

# **HOMER'S (AFTER SCHOOL, OUT OF THIS WORLD, DANGEROUS AND SCARY) ODYSSEY**

**By Steph DeFerie**

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**SYNOPSIS:** Homer's just a regular kid who tends to give up when the going gets tough. This is unfortunate because things just got very tough indeed - his teacher and principal are aliens from outer space bent on conquering and devouring every person on earth... and he's the only one who can stop them! With the survival of all humans now his responsibility, Homer's flight back to his house after school becomes a daunting and frightening odyssey which mirrors that of Odysseus which Homer and his friends are currently studying. Will Homer make it safely back to his parents? Will his parents even believe them if he does? Can the aliens be stopped before it's too late? This is a fun, modern slant on one of the oldest stories ever told which everyone has experienced at some point in their life - the journey through a myriad of dangers just to reach... home.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 MALES, 6 FEMALES, 10 EITHER)

- MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH (f)**..... A middle-school teacher, actually an alien in disguise (74 lines)
- HOMER (m)**..... Our hero, a middle-school boy who usually gives up in the face of adversity (166 lines)
- SALLY (f)**..... A middle-school girl (17 lines)
- DAVE (m)**..... A middle-school boy (36 lines)
- MIKE (m)**..... A middle-school boy (75 lines)
- WENDY (f)**..... A middle-school girl (16 lines)
- PAM (f)**..... A middle-school girl (16 lines)

BY STEPH DEFERIE

- MRS. NESBIT (f)** ..... A middle-school principal, also an alien in disguise (38 lines)
- MOONGLOW (m/f)** ..... A hippie/slacker monster (16lines)
- SUNRISE (m/f)**..... A hippie/slacker monster(13 lines)
- STARSHINE (m/f)** ..... A hippie/slacker monster(15 lines)
- MOTHER (f)** ..... Homer's mother (25 lines)
- FATHER (m)** ..... Homer's father (20 lines)
- RUFFY (m/f)**..... Homer's dog (12 lines)
- OLD MAN POLLY (m/f)** ..... A child abductor (30 lines)
- ICE CREAM WOMAN (m/f)** ..... A temptress (13 lines)
- ANGEL (m/f)** ..... A living statue in the cemetery (12 lines)
- SINISTER (m/f)** ..... A technology addict (16 lines)
- SECRETIVE (m/f)** ..... A technology addict (14 lines)
- SLY (m/f)** ..... A technology addict (15 lines)

**DURATION:** 45 minutes

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**PRODUCTION NOTES**

**SET:** If possible, the opening schoolroom scene of the children sitting at desks or tables should be played before a curtain. At the conclusion of the scene, the desks are removed and the curtain opens to reveal a basic forest setting or outdoor scenery drop and all the other scenes (With the exception of those in the kitchen.) should be played before that. The kitchen consists of a table and three or four chairs and is set as far as possible to one side of the stage. The hippies and technology addicts may be seated on benches or tree stumps or large rocks if desired. The angel should stand on a low pedestal and should be surrounded by gravestones. The easiest way to present Polly's shed is to join two upright flats at a wide angle and put the unit on wheels or moving pads. One side of the unit is the outside of the shed and when it is turned around, the other side is the inside of the shed. One of the flats must have a practical door while the other is lined with shelves of novelties.

**NOTES:** There are numerous ways to pull off (As it were.) the alien reveal. The easiest is that the actors wear the alien make-up directly on their faces and cover it with obviously false beautiful "princess" Halloween masks. The joke is that no one seems to notice anything out of the ordinary about this. Care should be taken that there is plenty of room around the actors' mouths so that they can speak clearly. An alternate method is that the actors do not wear any make-up and when they "peel off their faces" to reveal their true appearance, they turn around or bend over behind a desk or table, quickly don their alien masks and then turn back or stand up. To make this illusion more believable, they might then be holding another mask in their hands which would be understood to be the "human" mask they have just taken off. A variation is that the actors might wear a weird "alien brain"-type hat on their heads, covered with a large wig. They would then remove the wigs to display their alien physiology. Care should be taken that the "brain" is not removed along with the wig. Lines referring to the aliens "removing their faces" would have to be modified accordingly.

These are suggestions only and groups are encouraged to brain-storm their own solutions.

The angel's make-up on face and hands should be the same grey color as the costume and there should not be any sort of halo.

## COSTUMES

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH** - Skirt and blouse or dress.

**HOMER** - Pants or shorts and shirt.

**SALLY** - Dress, skirt or shirt with pants or shorts.

**DAVE** - Pants or shorts and shirt.

**MIKE** - Pants or shorts and shirt.

**WENDY** - Dress, skirt or shirt with pants or shorts.

**PAM** - Dress, skirt or shirt with pants or shorts.

**MRS. NESBIT** - Pants suit or blazer, blouse and skirt.

**MOONGLOW** - Tie-dyed t-shirt and pants or skirt.

**SUNRISE** - Tie-dyed t-shirt and pants or skirt.

**STARSHINE** - Tie-dyed t-shirt and pants or skirt.

**MOTHER** - Dress or skirt and blouse.

**FATHER** - Casual shirt, pants, maybe a suit jacket.

**RUFFY** - Furry dog outfit.

**OLD MAN POLLY** - Flannel shirt, pants, eye-patch.

**ICE CREAM LADY** - White blazer, pants or skirt, paper hat.

**ANGEL** - Robe and wings in a grey color so as to look like stone.

**SINISTER** - Black t-shirt and jeans.

**SECRETIVE** - Black t-shirt and jeans.

**SLY** - Black t-shirt and jeans.

## PROPERTY LIST

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paper and pencils               | <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer ball                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Scrap of paper  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two cell phones                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Two futuristic ray-guns   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three weird flowers             | <input type="checkbox"/> Tray, coffee pot, coffee cups, creamer, sugar bowl  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dishes, silverware, glasses     | <input type="checkbox"/> Various gags - fake vomit, whoopee cushion, phony dog doo, stink bomb, novelty glasses-nose-mustache, disappearing ink, joy buzzer, bug in an ice cube, a Chinese finger trap, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long rope                       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jump rope                       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wheeled ice cream cart          |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dishes of colored whipped cream |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MP3player                       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer tablet                 |  |

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**PRODUCTION HISTORY**

"Homer" was first staged on June 10, 2004 by the Chatham Middle School Drama Club, Cape Cod, MA under the direction of Karen McPherson with the following cast:

Mrs. Cheeseborough .....	Ashley Shaffer
Homer .....	Sean Brady
Sally .....	Chelsea Kimbrell
Dave .....	Colin Ryan
Mike .....	Zach Whitcomb
Wendy .....	Kirsten Eilertsen
Julie .....	Jenna Coulseay
Pam .....	Sadie Garside
Mrs. Nesbit .....	Ariele Biron
Moonglow .....	Kevin Staake
Sunrise .....	Jenna Coulseay
Starshine .....	Sadie Garside
Mother .....	Chelsea Maher
Father .....	Jim Nesbitt
Ruffy .....	Molly Davol
Old Man Polly .....	Willie Farris
Ice Cream Lady .....	Steffi Patterson
Angel .....	Sarah Bryce
Sinister .....	Kayla Rose Jason
Secretive .....	Steffi Patterson
SlyCody Cagnina .....	

For Joe (Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men... and mine as well.)

**At RISE:** A middle school classroom. The KIDS are busy drawing charts at their desks. MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH, the teacher, is supervising, perhaps writing on a blackboard. One student, HOMER, is rather frustrated.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** After the Trojan War was finally over, Odysseus tried to return home to his wife and family but what happened?

**PAM:** (*Hand in the air.*) The gods cursed him.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Which gods?

**DAVE:** Athena first and then Poseidon but Athena changed her mind later and tried to help him.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Correct. Now on your charts, the head of all the gods should be at the top. What's his name?

**EVERYONE BUT HOMER:** Zeus!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Below him, list the other gods. Then in the middle of the page, you should have Odysseus and his crew and then his family under that. What were the names of his wife and son?

**JULIE:** Penelope and Telemachus.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Good. Now, surround Odysseus and his crew with all the monsters that caused them trouble. What were they?

**SALLY:** The Lotus Eaters were first. When the men ate the lotus plant, they forgot all about going home and didn't want to do anything.

**MIKE:** Then came the big one-eyed giant Kyclops. Her name was Polly.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** You mean the Cyclops. His name was Polyphemus.

**MIKE:** But Odysseus stabbed his eye out and it was all bloody and horrible and then he tricked him and all the men escaped from the cave by hiding under the sheep.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Wasn't Odysseus clever to come up with that idea! Who did they meet next?

**WENDY:** Aeolus, the god of the winds. He gave Odysseus a bag of all the wind to help him get home but his crew opened the bag and it blew them way off-course.

**MIKE:** And then they got caught by cannibals!

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**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Mike, I wish you wouldn't relish the gory details quite so much. Homer, who came next?

**HOMER:** Uhm, Calypso?

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** No, she's the last. Anyone?

**JULIE:** Circe. She turned the crew into pigs which is what boys are anyway.

**BOYS:** Hey! We're not pigs! Who're you calling a pig? You're the pigs! Oink oink oink! *(Etc.)*

**GIRLS:** You are so pigs! Look at you! Great big pigs! *(Etc.)*

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Now, now, stop that. Name calling is never a good idea. Where did Odysseus go after that?

**HOMER:** I know that one - the waterfall!

**MIKE:** Not a waterfall - a whirlpool. Charybdis.

**PAM:** That didn't come next, Hades is next...

**MIKE:** ...the land of the all the dead people!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Now how could I guess Mike would know that?

*The KIDS, except HOMER, laugh.*

**HOMER:** I can't remember any of this stupid stuff!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** You just have to spend a little more time studying, Homer. The more you study, the bigger and juicier your brain will become.

**HOMER:** What?

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** You want to be like all the other kids, don't you, with a brain that's smart and bright and delicious?

**HOMER:** Delicious?

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Lush - lush and rich with knowledge.

**HOMER:** This is dumb! I can't do it!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Nonsense, it looks fine, it's just a little messy. Put Odysseus in the center and you'll have more room.

**HOMER:** *(Throwing his pencil down and crumpling up his paper.)* I give up!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** You're always giving up. Start again on another sheet of paper. *(To the CLASS.)* Now, who did they meet in Hades?

**DAVE:** Tiresias, the blind guy.

**WENDY:** He could predict things.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** That's an interesting idea, isn't it? He is blind so he can't see like you and I but he can see into the future which we cannot.

**SALLY:** And he met his mother and he was really sad because he didn't know she'd died while he was away.

**PAM:** Then he was lured away by the sirens and their beautiful song. Whoever heard it was hypnotized.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** And then there was a bloodthirsty monster so I'm sure Mike knows his name.

**MIKE:** Scylla! It had six heads and each one ate a sailor!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** And this is where we find the whirlpool Charybdis, Homer. It was opposite Scylla.

**WENDY:** And then came the cows they weren't supposed to kill but they did.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Who owned the cows?

**DAVE:** McDonald's!

**ALL KIDS:** (*Singing McDonald's theme.*) Da da da da duh, I'm lovin' it!

**WENDY:** The god of the sun owned the cows.

**JULIE:** Helios.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Correct. And now the last one. Homer?

**HOMER:** I don't know.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** You just said it. She fell in love with Odysseus and wouldn't let him leave for seven years.

**HOMER:** I don't know!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Anyone?

**EVERYONE BUT HOMER:** Calypso!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Right! Let's see how far you've gotten. (*SHE walks around and looks at their work.*) Very good, Pam. Nice and neat, Dave. Mike, I particularly like the bloody pictures you've drawn around the monsters. Good, Sally, you're the only one who remembered Odysseus' dog Argos.

**HOMER:** I've messed it up again!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Nonsense. You just have to...

**HOMER:** I'm so stupid, I screw it up every time I try! I quit!

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**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** You can't quit. This isn't like all the other things you've given up on - the class play or the baseball team or the yearbook or the school newspaper or the science fair or the martial arts club. You can't quit your homework just because it doesn't work out the way you want it to. This is an assignment.

**HOMER:** So just give me an "F." I don't care.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** You can't go through life with that attitude. You can't always quit when something's difficult and then say "I don't care."

**HOMER:** Sure I can. So what?

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** So your brain will shrivel up like a raisin. (*Licking her lips.*) And raisins are not particularly tasty.

*The bell rings. The class begins to leave.*

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Homer, you're not going anywhere.

**HOMER:** But school's over.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Not for you it isn't. You're going to stay right in your seat and finish your chart.

**HOMER:** But I'll miss my bus!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** You can catch the late bus.

**HOMER:** But I was supposed to play soccer...

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** I heard you quit the soccer team.

**DAVE:** We're just going to kick the ball around. We'll wait for you, Homer. Hurry up and finish.

**MIKE:** Yeah, it's not that hard.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** You boys be sure to stay together. You know some of our children have gone missing in the past few months.

**MIKE and DAVE:** (*Bored with the warning.*) We know.

*MIKE and DAVE exit.*

**PAM:** Even the easiest stuff is hard for Homer - he's the worst at everything.

**SALLY:** Because he always gives up in the middle. He might be good at something if he'd finish once in a while.

**WENDY:** Like that'll ever happen. He's the biggest quitter in the world.

**JULIE:** (*Waving.*) 'Bye, Homer. Have a good time working while we're out playing!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Be careful, girls.

*PAM, SALLY, WENDY and JULIE exit.*

**HOMER:** It's not fair!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** It's perfectly fair. If you can't finish your work during class, you must finish it after.

**HOMER:** Why do you care so much?

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** I told you - brains withered from disuse taste terrible.

*Enter MRS. NESBIT, the principal.*

**MRS. NESBIT:** Mrs. Cheeseborough, what's this I hear about Homer being kept after school?

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** I'm afraid it's true, Mrs. Nesbit.

**MRS. NESBIT:** I suppose he abandoned his assignment again?

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** He most certainly did.

**MRS. NESBIT:** Homer, as your principal, I must tell you I'm very disappointed in you. Do I need to send another note home to your parents?

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** It didn't do any good the last time. He did try a bit harder for a few days after that but then he fell back into his old ways again.

**MRS. NESBIT:** I could set up a parent-teacher conference. That might get some results.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** I'm sure his parents are as tired of trying to motivate him as I am. There's only one thing left to do.

**MRS. NESBIT:** Punish him?

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Eat him.

**HOMER:** What?!

**MRS. NESBIT:** Really? But his brain will be so withered and dry and tasteless.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** We just have to accept that he's never going to change, his brain will never be any juicier than it is right now and cook him up as best we can.

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**MRS. NESBIT:** Perhaps you're right.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** We've tried everything else.

**HOMER:** What are you talking about???

**MRS. NESBIT:** What if we give him just one more chance? If he promises to study and pump up his grey matter, we'll let him live. For a little while, anyway.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** (*Thinks it over.*) Hmm... All right. But if he wastes this chance and refuses to try harder on a consistent basis, we'll eat him no matter what he tastes like. Agreed?

**MRS. NESBIT:** Agreed.

*A pause.*

**MRS. NESBIT:** (*Bursting out laughing.*) Oh, Mrs. Cheeseborough, what a terrible joke!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** (*Laughing.*) I'm sorry. I just thought if we gave him a good scare, he might buckle down.

**MRS. NESBIT:** I suppose at this point, you've got to go to extremes to get his attention. (*To HOMER.*) I hope she got it.

*MRS. NESBIT exits.*

**HOMER:** I don't think that was very funny.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** I just want you to recognize how serious a problem this is. You'll never get anywhere in life if you give up so easily. (*Suddenly remembers.*) Oh! I must speak to Mrs. Nesbit again before I forget. Get going on that chart.

*MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH exits.*

**HOMER:** (*Throwing pencil and paper on the floor.*) This stinks! Who cares if I do some crappy chart or not? It doesn't matter at all. Maybe if I cry and get all worked up, she'll feel sorry for me and let me go. (*HE tries to cry, doesn't get very far.*) I need some water for tears or she'll never believe it. (*Loudly.*) Excuse me! Mrs. Cheeseborough, I have to go to the boy's room! Mrs. Cheeseborough!

*HOMER gets up, off, exits. Pause. Enter MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH and MRS. NESBIT.*

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** I have it in my desk. Homer? How's that chart coming? (*Looks around.*) Homer? The little toad must've sneaked off.

**MRS. NESBIT:** I wish we had eaten him.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** I'm sorry that slipped out. I wasn't thinking.

*HOMER pokes his head in but is not noticed.*

**MRS. NESBIT:** It's all right. I covered for you - I don't think he suspects anything.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** So our secret is still safe?

**MRS. NESBIT:** Yes. No one has the faintest idea who we really are.

*MRS. NESBIT and MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH take off their faces to reveal that they are actually horrible-looking aliens.*

**MRS. NESBIT:** Ahh, that feels better. These disguises are so uncomfortable.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** But necessary. If the humans ever saw what we really look like, they'd know what we are and be prepared to repel our invasion. We must maintain this camouflage as long as possible.

**MRS. NESBIT:** It's so hard pretending these puny earthlings are my equal. Every time some stupid human talks to me, it takes all my self-control not to rip their head right off and eat their brain on the spot!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Patience. It won't be for much longer. Soon, the others will be in place and we can finally attack and conquer them.

**MRS. NESBIT:** I'm going to eat that quitting child first thing. I don't care how his brain tastes, I just want to be rid of him!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Not if I get to him before you do!

*THEY laugh evilly.*

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**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** All this talk of eating Homer is making me hungry. Let's go to the Science Lab for a quick mouse snack.

**MRS. NESBIT:** Excellent idea! I do so love to suck up their little tails.

*MRS. NESBIT and MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH turn to exit and spot HOMER.*

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Homer! What are you doing there?

**HOMER:** I...uh...

**MRS. NESBIT:** How long have you been spying on us, you little sneak?

**HOMER:** (*Nervously.*) I... just came back... for my science mice... I mean...

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** He heard! He knows everything!

**HOMER:** I don't know anything! I just got here...!

*MRS. NESBIT grabs HOMER.*

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** What shall we do with him?

**MRS. NESBIT:** Eat him, of course. We'll say we saw him leaving the school and everyone will assume he's the latest victim of that child snatcher. No one will ever suspect us.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** I just wish his brain was more developed. It's going to be so tiny and tough.

**MRS. NESBIT:** But the rest of him will be veeeeery tasty indeed!

*HOMER stamps on MRS. NESBIT's foot and when she reacts, HE manages to twist out of her grasp and put desks between himself and the aliens, who circle about, trying to catch him.*

**HOMER:** You're not eating me! I'm going to tell everyone what you really are and they'll stop you!

**MRS. NESBIT:** No one's going to stop us because no one's going to believe you.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Your teacher and principal are aliens - everyone will think you're making up stories to get out of doing your work.

**HOMER:** My dad'll believe me! He knows I never lie! He trusts me!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** He also knows how much you like to give up to get out of doing anything difficult.

**MRS. NESBIT:** People always believe adults over children. Especially a problem child like you.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Please let us eat you. I skipped lunch.

**HOMER:** I'm going to stop you - you'll see! I just have to get home to my dad and he'll call the Army and they'll blow you to smithereens!

*HOMER manages to escape the MONSTERS' grasping arms and exits at a run.*

**MRS. NESBIT:** Hurry! We must go after him!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** I'm too weak from hunger. *(Calling out after HOMER.)* You'll never get to your house alive, Homer! We aren't the only monsters around, you know! There are all sorts of us out there, just waiting for you to cross our path! What chance does a puny little quitter like you have against us? None! You'll never beat us! Never! *(Seeing MRS. NESBIT looking depressed.)* Oh, what's the matter with you? We're not in any danger.

**MRS. NESBIT:** But now someone else will eat him.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Don't worry - there are plenty of other delicious children in the school.

**MRS. NESBIT:** You're right - think of the ones who do so poorly in gym - they'll be easy to catch. My mouth is watering already.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** *(Sighing with relief and licking her lips.)* Let's go find one now!

**MRS. NESBIT:** We must wait until the time is right.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** *(With a huge sigh.)* So... I suppose it's mice for dinner again?

**MRS. NESBIT:** For now... but not for long!

*MRS. NESBIT and MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH exit, laughing evilly. The scene switches to outdoors. Enter HOMER, running, frightened, looking over his shoulder. DAVE and MIKE are there kicking a soccer ball back and forth.*

**DAVE:** It's about time. We're getting ready to go home.

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**HOMER:** You guys! You'll never believe it! Mrs. Cheeseborough and Mrs. Nesbit are aliens!

**DAVE:** Really? I always thought they were robots.

**MIKE:** I always thought they were terminator robots.

**DAVE:** No! Zombie terminator robots!

**HOMER:** I'm not kidding! I just saw them with their faces off!

**MIKE:** They took their faces off?

**HOMER:** They're wearing masks to look normal. They didn't know I was there but I saw them when they took them off!

**MIKE:** You idiot. They were playing a joke on you. The alien faces you saw were the masks.

**HOMER:** The alien faces were on under their normal human faces. How did they manage that?

**MIKE:** I don't know but I do know they're not aliens.

**HOMER:** Look, I know what I saw and I saw real, live monsters! They said they were going to eat my big, juicy brain!

**DAVE:** I told you they were zombies!

**MIKE:** Did you see them do anything weird like fire ray guns or anything?

**HOMER:** No... but they said they were going to the Science Lab to eat the mice!

**DAVE:** And did you see them do it?

**HOMER:** (*Hesitantly.*) Well, no, not exactly...

**MIKE:** Then it's definitely a joke. They were just trying to scare you.

**HOMER:** I don't care if you don't believe me or not. I know what I saw!

*HOMER starts to exit.*

**DAVE:** Hey, wait, where're you going? We were gonna play...

**HOMER:** I'm getting out of here and if you're smart, you will, too!

**MIKE:** Because the aliens will get us? Homer, quit fooling around and let's work on our...

**HOMER:** You keep playing all you want - I'm going home and telling my dad so he can call the Marines!

**DAVE:** You can't do that! They'll think you're crazy! They'll lock you up in the looney bin!

**MIKE:** Or they'll arrest you for making a false report and getting everybody all upset.

**HOMER:** It doesn't matter! Can't you get that through your thick heads? Jeez, what am I thinking? I can just call him!

*HOMER takes out his cell phone, makes a call. DAVE and MIKE look at each other.*

**DAVE:** Do you think it's true?

**MIKE:** I think he thinks it's true. We better keep an eye on him to keep him out of trouble.

**HOMER:** Darn it!

**DAVE:** What's the matter? Having trouble contacting the mother ship?

**HOMER:** Something's wrong - I'm not getting a signal and I should. I've made tons of calls from here before. They must be blocking it somehow!

**DAVE:** So now the aliens can block cell phone signals?

**HOMER:** *(Starting to exit.)* They traveled across the galaxy to get here - I think screwing up cell phones would be pretty easy for them. I better get home as fast as I can.

**MIKE:** Hey, wait up! We're coming with you!

**HOMER:** You can't - it's too dangerous.

**MIKE:** What do you mean?

**HOMER:** They said they aren't the only ones here on earth and I'm gonna run into more of them on the way home. I might not even make it home!

**MIKE:** Then we definitely have to go with you as back-up.

**HOMER:** I thought you didn't believe me.

**MIKE:** I don't believe you saw aliens but I do think you saw something weird...

**DAVE:** Maybe it was terrorists!

**MIKE:** ...so you'll need all the help you can get it. Hey! Maybe they're the ones snatching kids! We'd better all stick together from now on.

*The BOYS cross and come to a strange group of three HIPPIES who are blocking the way.*

**HOMER:** Excuse us, please.

**DAVE:** Yeah, let us by. We're on an important mission.

*HOMER'S (AFTER SCHOOL, OUT OF THIS WORLD,  
DANGEROUS AND SCARY) ODYSSEY*

**MOONGLOW:** Take it easy, little brother. No need to hurry on such a fine day.

**SUNRISE:** What's with the rushing attitude, young ones?

**MIKE:** We've got to get home.

**STARSHINE:** Home will always be there.

**MOONGLOW:** No, man. Home is where your heart is.

**SUNRISE:** (*Dreamily.*) Oh, right!

**STARSHINE:** You're wrong, man. Home is where your love lies waiting.

**MOONGLOW:** Oh, Starshine, that is so deep.

**STARSHINE:** Isn't it?

**DAVE:** What's wrong with them? Are they on drugs or something?

**MIKE:** Nah, they're just hippies.

**HOMER:** Have you guys seen anything weird going on around here lately?

**SUNRISE:** Everything's weird in its own way.

**MOONGLOW:** Sunrise, it is so weird that you said that because that's exactly what I was going to say!

**SUNRISE, STARSHINE, MOONGLOW:** Weird!

**STARSHINE:** What do you mean by weird?

**HOMER:** Like monsters or something from another planet.

**STARSHINE:** Nope, haven't seen any monsters, little brother.

**SUNRISE:** Nothing like that around here.

**MOONGLOW:** Monsters from another planet would totally freak me out.

**DAVE:** How about strange people hanging around kids and trying to get them to do things?

*The HIPPIES suddenly become suspicious.*

**MOONGLOW:** People messing with kids? Why would you say that?

**MIKE:** You do know kids are going missing, right?

**SUNRISE:** So? Why would you ask us about that?

**STARSHINE:** Do you think we have something to do with it?

**DAVE:** No, no! It's just...

**MIKE:** We thought you might have seen something, you know?

**HOMER:** Something out of the ordinary...

**MIKE:** Like some scary-looking guy hanging around acting suspicious.

**MOONGLOW:** I bet not all bad guys look horrible, man. I bet some monsters look pretty nice and you wouldn't even know they were monsters at all.

**HOMER:** (*Looking at MIKE and DAVE.*) You might even think they're teachers.

**STARSHINE:** Moonglow, that is so right! I mean, things that are good for you sometimes are horrible, like broccoli and dentists and things that are bad for you are sometimes beautiful like tigers and fire.

**MOONGLOW and SUNRISE:** Oh, yeah!

**SUNRISE:** Speaking of something beautiful, have you boys ever smelled one of these?

*SUNRISE holds out an interesting-looking flower. DAVE gets a whiff.*

**HOMER:** We don't have time for flowers! (*To DAVE and MIKE.*) Come on!

**DAVE:** Wait a minute. That smells good. What is it?

**MOONGLOW:** (*Holding out a flower.*) Just a beautiful flower, man.

**STARSHINE:** (*Holding out a flower.*) Don't worry - it can't hurt you or anything, bud, it's natural.

*DAVE takes a big inhale of the flowers. Instantly, HE becomes like the HIPPIES.*

**DAVE:** (*Taking one flower, dreamily.*) Oh, wow! That smells so... wow.

**MOONGLOW:** Doesn't it?

**STARSHINE:** Exactly.

**DAVE:** (*To HOMER and MIKE, holding out flower.*) You have to smell this. It's amazing!

**HOMER:** Quit fooling around, Dave. We've got to stop the aliens, remember?

**DAVE:** Aliens? What aliens?

**MIKE:** He means the kidnapppers! Come on!

**HOMER:** We have to get help!

**DAVE:** You go on ahead - I'm going to stay here with my friends for a little while. I'll catch up with you later.

**MIKE:** What are you talking about? We're your friends!

*HOMER'S (AFTER SCHOOL, OUT OF THIS WORLD,  
DANGEROUS AND SCARY) ODYSSEY*

**DAVE:** My friends understand the secret of the flower. Just smell it and you'll know what I'm talking about.

*HE slowly waves the flower.*

**MOONGLOW:** Smell it.

**SUNRISE:** Yeah, what's wrong?

**STARSHINE:** Why won't you smell it?

**DAVE:** If you were really my friends, you'd try it. Just take a little sniff...

*The HIPPIES turn menacing.*

**MOONGLOW:** You're not scared of a little flower now, are you?

**SUNRISE:** What could a little flower do to you?

**STARSHINE:** It's just a little flower.

**MOONGLOW, SUNRISE, STARSHINE:** Smell it. Smell it. Smell it!

**DAVE:** *(Calmly.)* It'll blow you away.

**MIKE:** Look, if we smell it already, will you come with us?

**DAVE:** Whatever you want.

**MIKE:** Fine.

*MIKE grabs a flower and is about to smell it. The HIPPIES and DAVE anxiously anticipate his joining them. HOMER suddenly dashes the flower to the ground and squashes it.*

**HOMER:** Don't do it, Mike! It's a trap!

**MIKE:** What are you...?

**DAVE:** *(Upset.)* What'd you go and do that for?

**SUNRISE:** Don't worry, plenty more where that came from.

**MOONGLOW:** You're going to join us. One way or another.

**STARSHINE:** It's easy. We'll help you and you'll thank us for it.

**SUNRISE:** You're going to become just like us.

*The HIPPIES ominously close in on MIKE and HOMER. HOMER acts quickly, pushing the flowers under the HIPPIES' noses. THEY inhale and instantly lose their menace and sense of purpose.*

**STARSHINE:** Oh, man, that is so beautiful.

**MOONGLOW:** It takes me away to a totally different place.

**SUNRISE:** I'm going to stay here forever.

**MIKE:** What's going on? It's just a flower, isn't it?

**HOMER:** I don't think so. Look at Dave - he doesn't care about our mission at all anymore! It's wiped his brain clean. We've lost him!

**DAVE:** You've got it all wrong, man. Just relax and chill out...

**MIKE:** Come on, let me try it. I just want to see what the big deal is.

**HOMER:** Don't you care about saving the world?! Come on! We've got to get away!

**MIKE:** But what about Dave?!

**HOMER:** He's not in any danger. We'll come back for him later. Come on!

*HOMER and MIKE exit at a run.*

**MOONGLOW:** Wait, little brothers! Come back!

**STARSHINE:** Stay with us here in our beautiful dream!

**SUNRISE:** No worries, no problems... everything's groovy.

**MOONGLOW:** What's your hurry, man?

**DAVE:** Nothing to get upset about because nothing really matters... what's their problem?

*The HIPPIES shrug. Lights fade out. Lights up on an area to one side - it's HOMER's house. FATHER, MOTHER and RUFFY the dog are there at the kitchen table.*

**MOTHER:** *(Setting the table.)* What time is it?

**FATHER:** *(Reading the paper.)* It's not late.

**MOTHER:** It's late enough. Homer should be home by now.

**FATHER:** Doesn't he have soccer practice?

**MOTHER:** He quit when he didn't score any goals.

**FATHER:** Again?

**MOTHER:** I'm worried about him.

**FATHER:** He really does give up on things too easily. Perhaps I should have another talk with him.

**MOTHER:** I mean, I'm worried about him now. I have a funny feeling...

**FATHER:** He's just messing around with his friends.

**MOTHER:** No, something's wrong. Ruffy, go find Homer. Find Homer!

*HOMER'S (AFTER SCHOOL, OUT OF THIS WORLD,  
DANGEROUS AND SCARY) ODYSSEY*

*RUFFY barks, dashes out.*

**FATHER:** You've just got the jitters is all - a goose walking over your grave.

**MOTHER:** I hope you're right.

*The lights fade out as MOTHER continues looking worried. Lights up on HOMER and MIKE entering. There is a shed nearby.*

**HOMER:** Are you sure this is a shortcut?

**MIKE:** Yeah. I've heard the high school kids talk about it. See, there's Old Man Polly's shed. I know where we are.

**HOMER:** Old Man Polly. Isn't he the guy with the eye patch?

**MIKE:** Yeah. My big brother says he saw underneath it once and it's just a big old hole there all full of pus and blood and stuff!

*Unseen by HOMER and MIKE, OLD MAN POLLY enters from the shed and creeps up on them from behind. HE wears an eye patch.*

**HOMER:** I think he's creepy.

**MIKE:** He's harmless. I've talked to him a couple of times. He's okay. He just acts weird because people are scared of him.

**OLD MAN POLLY:** But you ain't scared of me, are you boys?

*HOMER and MIKE jump!*

**OLD MAN POLLY:** This little old eye patch, it don't put you off or nuthin', does it? Big, brave boys like you.

**MIKE:** Oh, hey, Mr. Polly. You just surprised us is all.

**OLD MAN POLLY:** And what're you doing here way off the beaten path on such a fine day?

**MIKE:** Taking a shortcut home.

**OLD MAN POLLY:** In a hurry, are ya?

**HOMER:** We've kind of got something important to do.

**OLD MAN POLLY:** Don't let me keep you from it, then.

**MIKE:** You haven't seen anything strange around here today, have you, Mr. Polly? Anything out of the ordinary?

**HOMER:** Anything out of this world?

**OLD MAN POLLY:** Well, it's odd that you should be asking that, now.

**HOMER:** You did see something?

**OLD MAN POLLY:** (*Suspiciously.*) How do I know I can trust you?

**HOMER:** (*Tugging at his face.*) Because my face doesn't come off.

**MIKE:** (*Tugging at his face.*) Neither does mine.

**OLD MAN POLLY:** Neither does mine. What does that have to do with it?

**HOMER:** It means we're not one of them!

**OLD MAN POLLY:** So you know about them, do you? Well, I guess that's good enough for me. Come on in.

*OLD MAN POLLY enters his shed.*

**MIKE:** What do you think he's found?

**HOMER:** I don't know. Maybe he's got some kind of proof we can show the police.

*MIKE and HOMER enter the shed. The shed is turned around or opened up so we can see the inside. There is one small window that lets in the light and several shelves of junk. OLD MAN POLLY pokes through this stuff.*

**OLD MAN POLLY:** Now, where was it? I had it here just a minute ago.

**MIKE:** Hey, look at all this neat stuff - fake vomit, whoopee cushions, phony dog doo, stink bombs, this is great! Where'd you get all this junk, Mr. Polly?

**OLD MAN POLLY:** Used to have quite a collection when I was your age. Liked to pull a prank or two in my time. You boys still like jokes like that or are you too busy with your computers nowadays?

**MIKE:** (*Putting on a pair of novelty glasses with attached nose.*) I think it's cool. Wow - disappearing ink, joy buzzers, bug in an ice cube, hey, a Chinese finger trap!

**HOMER:** What did you want to show us, Mr. Polly?

**OLD MAN POLLY:** I'm sure I didn't take it home, thought it'd be safer if I hid it in here. Let me see, let me see...

**HOMER:** (*Nervously.*) I think we better be going now, Mr. Polly. My dad's waiting for me... Maybe you can show it to us later.

*HOMER'S (AFTER SCHOOL, OUT OF THIS WORLD,  
DANGEROUS AND SCARY) ODYSSEY*

**OLD MAN POLLY:** *(To MIKE, holding out a rope.)* Ever seen one of these before?

**MIKE:** *(Not impressed.)* What, a rope?

**OLD MAN POLLY:** Not just any old rope - a genuine cowboy lasso. I used to do all kind of rope tricks with it, escape knots, too...

**MIKE:** Escape knots?

**OLD MAN POLLY:** You know, tie up knots that look real tight and then slip right out of 'em like that Houdini fella used to do. You like magic tricks?

**MIKE:** Heck, yeah! How do you do it?

**OLD MAN POLLY:** *(Putting on a top hat.)* Abbra-cadabbra! Put out your hands.

*MIKE obediently sticks his hands out in front. OLD MAN POLLY ties them with the rope.*

**OLD MAN POLLY:** There you go. *(To HOMER.)* Come over here, young fella. I'll show you two for the price of one.

**MIKE:** C'mon, Homer. It's just a trick.

*HOMER hesitantly stands next to MIKE, puts out his hands, is tied with the rope.*

**OLD MAN POLLY:** Looks like you're tied up for real, don't it. Now, just twist your hands and pull.

*The BOYS do. Nothing happens.*

**OLD MAN POLLY:** What's the matter, can't you do it?

**HOMER:** *(Panicking.)* The knots are pulling tighter!

**MIKE:** *(Annoyed.)* Are you sure you did it right?

**OLD MAN POLLY:** *(Becoming nasty.)* Oh, I did it right. I did it just perfect.

**MIKE:** Hey, what's going on?!

**OLD MAN POLLY:** This is getting almost too easy. Takes some of the fun out of it when there's no challenge. You're the stupidest ones I've caught yet.

**MIKE:** What do you mean, caught?

**HOMER:** It's you! You're the one who's been snatching kids!

**OLD MAN POLLY:** *(Tying the boys up tighter.)* A correct guess but much too late to do you any good.

**MIKE:** What're you talking about? He's just Old Man Polly, everybody knows him!

**HOMER:** That's exactly why nobody'd suspect him!

**OLD MAN POLLY:** And that's why it's so easy to lure you children in here. Sometimes it's a puppy or a kitten, sometimes I'm hurt and need help, sometimes it's this rubbish. And once you're inside my shed, you never get out!

**HOMER:** *(Screaming.)* Help! Help us!

**OLD MAN POLLY:** No one's going to hear you way out here in the woods, my dears. They never do. Shout all you want! Help! Help! We're all by our lovely lonesomes, no one to disturb us. And while you can't take your faces off, I just might show you what I really look like underneath.

**MIKE:** Help! Somebody please help!

**OLD MAN POLLY:** *(Pulling the rope sharply, hurting HOMER and MIKE.)* Stop shouting! You're only making me angry. There is no escape.

*OLD MAN POLLY goes outside.*

**MIKE:** *(HE tries the door.)* He's locked it! We're trapped! Help! Help us!

**HOMER:** What's the use? We can't fight him.

**MIKE:** We can't give up!

**HOMER:** We can't beat him.

**MIKE:** Help! Somebody! Help!

**HOMER:** Shut up! He'll get mad if you keep shouting!

**MIKE:** Get mad? He's going to kill us if we don't do something!

**HOMER:** If we do what he wants, maybe we can talk him into letting us go. If we do whatever he asks and promise not to tell anyone...

**MIKE:** *(Looking through the junk.)* He'll never let us go! Stop giving up! We've got to think of something! Don't you have to warn everyone about the aliens?

**HOMER:** It's hopeless. Even if we can get away, there're too many of them, we'll never beat them.

*HOMER'S (AFTER SCHOOL, OUT OF THIS WORLD,  
DANGEROUS AND SCARY) ODYSSEY*

**MIKE:** Don't say that! Look around! There must be something here we can use!

**HOMER:** *(Throwing a few things aside, palming a piece of fake vomit.)* It's just jokes, not weapons. What good's fake vomit?

**MIKE:** Ugh, keep that away from me, it looks so real it's gonna make me sick.

*OLD MAN POLLY returns.*

**OLD MAN POLLY:** Not a sign of anyone. We're all alone... and we've got plenty of time.

**HOMER:** Please, mister, we'll do whatever you say if you'll just let us go and we won't tell anybody anything.

**OLD MAN POLLY:** Oh, I'm sure you'll do what I want and I'm sure you won't tell anybody. You won't be able to. Come here.

*OLD MAN POLLY picks up the end of the rope and pulls HOMER toward him.*

**MIKE:** Help! Help!

**HOMER:** I don't feel so good.

**OLD MAN POLLY:** I'm afraid you're soon going to feel even worse soon enough.

**HOMER:** I think I'm going to throw up...

*HOMER lurches toward OLD MAN POLLY, makes a retching noise and tosses the fake vomit on OLD MAN POLLY. OLD MAN POLLY violently reacts by backing away and dropping the rope and HOMER and MIKE are able to attack him.*

**HOMER:** Mike! Poke his good eye out!

*MIKE jabs his fingers at OLD MAN POLLY's face.*

**OLD MAN POLLY:** Ow! My eye, my eye, my good eye! What've you done, what've you done?!

**MIKE:** That'll teach you to hurt kids!

**HOMER:** Come on!

*MIKE and HOMER run out of the shed and exit.*

**OLD MAN POLLY:** You won't get far! Nasty boys! You think you're safe? You're not! You'll never make it home! Never, never, never!

*Lights fade out. The shed is removed. Lights up on SALLY, JULIE, PAM and WENDY jumping rope.*

**GIRLS:** *(Sing jumping song.)* Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around.  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground. *(Or whatever.)*

*Enter HOMER and MIKE. THEY hold up the rope connecting them.*

**MIKE:** Help us!

**PAM:** That's what happens when boys try to jump rope!

*GIRLS laugh.*

**HOMER:** Just untie us, will you? We're in trouble!

**PAM:** You sure are.

**MIKE:** That was pretty smart, fooling Old Man Polly like that.

**JULIE:** What are you playing around with Old Man Polly for?

**SALLY:** You should stay away from him. He's creepy.

**WENDY:** He's super creepy.

**HOMER:** He's an alien!

**JULIE:** Totally!

**MIKE:** *(To HOMER.)* Would you stop with that? He may be a crazy kid-killing monster but he's not an alien! *(To GIRLS.)* He just tried to kidnap Homer and me but we got away! Homer tricked him.

**HOMER:** He's the one who's been kidnapping kids!

**PAM:** Old Man Polly? Really?

**SALLY:** You better tell someone!

**MIKE:** If you'd untie us, we would!

*The GIRLS begin to untie the knots.*

*HOMER'S (AFTER SCHOOL, OUT OF THIS WORLD,  
DANGEROUS AND SCARY) ODYSSEY*

**HOMER:** And it's not just him who's a monster. You wouldn't believe what's going on around here!

**MIKE:** Homer thinks Mrs. Cheeseborough's an alien.

**HOMER:** She is! And so is Mrs. Nesbit and so is Old Man Polly! They're all going to take over the planet and eat our brains if we don't stop them!

**SALLY:** So let's stop them.

*The GIRLS giggle.*

**PAM:** You're just saying that because you think Homer's cute.

**JULIE:** Well, you think Mike's cute!

**WENDY:** So do you!

**MIKE:** You think I'm cute?

**HOMER:** Look, we don't need your help if you're just going to act all stupid and girly. This is serious!

**SALLY:** All right, all right. We'll help. What do you want us to do?

**JULIE:** You really think Old Man Polly's an alien?

**SALLY:** It doesn't matter what he is, if he's taking kids, we have to stop him.

**WENDY:** And we can be just as serious as you boys can.

**SALLY:** Yeah, you need us.

**PAM:** Everyone knows girls are smarter than boys.

*Enter an ICE CREAM WOMAN. SHE has a wheeled cart.*

**ICE CREAM WOMAN:** Ice cream! Ice cream!

**JULIE:** We'll get Old Man Polly arrested before you boys even figure out the number to 911.

**WENDY:** Yeah, Homer will dial "9-1" and then give up!

**PAM:** And the aliens will take him off to their home planet!

**HOMER:** Fine. If you're going to be like that, we can do without your help.

**MIKE:** Yeah, go back to your little girly games.

**ICE CREAM WOMAN:** Ice cream! Get your ice cream! Ice cream here!

**SALLY:** Quit it, you guys! Those missing kids are no joke. Whether you think it's aliens or not, if we want to stop them, we have to work together.

**HOMER:** Then, you have to listen to me and do what I say.

**WENDY:** Who made you the boss?

**MIKE:** He knows what he's talking about - he's fooled them twice already! *(To HOMER.)* So what's the plan?

**HOMER:** If we take Sturgis Avenue to Mill Pond Road, we can go along the back of the cemetery on the path. That leads right to the pond and my house is just a couple of blocks away.

**WENDY:** The cemetery? That's spooky!

**JULIE:** So's the pond. Anything could be hiding down there!

**PAM:** I'm not supposed to play down there. My dad says it's dangerous.

**SALLY:** So don't come. *(To HOMER.)* And then what?

**HOMER:** I'll tell my dad. He knows I never lie. He'll call the army and they'll catch them all.

**ICE CREAM WOMAN:** Ice cream!

**SALLY:** Let's go.

**JULIE:** Wait a minute. I want to get some ice cream first.

*The GIRLS cross to the ICE CREAM WOMAN.*

**PAM:** Yeah, I haven't had anything to eat since lunch.

**WENDY:** Me, neither. How much money have you got?

**HOMER:** How can you think about eating at a time like this?

**MIKE:** We've got to keep our strength up, battling aliens and everything. Does she have any Fudgie Rockets?

**SALLY:** My favorite's ice cream sandwiches.

*EVERYONE but HOMER crosses to the ICE CREAM WOMAN.*

**ICE CREAM WOMAN:** Hey, hey, hey, what'll it be, kids, what'll you have?

**HOMER:** Come on! We don't have time! We have to keep our minds on what's important! You can have ice cream later!

**ICE CREAM WOMAN:** I've got Nutty Buddies, Strawberry Shortcakes, Brownie Delights, Koala Cones...

*HOMER'S (AFTER SCHOOL, OUT OF THIS WORLD,  
DANGEROUS AND SCARY) ODYSSEY*

*The ICE CREAM WOMAN pulls dishes out of her cart. They are filled with whipped cream in different colors.*

**ICE CREAM WOMAN:** How about some Frozen Fruity Whip? It's on special 'cause I ran out of spoons - all you can eat for fifty cents!

**ALL BUT HOMER:** All you can eat?! 50 cents? That's what I'll have! I want one of those! Give me one! Pass one over here! (Etc.)

*The KIDS' shouts gradually become quite piggish, as if THEY are turning into pigs themselves.*

**HOMER:** You guys! Come on! That's enough! You'll make yourselves sick!

**KIDS:** Hold on! Don't be such a spoilsport! Just a little more! All you can eat, huh? Then, I want more! (Etc.)

**ICE CREAM WOMAN:** Plenty for all, plenty for all! Delicious, huh? How about some more? (Etc.)

**HOMER:** You're wasting time! Stop being such pigs! The aliens will catch up to us!

**ICE CREAM WOMAN:** (To HOMER, quite unnoticed by the other children, taking off her mask to reveal an alien face.) They already have!

*The KIDS are now smeared with ice cream and have forgotten all about HOMER and the ICE CREAM WOMAN.*

**ICE CREAM WOMAN:** It's too late to do anything now, Homer! You're all on your lonesome and we're going to get you!

**HOMER:** Mike! Look out! She's one of them!

**ICE CREAM WOMAN:** He can't hear you, you weak little worm. He's mine now! They all are - all of them and their big juicy brains!

**HOMER:** What did you do to them?

**ICE CREAM WOMAN:** Nothing. They did it all to themselves, the greedy little things! They've turned themselves into hogs all on their own with no help from me. So who can you turn to now?

**HOMER:** (At a loss.) Shut up! Shut up!

**ICE CREAM WOMAN:** (*Holding out a dish.*) Sure you won't have some? It's delicious!

*HOMER runs off. The KIDS continue stuffing themselves. The ICE CREAM WOMAN shouts after HOMER.*

**ICE CREAM WOMAN:** It's too late, Homer! And now you're all alone! Why don't you just give up like you always do?

*Fade out. Fade up on MOTHER and FATHER at home.*

**FATHER:** Still no sign of Homer?

**MOTHER:** No and I'm very worried now. Those children that have gone missing...

**FATHER:** Now don't get all riled up. Ruffy will chew on anyone who tries anything funny with him.

**MOTHER:** I think we should call the police. They could send out an amber alert...

**FATHER:** He's only a couple of hours late, I hardly think that qualifies for...

*A knock or doorbell.*

**FATHER:** You see? There he is now.

*MOTHER answers the door.*

**MOTHER:** Yes?

*Enter MRS. NESBIT and MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH.*

**MOTHER:** Mrs. Nesbit? Mrs. Cheeseborough? Oh, no! What's wrong?! What's happened to Homer?!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Why, nothing as far as I know. He was fine the last time I saw him as he was leaving school.

**MRS. NESBIT:** Why would you ask?

**MOTHER:** We haven't seen him since he left this morning and now you're here!

*HOMER'S (AFTER SCHOOL, OUT OF THIS WORLD,  
DANGEROUS AND SCARY) ODYSSEY*

**MRS. NESBIT:** He hasn't called?

**MOTHER:** No and it's not like him at all.

**FATHER:** Now, don't panic, I'm sure everything's all right.

**MOTHER:** If everything's all right, why are his teacher and principal here?!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Please don't worry, I just had a little trouble with him during last period and I thought I'd come to have a word with you about it.

**MRS. NESBIT:** He got himself all worked up over something he imagined and we thought it best to nip it in the bud before it got out of hand.

**MOTHER:** (*Very nervous.*) Oh, my goodness, what else could go wrong today?!

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** Don't get upset. I'm sure he'll be home soon. He's probably just avoiding coming back because he's afraid he's going to get into trouble.

**FATHER:** Is he?

**MRS. NESBIT:** No, no. But there is something we should take care of before he gets here...

**MOTHER:** I'm sorry, where are my manners? Please sit down. Can I get you some refreshment?

**MRS. NESBIT:** (*Ominously.*) How kind of you to offer.

**MRS. CHEESEBOROUGH:** (*Also ominously.*) I could certainly nibble on something...

*Fade out. Lights up on a cemetery. Most prominent is a life-sized marble statue of an angel. Enter HOMER.*

**HOMER:** Now what am I gonna do? It's just me alone against the aliens! I'm never gonna make it home. I might as well just give up and let them kill me here in the cemetery.

*HE sits down by the angel.*

**ANGEL:** Have faith, little one.

**HOMER:** (*Looking around.*) Mike?

**ANGEL:** Do not despair.

**HOMER:** (*Searching.*) Mike, is that you? Quit fooling around. Where are you?

**ANGEL:** I am here.

*Although the ANGEL speaks, it is frozen in place so does not move or look at HOMER.*

**HOMER:** (*Finally noticing the statue.*) Is that you talking?

**ANGEL:** Yes, I am here with you.

**HOMER:** Great - I suppose you're some kind of alien, too. So go ahead and eat me why don't you and get it over with.

**ANGEL:** It is true I am not of this world. Blind and frozen, bound in this prison of stone but still undefeated, still unbroken.

**HOMER:** Why are you trapped like that?

**ANGEL:** Your enemies are my enemies.

**HOMER:** Can you destroy them?

**ANGEL:** My weapons have been taken from me.

**HOMER:** So you can't help me at all?

**ANGEL:** Caught here day after day, I have been listening. I've heard the birds and the rain and the grass and the wind. I can offer you only knowledge and hope but that may be enough.

**HOMER:** What knowledge?

**ANGEL:** Sometimes the least are the greatest. Seek help from one that many overlook.

**HOMER:** What are you talking about? Just tell me!

**ANGEL:** You do not have to fight the whole world, just one. And when you prevail, I shall be set free.

**HOMER:** Great - so no pressure.

**ANGEL:** Everything is connected. Each one is tied to another. If one goes, all go.

**HOMER:** I don't understand!

*Enter RUFFY.*

**RUFFY:** Ruff ruff!

**HOMER:** Ruffy! What are you doing here?

*HOMER'S (AFTER SCHOOL, OUT OF THIS WORLD,  
DANGEROUS AND SCARY) ODYSSEY*

*HOMER gives RUFFY a hug. RUFFY runs away from HOMER, runs back.*

**HOMER:** I think he wants me to get going. Thanks, I guess.

**ANGEL:** Remember what I have said - fight with your heart and your brain and not with your muscles and you will succeed.

**HOMER:** *(To RUFFY.)* Major weirdness.

*HOMER and RUFFY exit. Lights fade out on the cemetery. Lights up on three SIRENS - SINISTER, SLY and SECRETIVE. THEY hold an MP3 player, a cell phone and a tablet. Enter HOMER and RUFFY.*

**HOMER:** *(To RUFFY.)* If we can just get around the pond, we'll be home free.

**SINISTER:** Hey, kid. Who're you?

**HOMER:** Homer.

**SINISTER:** Well, Homer, don't you know you're not supposed to come down here?

**SLY:** Yeah, it's dangerous for little kids.

**SECRETIVE:** It's our place.

**HOMER:** Look, I don't want any trouble, I've got more important things to do right now.

**SINISTER:** *(Mockingly polite.)* Oh, I do beg your pardon, your highness. *(Angry.)* Just take your butt out of here.

**RUFFY:** Ruff ruff ruff!

**SECRETIVE:** And take that stupid flea-bag with you!

*SECRETIVE makes a threatening move at RUFFY.*

**RUFFY:** Ruff ruff!

**HOMER:** You leave him alone! He didn't do anything to you!

*SECRETIVE aims a kick at RUFFY but RUFFY moves at the last minute and SECRETIVE falls over. SLY and SINISTER laugh.*

**HOMER:** Serves you right!

**SLY:** That dog's smarter than you, Sinister.

**SECRETIVE:** Shut up.

**HOMER:** You haven't seen anything weird around here today, have you?

**SINISTER:** We've been too busy playing "Metal Storm Riot in Cell Block Six."

**HOMER:** (*Interested.*) Really? I'm not allowed to play that one. My parents say it's too violent.

**SLY:** They're right - that's what makes it so excellent! Watch.

*SLY shows HOMER the game.*

**SLY:** See? Now if I can work it just right, I can...

**HOMER:** Wow! You just tore that guy's heart out of his chest and ate it! Can I try?

**SLY:** If you think you can handle it.

**SINISTER:** Just make sure your mommy doesn't catch you.

*HOMER takes the game and plays it.*

**SLY:** Hey, the kid's got skills.

**SECRETIVE:** Not bad for a beginner.

**SINISTER:** Have you heard the latest (*Popular controversial singer/band.*)?

**HOMER:** I can't download them/him/her. But I hear them/him/her on the radio.

**SECRETIVE:** Too bad. They're not allowed to play the best songs on the radio.

*SECRETIVE plays a song at low volume.*

**HOMER:** Cool!

**RUFFY:** (*Agitated, running around and barking.*) Ruff ruff!

**HOMER:** Quiet, Ruffy!

**SINISTER:** (*Showing HOMER the tablet.*) You a skater? Check out this board.

**HOMER:** Wow! I'm gonna have one just like that some day.

**RUFFY:** Ruff ruff ruff!

**HOMER:** I said, cut it out!

*HOMER'S (AFTER SCHOOL, OUT OF THIS WORLD,  
DANGEROUS AND SCARY) ODYSSEY*

*HOMER is now fully entranced by the music, the game and the tablet.  
The SIRENS turn ominous. RUFFY is desperate to get HOMER away.*

**SINISTER:** It's pretty cool hanging out here with us, isn't it, Homer?

You probably wish you could stay here forever, don't you?

**SLY:** Nah. I bet a little kid like him wants to go home to his mommy now that it's getting dark and everything.

**SECRETIVE:** Homer go home to mummy and daddy-kins?

**HOMER:** *(Defiantly.)* I can stay out as late as I want.

**SINISTER, SECRETIVE, SLY:** Excellent!

*THEY look at each other significantly but HOMER remains oblivious.*

**SINISTER:** *(Looking up.)* Sun's going down. No moon tonight, is there.

**SLY:** You won't be able to see anything pretty soon.

**SECRETIVE:** It's so dark, any old thing could sneak right up on you and you wouldn't even see it coming...

*THEY are about to pounce on HOMER but RUFFY breaks the trance by biting HOMER on the leg.*

**RUFFY:** Ruff ruff!

**HOMER:** *(Pulling off earphones.)* Ow! Ruffy! Bad dog!

*THEY pull back.*

**HOMER:** What'd you go and do that for?

**SECRETIVE:** You better tie that mutt up. He's dangerous.

**SLY:** Send him home for dinner.

**SINISTER:** Or have him for dinner.

**HOMER:** I don't know what's gotten into him - he's never done that before.

**SECRETIVE:** Forget the dumb old dog. Just listen to the music...

**SLY:** Check out the board...

**SINISTER:** Get back in the game...

**HOMER:** *(Looking around.)* Hey, I didn't realize it was so late. I gotta go.

**SINISTER:** If you go now, we won't let you come back.

**SLY:** You'll never be able to hang out with us again.

**SECRETIVE:** If you can't stay out past your bed time, you can't be one of us.

**SINISTER:** Stay here...

**SLY:** Stay with us...

**SECRETIVE:** Stay with us forever...

**SINISTER:** You can play games your parents won't let you...

**SLY:** You can listen to music your parents won't let you...

**SECRETIVE:** We'll talk about stuff your parents won't tell you...

*HOMER begins to fall under the spell again.*

**RUFFY:** Ruff ruff ruff!

**HOMER:** No, thanks! I really gotta get home. (*Remembering.*) I'm on an important mission! Come on, Ruffy!

*HOMER and RUFFY exit.*

**SINISTER:** Don't go!

**SLY:** Come back!

**SECRETIVE:** Stay with us!

**SINISTER:** Stay with us forever!

**SINISTER, SLY, SECRETIVE:** Sssssttttttaaaaaayyyyyyy!!!!!!!

*But HOMER and RUFFY are gone. Fade out. Fade up on somewhere else. Enter HOMER and RUFFY.*

**HOMER:** Thanks for saving me, Ruffy. I forgot all about the aliens while those kids were talking. I bet they weren't really even kids at all... I bet they were aliens too, trying to make me forget my mission! Saved by a good dog, how about that? Hey, I guess the angel was right. Sometimes, the least are the greatest. I did get help from someone they overlooked. You! Who's a good dog?

**RUFFY:** Ruff ruff ruff!

**HOMER:** (*Pointing off.*) There's our house! We're home free!

**RUFFY:** Ruff ruff!

*HOMER'S (AFTER SCHOOL, OUT OF THIS WORLD,  
DANGEROUS AND SCARY) ODYSSEY*

Enter DAVE, MIKE, SALLY, JULIE, WENDY and PAM. THEY speak unemotionally.

**KIDS:** *(In unison.)* Where're you going, Homer?

**HOMER:** Hey, you guys! How'd you get away?

**DAVE:** Never mind that now.

**MIKE:** That's not important.

**SALLY:** We want to help you.

**JULIE:** We want us to be friends again.

**WENDY:** Join us.

**PAM:** Be one of us.

*RUFFY, scared and upset, whines and backs away from the KIDS.*

**HOMER:** Are you guys all right? You're acting kind of funny.

***Thank you for reading this free excerpt from HOMER'S (AFTER SCHOOL,  
OUT OF THIS WORLD, DANGEROUS AND SCARY) ODYSSEY by Steph  
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