

THEY'RE COMING! a monologue

For me, it began one dark night on a lonely back road, several wrong turns from civilisation.

My car had run out of juice. I guess I should have used petrol really; but, such is the fickle finger of fudge, my car had belched its last and would sputter no more. I had to proceed on foot. So, with a torch and a petrol can for company, I set off along that lonely back road into that great big black thing we call night.

And I walked, and walked, and walked, and walked, and walked, and walked, and walked ... and walked ... until, eventually, I reached a deserted shack by the side of the road that possibly contained petrol and was near a convenient log to rest upon while I considered breaking and entering the deserted shack by the side of the road that possibly contained petrol and was near a convenient log to rest upon while I considered breaking and entering the deserted shack by the side of the road that possibly contained petrol and was near a convenient log to rest upon.

And it was as I considered breaking and entering that deserted shack by the side of the road that possibly contained petrol and was near a convenient log to rest upon that I gazed upon the luminous full moon in the sky. And I could trace the Plough, to the North Star; and then I tried to find other constellations, but I couldn't, because you have to be a little sad and spend your nights staring into the void of space from the short end of a telescope to know any more. But I knew the names of the constellations: Orion, Cassiopeia, the Big Dipper, the dodgems, the Ferris wheel, that game where the hoops are too large to get over a bowl with a tired looking goldfish you don't want to win anyway.

It was as my mind wandered thus that I became aware of the spaceship landing in the field behind me. I knew it was a spaceship by the rocket assisted vertical landing and the ALPHA CENTAURI OR BUST sticker on the bumper.

Now, it's not every day you see an unidentified flying object unless you're on serious drugs, so I decided to take a closer look, to see if I could shake hands with a little green man. And, with a swift hedge-hop and a bit of ellipsis, there I was, standing in front of this vessel from the far-out, as a door slowly opened in its midriff, and a landing ramp thrust outwards and downwards to touch earth with a 'thud'.

There followed a dramatic pause.

A man emerged, descending the ramp towards me. That is, it looked like a man ... the bloke from the off licence 'round the corner from my mum's, to be precise.

“What planet is this?” he asked, in a strange alien voice.

“Earth.” I replied.

“Never heard of it.”

I tried to explain something to our visitor of this little rock we call Earth. I told him how the land had risen out of the waters and the fish had grown limbs; how there were birds, reptiles and insects, and that I was a mammal; that rabbits were both fluffy and good to eat; that football is a religion, and wise men say only fools rush in ... until he interrupted me because I was waffling; and he was right to, because I was.

“We have run out of petrol,” he said, “is there a filling station nearby where we can tank up and get some munchies?”

Well, what a coincidence? I was looking for a petrol station too.

“We will look together.” he said.

And that was that. I found myself walking down a lonely back road into that great big black thing we call night, with an alien who looked like the bloke from the off licence 'round the corner from my mum's in search of a petrol station.

And he was a nice bloke, too.

He came from “that star just to the left of that bright one, there, no, to the left a bit, look! there! where I'm pointing!” His planet was called tzcheerakkakitzunkal; but he said he'd use its familiar name, Bibble, to save my brain from hurting. On Bibble, the sky is green, the sea is red, and the flip-top bins can take your leg off. Their society is run by a monolithic computer called Susan, and all their basic needs are catered for by machine, from the evening meal to an intergalactic defence system; which leaves the population at leisure to party-on down and indulge in the popular pastime of jelly throwing. And by the time I had learned just so much, the lonely back road had intersected a major road and the bright lights of a 24-hour petrol station were clearly in sight. We were there in a trice, whatever a trice is.

My alien friend took out a small black remote control unit and guided his enormous fuel tank, which had been hovering above our heads as we'd walked, down onto the forecourt of the petrol station. “It will take some time to fill this with such a small hose.” he commented, as he unscrewed the enormous petrol cap.

And, as sure as eggs can be fried or boiled, my small petrol can was full in a fraction of the time. I approached the petrol station attendant, behind the kind of reinforced plexi-glass screen used at night, and paid. The station attendant looked at my companion with a

knowing glance as he gave me my change. "Let me guess: you met him on that lonely back road which turns off just back there a bit?"

Well, that was a good guess ... or was it?

"They land up there all the time." he continued, noticing my surprise, "We do good business with aliens: always buy a shit-load of petrol, and they have this thing for cheesy Wotsits and Vimto. I suppose it'd be your first encounter, would it?"

Well ... yes! I had no idea that UFOs really existed, let alone that they were refuelling at a 24-hour petrol station in one of the leafier parts of our rural hinterland. I wondered, as he had experience of these things, did all aliens look human?

"No, mate, none of 'em do. You see that bloke you're with? He probably has eight legs and squirts ink. Apparently, they have this gizmo that taps into your brain so you only see and hear stuff you can handle. I bet he looks like someone you know, yeah? I've had everyone I've ever known or heard about in here. It was a bit fuckin' weird at first, y'know, like, when your dead mum comes in to get petrol; but you get used to it, and it can be well bizarre when they look like your favourite fuckin' film star or somethin'. Best one was when I'd been watchin' a porno the night before: you should've seen her! Mind, she told me she had two heads and a sting in the tail when I got a bit familiar like."

And so we chatted ... until my alien friend had finished filling his rocket tank with five star and approached the plexi-glass window. "Twenty bags of cheesy Wotsits and all the Vimto you can muster, please." he said to the attendant in his strange alien voice.

I watched the station attendant collect the goodies from inside the petrol station's shop, like they do at night when the door is locked to keep out drunks and thieves (on the misguided premise that they don't drink and thief in the day, I suppose). The bill came to nine hundred and thirty eight pounds and ninety nine pence.

To pay, our alien friend rummaged in his pocket, and pulled out a large flat piece of silver looking metal. "Have you got change for a zog?" he asked.

Well, that just seemed to prick some pent up and frustrated aggression in the station attendant: "Have I got change for a zog?! 'Course I ain't got change for a bloody zog! This is Earth, mate! Aint you got any proper currency, like dollars? No?! How about euros? Pounds? Gold?! Precious stones?! Well, that's fuckin' brilliant, innit?! You chuck nine hundred quid's worth of petrol in your tank and you can't even pay for it!! You fuckin' aliens are all the same: coming here with your fuckin' petrol tanks floatin' above your heads, lookin' like minor fuckin' celebrities from crap 70s TV cop shows! I wish you'd all go back where you fuckin' came from!! Fuckin' Martians ..."

And that is where the station attendant's rant ended, as our visitor from another world had whipped out his ray-gun and disintegrated half the building, vaporising the attendant and his reinforced plexi-glass screen in the process.

"No one calls me a Martian!" he said, and he meant it.

You may not be surprised to learn that I did not accompany our visitor back into that great big black thing called night, down the lonely back road. I made up an elaborate excuse involving the hour of day and the size of my penis; and then I waited for the police, who I knew would arrive, because I called them. And you can imagine, it was quite tough trying to explain to the local yokel constabulary that an alien, who looked like the bloke from the off licence 'round the corner from my mum's, had disintegrated half a petrol station because the attendant had called him a Martian. They grilled me for hours on a medium heat with a light sprinkling of rosemary, turning occasionally; and then they locked me in a cell with a drunk who kept on saying he loved me.

I had a sleepless night.

It wasn't until the following day that my story was eventually given due credence. A man dressed in black had shown up, who said he was from the Interplanetary Police, which I would have sneered at before my experience: he seemed to know all about my alien friend. He took my statement and my details, and then I was let go. He said I could talk about what I'd seen as much as I liked, because, he said, no one would ever believe me.

So, my friends, I have told my tale here; and, indeed, you may not believe it. However, I have had cause many times since to wonder if the person I am talking to is actually human; and I am sure you must have felt the same.

So, take heed!

When you talk to the person next to you, just be careful what you say – they may be an over-sensitive alien.