

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



# The Aliens

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by Jackie Smith

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EXTRACT

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# The Aliens

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## **Characters:**

**Peter Little:** Mid 60's. He has emphysema, he doesn't walk far or well, so is generally in a wheel chair. His breathing is laboured especially when he gets excited or angry. When he sleeps, his breathing can still be heard.

**Iris Wilson:** Mid 50's. Mr Little's live in house keeper. She is a dour and harassed looking woman, who is very short spoken.

**Liz Shaw:** Mid 30's. A very attractive woman. A bright and vivacious manner.

**Deidre Wilson:** Mid 30's. Daughter of Iris. She is extremely bright in some ways, yet generally she is childlike and naive.

## **Scenes:**

**Mr Little's House:** Includes kitchen open to the living/dining area and outside veranda. In the living area is Deidre's computer.

**The River:** A river bank.

## **Scene One: House**

[**Peter** is sitting in his wheelchair. The door bell rings. He doesn't move. It rings again and again. He looks around and waits for someone else to answer it. He tries to wheel his chair. It is too hard for him. He struggles up and slowly starts towards the door. **Iris** enters.]

**Iris:** Sit back down. [She yells towards the door.] All right all right, just come in, it's open [She watches Peter back to his chair] Are you all right Mr Little?

**Peter:** [Holds his hand up to signal he's ok]

**Iris:** I was out the back.

**Peter:** [holds up his hand]

[Liz enters]

**Iris:** You?

**Liz:** Hello.

**Iris:** What on Gods green earth are you doing here? You could've killed him.

**Liz:** What? What'd I do?

**Iris:** Ringing away like that, like a maniac.

**Liz:** I didn't know the door was open Mrs Wilson. Anyone could come in.

**Iris:** Of course *anyone* could come in. That's the point. What do you think he can do? Roll out the red carpet for you?

**Liz:** Well I didn't know, did I?

**Iris:** You didn't think, that's your problem.

**Liz:** I didn't bloody know.

**Iris:** Don't swear. This is a no swear zone.

**Liz:** *[Starting to laugh]*.

**Iris:** Don't you laugh at me Liz Shaw.

**Liz:** *[laughing]* Ok ok. All right. You should put a sign up or something on the door. Not everyone's going to know, y'know.

**Iris:** Most people think first. *[Liz laughs]* You take me seriously, Liz Shaw or...

**Liz:** I do I will, don't worry.

**Iris:** Where'd you turn up from?

**Peter:** *[recovered]* Leave off, Iris.

**Iris:** She should've thought first.

**Peter:** Don't be so mean.

**Iris:** Mean? *[pause]* Mean? Well, come in properly at the very least. Go say you're sorry to Mr Little.

**Liz:** *[She puts down a small suitcase, and goes over to Peter]* Hello Mr Little.

**Peter:** *[warmly]* Lizzie.

**Liz:** I'm sorry about the doorbell thing. I didn't think to just come in.

**Peter:** [*Holds up his hand.*] It's ok. I'm a bit slow.

**Liz:** How you going anyway?

**Peter:** Not good.

**Peter:** [*Shrugs*]

**Iris:** Don't wear him out.

**Liz:** [*sarcastic*] Hello to you too Mrs Wilson.

**Iris:** What are you doing here anyway?

**Peter:** Don't be so bloody mean.

**Liz:** Yeah, don't be so mean.

**Iris:** It's hardly being mean to ask a person what they're doing in another person's house.

**Liz:** Deidre wrote, all right? She asked me to come. Why not? It's my home town too, you know. I didn't see a sign up saying I wasn't allowed in.

**Iris:** Must've fallen down.

**Peter:** I pay her extra for the jokes.

**Iris:** [*Looking at Peter*] Did you know she was coming?

**Peter:** Maybe - Deid might of mentioned something.

**Iris:** Did she? [*to Liz*] It's a bit late, don't you think.

**Peter:** Iris.

**Liz:** I've been busy.

**Iris:** Busy? Well, excuse me. So, I suppose you want to stay?

**Liz:** *[To Peter]* If that's ok, I'll stay.

**Peter:** Yes. Please. *[To Iris]* She's here to stay. You take your things...

**Iris:** How long for?

**Liz:** Just a night or so. Don't panic.

**Peter:** ...you take your things to Julies room. You go in her room.

**Liz:** You sure?

**Peter:** Yeah.

**Iris:** *[meanly]* Go on. Don't worry.

**Liz:** *[to Peter]* I don't want to get in the way or anything. I can sleep on the couch, eh, like old times?

**Iris:** All her stuff. It's in the shed. You don't need to worry.

**Peter:** Go on, love. I'd like it.

**Liz:** Ok. Ok. Thanks.

*[pause: an uncomfortable silence as they look at each other.]*

**Liz:** I'll go, put my stuff in then, shall I?

**Iris:** There's a thought.

**Liz:** Ok.

*[Liz exits]*

**Peter:** She's still a good looker, isn't she.

**Iris:** She hasn't changed much. Looks quite well off too. *[She looks at Peter, who has a slight leery look on his face.]* God spare us! In your dreams Mr Little.

**Peter:** *[Starting to laugh again]* A man can still look at least there's no law...

**Iris:** Don't start up, I haven't got all day waiting for you to finish a sentence. And don't laugh, you'll die.

**Peter:** Don't make me laugh.

**Iris:** You're in a good mood now, aren't you? How long is she going to stay then? What's she want?

**Peter:** Give us a break. Why shouldn't she stay? She and Julie were mates. She was always here. She's always been welcome here.

**Iris:** She'll end up never leaving, most probably.

**Peter:** So what if she doesn't leave. Do us all good. To have her around.

**Iris:** Maybe.

**Peter:** What have you got against the girl, Jesus.

**Iris:** Things are just starting to settle down.

**Peter:** You just be nice to her. Deidre wanted her to come. I don't want a fight on it. *[He is getting worked up and wheezy]*

**Iris:** All right. Say no more.

*[uncomfortable pause. They wait for Liz to re enter]*

**Iris:** You want to watch some telly, isn't there some cricket on the telly or something?

**Peter:** *[cross]* No.

**Iris:** There is.

**Peter:** Rain stopped it.

**Iris:** Is it washed out?

**Peter:** That's what I said. Rain stopped it.

**Iris:** What d'you want for lunch then?

**Peter:** Dunno'.

**Iris:** Maybe a pie?

**Peter:** *[he grunts]*

**Iris:** I'm supposed to be a housekeeper not a mind reader.

**Peter:** Ok. A pie. You got some money?

**Iris:** Of course I've got money.

*[pause]*

**Peter:** You'll let Deid know she's here, wont you?

**Iris:** I was going to.

*[Liz re-enters]*

**Peter:** Hello. Everything ok, love?

**Liz:** It's good. It's great. It's fine.

**Peter:** *[smiling and nodding]* Good. Good. That's good.

**Iris:** *[to Peter]* All right, turn it off.

**Peter:** I'm allowed to be happy aren't I?

**Liz:** Course you are Mr Little.

**Iris:** Happy is fine. I've never had a problem with happy.

**Liz:** That's debatable.

**Peter:** *[Has a wheezy chuckle which becomes a cough.]*

**Iris:** Settle down.

**Peter:** *[coughs more]*

**Iris:** *[Looking accusingly at Liz]* All too much for him.

**Liz:** Shit I'm sorry.

**Peter:** *[Holds up his hand to indicate he has something to say. - he wheezes instead.]*

**Liz:** I'm sorry.

**Peter:** *[getting worse - he flaps his hand]*

**Liz:** I'm really sorry.

**Iris:** Just wait for him.

**Liz:** Sorry.

**Peter:** It's ok. She *[indicating Iris]* cracks me up.

**Iris:** You crack yourself up. You crack yourself up so much one day you'll cark it.

**Peter:** *[wheezy chuckle]* See.

**Liz:** She hasn't changed a bit.

**Peter:** Rock of bloody Gibraltar.

**Iris:** The need for good manners, for instance, will never change while I'm around.

**Liz:** I'll remember that, thanks heaps Mrs Wilson. *[Peter has a wheezy cough]* Are you really ok?

**Iris:** He's fine. Aren't you?

*[Peter lifts his hand up and regains composure. Iris and Liz stand and watch him.]*

**Iris:** Are you?

**Peter:** *[nods]*

**Iris:** There. I have to go out for a bit, to get Mr Little's lunch. His stomach won't stop just because you've arrived. You want anything for lunch?

**Liz:** I'm fine.

**Iris:** You look out for Mr Little if he needs anything.

**Liz:** Sure. Of course I will. *[pause]* Like what though?

**Iris:** Don't worry. He'll be all right.

**Liz:** I'm sure he will.

**Iris:** I'll pop into the council and tell Deidre you're here.

**Liz:** Thanks.

**Iris:** She'd be mad if I didn't. Don't wear him out..

*[Iris exits]*

**Liz:** ... and it's nice to see you too, Mrs Wilson.

**Peter:** She's a tartar.

**Liz:** She's so rude, I love it. I can't believe someone can be so rude.

**Peter:** She is awful.

**Liz:** And she hasn't changed. Isn't that scary.

**Peter:** Dry as a stick. She was sixty when she was three. You don't worry.

**Liz:** You need anything. You want some tea or coffee or anything?

**Peter:** *[Shakes his head]* No. I'm right. *[pause]* It's nice - your coming up.

**Liz:** I've meant to visit for ages, anyway. Then Mrs Wilson rang, there was a message on the machine. It was a shock. A big shock. I'm really sorry.

**Peter:** Julie, she was my little girl. I don't know. I'm a sick man. Iris found her. Deid's ok. She's mad. That helps. But Julie, I don't know why she would do such a thing.

**Liz:** It must have been awful for you, I'm sorry, I sound stupid. I don't know what to say.

**Peter:** There's nothing more to say. *[Pause]* You don't know why, do you?

**Liz:** Me?

**Peter:** I just thought, maybe, you might know.

**Liz:** Me and Julie, we haven't, we hadn't kept in touch. I'm sorry.

**Peter:** It burns me up. You wonder all the time. What you did, maybe did wrong.

**Liz:** *[Pause]* I meant to come.

**Peter:** I know. You're a good girl.

**Liz:** Deid's ok though? She wrote. She said she had something very important to tell me.

**Peter:** *[Shrugs]* I don't know.

**Liz:** She said in her letter she had a job. At the council.

**Peter:** *[laughs]* The council! That's right.