back of sofa, side table. FORESTAGE represents areas outside the inn.

LIGHTS UP: Revealing the inn's lobby. It's almost noon. A few seconds before LIGHTS UP we hear a TELEPHONE RINGING. When LIGHTS ARE UP FULL we realize it's a sunny day.

ROSIE, about 17, is seated on the sofa reading a magazine. ALICE, her friend, sits at the table playing a boring game of solitaire. Each girl has a hiking knapsack beside her, on the floor. PEGGY hurriedly ENTERS RIGHT, from the office and moves for the telephone. She is a pretty girl of about 19. She seems overwrought as she picks up telephone receiver.

PEGGY: Meteorite Inn, the "in" place to be. Keep watching the skies. (*Listens.*) I'm sorry but we're booked solid. (*ROSIE puts down her magazine, ALICE stops her card game. They eavesdrop. PEGGY listens to caller.*) The UFO Convention, yes. (*Listens.*) There's not a room in the motel and all the recreational vehicle spots are tied up. If you insist on coming, all I can do is suggest you bring along a sleeping bag and sleep under the stars or in your automobile. (*Listens.*) Yes, we do have a luncheonette. (*Listens.*) No, we do not serve vegetarian

pizza. Our specialty is Marsburgers. *(She hangs up.)* I think I'll have to disconnect this telephone. All it does is ring.

ROSIE: You ought to have a computer, Miss Albright.

ALICE: At least an answering or fax machine.

PEGGY: This far out from town I'm lucky I have a telephone that functions.

ROSIE: *(Woeful.)* Miss Albright, hasn't anyone cancelled a room?

ALICE: Rosie and me don't mind sharing.

ROSIE: We'll share with our friend Carol, too. She won't mind sleeping on the floor.

ALICE: All I can think about is a hot shower.

PEGGY: Young ladies, I've told you a hundred times. If there was a room available, I'd let you have it. I've put your names on the top of the waiting list.

ROSIE: How long is the waiting list?

PEGGY: Very long, I'm afraid.

ALICE: We don't like to sleep outside.

PEGGY: Why not?

ROSIE: Coyotes and wolves and scorpions and snakes.

PEGGY: If worse comes to worst, you can sleep here in the lobby.

ROSIE/ALICE: *(Distasteful.)* The lobby?

PEGGY: You won't be alone.

ROSIE: That sounds worse than coyotes and wolves and scorpions and snakes.

PEGGY: It's the best I can do for now. *(TELEPHONE RINGS. PEGGY picks up receiver.)* Call back next week. *(She hangs up. ROSIE and ALICE are amazed.)*

ROSIE: I didn't realize things were that hectic. Imagine. Turning away business.

PEGGY: It's either that or lose my sanity. I hear ringing telephones in my sleep.

HAZEL'S VOICE: *(From OFF DOWN LEFT, the dining room.)* I don't care how good the tips are. I quit! *(She ENTERS DOWN LEFT wearing a waitress uniform. She is followed by PEGGY's brother, DOUG. He is good-looking, about 20, and wears a chef's apron.)*

DOUG: You don't mean that, Hazel.

HAZEL: I don't, huh? Watch. *(Fast, she removes her cap and apron.)*

PEGGY: Now what's the trouble?

HAZEL: Only two people to work the dining room and the counter.
That's one waitress. Me. That's one cook. Your brother, Doug,
here.

DOUG: We're working as fast as we can. Honest, Peggy.

PEGGY: I believe you.

HAZEL: You've got to hire more help.

DOUG: If only we could.

PEGGY: You know it's difficult to get anyone to work this far out
from town.

HAZEL: I'm only human. I can only do so much.

VOICES: (*From OFF DOWN LEFT.*) Hey, how about some service?
Waitress! Waitress!

Where's my Marsburger?

DOUG: (*Yelling.*) A little patience, please. We'll get to each and
every one of you.

VOICES: (*From OFF DOWN LEFT.*) I should hope so.

We're hungry.

We're starving!

PEGGY: (*To ROSIE and ALICE.*) Would you girls like a job for a
few days?

ROSIE: Certainly not. We didn't come to the Meteorite Inn to serve
Marsburgers.

ALICE: We came to listen to all those people who've been abducted
by aliens. Sucked up into the guts of prowling starships and
lived to tell about it.

HAZEL: I think most of those people are in the dining room.

BERNICE: (*ENTERS DOWN RIGHT, wearing maid's uniform.*) Bad
news, Miss Albright.

DOUG: Now what?

PEGGY: Might as well let me hear it.

BERNICE: The dryer broke down again. That means I'll have to dry
the towels and facecloths in the sun. I just hope we don't get
rain.

PEGGY: What next?

VOICES: (*From OFF DOWN LEFT.*) Food! Food!

We want food!

Service! Service!

DOUG: There they go again.

VOICES: (*From OFF DOWN LEFT.*) Marsburger! Marsburger!

HAZEL: They're so rude.

BERNICE: Look on the up side.

DOUG: Which is?

BERNICE: The nearest place they can get anything to eat is over twenty miles away.

DOUG: And it doesn't serve Marsburgers.

PEGGY: Please be patient, Hazel. It's only for a week.

HAZEL: Yeah, but what a week. Will I survive it?

DOUG: (*Drops to his knees, holds up folded hands imploringly.*)
Pleeeeeeeaze, Hazel. Pleeeeeeeaze.

HAZEL: (*Resigned.*) Okay. I'm such a softie.

PEGGY: That problem's solved.

HAZEL: I never could resist a man who grovels.

VOICES: (*From OFF DOWN LEFT.*) Hey! How about some service!
Waitress! Waitress!

How long are we supposed to wait?

HAZEL: Help is on the way. (*She EXITS DOWN LEFT. DOUG gets up.*)

BERNICE: If it rains, we got big trouble. Nobody likes a soggy towel.

PEGGY: Bernice, see what you can do in the dining room. Give Hazel a hand.

BERNICE: I'll be glad when this week is over.

PEGGY: So will I.

DOUG: It's only temporary.

BERNICE: That's what the dentist said about my tooth. (*She displays her tooth. DOUG EXITS DOWN LEFT. BERNICE follows him OUT. CAROL ENTERS UP RIGHT from outside. Like her friends, she has a knapsack.*)

CAROL: Any luck? (*ROSIE and ALICE stand.*)

ROSIE: No room yet.

ALICE: But we're at the top of the list.

CAROL: (*Moving into lobby.*) There must be a hundred rec vehicles out there.

PEGGY: I had no idea so many people would be interested in this UFO Convention. I didn't realize they'd all want to stay here at the Meteorite Inn.

CAROL: Why wouldn't they? The Meteorite Inn is the only motel and restaurant close to Area 502. The military installation the government says doesn't exist.

GIRLS: (*Mockingly.*) Doesn't exist? Ha. Ha. Ha.

ROSIE: There are always weird things being sighted around here.

ALICE: Have you experienced any sightings, Miss Albright?

PEGGY: (*Hesitates.*) Well... that is... maybe I have. (*Anxious to change the topic.*) I imagine you girls would enjoy a hot shower.

GIRLS: Hot shower!

ALICE: You mean with real hot water?

PEGGY: Real hot water.

ROSIE: It sounds like heaven.

PEGGY: I'm holding one room until this evening. (*Indicates UP LEFT.*) Room 202. Please don't leave it in a mess. (*GIRLS jump up and down, applauding.*)

ALICE: Thanks a million, Miss Albright.

PEGGY: (*Gets key from mail slot or from under desk, and slaps it on the registration desk.*) Remember. Leave the room as clean as you find it.

CAROL: You betcha. You're an angel.

PEGGY: Or an alien.

GIRLS: An alien. Hahaha!

PEGGY: You never can tell.

CAROL: (*To ALICE and ROSIE.*) Know something? She's right. (*They laugh. CAROL picks up the key. EXITS UP LEFT. ROSIE and ALICE follow. Each girl carries her knapsack. TELEPHONE RINGS. This time, PEGGY does answer.*)

PEGGY: Meteorite Inn, the "in" place to be. Keep watching the skies. (*Listens.*) Who? (*Listens.*) Sheriff Chickamauga? No, I haven't seen him this morning. (*Listens.*) Yes, I'll tell him to call his office. No trouble at all. (*She hangs up as MRS. MINTWEED, the Mayor of the neighboring town, and her friend MRS. WILLIS ENTER UP RIGHT. Both are fussily dressed. MAYOR MINTWEED is inclined to gush. Both women move CENTER.*)

MAYOR MINTWEED: Good morning, Peggy.

PEGGY: Good morning, Mayor Mintweed.

MRS. WILLIS: 'Morning, Peggy.

PEGGY: Mrs. Willis.

MRS. WILLIS: I'm delighted to be here.

MAYOR MINTWEED: It's a long way to drive for lunch, but I've been promising Mrs. Willis a Marsburger since last Halloween.

MRS. WILLIS: I'm dying to try one. Does it come with chips or fries?

PEGGY: Choice of chips, fries or slaw.

MRS. WILLIS: I wonder if I should have the fries or the slaw?

MAYOR MINTWEED: You can never make up your mind about anything, Cynthia.

MRS. WILLIS: That's not true. I think I'll have the slaw. (*Thinks.*) Maybe I'll have the chips. (*To PEGGY.*) Are your chips fresh?

PEGGY: As fresh as the bags they come in.

MAYOR MINTWEED: I'm most anxious to meet the woman who's organized this UFO Convention. In her letter she asked if I would give a little welcoming speech to all the weirdos.

MRS. WILLIS: Careful what you say, Mayor Mintweed. You might be overheard. I don't think the conventioners would like to hear you call them weirdos.

PEGGY: No, they wouldn't.

MAYOR MINTWEED: (*Defensive.*) What else would you call people who claim they've been abducted by aliens? People who see spaceships in the night skies. And strange lights. Perhaps another choice of word would have been better. How about nutburgers? Ha, ha, ha.

PEGGY: Please remember, Mayor Mintweed, these people help our local economy. They spend a great deal of money.

MAYOR MINTWEED: (*All business.*) You're quite correct, Peggy. If they wish to believe in strange things, that's entirely up to them. I'll be on my best behavior. (*HYACINTH MUGGLEWORTH ENTERS DOWN RIGHT. She is forceful and efficient. She's followed by her assistant SUSANNA BROOM who carries a handful of pamphlets.*)

PEGGY: Here's Hyacinth Muggleworth now.

MAYOR MINTWEED: Who?

MRS. WILLIS: The woman who's conducting the convention.

MAYOR MINTWEED: Muggleworth. Yes, of course. (*She crosses to HYACINTH, hand extended.*) How do you do, Miss Muggleworth. I'm Mayor Mintweed. A pleasure to meet you. Things are going well with the convention, I trust? (*They shake hands.*)

HYACINTH: Splendidly, I'm happy to report.

MAYOR MINTWEED: Isn't that nice.

HYACINTH: This is my assistant, Susanna Broom.

SUSANNA: A pleasure, Mayor.

HYACINTH: Susanna, put that literature on the table. (*Indicates UPSTAGE table.*) Spread the pamphlets out.

MRS. WILLIS: Might I have a pamphlet? (*During all this, PEGGY busies herself at the registration desk. Checking mail and accounts, making a phone call. Eventually, she EXITS LEFT, into the office.*)

SUSANNA: Sure thing. (*She hands a pamphlet to MRS. WILLIS, goes to small UPSTAGE table, RIGHT, spreads out the pamphlets, checks bulletin board.*)

MRS. WILLIS: (*Reading aloud pamphlet's title.*) "Alien Autopsies and How to Perform Them."

SUSANNA: It's a popular topic.

MAYOR MINTWEED: Not exactly light reading, but I imagine it's most educational.

HYACINTH: (*Dark and mysterious.*) They're coming, you know. More and more of them. We must be prepared.

MRS. WILLIS: Who's coming?

HYACINTH: (*Hushed tone. Nervously looks about as if she fears being overheard.*) Them.

MAYOR MINTWEED/MRS. WILLIS: Them?

SUSANNA: She means creatures.

MAYOR MINTWEED/MRS. WILLIS: Creatures?

SUSANNA: You know—aliens. Alien creatures.

MAYOR MINTWEED/MRS. WILLIS: Oh. (*Both MAYOR MINTWEED and MRS. WILLIS are uneasy with this conversation, but they do their best not to show it.*)

HYACINTH: They're probably watching us this very minute. (*MAYOR MINTWEED and MRS. WILLIS look about, edgy.*)

MAYOR MINTWEED: Do you really think so?

HYACINTH: I'm sure of it.

MAYOR MINTWEED: (*Giggles nervously, then recovers.*) How about some lunch? You and your assistant will join me, won't you?

SUSANNA: I don't mind.

HYACINTH: There's so much to do. Still one must not ignore nourishment. One must keep up strength for the coming battle.

MRS. WILLIS: Battle?

SUSANNA: Miss Muggleworth is convinced the aliens are hostile.

MRS. WILLIS: You mean they won't be friendly?

SUSANNA: That's what hostile usually means.

MAYOR MINTWEED: (*Gestures OFF DOWN LEFT.*) Let's discuss it over Marsburgers. After you, Miss Muggleworth. Miss Broom. (*HYACINTH crosses and EXITS DOWN LEFT into the dining room. SUSANNA follows her OFF. MAYOR MINTWEED grabs MRS. WILLIS by the wrist, whispers.*) What did I tell you—weirdos. (*They EXIT DOWN LEFT. A moment for dramatic impact and then—COMMANDER COBURN jumps IN UP RIGHT and lands with a LOUD THUD—as if he's dropped via parachute.*)

COMMANDER COBURN: On patrol for UFOs! (*He's dressed for jungle combat. Battle fatigues, boots, helmet, face camouflage, cartridge belt, assault rifle. He frantically looks LEFT and RIGHT, as if expecting an enemy to materialize at any moment. He makes strange grunting sounds. Aiming his rifle here and there.*) Er... uh... huh... yeah... watch it... huh... uh... er...

GERALDINE'S VOICE: (*From OFF UP LEFT.*) Miss Albright, do you have any lubricating oil? (*Alarmed by the voice, COMMANDER COBURN climbs over the back of the sofa and rolls onto the floor where he remains in a prone position, assault weapon ready for action. In a moment, GERALDINE, wearing a smock with a badge reading "UFO" pinned to it, ENTERS UP LEFT, wheeling on a small cart. On the cart are some felt boards hosting pins, badges, buttons. She wheels the cart CENTER. She doesn't realize PEGGY is not at the registration desk.*)

GERALDINE: Just a little oil would help. The right wheel squeaks. It's so annoying. Squeak, squeak, squeak.

COMMANDER COBURN: (*Plucks some communication device from his belt and speaks into it.*) This is an alert. Commander Coburn calling headquarters. Commander Coburn calling headquarters. Over. Come in, headquarters.

GERALDINE: Hello, Commander Coburn. I didn't see you there on the floor. You're going to get awfully dirty. Wouldn't you be more comfortable somewhere else?

COMMANDER COBURN: (*Jumps up, returns device to belt.*) How did you know it was me?

GERALDINE: Don't be silly. I met you yesterday. We all did. When you were prowling through the rec vehicles looking for aliens.

COMMANDER COBURN: That's supposed to be classified information.

GERALDINE: Have you found any aliens yet?

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COMMANDER COBURN: I'm not permitted to discuss it. Top secret. Hush-hush. My lips are sealed. *(Pretends to zip his lips.)*

GERALDINE: In that case, you need something to brighten up your day. How about a pin? *(She plucks a pin from one of the felt boards.)* This one says—*(Checks.)* "I have been to Mars and survived."

COMMANDER COBURN: Kid stuff.

GERALDINE: *(Selects a button, checks message.)* How about a button? This one says—"I have been to the *[supply year]* UFO Convention."

COMMANDER COBURN: Tourist trash.

GERALDINE: My, you are hard to please.

COMMANDER COBURN: I've got a lot on my mind. Comes with the territory.

CARL'S VOICE: *(From OFF DOWN LEFT.)* It's a rip-off.

JACK'S VOICE: *(From OFF DOWN LEFT.)* It's a gimmick.

BILL'S VOICE: *(From OFF DOWN LEFT.)* What did you expect? Chopped sirloin?

COMMANDER COBURN: Aliens approaching! *(Instead of walking behind the sofa, he climbs over and drops from sight. CARL, JACK and BILL ENTER DOWN LEFT. They are dressed in hiking or camping gear. Each is about 18.)*

CARL: That Marsburger was nothing but a plain everyday hamburger. I ought to know. I've eaten enough of them.

JACK: The menu said it was irrigated.

BILL: Not irrigated—irradiated.

JACK: Big deal.

GERALDINE: Hi, boys.

BOYS: Hi, Geraldine.

CARL: How's business?

GERALDINE: I can't complain. I sold all the balloons and the little stuffed spacemen. All I've got left are pins, buttons and badges.

JACK: I bet you sell out.

GERALDINE: That's what I'm hoping to do.

COMMANDER COBURN: *(Jumps up from behind the sofa, assault weapon trained on the guys.)* Dirty rotten stinkin' space invaders. I'm going to irradiate you!

CARL: Oh, hi, Commander Coburn.

JACK: Didn't see you behind the sofa.

BILL: Still on patrol, huh?

COMMANDER COBURN: You'll find out. (*Takes the communication device from his belt, speaks into it.*) This is an alert! This is an alert! The aliens are coming! The aliens are coming! Commander Coburn here. I've just captured three Martians attempting to pass themselves off as ordinary citizens.

CARL: We are ordinary citizens.

JACK: Speak for yourself.

BILL: (*Indicates assault weapon.*) That thing isn't loaded, is it?

COMMANDER COBURN: Give me trouble and you'll find out, Martian.

BILL: I'm not a Martian.

COMMANDER COBURN: They all say that.

SHERIFF'S VOICE: (*From OFF UP RIGHT.*) We won't stay long, Deputy Murdock. Just long enough for me to polish off a Dr. Pepper.

DEPUTY MURDOCK'S VOICE: (*From OFF UP RIGHT.*) You're the Sheriff. (*SHERIFF CHICKAMAUGA ENTERS UP RIGHT, a gruff sort with an enormous tummy. [See PRODUCTION NOTES.]*)

GERALDINE: (*To BOYS.*) It's the Sheriff.

BOYS: Hi, Sheriff.

SHERIFF: Howdy, one and all. (*Sees COMMANDER COBURN.*) What's this? Commander Coburn with a firing de-vice.

JACK: He's harmless.

SHERIFF: Until you feed him meat. Let me see that. (*He waddles to COMMANDER COBURN and yanks away the assault weapon. Checks it.*) Why, this here ain't nuthin' but a kid's toy. Painted over to look like the real thing.

COMMANDER COBURN: Shows how much you know. That weapon not only detects aliens, it's capable of destroying them. Handle with care.

SHERIFF: I say this here weapon is a hunk of junk and I say you're mushy between the ears.

COMMANDER COBURN: You shouldn't talk to me like that, Sheriff Chickamauga. I deserve respect. I'm all that stands between the conventioners and disaster.

SHERIFF: You're the disaster. (*DEPUTY MURDOCK ENTERS UP RIGHT.*)

COMMANDER COBURN: I got rights.

SHERIFF: If I find out you've been annoying folks, I'll let you explain them rights to the judge. (*Returns weapon.*) Go on. Get out of here. Take this pea-shooter with you. (*COMMANDER COBURN*

takes back the weapon. In military fashion, he salutes smartly, spins around and marches DOWN RIGHT. Fast, he crouches in an attack position.)

COMMANDER COBURN: Remember, Martians, Commander Coburn takes no prisoners. On patrol for UFOs! *(He leaps OFF DOWN RIGHT.)*

SHERIFF: Whenever he's around it's feeding time at the zoo. Deputy Murdock.

DEPUTY MURDOCK: Yeah, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: Find me Doug Albright and his sister. Tell them I want to speak with them pronto.

CARL: Doug's in the kitchen.

DEPUTY MURDOCK: I'll find him. *(She moves DOWN LEFT.)*

SHERIFF: Find me that Miss Muggleworth, too.

JACK: She's having lunch.

SHERIFF: Her lunch'll keep.

DEPUTY MURDOCK: Leave it to me.

SHERIFF: And, Deputy Murdock—

DEPUTY MURDOCK: *(Stops, turns back.)* Yeah, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: Don't forget my Dr. Seuss.

DEPUTY MURDOCK: I thought you said you wanted a Dr. Pepper.

SHERIFF: That's right. Dr. Pepper. I never can keep them doctors straight.

DEPUTY MURDOCK: One Dr. Pepper coming up. *(She EXITS DOWN LEFT into the dining room.)*

SHERIFF: *(Waddles to sofa, sits. Yells DOWN LEFT.)* Plenty of ice! If there's one thing I can't abide, it's a warm Dr. Pepper. Makes my tonsils crotchety. *(He takes off his hat and fans himself.)* Hot day. Mighty hot day. *(He produces half a doughnut. Takes a bite.)*

CARL: Weren't you a little hard on Commander Coburn, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: That kook's a menace.

JACK: He's harmless.

SHERIFF: Harmless, huh? Last year he got himself a mail order tank and he drove it into the desert and squashed all the cactus plants. That's a federal offense in these parts.

BILL: What happened to him?

SHERIFF: The judge sent him away for thirty days' observation, but he came back. He always comes back. Commander Coburn don't make my job easy.

GERALDINE: Want to buy a pin, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: I already got a pen. Writes real good, too.

GERALDINE: I'll see how I do outside. Wish me luck.

OTHERS: Luck. *(She wheels the cart OFF UP RIGHT.)*

SHERIFF: I reckon you boys will be out staring at the sky tonight.

CARL: That's what we're here for.

SHERIFF: Don't you mess up any plants and stay close to the two-lane highway. Don't wander into the desert.

JACK: Sure thing, Sheriff.

BILL: We won't cause any trouble.

SHERIFF: Better not. This convention is a lot of hooley.

BILL: You've got a bad attitude about this convention, Sheriff.

SHERIFF: I'm entitled.

CARL: We'd better check on our bedrolls.

JACK: No one would steal them.

CARL: Better safe than sorry. *(He motions to BILL and JACK and they EXIT UP RIGHT. SHERIFF eats the last of the doughnut. DEPUTY MURDOCK ENTERS DOWN LEFT from the dining room with a large paper cup. The meteorite piece under glass attracts her attention. She steps to it.)*

DEPUTY MURDOCK: Here's your Dr. Pepper, Sheriff.

SHERIFF: You don't expect me to walk over there and get it, do you? Fetch it over here.

DEPUTY MURDOCK: This piece of meteorite rock. It fascinates me. They say it fell from the sky over a million years ago. Doug says sometimes it glows.

SHERIFF: I want my beverage! By the time I get it, the ice will be melted.

DEPUTY MURDOCK: Ice makes me think of the Ice Age.

SHERIFF: Ice makes me think, mebbe, I need a new deputy. *(That snaps DEPUTY MURDOCK from her fascination with the meteorite rock. She steps behind the sofa and hands the cup to the SHERIFF.)* Where's Doug Albright?

DEPUTY MURDOCK: He's coming. Miss Muggleworth, too.

SHERIFF: Find Peggy Albright.

DEPUTY MURDOCK: Betcha she's in the office.

SHERIFF: Wouldn't be surprised. *(He gulps the drink. DEPUTY MURDOCK crosses behind registration desk and EXITS LEFT into the office as MISS MUGGLEWORTH, Followed by*

SUSANNA and MAYOR MINTWEED, ENTERS DOWN LEFT and stands in front of table.)

HYACINTH: You wished to speak with me, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: Yup. Take a seat. All of you. Howdy, Mayor. Didn't know you were here. Just as well. (*He struggles to his feet as they sit at table.*)

MAYOR MINTWEED: Goodness, Sheriff Chickamauga. You sound serious.

SHERIFF: I'm a serious man in a serious job. It's my fate.

DOUG: (*ENTERS DOWN LEFT, wiping his hand on his apron.*) Anything I can do for you, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: You can hear what I got to say. (*PEGGY ENTERS LEFT from the office and stands behind the registration desk. DEPUTY MURDOCK ENTERS LEFT from the office and moves to the UP LEFT table.*)

MAYOR MINTWEED: What is all the mystery, Sheriff?

SHERIFF: No mystery. But as long as this convention is being held, there will have to be some ground rules.

HYACINTH: Yes, yes. Of course.

SUSANNA: What kind of ground rules?

SHERIFF: If folks is out at night, they will have to stay close to the highway. I'm only one man and I've only got one deputy.

MAYOR MINTWEED: Nice to see you, Deputy Murdock.

DEPUTY MURDOCK: Mayor.

SHERIFF: Let's stick to business. (*As he speaks, he moves back and forth in front of the sofa.*) If folks wander away from the highway, there ain't no telling what might happen to them.

HYACINTH: Ah ha. I see what you mean. There might be an abduction.

SHERIFF: That ain't what I meant at all. They could get bit by a dangerous critter. Also, if they get too close to that military installation that ain't there, they could get themselves shot. (*OTHERS react.*) You can't mess with Uncle Sam. The "No Trespassing" signs are posted everywhere, but you can't see them at night on account of they don't glow.

DEPUTY MURDOCK: If folks get lost out there without water, they're goners for sure.

HYACINTH: Tsk, tsk.

SHERIFF: No picking up rocks. Government property. No visiting the nearby lake, either. It's in the restricted zone. Stay close to the motel, that's my advice.

For preview only

SUSANNA: You want us to pass on this information, right?

SHERIFF: That I do.

HYACINTH: I shall certainly alert the conventioners to your concerns, but this is Wednesday.

SHERIFF: What of it?

SUSANNA: Wednesday is the best day to see a flying saucer.

HYACINTH: The best day to see any manner of UFO phenomenon.

SHERIFF: (*Unimpressed.*) Is that a fact. (*Puts on hat.*) Well, I said what I come for.

MRS. WILLIS: (*ENTERS DOWN LEFT.*) Better come along, Mayor. Your Marsburger is getting cold and greasy.

MAYOR MINTWEED: Thank you, Cynthia. You're doing a brilliant job, Sheriff Chickamauga.

SHERIFF: I try. But lately my life ain't been easy. UFOs, aliens, Commander Coburn. Strange conventions.

MRS. WILLIS: (*Insistent.*) The Marsburger.

MAYOR MINTWEED: Coming. (*MRS. WILLIS EXITS DOWN LEFT, leading MAYOR MINTWEED, SUSANNA and HYACINTH, who follow her OUT. DOUG steps back out of the way, moving toward the registration desk.*)

PEGGY: Oh, Sheriff.

SHERIFF: Yeah?

PEGGY: You had a telephone message. The state police. They said they couldn't reach you.

DEPUTY MURDOCK: We must have been in the doughnut shop, Sheriff.

SHERIFF: I can figure that out for myself. (*Points to meteorite piece under the glass.*) Is that hunk of rock really from a meteorite?

DOUG: That's what everyone from the university says.

SHERIFF: And it glows?

PEGGY: Sometimes.

SHERIFF: Weird. I liked this job better when folks didn't see things that ain't supposed to be there. Let's move it, Deputy Murdock.

DEPUTY MURDOCK: You're the sheriff.

SHERIFF: (*Starts to EXIT UP RIGHT, stops, turns back to PEGGY and DOUG.*) Wednesday. Bah. (*He EXITS.*)

DEPUTY MURDOCK: Sheriff Chickamauga doesn't have much imagination. I'm different. I've seen things in the sky over Area 502.

DOUG: Like what?

DEPUTY MURDOCK: Flames.

DOUG/PEGGY: Flames?

DEPUTY MURDOCK: Racing across the night sky. I think it was propane.

DOUG: Probably a jet operating in the dark.

DEPUTY MURDOCK: No, because it made a funny burping sound, and I could feel my flesh tingle, like someone was pulling at it.

DOUG/PEGGY: Yuck!

SHERIFF'S VOICE: *(From OFF UP RIGHT.)* Deputy Murdock!!!

DEPUTY MURDOCK: Coming, Sheriff Chickamauga! *(She runs OUT UP RIGHT.)*

DOUG: *(Sits at the table.)* Sometimes I wonder if we've gotten in over our heads.

PEGGY: All this UFO stuff is a bonanza for us. We were almost bankrupt. Thanks to outer space, the Meteorite Inn has turned to gold.

DOUG: Do you actually think the government has an alien prisoner at that installation?

PEGGY: What does it matter?

DOUG: You're right. Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

LAVINIA: *(ENTERS DOWN RIGHT.)* Is the dining room thinning out yet?

DOUG: Not yet, I'm afraid, Miss Dudley.

HAZEL: *(ENTERS DOWN LEFT.)* Better come along, Doug. The customers are starting to growl again.

VOICES: *(From OFF DOWN LEFT.)* Food!
Service!

Waitress!

DOUG: No rest for the weary. *(He follows HAZEL OFF.)*

LAVINIA: *(Crosses to the registration desk.)* Any messages for me?

PEGGY: *(Checks a few message memos.)* I'm afraid not, Miss Dudley.

LAVINIA: It's going to be quite a night.

PEGGY: Hyacinth Muggleworth thinks so.

LAVINIA: I understand Wednesday has some significance.

PEGGY: It's when UFO activity is supposed to be exceptionally strong in this area.

LAVINIA: My callers will love it.

PEGGY: *(Indicates.)* I see your equipment is set up.

LAVINIA: I'll tape the convention, play the tape tomorrow night and take calls.

PEGGY: Must be exciting being a radio talk show host.

LAVINIA: It is. I don't care if the dining room is crowded. I'm famished. Any suggestions?

PEGGY: Anything but a Marsburger.

LAVINIA: I hear that. *(She starts to EXIT DOWN LEFT, but is stopped by the arrival, UP RIGHT, of ESTHER HEDBURN, a noisy newspaper editor. She's dressed in glamorous fashion and is quite haughty. She is followed by RITA ARMSTRONG who is weighed down by too much luggage and is having a rough time managing it. ESTHER takes a few steps into the room, stops. Gives the place a quick appraisal.)*

ESTHER: What a dump. The Old West Meets Plastic World. *(PEGGY and LAVINIA exchange a "Who's this?" expression.)*

RITA: I think it's kind of nice.

ESTHER: You would.

PEGGY: Can I help you?

ESTHER: I hope so. I'm Esther Hedburn. *(Nods to RITA.)* This is a member of my staff, Rita Armstrong.

LAVINIA: Esther Hedburn? I know the name. You edit The World Today. Best tabloid east of the Mississippi.

ESTHER: Best tabloid east and west.

PEGGY: *(To ESTHER.)* This is Lavinia Dudley. The talk show host. Very popular.

ESTHER: Never heard of her.

LAVINIA: Ouch. *(She EXITS DOWN LEFT.)*

PEGGY: I've held your room for you, Miss Heartburn.

ESTHER: Hedburn.

PEGGY: Room 202. Holding the room wasn't easy.

ESTHER: Room? You mean rooms, don't you?

PEGGY: Why, no. One room. A single. I didn't expect you until this evening.

ESTHER: *(Turns to RITA who remains weighed down with the heavy luggage.)* Didn't you ask for two rooms?

RITA: I can't think of everything.

ESTHER: Rita, you're hopeless.

RITA: I'm sorry, Miss Hedburn.

ESTHER: You should be. *(To PEGGY.)* I'm sure you don't have a suite, so it will have to be two rooms.

PEGGY: I'm afraid that's impossible.

ESTHER: Impossible is not a word I like to hear.

PEGGY: The best I can do is put a cot in your room.

ESTHER: A cot?

PEGGY: Or one of you could sleep here in the lobby.

ESTHER: The lobby! You've got to be kidding.

PEGGY: I'm afraid not.

ESTHER: Rita, take the luggage outside. (*RITA turns UP RIGHT to EXIT.*) We'll go to another place.

PEGGY: I'm afraid there's nothing available for twenty miles and that will be filled up by now.

ESTHER: Rita, bring back the luggage. (*RITA turns back around.*)

PEGGY: I'll check your room to make sure it's ready.

ESTHER: You do that. (*PEGGY EXITS UP LEFT.*)

RITA: I don't like sleeping on a cot.

ESTHER: You won't have to sleep on a cot. You'll be sleeping here in the lobby. I imagine they give out pillows and blankets. You can pretend you're in a hurricane. (*RITA can hold the luggage no longer. She lets it fall to the floor.*) Watch what you're doing.

RITA: Are you sure our readers will enjoy reading about this convention? Seems routine to me. We've done so many articles on UFOs and aliens and Martians. (*She moves UPSTAGE and checks the bulletin board.*) "Scientists Find Living Creature from Outer Space," "Space Alien Meets with President [*supply name of current U.S. President*]," "Alien Child Found in Bat Cave," "Tiny Space Aliens Invade Human Body and Rob It of Vitamin B."

ESTHER: I'm leaving all that sappy mumbo-jumbo to you. I've got bigger fish to fry.

RITA: Oh?

ESTHER: (*Moves DOWNSTAGE.*) I'm going to expose the Meteorite Inn as a gigantic hoax.

RITA: Hoax?

ESTHER: Some old geezer built the motel a few years ago. I understand he didn't see five customers in a week. When he died he willed the place to his grandson and his granddaughter. They run the place. I imagine the young woman we just met is the granddaughter, Peggy Albright. I'll report all these sightings are the Albrights' way of making the motel a profitable venture. Fraud with a capital "F."

RITA: If you do that, they may go out of business.

ESTHER: That's no concern of mine. The public loves an exposé, and I intend to see that the public gets one. If this phony UFO motel is destroyed in the process, so what?

RITA: You are good at destroying things, Miss Hedburn.

ESTHER: Watch what you say to me, Rita. You can always be replaced.

RITA: Sorry.

ESTHER: You get a few good stories from these loony conventioners, and I might consider a small raise in your salary.

RITA: (*Flat.*) A small raise? How can I ever thank you? (*ROSIE, ALICE, CAROL ENTER UP LEFT. They have towels around their necks, carry their knapsacks.*)

ROSIE: I thought Miss Albright said the room would be vacant until tonight.

ALICE: I didn't get to use the shower.

CAROL: Looks like we'll be sleeping in the lobby. (*They EXIT UP RIGHT.*)

HYACINTH: (*ENTERS DOWN LEFT.*) Ah, new arrivals. I'm your convention chairperson, Hyacinth Muggleworth. I bid you welcome.

ESTHER: I'm Esther Hedburn. I'm the editor of *The World Today*. (*Nods to RITA.*) This is one of my feature writers.

HYACINTH: Splendid. The more publicity the better. Tonight you will witness extraordinary things.

ESTHER: If you say so.

PEGGY: (*ENTERS UP LEFT.*) Your room is ready, Miss Hedburn.

ESTHER: (*To RITA.*) What are you waiting for? Pick up the luggage and take it to my room.

PEGGY: I'll give you a hand. (*She crosses to the luggage and picks up a couple of pieces. RITA takes the rest.*) My brother would help but he's got his hands full in the kitchen. It's been a busy week. This way. (*She EXITS UP LEFT. RITA follows her OFF.*)

HYACINTH: (*Steps to ESTHER.*) I heard you were coming to the convention. You can do so much to help. You've already alerted the public to the danger. Who could forget that front page article—"Mars Is Watching." Chilling, that's what it was.

ESTHER: It was a popular issue.

HYACINTH: How could it be anything else? Come outside. You'll enjoy meeting some of the others.

ESTHER: I'd rather go to my room and freshen up.

HYACINTH: You can freshen up anytime. (*She takes ESTHER by the arm and guides her UP RIGHT.*) I want you to meet a woman who was abducted into an alien spaceship. She remembers every little detail.

ESTHER: I'm sure she does.

HYACINTH: Did you know aliens are fond of chewing gum?

ESTHER: No, I didn't know that.

HYACINTH: We must be on guard every moment. (*They're OUT. As they EXIT, the LIGHTS GO QUICKLY TO BLACK. SOUND: WEIRD "OUT OF THIS WORLD" NOISES. [NOTE: For all OPTIONAL SPECIAL EFFECTS, consult PRODUCTION NOTES.] OPTIONAL VISUAL: As the BLACKNESS STRIKES and SOUND EFFECTS COME UP, the "meteorite rock" in the glass box begins to glow quickly on and off, on and off, etc. If you are using a CURTAIN, it is drawn at this point.*)

End of Scene One

ACT ONE

Scene Two

FORESTAGE. SOUND EFFECTS FADE. We're somewhere beyond the Meteorite Inn in the desert at night. If you're using a STAGE CURTAIN, the ACTORS who will appear in Scene Three will take their positions BEHIND THE CURTAIN. If you're not using a curtain, the Scene Three ACTORS will move into place as quietly and as unobtrusively as possible in the dark background. CARL, JACK, BILL, HAZEL and BERNICE ENTER LEFT on FORESTAGE. They carry flashlights and crisscross the beams on the auditorium ceiling, which makes a bizarre lighting pattern. They're excited.

CARL: I tell you I saw something.

JACK: I know I heard something.

CARL: It was like a booster ignition and liftoff.

BILL: I saw something up there jumping around.

HAZEL: Is that a spaceship or the Big Dipper?

BERNICE: Where?

HAZEL: (*Points to sky.*) There.

BERNICE: I don't see anything.

CARL: Look!

OTHERS: What?

CARL: That flame.

JACK: Shooting across the sky.

End of Script Sample

PRODUCTION NOTES

ON STAGE: Optional fireplace, bench. Large display table. Smaller table (2), one with rocks and crystals, one with recording equipment, chair. Bulletin board with messages and advertisements. Banner proclaiming: "WELCOME UFO CONVENTION." Registration desk with optional key/mail rack; lamp, telephone, pen, registry cards, colored rock under glass [upside down fish tank will work]. Small sofa, table with three chairs. Additional stage dressing as/if desired: Rugs, lamps, flowers, Indian blanket on sofa, etc.

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene One: Magazine (ROSIE); playing cards (ALICE); knapsack (ROSIE, ALICE, CAROL); chef's apron (DOUG); waitress' cap, apron (HAZEL); room key (PEGGY, at desk); pamphlets (SUSANNA); assault rifle, helmet, cartridge belt, phone device (COMMANDER COBURN); smock with UFO button, small cart, felt boards with pins, buttons, badges (GERALDINE); gun holster with gun, cowboy hat (SHERIFF, DEPUTY); doughnut (SHERIFF); paper cup (DEPUTY); luggage (RITA); towel (ROSIE, CAROL, ALICE).

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene Two: Flashlight (BILL, JACK, CARL, BERNICE, HAZEL); binoculars (BILL); gun holster with gun, cowboy hat, flashlight (SHERIFF, DEPUTY).

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene Three: Thick glasses, hat (MABEL); fishing pole, fisherman's hat and boots (CHARLIE); rifle (SOLDIERS); gun holster with gun, cowboy hat (SHERIFF, DEPUTY).

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO, Scene One: Playing cards (ROSIE, ALICE, CAROL); blanket, pillow, writing pad, pencil (RITA); flat tire (MAYOR MINTWEED); rifle, whistle (SOLDIERS); assault rifle (COMMANDER COBURN); gun holster with gun, cowboy hat (SHERIFF, DEPUTY); felt board with pins and buttons (GERALDINE).

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO, Scene Two: Table or barrel with wheels (NURSE); bedroll or clothes bag with assorted "fake body parts" and a trash bag inside it (DR. HAWK); surgical gloves and masks (DR. HAWK, DR. TRUEBLOOD); hospital screen or large bedsheet (SOLDIERS); camera (ESTHER); doughnut, gun holster with gun, cowboy hat (SHERIFF).

COSTUMES: As indicated in script. The appearance of the ALIENS at the end of the play will require special attention. They wear costumes that reach to the floor like flowing robes. White will look good. Their faces are painted white or silver and the

glasses they wear are angular. Their heads are bald and you can achieve this effect by using bathing/shower caps. To suggest their heads are “large,” pad the caps with tissue paper. An extra “eye” in the center of the forehead will also prove effective. Some magic and/or costume shops offer “alien masks” made from latex rubber. An “insect” face is worth considering.

SOUND: Telephone, “out of this world” effects, buzzing sound (*helicopter sound effect works nicely*), creepy music for the autopsy scene.

MISCELLANEOUS

PACING must be fast. Don’t allow scenes to lag. Move fast on entrances and exits. Pick up cues quickly. Don’t allow anything, dialogue or action, to be performed slowly.

SHERIFF CHICKAMAUGA’S TUMMY: Use an inflated inner tube under his costume to suggest he spends too much time at the doughnut shop.

SOUND and LIGHT EFFECTS: They add greatly to the “alien approaching” scenes. Work on them. At the end of the play, when the real space invaders are approaching, a flash of white light to illuminate the lobby will work wonders.

FROST ON SHERIFF CHICKAMAUGA: Supposedly from his stay in the meat locker. Powder, perhaps with some glitter will work.

FAKE ALIEN appears at end of ACT ONE. The lighting here is very dim so the audience will not get a clear view. To give the impression of something extremely “tall,” have someone who doesn’t weigh much get on the shoulders of someone who has plenty of carrying strength. The one being carried holds a flashlight with a red or green bulb and shines it up onto the face. The face can be an alien mask or something “weird.” If you have any problem with this, then have one of the “true” ALIENS from Act Two, Scene Two portray this part. But it makes a sensational impact if the two-actor image can be utilized. Another way to go is to have an alien face on a long pole with a crossbar to suggest shoulders. A long robe hangs from the “shoulders.” The ACTOR working the head and shoulders is inside the robe.

ALIEN AT END OF ACT TWO, Scene One: This can be any ACTOR wearing a robe and face mask. Use one of the two from the “tall” alien sequence. Or one of the “true” ALIENS can substitute. However, it makes for better impact if the “true” ALIENS don’t show themselves until the end of the play. But do what you have to do.

THE AUTOPSY: Everything that comes over the top of the screen is obviously fake. If someone is watching, so what? is CAPTAIN DAVIS' viewpoint. All he wants is CONVENTIONEERS talking about the autopsy. If ESTHER HEDBURN denounces the autopsy as a sham in her tabloid, all the better. For the "link of sausages" effect, use stuffed black socks tied together. Lump of clay for the heart, piece of felt for the tongue, etc. Use your imagination. You can get a silhouette effect on the sheet or screen by having lights behind. For example, if you're using the screen, PRIVATE RIDLEY and PRIVATE CROWLEY could get behind with strong flashlights. If they're holding a sheet, some EXTRAS in surgical smocks could hold the flashlights. The silhouette bit is strictly optional.

FLEXIBLE CASTING: Rework to your requirements. For example, some female roles can be changed to male: DEPUTY MURDOCK, GERALDINE (*GERALD*), LAVINIA (*LAURENCE*), PRIVATE RIDLEY, DR. TRUEBLOOD, ALIEN #2. Some male roles can be switched to female: CAPTAIN DAVIS, PRIVATE CROWLEY, LEONARD (*LOUISE*), DR. HAWK, ALIEN #1. Any number of characters can double in the roles of ALIEN #1, ALIEN #2, DR. HAWK, DR. TRUEBLOOD, NURSE HOUNDSTOOTH, etc.

REMEMBER—KEEP WATCHING THE SKIES!

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