

IF I SHOULD WAKE BEFORE I DIE

By Alan Haehnel

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SYNOPSIS: One by one, Sally's friends start to stutter, and then keel over, seemingly dead. Sally is left alone, frantically dialing a cell phone that has suddenly stop working. What is happening? The answer is almost beyond Sally's comprehension. Two strange-looking creatures, Zog and Zod, enter and inform Sally that her whole life has been an experiment. The Earth has been destroyed, and an alien planet collected Sally and a few other humans as study samples. Unfortunately, the committee governing Zog and Zod's experiments has decided to de-fund Sally's simulation. Her life, as Sally knew it, is over. Zod allows Sally a few minutes to say good-bye to her reality, then returns to finish closing down the experiment by killing Sally. Just as Zod is about to do the deed, though, Zog returns to announce that, in fact, Sally's experiment has been re-funded—she has her life back! But how can Sally continue on again, resuming her “normal” life, knowing that it's all just an illusion?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 Male, 6 Female, 6 Either)

(Several non-speaking extras should appear as inactive droids.)

SALLY (f)..... Main character, one of the few surviving “samples” after Earth's demise. *(159 lines)*

DON (m/f)..... Droid friend of Sally helping her make a poster. *(7 lines)*

RICK (m)..... Droid friend of Sally helping her make a poster. *(11 lines)*

DEE (m/f)..... Droid friend of Sally helping her make a poster. *(6 lines)*

MARY (m/f)..... Droid friend of Sally helping her make a poster. *(6 lines)*

- ZOG (m/f) Unsympathetic alien
experimenter. (25 lines)
- ZOD (m/f) Sympathetic alien
experimenter. (91 lines)
- DAD (m) Droid father of Sally. (12 lines)
- MEL(f) Droid sister of Sally. (8 lines)
- MRS. DOBSON (f) Droid friendly neighbor of
Sally. (8 lines)
- JAMES (m) Droid love interest of Sally.
(13 lines)
- DIANE (f) Droid arch-nemesis of Sally.
(10 lines)
- SONYA (f) Droid friend of Sally studying
with her in the library.
(12 lines)
- CHRISTINE(f) Droid friend of Sally studying
with her in the library.
(11 lines)
- KEVIN (m/f) Droid friend of Sally studying
with her in the library.
(12 lines)

DURATION: 30 minutes

PRODUCTION NOTES

SET: A large jumble of miscellaneous furniture, etc., that comprise parts of Sally's life.

AUTHOR NOTE: Perhaps the most challenging technical aspect of *"If I Should Wake Before I Die"* is the depiction of The Warehouse, that area where the aliens store Sally's life. While my stage directions suggest the use of a curtain to mask the warehouse, a director might choose to use light to simply de-emphasize it at the proper times. In other words, the play could certainly work if the warehouse were dimly visible throughout the show. Sally would just act unaware of this ever-present background.

Do Not Copy

AT RISE: *Downstage of the main drape, SALLY and her FRIENDS work on a banner.*

SALLY: Give me the green, give me the green.

DON: What do you want the green for? We're supposed to be saving the green.

SALLY: What do you mean we're saving the green?

DON: Rick, didn't you want us to save the green?

RICK: Yeah, save the green. We want the green just for the trees and the grass.

DON: See? No green for you.

SALLY: Oh, come on! Rick...

RICK: Only for the grass and the trees, Sally.

SALLY: Fine. I don't even see why we need grass and trees on this.

MARY: It's a summer scene. You have to have vegetation.

DEE: I wanted fireworks! I still think we should have fireworks.

DON: Rick is the designer. Rick doesn't want fireworks, we don't have fireworks.

DEE: Rick. Rick!

RICK: What, Dee? What are you screaming at me for?

DEE: I think we should have fireworks on this banner.

SALLY: Yeah, green ones.

RICK: It's a day-time scene. Fireworks wouldn't make sense.

MARY: Day-time, summer—no fireworks!

DEE: Fi-yure works! Fi-yure works!

DON: Day-time scene! Day-time scene!

DEE: Yeah, but this is supposed to be a psyche-up poster! Get excited! Who cares if it's... if it's... if it's... if it's...

SALLY: Dee, what are you doing?

DON: Yeah, you sound like a spitting cobra or something. *(Mocking.)* "If-it's, if-it's."

DEE: I don't know. The words got stuck. Anyway, who cares if it's a day-time scene! It's just supposed to be exciting! Nothing says exciting like firewo... wo... wo... wo...

MARY: Dee?

SALLY: What's the matter?

DEE falls over suddenly.

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RICK: Come on, cut it out, Dee!

MARY: I don't think she's joking. There's something wrong!

SALLY: We should call an ambulance!

DON: Dee! Dee, what... what... what... what... what... what...

SALLY: Cut it out, Don! That's not funny!

DON collapses, too.

RICK: You guys, we do not have time for this! This poster has to be done this afternoon! Get up and get working!

SALLY: Do you really think they're joking?

MARY: I don't! There's really something going on! They're not breathing!

SALLY: What?

RICK: They're holding their breath. All right, you two, I'm going to start using these markers on some very embarrassing parts of your bodies if you don't get up right now!

MARY: I don't have my cell. We should call an ambulance. Somebody call 9-1-1! Somebody, some, some, some, some, some, some, some... (*MARY collapses.*)

RICK: Oh, cute.

SALLY: Rick, if this is a joke, it's sick.

RICK: Not to mention an extreme waste of time. Some people will do anything to get out of work!

SALLY: Are you sure they're faking?

RICK: Watch this. Dee, I'm about to give you a nose stud with permanent marker! A very prominent one! Here I go!

SALLY: She's not moving.

RICK: Oh, she will. She w... w... w... w... w... w...

RICK collapses. SALLY looks at her pile of friends in front of her.

SALLY: Guys? You guys, I don't like this. If you think you're being funny, you're not; you're just freaking me out very seriously. Come on. Come on, get up! (*Looking around.*) Help! Somebody help me here! Isn't there anybody...? (*Taking out her cell, dialing 9-1-1.*) Why isn't anybody picking up? Somebody has to pick up! Did I dial the wrong... no, I dialed 9-1-1. This is crazy! Rick, please, if this is a... (*To the phone.*) Pick up! This is an emergency!

ZOG and ZOD enter in uniforms. They have claws instead of hands; their ears are strangely elongated; their noses come to an extreme point.

ZOG: You may desist from using your cellular phone.

ZOD: It will do you no good.

SALLY: What—whoa! Who are you guys? *What are you guys?*

What do you mean my phone won't do any good? What is this?

ZOG: Your project has been de-funded. You are no longer valid.

ZOD: Zog, really, do you have to be so callous?

ZOG: What difference does it make?

ZOD: She is a sentient being, after all.

ZOG: Barely.

ZOD: Zog! Try to keep your prejudices in check. Sally, I am Zog.

This is Zog.

SALLY: Zog and Zog? Okay, is there a hidden camera around here somewhere? Am I being punked?

ZOG: Zog, really—let's clean this up and move on. We have fifteen other experiments to attend to and they're in danger of losing funding as well.

ZOD: Do you honestly think I need reminding of that?

ZOG: Fine. Stay and explain to the human. I'm moving these into storage. (*ZOG proceeds to drag RICK offstage.*)

SALLY: Hey! Hey, don't do that! You shouldn't move him! You don't know what's the matter! (*Trying to wrestle RICK away from ZOG.*) I said let go of him, you freak!

ZOG: (*To ZOD.*) If you don't want me to neutralize it, you had better take care of it.

SALLY: "It"? Who are you calling "it," Buster?

ZOD: Sally.

ZOG keeps dragging RICK away.

SALLY: Stop it!

ZOD: Sally, it's all right. Zog is not hurting your friend.

SALLY: What is he...? What is going on?

As ZOD explains to SALLY, ZOG comes back and removes DON, MARY and DEE as well, dragging them ALL offstage.

ZOD: What I'm about to tell you, Sally, is going to be incredibly difficult to accept.

SALLY: Who are you? Are you... are you an alien?

ZOG: Ha!

ZOD: Zog, just go about your business.

ZOG does.

SALLY: What was that about?

ZOD: Technically, Sally, you are the alien.

SALLY: What?

ZOD: As I said, this is going to be very hard for you to accept. In fact, I don't think you will be able to take in what I'm about to tell you, not entirely, not for a while. But just try to listen.

ZOG: Waste of time.

ZOD: I don't happen to think so, all right? Just finish up; I'll meet you at Site 12.

ZOG: Hurry up.

ZOD: Shut up. *(To himself.)* I don't like this language. So limited and harsh.

SALLY: What do you mean, this language? And what's with the costume and the claws and all that? And your nose?

ZOD: Sally, I'm speaking to you in your language through the aid of a translator implant. If I were to shut it off, you would find me completely unintelligible. *(He presses a button on his uniform and continues to "talk" in a series of noises that sound unlike any language on Earth.)*

SALLY: Okay, stop. You're not making any... stop that!

ZOD pushes the button to shift back to English.

ZOD: I apologize, Sally, if I frightened you.

SALLY: Not frightened so much, just... you were freaking me out.

ZOD: Interesting. Wouldn't you term "freaking out" as a type of fear?

SALLY: I... no. Freaking out is—not understanding what's going on!

ZOD: And that's not fearful?

SALLY: Well, I guess, but...

ZOD: No matter, no matter—it's the scientist in me, continuing to probe though you're no longer my subject. I've often wanted to be able to talk to you like this.

SALLY: What do you mean, your subject?

ZOD: Sally.... Oh, my, how do I put this? I can't imagine trying to accept what I'm about to say to you.

ZOG: Zod, the droids are stowed.

SALLY: Droids?

ZOG: We need to move along.

SALLY: What do you mean "droids"?

ZOD: Then move along. I told you I would meet you at Site 12.

ZOG: We both need to move along.

SALLY: Would somebody tell me what is going on around here?

ZOG: Neutralize the human and get...

ZOD: I will not neutralize the human! I will not neutralize Sally! I think we owe her an explanation.

ZOG: I think you've lost your scientific objectivity.

ZOD: Site 12. I will meet you there.

ZOG: You need...

ZOD: I will meet you there, Zog. Thank-you.

ZOG hits the translator button on his suit and says a few choice "words" in the unintelligible language ZOD used earlier.

ZOD: Do you kiss your mother with that mouth? Hm?

ZOG exits, still mumbling.

ZOD: Now, Sally...

SALLY: This is way too weird.

ZOD: Yes. Yes, I can understand how you would feel that way, but I'm afraid it's about to get weirder.

SALLY: Impossible.

ZOD: Sally, you're one of three dozen surviving human beings from the planet Earth.

SALLY: What?

ZOD: Try to keep an open mind. I recognize I'm asking you to... well, essentially, I'm asking you to reject everything you've ever known as reality.

SALLY: What are you talking about? Like *The Matrix*? *The Truman Show*?

ZOD: We created those films and showed them to you as part of our experiment, to see if you might begin to suspect your... condition.

SALLY: What do you mean, you created those films? You didn't create Jim Carrey and Keanu Reeves.

ZOD: I'm afraid we did. Even the name "Keanu" didn't tip you off? Or his terrible acting?

SALLY: What are you talking about?

ZOD: When you were an infant, sixteen Earth years ago, your planet reached a point of complete unsustainability. A combination of atmospheric conditions, warfare, and economic instability led to—well, cataclysm. The end of your world. We had been watching and felt that, while we shouldn't interfere with the annihilation of your species, we might learn something through limited... sampling.

SALLY: Sampling? I'm a sample?

ZOD: Yes. You and, as I mentioned, several others. Not all have survived this long. Of the original 37, 33 remain.

SALLY: Okay, really, now, where is the camera? Come on. Bring everybody back, make the big reveal, I'll laugh, you'll laugh, you'll take off the fake nose...

ZOD: This is real, Sally.

SALLY: Who set this up, anyway? My mom? I've got to hand it to her—this is the ultimate practical joke! I never would have... I never.... You're not laughing. I'm on to it. Really.

ZOD: We created your reality as part of an experiment, Sally. You're on a planet over 3000 light years from Earth. Everything you've ever experienced up to this point has been an illusion, a fabricated reenactment of your Earth experience.

SALLY: This is... this is completely nuts! Why would... why you do this?

ZOD: For study. We are a highly inquisitive and scientific society, Sally. And I, for one, felt that the continuation of your particular project was definitely worthwhile.

SALLY: What do you mean? What are you talking about? I refuse to believe any of this!

ZOD: I understand. Perhaps this will help.

ZOD flips a switch. The curtain opens, revealing a set full of all kinds of furniture, photographs, boxes, building materials—anything that could be used to create the surroundings of a person's life—as well as a large number of people lying in various positions, all unconscious. DON, RICK, MARY and DEE are there.

SALLY: What is this place? What have you done to— (*Rushing to the prostrate figure of her father.*) Dad? Dad, are you all right? What have you done to him? (*Rushing to another unconscious figure.*) Sarah! Sarah!

ZOD: Sally.

SALLY: I know all of these—what have you done to everyone?

ZOD: Technically, this isn't everyone. From your life. The whole project takes up five spaces this size, not to mention the computer-generated simulations...

SALLY: What are you trying to do to me!

ZOD: Perhaps Zog was right. There is no kind way to explain this.

SALLY: Please. Please!

ZOD: Sally, these people from your life are not people. You are the only actual person. These are droids. Androids. Your project has been canceled. De-funded. I don't like it. As I say, I thought you were an excellent... subject. But the committee decided...

SALLY: What am I supposed to do now?

ZOD: Well...

SALLY: What did Zod mean when he said he was going to neutralize me?

ZOD: I'm Zod, actually. That was Zog. Regardless, neutralization is the process of... well, we'll continue to study you, only not in your... animate form. That is...

SALLY: You're going to kill me?

ZOD: Nothing has to be done immediately. I mean, the funding and the energy for your project were cut off, but... we have plenty still to do before...

SALLY: You're going to kill me.

ZOD: Eventually. But, in the meantime, you might be interested in a feature of these androids that might be... that might provide some comfort. *(He crosses to an android—SALLY's younger sister, MEL. He presses a button at the base of her spine.)* You see, they all have an auxiliary battery that you can activate...

MEL: Sally?

SALLY: Mel!

MEL: Where am I? *(Screaming at the sight of ZOD.)* What is that?

SALLY: Sh, sh... it's okay. It's Zod.

MEL: Zod?

SALLY: Yeah, he's a... he's a crazy friend of mine. Quite an outfit, huh?

ZOD: It's so fascinating, how you protect her like that, even when you know.

MEL: Know? What is he talking about, Sally?

ZOD: The extra energy boost doesn't last long, Sally, unfortunately—only a minute or two.

MEL: What is he talking about?

ZOD: Why don't I leave you alone here for a while?

SALLY: How long do I have?

ZOD: Uh... I don't expect they'll need to... I... I really don't know, Sally. I think there's some of your human food over in those boxes. Some... I don't know how healthy it is. I'm sorry. *(ZOD exits.)*

MEL: Sally, what was that about? Where in the heck are we? *(Seeing the familiar android.)* Dad? Dad! Sally, what's the matter with him?

SALLY: He's... he's just taking a nap, Mel. It's okay.

MEL: Taking, taking, taking, take, take...

SALLY: Mel!

MEL: Ta... ta... ta...

MEL collapses, expended. SALLY rushes to her.

SALLY: Mel! Mel, don't be.... Where is that button? Where is it?
(She presses the button, but MEL doesn't respond.) Come on,
give me just another few seconds! I just want to be able to.... Mel!

SALLY lays MEL down carefully. She looks around, overwhelmed. She goes to the android of her FATHER, presses the button at the base of his spine. He wakes.

DAD: Sally?

SALLY: Hi, Dad.

DAD: Sally, wha... what is this place? Are you all right?

SALLY: Daddy, I love you.

DAD: Well, I love you, too, sweetheart, but...

SALLY: No, no, listen to me. I love you so much!

DAD: The last thing I remember, I was in the garage working with you on your project for school, that diorama you needed. My God, what are all these people doing here? Did we have an earthquake?

SALLY: No, Dad, please listen to me—you're going to shut off again in just a little while.

DAD: Has anyone called the police? The fire department? Where is your mother?

SALLY: I don't know. She's probably in another storage...

DAD: *(Seeing MEL.)* Melanie! Melanie, what happened to you?

SALLY: Dad, she doesn't matter anymore.

DAD: Sally! How can you say that!

SALLY: Dad, please.

DAD: Do you know what's going on here? Did you have something to do with all this?

SALLY: Can you just hold me? I woke you up just so you could hold me for a little while, okay? Please?

DAD: What has happened to your sister?

SALLY: She's an android, Dad, and so are you! None of this is real! You're not my father and she's not my sister and none of this is really my life!

DAD: Sally, Sally, stop this! What are you talking about? Slow down.

SALLY: It doesn't make sense that I just want you to hold me and tell me you love me but you're all I know and that's all I know to even... to even do, Dad!

DAD: Slow down, now. Take a deep, take a deep, take a deep, take a deep...

SALLY: Oh, no! No, no, no! Here, put your arms around me before...

SALLY tries to get her "FATHER" to embrace her in the last few seconds of his energy, but he fades quickly, his arms going limp.

DAD: Deep, deep, deep, deep.

He collapses. SALLY looks around, lost and despondent.

SALLY: Zod. Zod! You might as well come back. You might as well just...

She notices the unconscious figure of JAMES, piled haphazardly amongst the rubble. She crosses to him, gently pulls him out and props him up in a seated position. SALLY looks around self-consciously, then pushes the button on JAMES's back.

JAMES: Hi. Sally?

SALLY: Hey, James.

JAMES: Where...?

SALLY: No. Don't look around.

JAMES: What do you mean, don't look around? What are you talking...

SALLY: You just woke up. Um—we're playing a game, okay?

JAMES: You're not making sense.

SALLY: Sh. Just... pretend that all that matters right now is telling me the truth when I ask you a question.

JAMES: I should be getting home.

SALLY: Don't! Don't get up! Don't go anywhere! Stay right where you are, please.

JAMES: Sally, what is...

SALLY: James! I'm just asking you a simple thing, to stay where you are! Just for a few seconds. Stay where you are and honestly answer one question I have! Can you do that? Will you please, please, do that?

JAMES: All right. It's cool. All right, Sally. What?

SALLY: Do you...? I mean, I guess this shouldn't matter to me because you're not real, but... well, you're real to yourself, aren't you? I mean, you don't know you're part of this whole...

JAMES: I'm not following you at all.

SALLY: Do you like me?

JAMES: Sure. I mean, I'm not thrilled about whatever's happening right at this second, but...

SALLY: No, I mean, do you... *like* like me?

JAMES: Oh.

SALLY: Yeah.

JAMES: Well... well... well...

SALLY: James.

JAMES: Well... we... we...

SALLY: Don't do this! Not yet!

JAMES: We... we... we...

JAMES collapses. SALLY pushes his back button desperately.

SALLY: Come on, come on, just a few more seconds, James! Because I like you! I really, really like... James? (*But he's gone, out of energy. SALLY leans against his inert body.*) Pathetic.

SALLY looks around more, notices DIANE's body. She goes to it, pushes DIANE's back button.

DIANE: Whoa.

SALLY: Don't ask.

DIANE: What?

SALLY: Don't ask where you are. It doesn't matter. I'm here. I'm the only one who really is.

DIANE: What is your problem?

SALLY: You've got about sixty seconds of life left in you, you know that? And do you know what I'm going to tell you in those final sixty seconds?

DIANE: Girl, you are totally out of your mind!

SALLY: I'm going to tell you that you are the most obnoxious, bullying, back-biting person I've ever known. And everybody thinks so!

DIANE: Is that right?

SALLY: Yeah, that's right!

DIANE: You gonna do something about it, huh?

SALLY: Uh-huh.

DIANE: What?

SALLY: This! *(She slaps DIANE in the face.)*

DIANE: You...!

DIANE slaps her back and the two begin to fight. SALLY is clearly outmatched, and DIANE quickly gets her in a strangling headlock.

DIANE: How do you like me now, huh? You want to keep talking trash to me? Let's hear what else you've got for me, you little witch! Come on!

SALLY: Let me go! Ow!

DIANE: That's right! You want some more of that? You... you... you... you...

DIANE keeps repeating the word and slowly running out of energy. She falls to the floor, dragging SALLY down with her. SALLY struggles to get out of the headlock.

SALLY: Let... me... go! *(She extricates herself, then punches DIANE's unconscious body once more for good measure.)* Stupid!

After a few moments of cooling down, SALLY pulls MRS. DOBSON from the wreckage and pushes her back button. MRS. DOBSON wakes coughing.

SALLY: Hey, Mrs. D.

MRS. DOBSON: Sally, I... (*MRS. DOBSON coughs a few more times.*) Oh, goodness, this is terrible. I feel like I just woke up, but...

SALLY: You did. That's why you're coughing. You always have that cough in the morning. I hear you all the way over in our kitchen.

MRS. DOBSON: I quit smoking years ago, but...(*More coughing.*) Don't you ever start, young lady.

SALLY: I won't.

MRS. DOBSON: Where are we, Sally?

SALLY: You're an android running on two minutes of auxiliary battery power. We're in a storage facility where aliens keep all the stuff that made up my life.

MRS. DOBSON: Excuse me?

SALLY: Did you know? All along, did you know? Were you part of this?

MRS. DOBSON: What is the matter, honey?

SALLY: When I fell off my bike when I was a little girl and you came out and put a Batman Band-aid on my knee and told me to be brave, was that just... an act?

MRS. DOBSON: No, of course not.

SALLY: But you're programmed to say that, aren't you? But do you know you're programmed to say it? Are you aware?

MRS. DOBSON: Honey, you're going through some sort of a crisis. I don't need to know the details, but I know this. God takes care of us. All right?

SALLY: God?

MRS. DOBSON: Of course. Of course. Of course. Of... of... of...

SALLY: Good-bye, Mrs. D. Thanks for the Band-aid.

SALLY gently lays MRS. DOBSON down as she runs out of energy. ZOD re-enters.

SALLY: Hey.

ZOD begins to speak in his language.

SALLY: Translator, Zod. Translator!

ZOD pushes the button on his suit.

ZOD: My apologies. Has it been at all comforting? Helpful? To have a chance to, uh...

SALLY: No.

ZOD: I apologize again.

SALLY: Not your fault.

ZOD: Well, um, as it turns out...

SALLY: Let me guess. My time's up.

ZOD: No, not exactly. I need to bring you to our intermediate facility for a brief stay, and then...

SALLY: Zod?

ZOD: Yes, Sally?

SALLY: This sounds like stalling.

ZOD: Does it?

SALLY: You're going to have to kill me. Neutralize me.

ZOD: I hope you understand that, in matters of funding, I have no control.

SALLY: Let's not delay things.

ZOD: Sally...

SALLY: I'm not interested in staying around here.

ZOD: If there's anyone in particular, any of the android simulations you'd like to spend more time with, I could probably double the battery capacity.

SALLY: "Android simulations." To think I used to call them friends. Neighbors, teachers, Mel, Dad. No, Zod, I don't need more time.

ZOD: Well, then.

SALLY: Are you going to... shoot me? Smother...? How is this going to work?

ZOD takes out a small tube.

ZOD: Just a touch on the neck. Completely painless.

SALLY: Wow. So, good-bye life, if you can call it that.

ZOD: I am very sorry, Sally.

SALLY: I believe you. Thanks for being... kind. For treating me like something besides just an experiment.

ZOD: You're welcome. Though I'm not expert on the matter, based on what I've observed of other projects... you were a good human.

SALLY: Maybe you should pat me on the head when you say that.

ZOD: Should I?

SALLY: No. You can go ahead.

ZOD: All right. (*ZOD positions the tube next to SALLY's neck.*)

SALLY: Good-bye, Zod.

ZOD: Good-bye, Sally.

Before ZOD has a chance to kill SALLY, ZOG bursts into the warehouse, loudly speaking in his native tongue. ZOD turns to him, touches the button to turn off his translator, and converses with him. They both seem very animated.

SALLY: Hey, guys! Translation, right? Come on, let me in on this, will you? What's the excitement about? I mean, you interrupt my final death moment here, at least you can do me the courtesy of speaking English! Zod, Zog! What's going on?

ZOD and ZOG both touch their translator buttons.

ZOD: Sally, incredible news, just wonderful!

ZOG: It looks like I came in the nick of time. The committee would have been very disappointed to find it already neutralized.

SALLY: Can we stop with the "it" reference, Zog? I do happen to be a girl. "She," "her"? Is it too much to ask?

ZOD: Sally, your project has been re-funded.

SALLY: What, you got your money back?

ZOG: The funding committee discovered a clerical error. The project with you as a subject should never have been de-funded.

SALLY: Wha... what does that mean?

ZOG: It means we can continue with our full slate of experiments. Happy day!

ZOD: It means, Sally, you get your life back. (*Referring to the tube.*) I won't be needing this.

SALLY: Get my life back? Whoa, whoa, wait a minute.

ZOG: Zod, I'm going to set up the next simulation. Bring it along quickly.

ZOG exits. The curtain closes on the warehouse. ZOG re-enters with a COUPLE other technicians resembling ZOG and ZOD. On the area where the play started, they set up a table and four chairs with various books and papers spread out on them.

SALLY: *(To ZOG as he exits.)* She! She! Get it right, will you?

ZOD: Isn't this amazing news, Sally?

SALLY: Yeah, sure, amazing, but—how do you expect me to get my life back? I'm sorry, but it went away the moment I met you. It's not coming back.

ZOD: You don't understand. All the resources we needed to create your life we now have at our disposal again. The warehouse is being emptied as we speak. Technicians are re-assembling...

SALLY: Technicians are re-assembling what? My life? How am I supposed to just step back into it, knowing what I know? Do you have one of those memory-eraser thingies like on *Men in Black*?

ZOD: Again, another film we created to test your reactions, particularly to the concept of co-existing with alien species. We don't actually possess the memory-erasing technology you speak of.

SALLY: Zod, I cannot go back to living my life, knowing it is all fake.

ZOG: We have its library test review session set up. Bring it over; we'll send in the droids. *(ZOG exits.)*

SALLY: *(Shouting after ZOG.)* I am not an "it"! Why do I bother?

ZOD: Sally, I'm sure you can do this. We have observed how humans often hold contradictory notions in their heads. They know something yet act as if they don't, even convincing themselves. Come, it's time for your meeting with your study group in the library.

SALLY: Wait a second. That's what this is about—your observations! This is a set-up. You pulled back the curtain, showed me what was really going on, and now you're suddenly "giving me my life back." This is part of your experiment, to see how I'll react. Isn't it?

BY ALAN HAEHNEL

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