

Luke Lloyd: Alienoid

PROLOGUE — THE UNIVERSE

LUKE comes out tentatively, and stands alone on stage against a spectacular projected image of the cosmos. He is holding a thick notebook. He speaks nervously at first, in a slight staccato rhythm.

LUKE

[To audience] My name is Luke ... Luke Oscar Lloyd. And I like facts. No that's wrong — I love facts. I really love them. I love them so much I'd like to marry one! *[beat]* That was a joke.

I love facts because they are smooth and shiny and round like bowling balls. I line them up in my mind on little shelves and I write them down in notebooks. I say them to myself over and over and they make me feel clever and safe. *[Reads from his book]* Fact: Cats have thirty-two muscles in each ear. Fact: the Giant Californian Sea Cucumber eats food through its own anus. *[He looks up]* It's true. *[He reads again]* Fact: when I was born I had fur all over my body. That's right — fur. But it fell off after a week. I wish it hadn't, because by now I'd look like a Wookiee. *[SFX: Wookiee ROAR!]*

LUKE looks around at the projected universe.

Fact: in our galaxy there are over sixty billion planets that could support other life-forms. That means aliens. So maybe on one of those planets there's an alien kid looking up at the stars. Right now. Just like I am.

He stares upwards, and waves tentatively.

Hi! My name is Luke Oscar Lloyd! Is anyone there?

Silence. LUKE looks back at the audience.

I think about aliens a lot. Probably because I am one. That's not a joke. Okay. I'm not really an alien. I'm half-alien, half-human. I'm an alienoid. Luke Oscar Lloyd: alienoid. Which means that all my life I've been ... different.

SCENE 1: SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

As the cosmos disappears, three NARRATORS enter.

NARRATOR 1 It's Monday morning. The sky is heavy with clouds. It looks like a storm is on the way.

A distant rumble of thunder. LUKE walks across stage in his stiff, peculiar way. He carries his school bag, and wears his school shirt buttoned up to the neck.

NARRATOR 2 Luke is walking to school the way he always does: with a sense of doom and dread.

NARRATOR 3 He walks through the school gates, his feet leaden, his stomach churning.

LUKE *[To himself]* Fact: the universe is expanding faster than the speed of light. Fact: an electric eel produces up to 650 volts in a single shock. Fact ...

NARRATOR 1 Just another Monday morning.

The NARRATORS join the rest of the ENSEMBLE to become SCHOOL KIDS. They play games, chat, and laugh. LUKE stands on the outer, watching. He reads from his notebook.

LUKE *[Reads]* Fact: school is a place smelling of old sandwiches where humans send their children to be humiliated by other children.

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He looks up.

I hate school. Not the learning part. Just everything else. But luckily I have a secret weapon.

LUKE starts to walk through the playground, in his stiff, peculiar way. No-one seems to see him, even as he walks through a soccer game or between a group of chatting GIRLS.

In the playground, no-one can see me. That's one of my cool alien superpowers — I can be invisible. Sometimes I get through a whole day without anyone noticing me or talking to me or realising I exist. Awesome, huh?

He walks through the crowd again, enjoying his invisibility.

I also use my invisibility for important research. Like answering the question that has baffled scientists for centuries: What happens inside the girls' toilets?

NATASHA, NAOMI and NATALIA head into the toilets. LUKE follows them surreptitiously, taking out a pen to make notes in his notebook. The GIRLS stand chatting and combing their hair in the mirror, oblivious to his presence.

GIRLS [Ad lib chat]

LUKE looks around like a researcher, making notes. Suddenly a spotlight goes on him, and the GIRLS turn to stare.

NATASHA Huh?

NATALIA Luke?!

LUKE looks terrified.

LUKE G-good morning girls.

NAOMI What are you doing here?!

NATASHA YOU DISGUSTING PERVE!

NATALIA

GET OUT, GET OUT!

NAOMI

WE'RE TELLING MR WATT!

GIRLS

[Chanting] MR WATT! MR WATT! MR WATT! MR WATT!

LUKE

LUKE runs out, panicky.

[To audience] Fact: my superpowers aren't always reliable!

He runs offstage.

SCENE 2: CLASSROOM

The classroom is empty except for KEVIN the mouse (an actor wearing a mouse 'onesie'), running on her wheel.

LUKE enters.

KEVIN

Where have you been Luke?! You know I get twitchy when you're late!

She twitches a few times as if to demonstrate.

LUKE

Sorry Kevin. I had to listen to Mr Watt say "highly inappropriate behaviour" seventeen times.

KEVIN

I hate to make this all about me — but I'm sure this spot on my tummy is growing! It's gotta be skin cancer!

She points to one of the black spots on her fur.

LUKE

Kevin, you're a white mouse with black spots. Look in the mirror. You've got loads more of them — see?

KEVIN looks in an (imaginary) mirror.

KEVIN

Ah! Maybe they're ALL skin cancers!

LUKE

Kevin ...

KEVIN

And I've got this throbbing headache that won't go away — I just know it's a tumour!

LUKE

You haven't had your morning coffee, that's all.

[Brings out a tiny cup] Double shot latte the way you like it.

KEVIN throws the coffee back in one gulp.

KEVIN

Squeakety-squeak-squeak-squeak! Now I feel all jittery and hyperactive — much better!

[Fast] Okay Luke there's a million things to do — I need fresh water fresh newspaper fresh food and my cage smells like a big toilet!

LUKE

[Under his breath] Only because you poo and pee all over it ...

KEVIN

Don't criticize mouse personal hygiene — it's very culturally insensitive!

LUKE

Sorry. I'll get onto it.

LUKE goes to get the things she needs.

KEVIN

[To audience] I'm Kevin — the class mouse. In case you're wondering why a cute girl mouse like moi is called "Kevin" I'll tell you: *[suddenly angry]* Because the teacher is a mouse-racist who thinks we all look the same! It's SO OFFENSIVE!

KEVIN takes a few breaths to calm herself.

[To audience] By the way, this is another of Luke's alien superpowers. He can communicate with animals — like me. Not out loud of course — by telepathy. So this whole conversation is actually taking place inside Luke's head.

She taps her temple. LUKE returns.

LUKE

KEVIN

Fresh water, newspaper, food. And I got you a treat.

Peanuts! Yum!

[To audience] Luke is such a sweetheart. Forget the mouse roster — nobody in this class ever remembers to feed me or clean my cage except him. If it wasn't for Luke I'd have starved to death and be lying on a pile of my own poo by now!

LUKE

[To audience] Fact: Kevin is my best friend at school. Actually she's my only friend at school. I'd rather talk to her than any of the ape-descendants — sorry, humans.

The bell goes — BRRRRRRRING!

Here they come.

The CLASS come bursting in, leaping around screeching, acting like monkeys — literally.

Stop!

They all FREEZE.

[To audience] That's just how I see them. In real life they're not quite this bad.

The class unfreezes, and now behave like typical noisy kids (except for JARED, who still acts like a monkey). LUKE quietly heads to his seat, up the front. Unlike everyone else in class, he sits with an empty seat beside him.

[Mumurs to himself] Please don't let him be here today please don't let him be here today please don't let him be ...

A cool looking boy, CONNOR, saunters into class.

JAKE

JARED

CONNOR

Connor!

Bro!

Hey dudes.

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LUKE

CONNOR

[To audience, glumly] He's here.

Yo! Fist bump guys!

He puts out his fist to JAKE and JARED. But as they put out their fists, CONNOR makes his hand into jellyfish, swimming away from them.

Jellyfish!

JAKE and JARED laugh. CONNOR holds his arms out to them.

Let's hug it out fellas!

As they go to hug, CONNOR flops his arms like a jellyfish.

Bigger jellyfish!

JAKE and JARED laugh some more. CONNOR turns to the class.

Hey Natasha, love the hair! Did your gran cut it with a chainsaw?

NATASHA

CONNOR

Yeah funny Connor.

Luke my man! Sitting with all your mates as usual?

LUKE tries to ignore this.

C'mon guys! Let's do the Luke!

CONNOR, JAKE and JARED all button up their shirts to the neck and mimic LUKE's stiff walk up and down the aisle.

[Mimicking LUKE's voice] Fact: The Milky Way is seven zillion kilometres across ...

LUKE

CONNOR

Actually it's nine point five by ten to the ...

Fact: I have the world's largest collection of shirts that button up to the neck.

By now most of the class is laughing.

Fact: My BFF is an action figure of Princess Leia.

LUKE

LUKE looks at the audience, hurt.

[To audience] Why are you laughing?

Suddenly there is a light from the screen of a laptop computer sitting on the desk out front of class. An adult voice comes from it.

MR WATT

[From laptop] OKAY CLASS! QUIET! Connor, Jared, Jake — back in your seats!

CONNOR

Hey how's it hanging Mr Watt?

MR WATT

[From laptop] I've warned you about that expression Connor! Highly inappropriate behaviour!

The class murmurs the last three words along with MR WATT — it's clearly his catch phrase.

LUKE

[To audience] That's Mr Watt our teacher. He takes the class by webcam from the office, because he's filling in for the principal Ms Garibaldi. She's been on stress leave for so long no-one remembers what she looks like.

MR WATT

[From laptop] Everyone get out your exercise books! I promised you a snap maths test and this is it!

There are groans from the class.

LUKE

[To audience] Ms Garibaldi tried to expel Connor for setting fire to Natasha's school bag — twice. But Connor's Dad is a lawyer and he threatened to sue Ms Garibaldi. So Connor stayed and Ms Garibaldi left. Mum says Connor is an amateur bully but his father is a professional.

There's a knock at the door. A new girl stands there.

MISH

Hello?

MR WATT

[From laptop] ENTER!

MISH walks in and looks around, mystified.

MISH

Is there a teacher here?

CLASS

[Ad lib] There! Up the front! The laptop!

MISH stares at the laptop, confused.

MISH

Your teacher's a computer?

MR WATT

[From laptop] No no — I'm human.

CONNOR

As if!

MR WATT

CONNOR!

MISH

[To MISH] My name's Mr Watt, and you are?

MR WATT

Mish ... The new girl?

[From laptop] Yes of course — Michelle. Welcome. Tell the class all about yourself.

MISH stands out front. She speaks confidently and quickly. It's clear she's a human dynamo.

MISH

Hi. I just moved here, and I'm not sure I like it yet. At my last school I got A's in everything but that doesn't mean I'm a nerd because I won lots of sports prizes too. I also sing, tap dance, do karate and play the violin. My short term goal is to make lots of new friends — especially ones who are in MENSA like me. My medium term goal is to win a TV talent quest, and my long term goal is to become an international human rights lawyer and chess grand master before I'm twenty five. If that doesn't work out my Plan B is ...

MR WATT

[From laptop] I think I better stop you there. Take a seat, Michelle.

She heads for the empty seat beside LUKE.

MISH

[To LUKE] Is anyone sitting here?

LUKE shakes his head, but doesn't make eye contact.

CONNER moves up close behind them.

My name's Mish, what's yours?

LUKE still doesn't make eye contact.

[Nervous] Luke Oscar Lloyd.

LUKE

CONNOR

MISH

Just call him the freak. Everyone else does.

[Ignoring CONNOR] Pleased to meet you, Luke. Are you cold — or is that a fashion thing?

She gestures to his top button. LUKE looks embarrassed.

I just ... like it.

LUKE

MISH

Personal style choice, huh? Cool.

Style? He's a dork!

CONNOR

MR WATT

[From laptop] QUIET! This Sunday is father's day, which means Friday is the annual Fathers versus Kids Footie match!

There are some cheers (and groans) from the class.

[From laptop] Show of hands from those whose fathers will be playing this year?

Most hands are raised, but not LUKE's.

Good, good.

BRRING!!! An alarm starts going ...

[From laptop] Okay — that's a fire drill! Everyone make their way out in an orderly manner! I said ORDERLY!

The class exits noisily, but LUKE lags behind.

KEVIN

There's a fire? And you're just going to leave me here?!

LUKE

It's only a drill, Kevin. There's no actual fire.

KEVIN

What if you're wrong? What if you come back and find my tiny charred corpse, frozen in terror — like in Pompeii!

LUKE

Okay. I'll take you with me, but you'll have to stay quiet.

LUKE opens the cage and KEVIN runs out ...

... just as CONNOR, backed by JAKE and JARED appear. They've been waiting for LUKE around the corner.

CONNOR

Playing with your only friend, hey freak? Grab the mouse guys!

JAKE

Grab the mouse, Jared!

JARED

Do I have to? Mice give me the creeps.

CONNOR

[Forceful] Grab it, Jared.

JARED grabs KEVIN, and pulls her towards CONNOR, who grabs her tail. KEVIN squeals.

KEVIN

Squeak! Luke, do something!

LUKE

I ... I can't.

CONNOR

It's lunch money time, remember?

JAKE

Hand it over. Or else — you know.

JARED illustrates what will happen by acting out a series of punches and kicks, supplying his own sound FX. He gets a bit carried away.

CONNOR

Jared.

JARED stops.

JARED

Sorry.

LUKE hands over some coins.

LUKE

Can you let Kevin go now please?

CONNOR Um, let me think. No.
He yanks KEVIN's tail again.

KEVIN Squeak! That's connected to me, you jerk!

CONNOR We know why your Dad won't be playing in the footie match, freak.

JAKE 'Cause you don't have one!

CONNOR You were born in a test-tube. You're a failed science experiment.

JAKE Ha! Failed is right!
JARED starts making weird faces and acting like some bizarre science experiment gone wrong.

CONNOR Jared.

JARED *[Stopping]* Sorry.

CONNOR Your mother is so ugly she couldn't find any guy who'd go near her.
LUKE is upset, but holding it in.

LUKE I ... I have a father.

JAKE Yeah? So what happened to him?

CONNOR Did he run off when he saw how weird you looked?
CONNOR and JAKE laugh. LUKE can't take this anymore.

LUKE I have a father!

CONNOR Then why isn't he coming on Friday?

JAKE Yeah — tell us why, freak?

LUKE He is coming.

JAKE As if!

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LUKE He's coming on Friday!

CONNOR Hold him Jared.

JARED grabs LUKE's arm from behind, pinning him.

Want to bet on that, freak?

LUKE Yes.

CONNOR You're on. But if your Dad doesn't show, your face has an appointment with your favourite toilet bowl.

JAKE Again.

JARED *[Flushing SFX]* FLUSSSSSHHHH!

CONNOR And to make it interesting, your furry pal gets it too.

KEVIN Me?!

CONNOR In the microwave. On high.

JARED *[Electrocution SFX]* Zzzzt! ZZZZzzzzt!

JAKE Mouse guts everywhere!

KEVIN Luke, say something!

LUKE My Dad will be here.

CONNOR You better hope so, freak.
JARED releases LUKE with a final jerk.

As CONNOR, JAKE and JARED exit, the sound of thunder and rain bursts in ...

SCENE 3: THE UNIVERSE / LUKE'S HOUSE

... and the school bell goes: BRRRRING! The projected universe now looks like a cosmic explosion. The NARRATORS appear.

NARRATOR 1

The storm hits just as school is coming out. Luke runs through the gates, and keeps on running.

LUKE runs across the stage.

NARRATOR 2

The storm is loud, but not as loud as the screaming inside Luke's head. The rain comes down hard, but Luke doesn't notice.

NARRATOR 3

He's nearly home before he realises he's soaking wet.

LUKE

[To audience] Why did I say my Dad was going to be there? Fact: I've never met my father! Fact: I don't know his name, or where he lives! Fact: My father is an ALIEN!

A tall figure (LUKE's ALIEN DAD), his face obscured by a full-face helmet and body covered in shiny motorcycle-style leathers, enters behind LUKE, looking like some kind of weird astronaut. He 'floats' past in slow-motion, and exits.

The cosmos disappears as lights come up on LUKE's house. LUKE's big slobbery dog ASTRO bounces up to greet him.

ASTRO

Lukie mate! You came back, buddy, you came back! I'm so happy! You're back you're back you're back!

ASTRO jumps up on LUKE and starts trying to lick him.

LUKE

Down Astro! I was only at school, like always.

ASTRO

But you know how I miss you all day, bro! [Slurp, slurp!]

LUKE

Ew! That's the same tongue you lick your bottom with.

ASTRO

[Slurp!] And your point is?

LUKE

ASTRO

Fact: There are tons of bacteria transmitted with a single lick!

[Slurp!] Hey, what's a bit of bacteria between pals?

LUKE slumps down on a chair, looking glum.

[To audience] I'm Luke's dog Astro. Luke's Mum got me when Luke was little — I think she wanted him to have a positive male role model around.

[Puts on a macho swagger] And you can't get more positively male than me, right, right, am I right?

[Scratches his groin] I've tried to teach him all kinds of useful bloke stuff. Like how to pee on trees, how to sniff butts, how to lick your privates. He hasn't really got into any of that yet — but hey, he's only a pup, he'll get there!

[Turns to LUKE] Cheer up, buddy! I got some grrreat new doggy jokes for you!

LUKE

Astro I'm not in the mood.

ASTRO

Come on Lukie — you know you love my jokes! Here we go. The other day I went to a zoo that only had one animal in it — it was a Shih tzu! A shih tzu! BOOM! Get it? Get it?

LUKE doesn't respond.

How about this? What do you call a dog magician? A labra-cadabrador! BOOM! What do you call a dog with no legs? Call it what you like but it's not going to come! BOOM-TISH!

LUKE can't help a smile.

LUKE

Okay stop.

ASTRO

Ha! Am I good, or am I good, or am I fantastic, eh, eh?!

LUKE

You're good. But I better see what Mum's saying.

LUKE goes to where there are some multi-coloured sticky notes stuck on the wall. He starts picking them up and reading them.

ASTRO

[To audience] Luke's mother has to work late, so she leaves little notes for her pup. She even colour codes them. Red means urgent stuff ...

LUKE

[Reading] "the layer of clothes on your bedroom floor is now deep enough to bury a body in — probably mine ..."

ASTRO

The green ones are food-related ...

LUKE

[Reading] "There's some of that vegetarian lasagne you love in the fridge ..."

ASTRO

Blue ones are bits of "Mum philosophy" ...

LUKE

ASTRO makes air-quotes with his paws.

ASTRO

"the longest journey to school starts with a single step ..."

LUKE

And the pink heart-shaped ones ...

"Always remember, you are my brave beautiful boy and I love every ..."

[To audience] I'm not reading THAT out!

There is the sound of a gate opening.

ASTRO

There's the gate! Stranger Danger, Stanger Danger! RUFF. RUFF! RUFF!

LUKE

Astro! Stop pretending you're a vicious guard dog!

ASTRO

I AM a vicious guard dog! GRR-RUFF! RUFF-RUFF!

LUKE

Vicious guard dogs aren't scared of kittens and guinea pigs.

ASTRO

Can I help it if little furry things creep me out?! RUFF-RUFF!

LUKE

Astro, it's only Lola!

An older teenage girl [LOLA] comes in the door, wearing a high school uniform and talking loudly on her mobile:

LOLA

[Into phone] ... shut-up! Shut-UP! Max said that? About me? He did not! He did NOT! O.M.G.! L.O.L.!

[Covers phone] Hey Lukie.

Hi Lola.

LUKE

[Into phone] He actually said that?! Hashtag: awkward!

LOLA

[Whispering] Want a juice?

LUKE

LOLA nods. LUKE scampers off to get one as LOLA's conversation continues ...

LOLA

[Into phone] You have to tell me the whole thing, like, from the start!

ASTRO

This is Lola from next door, who babysits Luke after school. She's been doing it since he was little, and it's pretty obvious to anyone with eyes that Luke's got a puppy crush on her.

LUKE races back with a juice and hands it to her.

LOLA

[Covering phone] Thanks Lukie.

She smiles at him. As LUKE smiles back, music starts and a disco ball lights up. LUKE walks around LOLA, staring longingly at her.

ASTRO

Look at him! It's pathetic! Get a kennel you two!

LOLA

[Into phone] Anyway, gotta go. See you!

[Hangs up] Hey Lukie, how was school?

The music suddenly stops, and the lights return to normal. LUKE deflates, shrugging.

LUKE

Okay.

LOLA

Oh no — what happened?

LUKE

LOLA

I said it was okay.

You didn't say 'okay', you said [*Glum voice*] 'okay' — hashtag: worst-day-ever. You know you can never keep secrets from me. So what happened?

I made a bet. With Connor.

LUKE

LOLA

Not Connor the deranged bully-slash-comedian-slash-psycho-killer?

LUKE

I told him my Dad was going to come to the football match on Friday.

LOLA

Your Dad? Your DAD?! Oh Lukie, why would you say something like that?

LUKE

It just ... came out.

LOLA

So, like, what happens when your Dad doesn't show, huh?

LUKE

Bad things.

LOLA

Okay, this is, like, WEEE-OOO, WEEE-OOO — a total Nine-One-One emergency!

LUKE

Fact: it's triple zero in Australia ...

LOLA

Whatever! I'm calling your mother right now, so you can tell her all about this!

[*She starts to dial*] Why do these creeps always pick on my little Lukie?

As LOLA starts to dial, LUKE steps forward.

LUKE

[*To audience*] I know why. I've always been different to the other kids. In preschool they'd all be playing in the sandpit — and I'd be showing the teacher how to do Powerpoint. In kindy they started calling me the freak. It stuck.

[*He pauses*] But then Mum gave me 'the talk' about where I came from ...

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The NARRATORS appear, as a projected shadow play begins — depicting the following in slightly comic fashion:

NARRATOR 1

Luke's Mum told him that she really wanted to have a baby, but she was all on her own.

NARRATOR 2

So she went to a clinic where the doctors could help her.

NARRATOR 3

The doctors used frozen sperm to fertilize the egg inside Luke's Mum.

NARRATOR 1

The sperm came from an anonymous donor — which means a man she didn't know.

NARRATOR 2

And that's how Luke's Mum become pregnant. With Luke.

The shadow play ends.

LUKE

When Mum told me this, suddenly everything made sense. I knew right away that the sperm donor had to be an alien! That was why I was so different! It all fitted. My donor Dad was an alien, so I was half-alien! But when I told my Mum, she said I had a [*Makes air-quotes*] "truly amazing imagination". But I know it's true.

LOLA walks over to LUKE with the phone.

LOLA

Here's your Mum — tell her!

LUKE

[*Into phone*] Hi Mum ... No, I'm okay ... Everything's fine.

LOLA looks frustrated.

LOLA

Luke — tell her!

LUKE

[*Into phone*] Um, there is one thing ... I want to get in touch with my Dad ... Yeah, my donor.

LOLA

What?!

LUKE

[*Into phone*] No reason ... I just want to ask him something.

There is a pause, as LUKE listens. He frowns.

[Into phone] ... information about him ... till I turn 18? Why not? ... The government protects his identity? ... Then how can I contact him ... ? Oh ... Okay. I guess I can try that ... Bye Mum.

[Soft, embarrassed] I love you too.

LUKE hangs up.

[To audience] Wow. The government protects my donor Dad's identity! Why would they do that unless there was something to hide — like he's an alien! It all fits!

Why didn't you tell her about Connor?

LOLA

She'd just worry. She worries enough about me already.

LUKE

That's the point of mothers!

LOLA

I can handle this. I'm going to get my Dad to come to the match.

LUKE

How? You don't know his name or address or star sign or anything!

LOLA

Mum said if I send an email to the clinic where the sperm came from, they might send the email on to him. And he might write back.

LUKE

But what if that doesn't happen? Lukie?

LOLA

LUKE shrugs uncomfortably. As the lights go down on LOLA and ASTRO, LUKE walks over to the laptop and starts typing.

[Typing] Dear donor Dad, you don't know me, but I'm your biological son. I know you're an alien — because I'm half-alien — but don't worry, your secret is safe with me. Anyway I was wondering if you're busy this Friday ...

LUKE

SCENE 4: LUKE'S BEDROOM / THE UNIVERSE

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The stars of the cosmos come out, and LUKE lies down, staring upwards. The ENSEMBLE gather around him.
That night, as Luke drifts off to sleep, he feels himself starting to float.

NARRATOR 1

The ENSEMBLE lift LUKE slowly and gently off the bed. [If this can't be done safely, projections or shadow play can substitute.]

NARRATOR 2

This is another of his alien superpowers — levitation. Luke floats up ... and out of his bedroom window.

LUKE glides below the stars, drifting in and out of sleep.

NARRATOR 3

He floats down the street, above the overflowing rubbish bins, beneath the star-filled sky.

NARRATOR 1

As he floats, Luke wonders which bright star his father came from, and how far he travelled to come to earth.

NARRATOR 2

He wonders what his father looks like, and what he's passed on to Luke.

NARRATOR 3

After all, Luke has half of his genes — alien genes.

LUKE

[Sleepy] Maybe that's where I got my weird toes ... and the way I walk ... I wonder if he likes his collar buttoned up too.

NARRATOR 1

Sometimes Luke feels like his life is a jigsaw puzzle — with half the pieces missing.

NARRATOR 2

He thinks if he knew more about his Dad, those missing pieces would fall into place.

NARRATOR 3

But would they?

As LUKE closes his eyes, the helmeted figure of his ALIEN DAD floats through behind him.

LUKE

[Murmuring] Dad ... ?

SCENE 5: SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

MR WATT's voice comes over the P.A.

MR WATT

[Over P.A.] Attention! Lunchtime is football practice for the fathers versus kids match! Participation is **COMPULSORY!**

[Then off mike] Pull your pants up Connor! That's highly inappropriate behaviour!

The CLASS runs on in sports gear, kicking and throwing balls around. LUKE comes in last, wearing a pair of shorts that look ridiculous on him.

LUKE

[To audience] Fact: I hate football. Fact: football hates me. Maybe I should try being invisible?

CONNOR runs past with the ball.

CONNOR

Nice shorts freak!

LUKE

Too late.

CONNOR

Here — catch!

CONNOR throws the ball at him, hard. LUKE fumbles. He picks it up, not sure what to do.

Kick it, ya dork!

LUKE tries but misses. There is laughter.

[To JAKE and JARED] Gimme some beats, guys!

JAKE and JARED start beat-boxing, and CONNOR starts to rap over the top of them.

Well, Lukie's the man
with the useless hands,
If you throw him a pass
He'll end up on his arse,
He's got no clue

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What he's s'posed to do,
And he looks like a dork
With that stupid walk,
He can barely speak
He just kinda squeaks,
And that's why we call him ...

JAKE and JARED chorus with CONNOR ...

CONNOR/
JAKE/JARED

THE FREAK!

They fist bump and laugh.

Nice one dude!

JARED is still beat-boxing.

Jared?

[Stopping] Sorry.

You should be ashamed of yourselves!

What's your problem, spoil-sport?

My problem is you and your idiot mates! You think it's so cool and so funny to humiliate people! But it's SO not!

Yeah it is. Everyone was laughing.

Didn't you see?

Only because they're scared you'll pick on them next! Just because somebody's different doesn't make it okay to make fun of them! Plus it contravenes the U.N. convention on rights of the child!

You're as weird as he is. Let's go guys.

As they walk off, MISH yells after them.

I'M GOING TO TELL MR WATT ... AND THE U.N!

JAKE

JARED

MISH

CONNOR

MISH

CONNOR

JAKE

MISH

CONNOR

MISH

LUKE Please don't.

MISH Why not?

LUKE You'll only make it worse. For both of us.

MISH But we can't let them do this! As a member of the school community I can't stand by and ...

LUKE Just ignore it. Like I do.

MISH And how's that working out?

LUKE *LUKE can't answer. He starts to walk away, and closes his eyes.*

LUKE *[Murmuring to himself]* Fact: there are a septillion stars in the observable universe. Fact: the blood vessels in the human body placed end to end could span the earth two point five times. Fact ...

Suddenly there is thunderclap and a huge white light blasts out from behind them silhouetting LUKE's ALIEN DAD who strides/fles in. He's in full alien superhero mode.

Everyone stares — including LUKE. The figure strides ominously towards CONNOR.

CONNOR What the ... ?

JAKE Run for it!

CONNOR is frozen in fear, but JAKE and JARED start to run. Without chasing them, the ALIEN DAD reaches out his hands towards them, and they seem to be dragged back by an invisible force.

JAKE/JARED *[Ad lib]* Aaaaah! What's happening?!

The ALIEN DAD brings his hands together — and JAKE and JARED slam into each other ...

OOF!

CONNOR

LUKE

ALIEN DAD

LUKE

MISH

LUKE

LUKE

MISH

LUKE

MISH

... by John Armstrong

They fall to the ground, knocked out. Then the ALIEN DAD turns his gaze on CONNOR, who is terrified.

It was only a joke ... A bit of fun ... Don't hurt me!

But the ALIEN DAD makes a strangling motion with his hands, and CONNOR starts to choke ...

[Choking] No ... please ... Argh!

CONNOR falls to the ground, writhing in pain, dying. LUKE looks up at the ALIEN DAD in awe.

Who are you?

The ALIEN DAD turns, his powerful gaze falling on LUKE.

[Unnaturally deep voice] Luke, I am your father!

I've been waiting so long for someone to say that.

MISH walks up to LUKE, oblivious to what's happening.

Luke? ... Hello? Are you on planet earth?

She waves her hand in front of his eyes. LUKE blinks.

Huh?

He looks around. The bright lights are off and his ALIEN DAD has vanished. CONNOR and JAKE and JARED are back on their feet, laughing and kicking the ball around, like nothing happened.

Where's he gone?

Where's who gone?

LUKE realises, and shakes his head, embarrassed.

No-one.

I thought you were having a stroke and was about to give you C.P.R.! You're lucky I came top in my first aid course.

LUKE I'm okay.

MISH No you're not. Let's go see Mr Watt and tell him everything.

LUKE I'm fine. It's not your problem!

He walks away. MISH yells after him.

MISH When I'm an international human rights lawyer I'm going to put Connor in jail for crimes against humanity! *Never to be released!*

SCENE 6: UNIVERSE

The cosmos appears, as the NARRATORS come to the front.

NARRATOR 1 It's nearly the day of the football match. And there's still no word from Luke's Dad.

NARRATOR 2 Whenever Luke thinks about it, he feels his stomach twisting. What if his Dad never got the email?

NARRATOR 3 What if he's back on his home planet, or voyaging somewhere in outer space?

NARRATOR 2 Luke knows emails can't travel across the galaxy. There has to be another way to contact him.

NARRATOR 3 But how do you get a message to an alien?

LUKE walks on, thinking.

LUKE Maybe if I call NASA ... Or that radio telescope in Parkes ... Or set up a laser signaling system on my roof ...

[Gets an idea] Wait ... I think I know!

He runs off stage.

SCENE 7: CLASSROOM

It's after school, and the class is empty apart from KEVIN, who is snoozing.

LUKE sneaks in and heads over to MR WATT's laptop. He turns it on, and is startled when it makes a loud chord.

KEVIN wakes at the sound and looks around.

Luke? Why are you sneaking around after school?

I'm sending a message to my Dad.

But isn't he an alien?

That's why I'm going to use SETI.

Oh, good idea. *[A beat]* What's SETI?

S.E.T.I. — the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. They have these giant radio telescopes which listen for signals from space. But they can *send* signals too. So I'm going to hack into their website, and send a message into space.

Wow. You know how to hack into websites?

No. But how hard can it be?

LUKE starts typing. The computer makes a BARP error noise.

That didn't work ... Maybe this ...

As he types MISH enters behind him. She spots LUKE and watches, unnoticed. LUKE hits some more keys and ... BARP!

Okay, it must be ...

He types some more ... BA-BARP!

This looks so easy in movies. Maybe I should Google 'how to hack'?

KEVIN

LUKE

KEVIN

LUKE

KEVIN

LUKE

KEVIN

LUKE

MISH walks right up behind LUKE without him realising.

Luke?

[Startled] Ah!

What are you doing? *[She peers at the laptop screen]* That's the SETI website isn't it?

I'm doing a ... a science project.

We don't have a science project.

It's a ... personal science project.

Then why are you using Mr Watt's computer?

[Unconvincing] Because ... he said I could?

Mr Watt is still in his office. Do you mind if I check with him?

[Getting nervous] Um, um, um ...

Is that yes or no?

It's um, um ...

Um's not really an answer. Sorry, but as a responsible member of the school community, I have to check.

[Takes a reluctant step] Here I go.

[Takes another step] This is me ...

[Another step] ... checking with Mr Watt. *[Another step]*

STOP! *[Blurts out in a rush]* Mr Watt didn't give me permission I was trying to hack into SETI to send a message into space and I'm using the school laptop so no-one can trace it back to me!

Did you say ... *you're sending a message into space?*

Yes.

Luke Lloyd: Alienoid by John Armstrong

That is ... so cool!

[Surprised] It is?

But you don't need SETI to do that. I'll show you.

MISH shoves him off the laptop, and starts typing away.

There's this new website that lets you send messages into space for free. I read about it in New Scientist.

You read New Scientist? I love New Scientist.

So do I! It's almost as good as How Stuff Works dot com.

You like How Stuff Works dot com too?

It's only like, my favourite website!

Did you see the thing about the Large Hadron Collider?

Oh yeah! Best explanation of the Higgs Boson particle ever!

LUKE looks impressed.

[To audience] Wow. Even Mr Watt doesn't understand the Higgs Boson particle!

MISH finishes typing.

Here's the space messaging site. Message away.

She gets off the laptop so LUKE can take over.

Thanks.

He starts to type, then stops, noticing she's watching.

Um. The message is kind of ... private?

What does it say?

It's ... kind of private.

Oh. Right.

LUKE *She turns her back, so she can't see what he's typing.*

KEVIN Why are you being nice to me? Is it because I don't have any friends?

LUKE What am I, cat food?

MISH *[To KEVIN]* I meant any human friends ...

LUKE So you think I just feel sorry for you? Have you noticed all my friends?

MISH No.

LUKE Exactly! It was the same at my last school. Everyone hates me — I can't work out why.

MISH Maybe ... because you're good at everything?

LUKE I can't help that, can I?

MISH But you talk about it. A lot.

LUKE *[Sigh]* Oh. Then I guess you hate me too?

MISH No.

LUKE You don't?

MISH *LUKE considers carefully.*

LUKE I don't think so. *[He hits a key]* Sent.

MISH *MISH turns around.*

LUKE *[Tentative]* Well, if you don't hate me ... do you think ... we could be friends?

MISH *An awkward pause.*

LUKE I don't know. I'm not sure how to have a friend. A human friend, that is.

MISH *[Giving up]* Oh. Okay.

LUKE
MISH

LUKE
MISH

MR WATT

LUKE
MR WATT
MISH

Luke Lloyd: Alienoid by John Armstrong

But ... I could try.

Okay — great! Friends!

She puts out her hand to shake. LUKE takes it awkwardly.

Is this what friends do? Shake hands?

Um, yeah. Stuff like that.

Suddenly the voice of MR WATT booms from the computer.

[From laptop] Is somebody there?! Hello?!

LUKE and MISH dive for cover.

[Whispering] We have to get out!

[From laptop] I'm sure I heard someone? Hello? Hello?

[Whispering] You go. I need to do something first.

LUKE heads for the door, and exits. MISH puts her head up, and tentatively reads off the screen.

[whispering] "This is Luke. If you're out there somewhere Dad, please come back to Earth and say hello. I'd really like to meet you, just once. P.S. — Friday is good for me."

MISH frowns, puzzled.

SCENE 8: LUKE'S HOUSE

LOLA and ASTRO are looking worried as LUKE walks in.

LOLA is on the phone, and hangs up.

LOLA

Luke! It's so late! Where have you been?

ASTRO jumps up on him.

ASTRO

Mate! Mate! I'm so happy to see you! Lola forgot to let me out, so I'm probably going to pee on the rug with the excitement! Yep, here I go!

He lifts his leg.

LUKE

Oh Astro.

ASTRO

Should I lick it up?

LOLA

I thought that psycho-serial-bully must've, like, murdered you, chopped your body into tiny pieces, wrapped them individually in lunch wrap and buried them all over the playground!

LUKE

[To audience] Lola watches a lot of Scandinavian crime shows.

ASTRO

What happened to you buddy?!

LUKE

I was just doing stuff at school.

LOLA

Then why didn't you call?! I couldn't get through to your Mum, so I was about to dial nine one one ...

LUKE

Fact: It's triple zero in ...

LOLA

WHATEVER! I WAS WORRIED!

LUKE

[To audience] Wow, she really does care! This is great!

LOLA

Why are you smiling?! Luke, this is not funny!

LUKE forces a glum look, but when he turns away from her he smiles broadly again. The doorbell sounds, and ASTRO goes berserk.

ASTRO

RUFF! RUFF, RUFF!

LUKE

Calm down Astro!

A tall teenage boy comes in tentatively. This is MAX.

Hello? Lola?

GRRR, GRRR!

Astro, back off!

Oh hi Max! It's alright, he's home now ...

[To ASTRO] Max? Who's Max?

Dunno. Want me to bite him?

... so I guess I don't need, like, a search party after all — sorry!

That's cool. Sure there's nothing I can do?

I'm sure. But thanks so much.

Okay. See you in Biology.

MAX exits. As LOLA walks back, LUKE stares at her.

What's up?

[Realises] He's just a guy from school, okay? But we need to talk.

Talk?

What are you going to do about this jerk Connor? Are you still just like, hoping your donor-Dad will show? Because that isn't really a plan.

LUKE shrugs hopelessly.

It's okay mate, I'll protect you!

Sure — as long as no kittens or guinea-pigs are present.

LUKE starts getting things out of his school bag, and pulls out a sketch of his ALIEN DAD. LOLA picks it up. [As she looks at it, we see it projected behind them.]

Who's this?

MAX

ASTRO

LUKE

LOLA

LUKE

ASTRO

LOLA

MAX

LOLA

MAX

LOLA

LUKE

LOLA

ASTRO

LUKE

LOLA

LUKE No one.

LOLA It says "Donor Dad" on the bottom. Do you think your Dad is some kind of superhero?

LUKE *[Uncomfortable]* Of course not. Superheroes don't exist.
LUKE walks off, embarrassed. LOLA studies the picture.

SCENE 9: CLASSROOM

It's before class, and KEVIN is running on her wheel, but looking twitchy and tired.

NARRATOR 1 It's Friday — the morning of the big football match.

NARRATOR 2 Kevin hasn't slept all night. She's so tired and twitchy she keeps falling off her wheel.

KEVIN falls off her wheel.

NARRATOR 3 She knows that in about an hour her short neurotic life is likely to end. Horribly.

LUKE walks in, and sees KEVIN twitching.

LUKE Kevin? What's wrong?

KEVIN Look what turned up in my cage this morning!

She points at a cardboard tombstone that's been put in her cage — which reads: RIP KEVIN.

LUKE Connor.

KEVIN I don't want to be zapped in a microwave! I was hoping for a slow romantic death from some nice terminal illness!

LUKE Kevin, everything's going to be fine. I've got a plan.

You do?! Oh thank goodness!

[To audience] I don't. But I can't tell her that.

MISH enters.

Luke?

[Awkward] Oh, hi ... friend. Should we shake hands again?

He puts out his hand.

[Awkward] Um, if you like.

They shake hands, looking self-conscious.

I've got to tell you something. You know that message you sent into space? I couldn't resist reading it.

[Surprised] You read it?

Yeah. And now I'm confused. Is your Dad like an astronaut or something? Does he work on the international space-station, or ...

You read my message?

[Nodding] After you left.

LUKE is getting more and more agitated.

But I told you it was private.

That's what made me curious.

Is this what friends do — read private stuff?

[Uncertain] Sometimes. Maybe.

A beat.

I've changed my mind. I don't think I want a friend after all.

Are you sure?

LUKE nods and walks off, leaving MISH glum. As the scene changes, a P.A. Announcement booms:

MR WATT

[Over P.A.] Would all players for the fathers versus kids football match please assemble on the field!

SCENE 10: SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

The lights come up on the playing field, with KIDS milling around.

NARRATOR 1

On the oval, everyone is getting ready for the big match.

NARRATOR 2

There are fathers and kids everywhere.

LUKE runs on dressed in his soccer shorts again (but still with his shirt done up to his neck).

NARRATOR 3

Luke is sure this is going to be the worst day of his life — and possibly the last day.

LUKE

[To audience] I need a miracle to get out of this alive. Fact: outside of the bible, miracles are statistically quite rare.

CONNOR walks up behind him.

CONNOR

Daddy not here freak? Oh look — my surprised face!

JAKE

You and that mouse are gonna get annihilated!

JARED acts out LUKE being pummelled and the mouse being electrocuted.

A whistle blows, and the P.A. booms.

MR WATT

[Over P.A.] Would the teams please take their positions!

CONNOR

Enjoy the game, freak!

LUKE

CONNOR, JAKE and JARED walk off, as everyone heads into position. LUKE stands there, panicky.

I've got to do something ... Maybe I can use telepathy?

He closes his eyes, and puts fingers to his temples, concentrating.

Dad, this is Luke ... Come in Dad ... Please? I need you.

Suddenly ASTRO bounds in, and jumps up on LUKE.

ASTRO

Hey Lukie! I'm out of the yard in the middle of the day and it's so woofin' exciting!

LUKE

Astro?! How did you get here?!

LOLA races up ...

LOLA

Sorry! I was at your house, and he got out and followed me! Astro, here!

She grabs his lead.

LUKE

Why were you at my house?

LOLA

Um, I found someone there looking for you. He's over there — see?

She turns and points. LUKE turns to see ...

... the helmeted figure from his dreams entering — it's his ALIEN DAD. The figure waves tentatively at LUKE, who is almost too astonished to speak.

LUKE

Dad ... ?

[To audience] This time I'm not imagining it! He's really here!

Dazed, LUKE starts to go towards him, but the REF (one of the kids) blows her whistle, and the match starts.

KICK OFF!

REF

LUKE *LUKE runs up beside CONNOR, and points.*
That's my Dad! Told you he'd be here!

CONNOR *CONNOR stares, surprised. Then he shrugs.*
Big deal. What's with the Darth Vader look?

LUKE *He runs off, following the ball. LUKE heads over towards his ALIEN DAD, trying to get close enough to talk.*
Dad? Dad! It's me!

The helmeted figure just nods and runs off following the ball — he doesn't seem to want to speak. LUKE yells to LOLA.

LOLA Why won't he talk to me?

LUKE Maybe he doesn't speak English?

LOLA I guess that makes sense.

The game continues — and now CONNOR gets the ball ...

NARRATOR 1 And then it happens.

NARRATOR 2 Connor kicks the ball hard ... right at Luke's Dad.

CONNOR kicks a ball right at the ALIEN DAD's head ...

NARRATOR 3 And as Luke watches, everything seems to go into slow-motion.
In pretend slow motion (the ball carried by some of the ensemble) the ball slams into the ALIEN DAD's helmet with a sickening SFX THUD! Still in slo-mo, the ALIEN DAD goes down — hard, and doesn't move. He's unconscious.

LUKE No! Dad! DAD!

LOLA races up, screaming at CONNOR.

LOLA If you've hurt him, psycho — you're DEAD MEAT!!

CONNOR looks scared. LOLA leans over the ALIEN DAD, and starts taking off his helmet.

O.M.G ... Are you okay?!

The helmet comes off — revealing MAX, the boy at the door.

[To audience] Huh?! My Dad is a teenager?!

MAX opens his eyes, dazed and confused.

Lola ... ?

Max! Are you alright?

My Dad is the guy from Lola's school?!

My poor baby! I thought you were, like, in a coma forever!

She hugs him in relief. LUKE looks shocked.

[To audience] My Dad is Lola's boyfriend?!

[To LOLA] Lola? What's going on?

Oh, Lukie ... I'm sorry! I was so worried about what was going to happen to you, that I got Max to dress up like your picture. Will you forgive me?

LUKE nods, in a daze. MAX is struggling to get up.

Lola ... ?

LOLA starts to help him up. MAX groans.

Ooh. My head hurts.

My poor sweetheart!

She walks off the field with MAX, patting his face and holding him. LUKE watches in total shock, devastated.

[To audience] I can't believe I just lost my Dad AND my girlfriend.

The REF blows the whistle.

REF Restart!

The others begin playing again. CONNOR comes up behind LUKE.

CONNOR *[Whispering]* Nice try with the fake Dad, freak. But you lost.

SCENE 11: CLASSROOM

We hear a whistle blowing, and the distant sound of MR WATT.

MR WATT *[Over P.A.]* That's full-time! And the final score is father's five, kids four! Let's hear it for the Dads!

LUKE runs into class, panicky, heading for KEVIN's cage.

LUKE Quick Kevin! I'm taking you home!

KEVIN Home?! Why?!

LUKE So Connor can't get you!

KEVIN Okay let's go!

But as LUKE starts to head for the door with KEVIN ... CONNOR walks in, backed by JAKE and JARED.

CONNOR Lukie my man. Going somewhere with the mouse?

LUKE freezes, scared.

Hand over the rodent, freak.

JAKE It's going in the teacher's microwave. Jared?

LUKE LLOYD: Alienoid by John Armstrong

JARED goes to grab KEVIN, but LUKE steps in front of him.

No.

What did you say?

She's my friend. I can't let you hurt her.

[Incredulous] Seriously?

Luke, my hero! You're so brave!

[To KEVIN] I'm scared out of my brain. Anyway, they'll just beat me up THEN kill you.

Oh great. Last resort time: playing dead!

KEVIN flops onto the ground, acting dead.

Get the freak!

JARED goes to grab LUKE. But LUKE manages to evade him, running to the other side of class. He looks upwards, desperate.

Dad, if you're up there, I need all my alien superpowers NOW!

LUKE scrunches up his eyes concentrating, as the boys catch up with him.

Invisibility!

He opens his eyes. CONNOR and the others stand there looking at him.

What are you doing?

LUKE closes his eyes again, concentrating harder.

Levitation!

Still nothing happens.

[To CONNOR] What's his problem?

CONNOR I think the freak's having a freak attack.
Getting desperate, LUKE puts out his hands as if strangling an imaginary CONNOR.

LUKE Grrrrr!

CONNOR Now I'm really scared.

JAKE He's totally wacko!

CONNOR Show's over freak!
CONNOR grabs LUKE roughly by the shirt.

LUKE Help! Someone! Help!

CONNOR No-one's gonna help you. You've got no friends, remember?
Suddenly in bursts ASTRO, barking like crazy ...

ASTRO RUFF! RUFF-RUFF! Leave him alone psycho! GRRRR!
ASTRO bails up CONNOR who looks scared.

CONNOR Get that crazy mutt away from me!

LUKE Astro?! What are you doing?!

ASTRO Waddy think I'm doing?! I'm going to bite his gonads off!
 GRRR-RUFF!

MISH appears at the door.

MISH Watch out Connor — that's a Siberian Sabre-Wolf!

CONNOR A what?!

MISH A Sabre Wolf — they're bred to fight Russian bears, so you don't want to get him angry!

ASTRO *[To audience]* I had no idea I was so dangerous! *[To Connor]* GRR-GRRR!

ASTRO makes a lunge for CONNOR's groin. CONNOR jumps back just in time, releasing LUKE.

CONNOR AH! What's he doing?!

LUKE I think he's trying to bite your testicles off.

MISH The Sabre Wolf is renowned for doing that. Apparently they like the taste.
That's it for CONNOR.

CONNOR Forget the stupid mouse! Just keep that wolf away from me!
LUKE grabs Astro's lead.

MISH But now he's got your scent, if anything ever happens to Luke, that dog will track you down and ...

ASTRO makes one last vicious lunge for CONNOR's groin, but is held back by the lead.

ASTRO GRRRRRRR-RUFF!

CONNOR Ah! We're out of here!
CONNOR flees, with his henchmen following ...

JAKE What about the bet ... ?

CONNOR Who cares?!

The three exit, as ASTRO barks.

ASTRO RUFF! RUFF-RUFF!

He turns to LUKE, bouncing around proudly.

Told you I was vicious! Didn't I, didn't I?!

KEVIN suddenly comes back to life, getting up off the floor.

KEVIN Thanks dog! You saved my life!

ASTRO stares in horror.

ASTRO

AHH! A MOUSE!

He flees, yelping in fear. KEVIN harrumphs.

KEVIN

And they call *me* neurotic!

MISH

Luke? Are you alright?

LUKE

I think so. Thanks. For the Sabre-wolf stuff, I mean.

MISH

That's okay. I owed you one. And it was kind of fun.

There's an awkward beat.

Anyway I have to get back to the Father's Day Gift stall. I haven't met my sales target yet.

As MISH turns to go, LUKE blurts out.

LUKE

I was wrong.

MISH

About what?

LUKE

Fact: I do need a friend. If you're still looking for one, that is.

MISH

You sure?

LUKE puts out his hand.

LUKE

Shake?

MISH smiles. They shake hands.

SCENE 12: SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

The lights fade up slowly on the playground, as the other KIDS gather, chatting and playing games — like a repeat of Scene One.

NARRATOR 1

It's Monday morning. The sky is blue, and goes on forever.

LUKE enters.

NARRATOR 2

Luke survived Friday. But now everything starts over.

NARRATOR 3

School looks and smells exactly the same. Nothing has changed.

NARRATOR 1

Just another Monday morning.

LUKE looks around the schoolyard, sighing.

LUKE

Oh well. Time to be invisible again.

He starts walking through the crowd, and once again no-one notices him. It's as if he's not there.

MISH enters from the other side, and waves to him.

MISH

Hey Luke ... Luke!

LUKE looks puzzled, as she races up to him.

Hi!

LUKE

How come you can see me?

MISH

See you? Did you think you were invisible or something?

LUKE

[Covering] No. Of course not.

MISH

Hey, it's still bugging me — that message you sent into space, I mean. Did your Dad die when you were little? Is that why you think he's up there — like, in heaven?

[LUKE doesn't respond] Oh — am I being too nosey again? Sorry — I do that!

A beat.

LUKE He isn't dead. At least I don't think so.

MISH You don't know?

LUKE looks uncomfortable.

LUKE My dad is ... a sperm donor. I've never met him.

MISH Oh. So ... why do you think he's in space?

A beat. LUKE hesitates.

LUKE I thought he might be ... an alien.

MISH can't help a short laugh of amazement.

MISH An alien?! Seriously?!

LUKE *[Mortified]* It sounds dumb now I'm saying it out loud ...

MISH No — no, it doesn't! I think it's ... fantastically awesome!

LUKE You do?

MISH Yeah! I would LOVE to have an alien for a parent! But ... what makes you think your Dad isn't human?

LUKE Just that I'm so different. It kind of explains everything.

MISH nods, thinking this through.

MISH I know what you mean. I've always been different too. But both my Dads say that's a good thing. Otherwise you're just another sheep. Baa, baa!

LUKE Both your Dads?

MISH Yeah — I've got two. They adopted me. So if you ever need a Dad for anything, I've got a spare I can lend you.

LUKE Thanks. But I'm happy with just my Mum. It isn't that I miss having a Dad around. I just want to know where I come from.

I get that.

CONNOR walks past with JAKE and JARED.

[Sneering] Oh look — the freak and the freakette. How cute.

[Matter of fact] Fact: I'd rather be the freakiest freak on earth than a psycho-bully like you.

MISH looks at LUKE in shock. CONNOR looks furious.

Luke?!

What did you call me?!

LUKE whistles and waves past CONNOR.

[Whistles] Hey Astro! Astro, go for the gonads!

CONNOR spins around, scared.

Your wolf's here?! Where?! Where?!

There's no sign of ASTRO. JAKE and JARED start laughing.

Ha! The freak got you one!

You should've seen your face, dude!

JARED imitates CONNOR's scared look.

Shut-up morons!

He stalks off, with JAKE and JARED following.