

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
Original Works Publishing

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this play is subject to royalty. It is fully protected by Original Works Publishing, and the copyright laws of the United States. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion pictures, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

The performance rights to this play are controlled by Original Works Publishing and royalty arrangements and licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation. No changes of any kind shall be made to the work, including without limitation any changes to characterization, intent, time, place, gender or race of the character. PLEASE NOTE that amateur royalty fees are set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. When applying for a royalty quotation and license please give us the number of performances intended, dates of production, your seating capacity and admission fee. Royalty of the required amount must be paid whether the play is presented for charity or gain, and whether or not admission is charged. Royalties are payable with negotiation from Original Works Publishing.

Due authorship credit must be given anywhere the title appears, on all programs, printing and advertising for the play. The name of the Playwright must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and in size and prominence of type equal to 50% of the largest, most prominent letter used for the title of the Work. No person, firm or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded to the Playwright.

Copying from this book in whole or in part is strictly forbidden by law, and the right of performance is not transferable. The purchase of this publication does not constitute a license to perform the work.

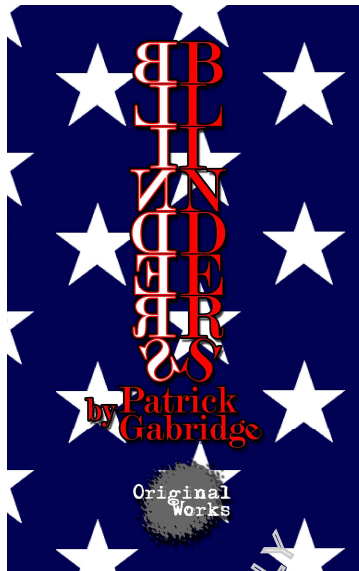
Whenever the play is produced the following notice must appear on all programs, printing, and advertising for the play on separate line:

**“Produced by special arrangement with
Original Works Publishing.
www.originalworksonline.com”**

On the cover: Seongchun Hong & Eunhee Kim
from the Seoul production.

Distant Neighbors
© Patrick Gabridge
Trade Edition, 2023
ISBN 978-1-63092-139-2

*Also Available By
Patrick Gabridge*



BLINDERS

Synopsis: Scientists announce that they have found two people who are exactly alike. Not twins, but two identical human beings. Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, Karen Sayer can clearly see that the "duplicates," Chris and Alex, look absolutely nothing alike. No one else seems to notice, or care, and the media unleashes a feeding frenzy over the new scientific discovery. With modern science and the media behind them Chris and Alex are catapulted to instant celebrity. With the help of Karen's salesman fiancé Stack, the incredible identicals campaign for the Presidency under the slogan "Two Heads Are Better Than One." Knowing she must do something to awaken the world, Karen is suddenly thrust to the forefront of an assassination attempt. Will she have the courage to follow through? Will she succeed before it's too late? Only the outrageous conclusion holds the answers.

Cast Size: 3 Males, 1 Female, 4 Chorus

Distant Neighbors

by
Patrick Gabridge

SAMPLE ONLY

Characters: (3m, 2w)

ADAMS: 20s-30s, a black man. A gardener and lover of the earth, with a strong capacity for wonder.

TALIA: 20s-30s, a white woman. A physical therapist, who is interested in the new, and has made her fair share (or more than her share) of mistakes.

GRIFFIN: 50s, a white man. A copier repairman with a strong desire to keep his promises and his feet on the ground.

MELANIE TOMLINSON: 40s-50s. A NASA scientist and life-long dreamer.

BLAKE: 30s-50s, a white man. Talia's ex-husband, biker, and pharmacist.

Time: Late summer, this year.

Place: A collection of adjoining suburban backyards outside of Denver. They are normally separated by six-foot high privacy fences. Unless part of an alien spaceship were to crash and smash them to pieces. Which it has.

Distant Neighbors was originally produced by the Fresh Ink Theatre, directed by Liz Fenstermaker, at the Boston Playwrights' Theatre, in December 2014.

Cast:

ADAMS: Sheldon Brown

TALIA: Louise Hamill

GRIFFIN: Daniel Boudreau

MELANIE TOMLINSON: Gillian Mackay-Smith

BLAKE: Michael Knowlton

Dramaturg: Tyler Monroe

Production Manager: Gabe Hughes

Stage Manager: Keagan McCarthy

Lighting Design: Christopher Bocchiaro

Scene & Prop Design: Marc Ewart

Sound Design: Lindsey Anderson

Costume Design: Bridgette Hayes

Assistant Director: Gabe Graetz

Assistant Stage Manager: Andrew Cataluna

Assistant Lighting Design: Emily Crochetiere

Costuming Assistant: Erica Desautels

The first international production of *Distant Neighbors* was by the Theatre Troupe Cheongnyeondan at the Mirigogae Art Theater in Seoul, South Korea, directed by Saerom Min, translated by Jisoo Chung, in August 2018.

Cast:

ADAMS: Jeonghoon Kim

TALIA: Yuri Kim

GRIFFIN: Seongchun Hong

MELANIE: Eunhee Kim

BLAKE: Minho Jeon

Staff:

Director: Saerom Min

Translation: Jisoo Chung

Ass. Director: Jeonghyeon Yang

Stage Manager: Bongkwan Kim

Ass, Stage Manager: Aram Jeong

Set Design: Taehoon Oh

Props Design: Jeongran Kim

Video Design: Seongha Kim

Light Design: Myeongjun Roh

Music: Jeongyong Kim

Sound Design: Eshu Jung

Costume Design: Yona Jeon

Make-up: Kyeongsuk Jang

Promotion: Jaeun Shin

PR Materials Design: Jihoon Ha

Distant Neighbors

SCENE 1

(In the darkness, a loud crash.)

(Lights up to reveal a collection of suburban back yards on a peaceful summer night. Each yard is separated from the next by a six foot high wooden privacy fence. We see the intersection of four yards/fences. One of the yards is lush with vegetation--flowers, vegetables. The other most visible yard has scraggly grass and a few dead plants.)

(At rise: A gigantic, metallic wing has smashed the intersecting fences to bits. It lies steaming in the warm night. There are strange markings on the oddly structured device and flashing lights in unusual colors.)

(Adams, a black man in his 30s, stands on the deck of his house, overlooking his lush backyard garden. He stares at the object that has just fallen out of the sky into his yard.)

ADAMS: Woah.

(The wing just sits there steaming. A section of fence falls over with a crash. Adams continues to stare, in stunned disbelief.)

(Griffin, a white man in his 50s, exits from his house, into his yard, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes.)

GRIFFIN: What the hell!

ADAMS: Careful.

(Adams cautiously approaches the wing.)

GRIFFIN: What is it?

ADAMS: I think it's...

GRIFFIN: Where did it come from?

ADAMS: The sky.

GRIFFIN: What?

ADAMS: I saw it fall. Floated, really.

GRIFFIN: Out of the sky? Son of a bitch. I just replaced that stupid fence. Insurance is not going to cover this.

(Adams walks even closer to the wing.)

(Talia, a white woman in her late 20s/early 30s, enters from her house, wearing a robe over pajamas.)

TALIA: What happened? Oh, my god!

GRIFFIN: Insanity.

TALIA: Is anyone hurt? We should do something. Call an ambulance, the police, the fire department. We have to call someone.

ADAMS: No. No. We need to stay calm. Everyone is fine.

GRIFFIN: Not my fence.

ADAMS: Or my lemon apple cucumbers. But it's okay.

TALIA: Oh. You. I. Ah.

ADAMS: I saw it fall. I was right here.

TALIA: And it just crashed down from the sky?

ADAMS: That's right. Just now.

GRIFFIN: She's right. We should do something. Call someone.

TALIA: It's an emergency. A catastrophe. We should call 9-1-1. I'll get my phone.

(Talia is about to run back into her house.)

ADAMS: Don't! Please?

TALIA: Someone could be hurt.

ADAMS: Not here. No one is hurt here. We don't need to panic. We don't need to call. Not yet.

(Adams stands right next to the wing, transfixed.)

TALIA: Where are the other pieces?

(She looks out away from their yards, out into the neighborhood, but sees nothing.)

GRIFFIN: You think there are more?

ADAMS: I only saw this one. Maybe it's the only piece that survived.

TALIA: Oh, no. Those poor people.

ADAMS: People?

TALIA: The pilot, the passengers.

ADAMS: I'm not sure it was a plane.

GRIFFIN: What do you mean? Look, it's an airplane wing.

ADAMS: Is it?

TALIA: What are you saying?

GRIFFIN: Maybe it's from the Air Force base. Some sort of drone or something. Could be loaded full of explosives.

(Griffin and Talia take a nervous step back. Adams gets even closer.)

ADAMS: What are these markings?

GRIFFIN: Russian?

TALIA: Definitely not Cyrillic. *(They give her a look.)*
What? I took Russian in college.

GRIFFIN: What language then, professor?

TALIA: Maybe Chinese? Korean?

GRIFFIN: Look at all the squiggly lines. Could be Arabic.

ADAMS: I don't think so.

(Adams reaches out and touches the wing, carefully.)

GRIFFIN: What are you doing?

ADAMS: Oh. Wow. Oh, wow. Holy mother of God!

TALIA: Are you okay?

ADAMS: Oh, yes. *(laughs)* Yes, I am.

TALIA: Is it hot?

ADAMS: Barely warm. Incredibly smooth. Almost like... I don't know how to describe it. I really think... Oh, man. This is crazy. Completely impossible. Impossible, and I'm touching it. Right here, right now. I am touching it. Come on. Feel this.

GRIFFIN: No way.

TALIA: What does it feel like?

(Talia's curiosity brings her closer to the wing. Griffin keeps his distance.)

ADAMS: Go ahead.

TALIA: I don't know.

ADAMS: It won't hurt you.

GRIFFIN: He doesn't know that.

(Adams smiles at her. Talia looks at him, then touches the wing.)

TALIA: Oh. Oh my, that's strange. But. Wow. Oh. Oh, that's.

ADAMS: Like liquid and solid all at once.

TALIA: But strong. It. It almost begs to be touched, doesn't it?

GRIFFIN: I see radiation burns in your future.

TALIA: No, you don't understand. It's—

GRIFFIN: You don't know what it is or where it came from.

ADAMS: Space. It came from outer space.

GRIFFIN: Bull.

TALIA: Outer space?

ADAMS: Does it look like anything you've ever seen before? Does it feel like anything you've ever felt before?

TALIA: No.

GRIFFIN: What are you saying?

ADAMS: It's not from Earth.

TALIA: Oh, my god.

ADAMS: Come feel this.

TALIA: You really think it could be?

ADAMS: I saw it float down out of the sky.

GRIFFIN: You're an expert on alien life? On space materials?

ADAMS: Me?

GRIFFIN: Yeah, you. Neighbor whatever-your-name-is.

ADAMS: Adams.

TALIA: Nice to finally meet you, Adams. I've watched you, I mean, seen you, out here, in your garden. But we never—

GRIFFIN: Do you work for NASA, Adams?

ADAMS: I'm a gardener. I design and install edible landscapes.

GRIFFIN: You're a grower of tall tales. That's what I think.

TALIA: An alien spacecraft.

ADAMS: Part of one. And you're touching it.

(Talia quickly pulls her hands away. Adams keeps exploring the wing with his sense of touch. He leans forward to smell it.)

GRIFFIN: Aliens? Aliens? You think they're trapped inside?

ADAMS: Who knows. Hello?

(Adams knocks on the wing. They all step back, then lean forward to listen. No response.)

GRIFFIN: You're nuts.

(Talia tries knocking and listening, too.)

TALIA: Hello? Hello?

GRIFFIN: *(to Talia)* Why are you so close? You. Young lady. What's your name?

TALIA: Talia.

GRIFFIN: Weren't you going to call someone? What are you waiting for? Call the police, NASA, the army.

TALIA: Right. Right. Of course. I should. And tell them what?

GRIFFIN: Whatever will bring someone here to drag it away. Tell them an alien probe has landed in our back yards.

TALIA: So now you believe him?

GRIFFIN: Of course not.

(Adams stares up at the sky.)

ADAMS: What if there are more on the way?

(They all look up. The night is very quiet.)

GRIFFIN: Now you're playing with me.

TALIA: *(to Adams)* Should I call?

GRIFFIN: It's not what he says. It's nothing. It needs to get the hell out of here.

ADAMS: Remember this moment. We were the first to know, for certain, that man is not alone in the universe.

GRIFFIN: You've been smoking too much of whatever you've been growing.

ADAMS: If you call the cops, or NASA, or whoever, they're going to take it away.

GRIFFIN: Good.

ADAMS: And they'll hide it, cover it up, make up a story. They may hide it from the whole world, but you'll know, because you saw it with your own eyes. Touched it with your own hands. History is being made tonight, right this minute, in your own back yard, and you're part of it. You are primary witnesses to the greatest shift in cosmic understanding ever known to humanity. Right here, right now.

(Talia puts her hands on the wing again.)

TALIA: Wow.

GRIFFIN: What you're feeling is the biggest load of horse shit ever laid down in suburban midnight.

ADAMS: *(to Talia)* You think I'm right.

TALIA: I don't know. I think you could be.

GRIFFIN: Don't fall for this.

TALIA: *(to Griffin)* What's your name?

GRIFFIN: Griffin.

TALIA: Griffin. You don't need to be afraid.

GRIFFIN: Afraid? Who said anything about being afraid?
I'm being cautious. Sensible. If this is what he wants it
to be, and I'm not saying it is, we would be very wise
to be afraid.

ADAMS: You've got it all backwards.

TALIA: It'll be okay.

GRIFFIN: This thing doesn't belong here.

TALIA: No, it doesn't.

GRIFFIN: See. You understand.

TALIA: But just look at us. We're fine.

*(Talia extends a hand towards him, gently, beckoning him
closer.)*

TALIA: It's all right.

ADAMS: History. We're part of history.

TALIA: You'll see. It feels like... the future.

GRIFFIN: What if it's dangerous?

ADAMS: What if it's not?

TALIA: Just one hand. One finger. If you were ever going to try something, in your whole life, this is the time.

(Griffin reaches forward and places a hand on the wing. He definitely feels what they feel.)

GRIFFIN: Oh.

(He looks up at the sky again.)

(End of scene.)

SCENE 2

(The next afternoon.)

(Melanie, a woman in her 40s, enters, carrying a bag. She's dressed for business, like a detective or small time official.)

(She sees the wing and stops dead in her tracks, stunned.)

MELANIE: Holy crap.

(She walks cautiously over to the wing and looks at it closely, without touching it.)

MELANIE: Man, oh man, oh man, oh man. No. No. No, no, no. No way. No. No. No no no no no no. Wow. Okay. Okay. Okay. Deep breath. Okay. Okay.

(She's completely flustered. Looks even closer at the wing without touching it.)

(Almost touches it, but refrains.)

(She rummages in her bag and pulls out a roll of yellow police caution tape. She unrolls the tape along the wing. She climbs over the broken fences, but nothing will stop

her from creating a perimeter with the caution tape. Her eyes never leave the wing, which might cause her to slip, fall, and generally be a clumsy disaster. (Think: Lucille Ball meets the X Files.) During all of this, she continues her deep breathing and exclamations of dismay.)

(Adams enters from his house and sees Melanie in his garden.)

ADAMS: Hey! Watch out for my carrots.

(Melanie shrieks in surprise.)

MELANIE: Ah! Oh, my god.

(Melanie looks down and sees that she is trampling Adams' vegetables.)

MELANIE: Sorry. I'm, ah... You've noticed the, ah...

ADAMS: You're from NASA?

MELANIE: A woman called, claiming that an, uh, alien spacecraft landed in her backyard.

ADAMS: She's my neighbor.

(Griffin enters from his house and walks over to them.)

GRIFFIN: Who are you?

MELANIE: Melanie Tomlinson.

ADAMS: From NASA.

GRIFFIN: What took you so long?

MELANIE: I was, ah... We get all kinds of reports, you know. I just flew in from Houston.

GRIFFIN: We called hours ago. This is an emergency.

ADAMS: Where's your crew?

MELANIE: My crew?

ADAMS: Shouldn't you have a team of scientists and trucks and instruments?

MELANIE: Um, no. It's just me.

(Melanie takes a clipboard out of her duffle bag.)

MELANIE: Well, gentlemen, first let me get a little more information—

(Talia enters, flustered.)

TALIA: Someone's here? Why didn't you call me?

ADAMS: I didn't have your number.

TALIA: You could have knocked on my door. We're all in this together.

(Talia approaches Melanie.)

TALIA: *(to Melanie)* Hi. We spoke on the phone. Thanks for coming. It's been a confusing day.

MELANIE: I can see why.

TALIA: We weren't sure what to do about it, but we thought NASA would know.

MELANIE: It's good that you called. So... when exactly did this arrive?

ADAMS: Just after midnight.

MELANIE: You saw it crash? All of you?

TALIA: Just Adams.

ADAMS: I like to look at the stars. And listen to the vegetables grow.

MELANIE: And what makes you think that it's an... an... Alien spacecraft?

GRIFFIN: It was his idea.

MELANIE: I see. (*looks at Adams*) *nuqneH. Blplv'a'.*
[*translation: What do you want? Are you healthy?*]

ADAMS: (*laughing nervously*) *ghIj qet jaghmeyjaj*
[*translation: May your enemies run in fear.*]

GRIFFIN: What?

MELANIE: Klingon.

ADAMS: So I used to be a fan.

MELANIE: Just trying to understand who I'm dealing with.

ADAMS: That doesn't mean this isn't real.

GRIFFIN: What are you going to do about it? And what are you going to do about this?

(*Griffin holds up his hands to show that his palms have turned bright blue.*)

MELANIE: Oh, my. That's where you... Touched it?

(*Adams and Talia hold up their palms--they're the same bright blue. Melanie instinctively takes a step back.*)

MELANIE: Okay. Wow. Was not expecting that.

GRIFFIN: What is it? Where does it come from?

MELANIE: Does it hurt? Burn? Sting? Itch?

TALIA: No. But nothing will wash it off. I've tried everything, even bleach.

MELANIE: And you showed this to a doctor?

GRIFFIN: Useless quacks.

TALIA: I was embarrassed that I just touched some random...

MELANIE: Has anyone else touched this? What about the neighbors in that house?

TALIA: It's in foreclosure. It's empty.

MELANIE: Did you call the police?

GRIFFIN: This one (*pointing at Adams*) convinced us to call you folks first. Look, you have to help us. My wife is very afraid.

ADAMS: You have a wife?

TALIA: Is she coming out?

GRIFFIN: She doesn't come out.

MELANIE: Has any of this spread to her, from you? Though contact?

GRIFFIN: No. We... It hasn't spread.

MELANIE: What about you two? Have you left your houses? Touched anyone?

ADAMS: I've been waiting for you. And trying to save my zucchini.

TALIA: My ex-husband stopped by, but...

MELANIE: Did you touch him?

TALIA: No. I didn't let him in.

(Melanie writes some notes.)

ADAMS: The motorcycle guy?

TALIA: *(to Adams)* It's a long story. *(to Melanie)* Look, I'm a physical therapist. I can't go to work with my hands like this.

MELANIE: Absolutely not. You can't go anywhere. Any of you.

GRIFFIN: What?

MELANIE: Not until we know exactly what's happened. No one else comes in this perimeter, and you don't go anywhere. Strict quarantine.

GRIFFIN: Quarantine! I have bills to pay. I called in sick today, but I have to go to work on Monday.

MELANIE: Impossible. Show me your hands again.

(Melanie examines their hands.)

MELANIE: That is really... interesting.

GRIFFIN: *(to Adams)* I told you we shouldn't have touched it.

ADAMS: I'm not sorry I did.

(Melanie turns back to the wing and looks at it closely.)

GRIFFIN: What are you going to do?

(Melanie takes out some forms from her bag and hands them to the neighbors.)

MELANIE: Well, I, ah, guess I'll ask you to fill out these forms, on both sides. In black ink. And then, I, um... The normal protocol doesn't exactly cover this sort of...

ADAMS: Are you going to ask for the full team now?

MELANIE: The full team?

GRIFFIN: The UFO team.

MELANIE: There is no team. Alien spacecraft aren't real. They're hoaxes, phoned in by crackpots. Misinterpretations of natural phenomena. Space junk. Remnants of failed experimental aircraft.

TALIA: Then what are you doing here?

MELANIE: My job is to calm people down and sweep up the mess.

ADAMS: You're the space janitor?

MELANIE: I give out paperwork. Paperwork makes people feel better.

TALIA: But this is real.

MELANIE: Yes. I mean, it could be. I don't know. It's probably not. What does that even mean? It's probably nothing. It's always nothing. You people should just go back inside until I have a chance to... examine this... this...

(She admires the wing with complete fascination.)

ADAMS: You believe.

MELANIE: It's not that simple.

GRIFFIN: You don't know what the hell you're doing.

TALIA: Nobody does.

MELANIE: You really touched it?

ADAMS: If you put a hand on it, you'll know something.

TALIA: You'll understand.

MELANIE: I... *(she's tempted)* I don't think that would be a good idea. We have a strict no touching policy.

GRIFFIN: *(holding up his palms)* Very wise.

MELANIE: Have you told anyone else about this?

TALIA: I called my sister. She thinks I'm nuts. But she always has.

MELANIE: It's best if we keep this quiet, until I can get it out of here.

ADAMS: See. I told you this would happen. I warned you.

GRIFFIN: Good. Can they fix my fence, too?

(Adams steps between Melanie and the wing.)

ADAMS: You can't have it.

MELANIE: What?

GRIFFIN: What?

ADAMS: It's in my yard. It's not going anywhere.

GRIFFIN: It's in my yard, too, and I don't want an alien space ship in my yard.

ADAMS: This is the most important thing that's happened in modern history, and she wants to take it away and keep it secret. We called the wrong people. We should have called CNN, ABC, CBS.

MELANIE: Look. Mr.—

ADAMS: Adams.

MELANIE: Mr. Adams. There's nothing to get excited about. This is probably not what you hope it is. But if you were to spread rumors about...

TALIA: Alien spacecraft.

MELANIE: There could be panic.

ADAMS: Or there could be a shift, in the way we all look at the sky, at the world, at each other.

GRIFFIN: I don't want it here.

MELANIE: We will take this and study it, and figure out what it is, where it came from. And you will all be fine.

ADAMS: *(to Talia)* It's in your yard, too. Are you going to let her take it and hide it?

TALIA: I don't know. If it's dangerous...

(Griffin thrusts his palms towards her.)

GRIFFIN: Who knows what else it will do to us? Maybe these lights are sending signals, telling the next wave of aliens where to land.

ADAMS: The galaxy is a big place. It might be centuries before any signal reaches home. Whoever launched this probably died before mankind turned a telescope to the sky.

GRIFFIN: *(to Melanie)* You're the expert. Tell us something.

MELANIE: I don't know where it came from, or how long it took to get here. Officially, I will tell you that this is just a strange accident.

ADAMS: If this is what it seems to be, it changes the context of everything.

TALIA: Everything. *(to Griffin)* Can't you feel it? It's like a chance for a fresh start, for an entire planet.

ADAMS: Life is either rare or plentiful in the universe. Until now, everything pointed to rare.

TALIA: But we were never alone.

ADAMS: That's right. *(to Talia)* It's not going to hurt us.

GRIFFIN: He tells you to touch it and your hands go all blue.

TALIA: Okay. That part's not so great.

GRIFFIN: And that's not enough to convince you? What about mind control? Maybe this thing wants to lull us, to lure us.

ADAMS: *(to Talia)* Nothing like this, nothing this amazing, will ever happen to us again.

(Talia looks at Adams, then at the wing, considering.)

TALIA: Let's keep it.

MELANIE: That's not how this is going to work.

TALIA: We won't breathe a word to anyone.

MELANIE: One peep to the media and you'll drown in a circus of epic proportions. Is that what you want?

ADAMS: I'll be as quiet as space.

MELANIE: There's no way you can keep it.

GRIFFIN: Damn straight.

TALIA: Not forever. But maybe for a few days? *(to Adams)* Wouldn't that be worth something?

ADAMS: I'll take what I can get.

GRIFFIN: No, no, no.

TALIA: You'll get your yard back. Adams and I will even fix your fence. We promise.

ADAMS: Absolutely.

GRIFFIN: But. But. *(to Melanie)* You're not going to let them do this, are you?

MELANIE: I want to move this to a protected environment and start tests as soon as possible.

ADAMS: And tear it apart.

MELANIE: To determine exactly what it is.

TALIA: A few days.

MELANIE: This is not a toy or souvenir for you to admire. Not a prize-winning squash.

ADAMS: I've been dreaming about something like this since I read my first Isaac Asimov book. Since I first grokked Robert Heinlein. I spent night after night hiding in my yard, with my Star Wars action figures, looking at the sky, wondering who might be out there? Do you know what I mean?

MELANIE: I do. Maybe too well.

ADAMS: Let us have a little time with it. Then it's all yours.

TALIA: Please?

MELANIE: The wheels of government move slowly, especially over the weekend. And people won't know what to... A couple days. Maybe Monday. If you can keep it quiet.

ADAMS AND TALIA: Thanks!

GRIFFIN: What? What are you talking about? You can't do this. This is crazy. You have to help us. How can you just let this sit here? *(to Adams)* You're a crazy person. *(to Talia)* And you. You seemed normal, but no, you'll listen to this guy, this, this, this, this, this...

TALIA: Griffin.

(Griffin turns and stomps back into his house. He leaves a little cloud of uncomfortable silence behind him.)

MELANIE: You seem pretty sure of yourself, Trekkie.

ADAMS: I am.

MELANIE: Be careful.

(She pulls out a cell phone and dials.)

MELANIE: Bob? It's Melanie. You know the call we got.
Well, we've got a situation. You are not going to believe this.

(She exits.)

(Adams and Talia look at each other, and then back at the wing.)

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 3

(Night. The wing is in the same spot, the lights still flashing in the same pattern.)

(Adams sits in a lawn chair, next to the wing, watching it.)

(Talia comes out of her house carrying a picnic basket.)

TALIA: You're still out here.

ADAMS: Can't seem to shake the hold this thing has on me.

TALIA: Mind if I join you?

ADAMS: I. Ah. Sure.

(She puts down the basket and gets a lawn chair and sets it next to Adams.)

TALIA: I brought some sandwiches. You've been out here so long, I figured you must be hungry.

ADAMS: Yeah. I am. Thanks.

TALIA: Turkey, ham, roast beef, tuna, veggie?

ADAMS: Wow.

TALIA: I didn't know what you'd like.

ADAMS: Veggie. Please.

TALIA: Mustard? Mayo? Ketchup? Salt? Pepper?
Relish?

ADAMS: You went all out.

TALIA: No, I just tossed things in, I wanted to be sure
that... I wanted you to like it.

ADAMS: Thanks.

*(She takes sandwiches and plates out of the picnic basket.
They eat.)*

(She watches him closely. He watches the wing.)

TALIA: It's. It's pretty amazing, isn't it?

ADAMS: I still can't find the words for it. For even a
way to think about it. I'm trying to push a whole
lifetime of science fiction movies out of my mind and
just look at what's in front of me. To try to understand
what it actually means. How deep are the
implications? Not just for us, but for everyone. Do
you believe in God?

TALIA: God?

ADAMS: What will this mean for people who take the
Bible literally? My mom did. She believed in Noah's
ark and the burning bush and all that. There are no
space aliens in the Bible. God created Heaven and
Earth, but mankind is kind of a big deal. What if we're
not? What happens to people like her when the world
won't fit in the pages?

TALIA: They just won't believe it. That's the thing, isn't it? You still have to pick what you want to believe, and the stuff that falls outside of that, well, you don't see it. We do that all the time. Even with the Bible.

ADAMS: That's why this changes the equation. All the equations. This can be seen, can be touched. It's right in front of us.

TALIA: Not for long. Even if NASA wasn't going to take it away, not everyone in the whole world could come here. In the end, people will still have to choose to believe what they hear, read, or see in photos.

ADAMS: So it still all comes down to faith?

TALIA: Doesn't everything? How do we know anything? What are the limits to what we can even understand?

ADAMS: See, that's the thing about this. It comes with big questions, not just big answers. It's like my whole brain is on fire. What happens after they take it away? Do we become new prophets?

TALIA: Voices crying in the wilderness.

ADAMS: People will hear, and they will want to believe. Someone might invent a whole new scripture wrapped around this wing of some fallen space angel.

TALIA: Intergalactic messiah.

(They watch in silence again. He paces, so agitated by it all.)

(He places his hand on the wing.)

TALIA: Are you sure you should touch that again?

ADAMS: I have to, while I still can.

TALIA: (*looking at her blue palm*) Do you think it'll ever come off?

ADAMS: I have a friend from the old neighborhood. Has tattoos all over. Girlfriend leaves him, teardrop. Falls in love again, heart with her name on it. Baby's name on his forearm. Even one of his new car. I never felt the need to have life mark me. Not like that.

TALIA: And now you're ready.

ADAMS: The earth feels like it's shifting in its orbit. I want to be along for the ride.

(*Talia joins Adams at the wing and places her hands on it, too.*)

TALIA: It like the way it feels. The way it makes me feel.

ADAMS: Yeah. It's like the sensation—

TALIA: Reaches deeper. Right? Deep. And I feel. I feel like.

(*She steps closer to Adams, still trailing one hand on the wing. He looks at her.*)

(*She kisses him. The kiss deepens, but each still keeps one hand on the wing.*)

(*The flashing lights change in color and pattern, but neither Adams nor Talia notices.*)

TALIA: Wow.

ADAMS: That was...

TALIA: Amazing.

ADAMS: Unexpected.

(Adams lifts his hand from the wing and looks at it, looks at Talia, a little confused.)

ADAMS: Did you feel that?

TALIA: Definitely.

(A loud RUMBLE from off stage.)

ADAMS: Would you... Could we...

TALIA: Again?

ADAMS: Please.

(They kiss again. He reaches out and touches the wing, and the flashing lights shift again. This time he sees.)

ADAMS: The lights! Did you see that?

TALIA: No. Try again?

ADAMS: For science.

(He kisses her again, with passion, keeping a hand on the wing. She keeps her eyes open and sees the lights shift.)

(Blake enters through Talia's yard, holding a manila envelope. He's in his 40s, with a biker beard and full leathers. An intimidating guy.)

(Talia and Adams break apart and Adams stumbles down to the ground, laughing in amazement. Talia just watches him, not unhappily.)

BLAKE: Talia!

(Talia is still leaning against the wing (Adams is not)--the lights take on an entirely different hue and pattern once she hears Blake's voice.)

BLAKE: What the hell are you doing?

TALIA: Blake.

(Talia steps away from the wing. Once she breaks contact with the wing, the lights resume their normal pattern.)

(Blake notices the wing and the broken fences.)

BLAKE: And what the hell is that?

TALIA: It's hard to explain.

ADAMS: It's from outer space.

BLAKE: As in from another planet?

ADAMS: Exactly.

BLAKE: Nice. *(To Talia)* You're really leaving me for this nutjob?

TALIA: We are not going to do this. Not now.

(Blake tosses the envelope at her feet.)

BLAKE: I signed the papers. All right? You should be happy.

TALIA: And you should go.

BLAKE: You're making a mistake.

TALIA: It's my specialty.

BLAKE: I tried, you know. I really tried.

TALIA: I know.

BLAKE: But nothing I do is good enough to drag you away from the window. Away from fantasizing about this... This... Gardener.

TALIA: You need to leave. Right now.

BLAKE: *(to Adams)* Don't think it won't happen to you. She saw me like that, once upon a time. Exotic, fascinating. That's what she likes. She gets a little purr in her voice. Makes you think you're the only one she sees in the whole world. She gets a little on fire, with biker fever. Farmer fever. Jungle fever. It never lasts.

TALIA: Get out of my yard, or I will call your parole officer.

BLAKE: Talia. You'll be sick of this geek in ten minutes.

TALIA: At least he knows an alien spaceship when he sees one.

BLAKE: Seriously. It's not too late.

(Talia takes out her cell phone.)

TALIA: Don't make me call.

BLAKE: You really like this guy, huh? Him and his little space ship. Is it worth anything?

ADAMS: NASA's going to take it.

BLAKE: It's probably worth serious cash to one of those billionaires who pays to fly into space.

(He walks over to the wing.)

ADAMS: Don't touch it!

BLAKE: Don't tell me what to do.

(Blake prepares to touch the wing. Talia holds her palms out at him.)

TALIA: This is what happens if you touch it.

(Blake laughs.)

BLAKE: What is that? Some weird space disease? *(to Adams)* You got it, too?

(Adams holds up his blue hands.)

BLAKE: Maybe you two deserve each other. *(to Talia)* Whatever you get for it, I want half.

(Melanie storms on stage, clothes and hair ruffled, as if she's been sleeping in her car (which she has.)

MELANIE: What are you doing here? This entire area is off limits. Did you touch that?

BLAKE: Hell, no.

MELANIE: Good. It is the wing off an experimental aircraft. We're worried it might have contaminants from a malfunctioning weapons system.

BLAKE: I wouldn't touch that thing if you paid me. Speaking of which--whatever government joke you represent will need to pay for damage to the property. And for emotional stress and suffering. Aircraft, huh? They said it's from outer space.

MELANIE: *(laughing)* Outer space? Did they show you the little green men, too? Maybe I can take you down to Area 51, and we can have an alien dance party.

BLAKE: Okay, I get it. *(to Talia and Adams)* Screw you both. I'm not stupid. *(to Melanie)* And I'm serious

about that money. Those divorce papers aren't finalized. That makes whatever you pay half mine. My attorney will be in touch.

MELANIE: Of course. Do you have a card?

(Blake pulls a business card out of his pocket and hands it to her.)

MELANIE: Pharmacist?

BLAKE: Harleys don't come cheap. *(to Adams)* And neither does Talia. You'll see.

MELANIE: Mr. Ketowski, if you don't leave now, I'm going to have to require that you stay. Because of the contaminants, this area is under quarantine.

BLAKE: I'm going. I'm going. *(to Adams)* Good luck.

(Blake exits.)

TALIA: Sorry about him. Don't listen to anything he says. He's just lashing out.

ADAMS: Yeah. Sure.

TALIA: *(to Melanie)* You were pretty fast on your feet.

MELANIE: I've seen his type before.

(Melanie approaches the wing and looks at it with longing, but does not touch it.)

MELANIE: Look, you wanted this thing as a temporary pet, or talisman, or whatever, but that only works if you keep it quiet. Don't mess this up.

(She exits.)

(Talia and Adams look at each other.)

TALIA: Okay. Seriously, don't pay any attention to Blake. He and I have a complicated. But he and I are no longer anything. Not even a little. That was not how I wanted to.

ADAMS: I know I don't fit in around here.

TALIA: What? Don't listen to him. He's an asshole. He's one of a long series of mistakes. Can we please go back to this most amazing thing that has ever happened, in the whole world?

(She steps over to the wing.)

TALIA: Come on.

(He considers it, sorely tempted.)

ADAMS: I, uh... Maybe I should. I should go inside. I'm kind of tired. Thanks for the sandwich, and for...

TALIA: Adams. Please.

ADAMS: I have spent some time, a long time, trying to... Things haven't always gone smoothly for me in the area of, well. Uh. And then, there's the matter of this thing. But there is you, and you are so. And when you, when we. I. I really want to. But. Ah. I. I. I should get some sleep. Good night, Talia.

(He exits.)

(She puts a hand on the wing. The lights do not change their pattern.)

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 4

(Very early morning.)

(Melanie paces in front of the wing. Stops. Looks at it. Considers. Resumes pacing. Her desire to touch this thing is intense.)

(Griffin comes out of his house.)

GRIFFIN: It's too early to be up.

MELANIE: What? Oh. Hello. It is early. But here you are.

GRIFFIN: I couldn't sleep. Not with this thing out here. Where are the other two? I thought Adams would never let this out of his sight.

MELANIE: It is compelling.

GRIFFIN: It's real, isn't it?

MELANIE: It's really something. What that something is, I don't know.

GRIFFIN: Haven't touched it yet, have you?

MELANIE: No.

GRIFFIN: Maybe if you did... Nah. You're smart. Smart. Which makes sense, you being a rocket scientist and all.

MELANIE: So you believe?

GRIFFIN: In this? No, it's more than just belief, it's... I don't know. I don't want to. Not like Adams. What about you?

MELANIE: I've been waiting for this since I was five years old. Other girls played with dolls, I made rockets in my backyard.

GRIFFIN: NASA's probably the perfect place for you.

MELANIE: Even they think I'm a little too... dreamy. So they gave me this job. I have to deal with the loonies, who want it to be true because their own lives are so empty. And their desperation feels so...

GRIFFIN: Dirty?

MELANIE: Familiar.

GRIFFIN: Oh.

MELANIE: I am a scientist, not a fanatic. I am supposed to base my life on facts, not faith, not desire. I should not believe this is real. Not yet. I am not one of those people.

GRIFFIN: I don't know what I've been waiting for my whole life. Maybe nothing. Maybe it's good to have something you want so much.

MELANIE: It's horrible. *(beat)* You were brave. To touch it.

GRIFFIN: I didn't know what I was doing. The other two, they got so googly eyed. I guess I... It wasn't very smart.

MELANIE: Maybe.

GRIFFIN: Look at my hands.

MELANIE: But now you know better. And you warned me. So no matter how much I want to...

GRIFFIN: You know you shouldn't.

MELANIE: Exactly. I know, and I want to anyway. But I won't.

GRIFFIN: You're sensible.

MELANIE: Maybe it will only be the three of you who ever touch it. In the lab, we will have all sorts of safety precautions. No one will ever lay a finger on it.

GRIFFIN: Good. Though, once you touch it, well, then you know something.

(They both look at his blue hands.)

GRIFFIN: It's harder to keep away than it should be. My wife can't know that I'm out there.

MELANIE: She doesn't come out?

GRIFFIN: She's afraid. There are reasons. And then there was Columbine, those kids with their guns. And 9-11. The Boston Marathon bombing. An endless stream of shootings and explosions. Each one a little push.

MELANIE: It's okay to be afraid of this. Most people would be.

GRIFFIN: I walk around the house like this *(sticks his hands in his armpits)* because I don't want her to see my hands.

MELANIE: Of course.

GRIFFIN: Sometimes it seems like I'm the last thing that she's not afraid of. But here I am. It's not what she thinks. And I don't know how to make her understand that this is not going to hurt her.

(Griffin steps forward and puts his hands on the wing.)

(He looks at Melanie and smiles. The lights shift. They both notice. He quickly pulls away.)

GRIFFIN: Whoah!

MELANIE: What was that?

GRIFFIN: What's it done to me now?

MELANIE: Did it hurt?

GRIFFIN: No. It didn't hurt. I just felt...

MELANIE: Felt what?

GRIFFIN: A jolt. A spark. Something's different. It's more...

MELANIE: Are you okay?

(He stares at his hand and at the wing.)

GRIFFIN: I don't know.

MELANIE: What did it...

GRIFFIN: I felt a push, a pull, towards this, towards... I don't understand. How is it that I? I felt.

(He cautiously approaches the wing and puts his hand on it again. The lights beat to his pulse.)

GRIFFIN: Oh.

MELANIE: Wow.

(He looks at Melanie.)

GRIFFIN: Griffin. My name is Griffin. And the way this makes me feel... You should not touch this.

MELANIE: No.

GRIFFIN: Because once you do...

(Melanie looks at him, and then reaches her hand out and touches the wing.)

MELANIE: Oh. Oh my.

(The colors and pattern shift to something more complicated now.)

MELANIE: I can't believe how this... To know. To know. And you... You. Are we?

GRIFFIN: I'm married.

MELANIE: I'm not.

GRIFFIN: My wife is inside. She is afraid of everything.

MELANIE: I'm not. Not of this, not of you, not of the way I feel. My whole life. And now it's here.

GRIFFIN: Melanie. Your name is Melanie. And I—

(He pulls his hand away from the wing. The pattern shifts again. He steps away. They look deeply into each other's eyes.)

GRIFFIN: I should get to work. I have copiers to repair.

MELANIE: Quarantine. You can't.

GRIFFIN: Get this thing out of here. I don't care what the other two say. We can't have it here.

MELANIE: I'm sorry.

GRIFFIN: Yeah. Me, too.

(He exits back to his house.)

(Melanie takes her hands off the wing. The lights shift back to normal. She stares at her hands.)

(End of scene.)

SCENE 5

(Later that morning.)

(Talia stands alone by the wing. At her feet is the picnic basket, with an untouched breakfast spread laid out beside it--fruit, bagels, juice.)

(She looks over at Adams' house. No sign of him. No sign of anyone.)

(She starts to enter Adams' lush garden, but stops herself.)

(Instead, she packs up the untouched breakfast into the basket and is about to leave for her own house, but stops.)

(She puts down the basket and approaches the wing, cautiously. Looks around. Sees no one.)

(Talia touches the wing. First with just one finger, then another, then with the palm of one hand.)

(Considers. Suddenly feels something from the wing. The lights shift. She notices.)

(She puts both palms on the wing. Nothing happens. Looks deeply at the wing, really studying it. She explores it with her hands. Closes her eyes. Breathes.)

(The lights shift.)

(She steps away, surprised at a new sensation from the wing. Then she steps forward and puts both hands on the wing again. She both relaxes and concentrates.)

(The lights shift and pulse.)

(Talia smiles.)

(End of scene.)

SCENE 6

(Afternoon)

(Adams stands by the wing, staring at it. He gets very close, almost touches it, but pulls his hand away.)

(Melanie enters.)

MELANIE: What are you doing?

ADAMS: Nothing.

(She starts to measure the wing with a tape measure, taking notes. She is careful not to touch it.)

ADAMS: What are you doing?

MELANIE: Trying to figure out how big of a truck we'll need tomorrow.

ADAMS: Tomorrow? You said we could have it 'til Monday. We still have more time.

MELANIE: I changed my mind.

ADAMS: We've kept it quiet. We've done everything we're supposed to.

MELANIE: It can't stay here.

ADAMS: Just call your people back and tell them you made a mistake. It's a fake, a hoax. We've been pulling a giant joke on you. Ha, ha! You said it yourself: these things are never real. It's junk. A big pile of junk in our backyards. Just go back to Houston and no one will ever know the difference.

MELANIE: I understand why you want it here.

ADAMS: I don't think so.

(She holds up her palm, which is now blue.)

ADAMS: One of us now, huh?

MELANIE: You don't know if this thing is benign. You just want it to be.

ADAMS: And you want it to be dangerous.

MELANIE: No. I want it to be perfect and lovely and my every fantasy come true. But that's not science and that's not the way the world works.

ADAMS: What if it is? What if we're just afraid for that to happen, because it means we have to look at ourselves and see how we measure up. It's easier to be afraid.

MELANIE: I've met your kind before.

ADAMS: My kind?

MELANIE: Believers. You were so sure, right from the beginning.

ADAMS: I saw it fall from the sky. I've touched it with my own hands. I've felt it, and it's felt me.

MELANIE: Yep.

ADAMS: And so have you. Now you know.

MELANIE: Know what? I suspect a great many things.
But the only thing I know for sure is that this is here.

ADAMS: And it was made. By someone. And not by us.

MELANIE: Okay. But I don't know by whom, or why, or
from where, or what it does.

ADAMS: But you touched it.

MELANIE: Yes. And if what I felt is real, then I need to
take it seriously. It can't stay here. Griffin is right.

ADAMS: Griffin is afraid of his own shadow.

MELANIE: It's his wife who's afraid. Not him. You
don't understand him.

ADAMS: And you do? Wait. You and he...

MELANIE: No. It wasn't like that.

ADAMS: You touched it together, and you felt that little
tug, that pull towards each other? That sense of
something about to open. A door, a window. It's a
little scary.

MELANIE: A little.

ADAMS: A lot.

(He almost puts his hands on the wing, but refrains.)

MELANIE: You and Talia?

ADAMS: You know what I want to be thinking about right now? This. The creatures who made it. What they look like, what they think, what they eat, what they drink. Do they want to kill us or help us? Are they even still alive? That's what I should be thinking about. But instead I am drawn to touch this thing, and I can't stop thinking about Talia.

(His hands hover over the wing.)

MELANIE: And that's a bad thing?

ADAMS: I don't know.

MELANIE: Maybe I'm doing you a favor. You can come visit it.

ADAMS: Houston's a long way. You're really NASA, huh?

MELANIE: By way of *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Alien*, 2001.

ADAMS: I keep trying to decide what this is like. The Borg? Cylons? Pods? None of them fit. Not even close. An entire childhood of geekdom for nothing.

MELANIE: Childhood?

ADAMS: Well, maybe beyond childhood. And it cost me. In my old neighborhood, there were plenty of ways to get your ass kicked, but being ultra-geeky was definitely one of them. When I got to college, I gave in to it completely. So much that I lost someone, because she just couldn't. I don't know. So I put it behind me. All that. I'm not that person anymore. I'm a gardener now. Feet on the ground.

MELANIE: Those stories you were trying to live, they're all make believe. This is real.

ADAMS: Definitely. Tomorrow, huh? There has to be some way it can stay. There has to be.

(He touches the wing. The lights do not change. Melanie watches him closely.)

(He looks at Talia's house. More intensely now. The lights on the wing shift and surge, abruptly, dramatically. His whole body jolts from the intensity of what he feels.)

ADAMS: Oh, man.

(He releases his hand. The lights return to normal.)

ADAMS: Okay. Okay. Maybe you're right. Maybe you should get this out of here.

MELANIE: What happened?

ADAMS: I looked at her house, I was thinking about her, and suddenly. Wow. The intensity. I. I can't explain. Just. Be careful.

(Adams exits to his own house.)

(Melanie waits. Then she approaches and puts a single finger on the wing.)

(The lights shift, ever so slightly.)

(End of scene.)

SCENE 7

(Night.)

(Talia walks along the wing, trailing her fingers sensuously along the metal as she moves. The lights flash a little brighter than before, reacting to her touch.)