

THE FOREIGNER



CHARACTERS

ALI, a high school student
MELANIE, Ali's friend
MAX, a new student

SETTING

The action takes place in a high school hallway, near the office. It's registration day. There's a long line-up of students waiting their turn. A really good-looking boy turns around and starts a conversation with the girl behind him.

SCENE 1

MAX

I have been waiting in line for 45 minutes. Is this usual?

ALI

I don't know. I heard the computers were down.

MAX

The computers are . . . down?

ALI

Yes, you know, they're not working properly.

MAX

(smiles) Ah-h! *(He shakes his head in disbelief.)*

ALI

You're not from here, are you? My name's Ali.

MAX

Ali. *(He extends his hand to shake hers.)* My name is Max.

ALI

(She shakes his hand uncomfortably.) Hi.

MAX

Excuse me, but I thought Ali was a boy's name.

ALI

(surprised) Well, it can be. Actually, my name is Alexandra, but everybody calls me Ali. I like it.

MAX

I understand. Max is not my real name either. It has been modified for . . . ah, never mind. Do you like it here?

ALI

Yes, it's a nice school.

MAX

Are the students friendly?

ALI

Friendly? *(She giggles.)* Yeah . . . they're cool. Boy, you sure are different. Where are you from anyway?

MAX

Er . . . I am . . . British. I guess I am what you might call a foreigner.

ALI

Oh. *(There's a silence. Ali sighs.)* It's hot in here.

MAX

Are you thirsty? I will get us something to drink. I assume you would like some orange juice, correct?

ALI

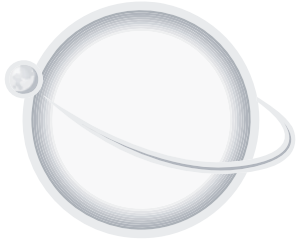
Yes, I would but . . .

MAX

It's okay and yes . . . you could keep my place in line. I will be right back. *(He leaves.)*

ALI

(after him) Thanks.



SCENE 2

Melanie walks over to Ali.

MELANIE

Hey, Ali. Who was that guy you were talking to?

ALI

His name is Max. He's new here. He just came from Britain.

MELANIE

What a hunk!

ALI

(She giggles.) Isn't he? And he's really nice too. He just went to get me an orange juice, which is exactly what I wanted right now because I'm so-o-o thirsty.
(*Max comes back with the drinks. He gives the orange juice to Ali.)*

ALI

Thanks. Max, this is my friend Melanie.

MAX

Hello, Melanie.

MELANIE

Hi. So, you're new here. You'll like it. This is a good school. There are lots of sports: basketball, soccer, hockey. And our school wins a lot! What's your sport, Max?

MAX

I am not sure. I have not tried any yet.

MELANIE

You haven't tried any? Okay . . . *(She turns her back to him and mouthes to Ali: He's weird! as she rolls her eyes.)* So what do you do then?

MAX

I like to read and I like computers a lot. *(Melanie rolls her eyes again.)*

ALI

Oh well, there's a lot of that here too!

MELANIE

Hey, have you seen the new science fiction movie *Quantum Space*? It's supposed to be the best sci-fi movie ever made.

MAX

Yes, I have seen it.

ALI

Really? So is it as good as she says?

MAX

Well . . . it is not very realistic.

MELANIE

(raising her voice) Not realistic? Are you kidding? My dad said he read in the paper that the producers met with people from NASA to make it look as realistic as they could. They've got all this technology and there are these incredible scenes in outer space that are just awesome.

MAX

I guess you are right. What do I know?

MELANIE

Well, I've got to go. See you on Monday!

ALI AND MAX

Bye Mel. *(Melanie leaves.)*



Scene 3

ALI

Don't mind Melanie, Max. She's like . . . you know . . . opinionated.

MAX

She thinks I am weird because I do not play any sports.

ALI

Ah, she's a big fan of sports, any sport. And most boys here are into sports, so it's unusual for a guy to say he hasn't tried any.

MAX

I see what you mean. Well, I guess I will learn all about sports at this school. *(The line starts to move.)*

ALI

Finally!

MAX

Well, I am next. I hope to see you again sometime. Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me, Ali.

ALI

(surprised) Sharing my thoughts with you? *(She laughs.)* Okay, right. You're British. I've got to remember that. See you later, Max.

MAX

I am glad I met you Ali. *(He turns and goes into the office.)*

Scene 4

Two weeks later, in the school cafeteria. Ali and Max are sitting at a table having their lunch.

ALI

It was just awesome how you solved that math problem, Max. I could tell Mr. Ryan was impressed. How did you know all that stuff?

MAX

Er . . . I learned it last year.
(He's interrupted by Melanie who is obviously excited.)

MELANIE

Yo Max! I saw you playing basketball in the gym this morning. What's all this talk about you never having played any sports before? You're good! Man, I know a pro when I see one. You just have to go to the tryouts man. You're awesome!

MAX

(embarassed) Well . . . maybe.

MELANIE

No! Not maybe! You have to go! Please. Tomorrow after school. Three thirty. Be there!

ALI

Chill, Mel. Chill! He can make his own decisions. *(Melanie leaves.)*

Scene 5

ALI

Melanie sure can be pushy sometimes. She's always been that way. Even when we were little. I just laugh about it now. I let her talk and then I do what I want.

MAX

Yes, she is very assertive.

ALI

(laughing) You wouldn't believe it. She tells me what I should wear, what music to buy, what books to read.

MAX

What movies you should see.

ALI

That's right, and I still haven't gone to see *Quantum Space*.

MAX

Do not bother.

ALI

What do you mean? Everybody is just raving about that movie. How come you didn't like it?

MAX

Because I am afraid people will believe that it is true.

ALI

Give it a break, Max! We know the difference between a story and real life!

MAX

Yes, but most science fiction movies portray extraterrestial beings as violent enemies.

ALI

So what? They're just stories.

MAX

Yes, but even if they are just stories, I think people become fearful of extraterrrestial beings.

ALI

So, what difference does it make?

MAX

I am afraid they store those images in their brain and . . .

ALI

(interrupting) Max! Don't tell me you think it can make us violent. You sound just like my mother. It's not like we're going to come out of the cinemas and start attacking people on the street.

MAX

No, not like that.

ALI

What, then?

MAX

I am afraid it is more subtle than that. If I asked you to draw an extraterrestial being . . .

ALI

An alien.

MAX

Right. See what I mean? Even in the words you use, you assume that they are enemies because of all these movies you have seen.

ALI

I see your point.

MAX

So how would you draw one?

ALI

(laughing) Oh, I'd probably draw a little green man with antennas and long ugly fingers.

MAX

You see!

ALI

I'm joking, Max! Nobody knows what they look like. For all we know, they could make themselves look exactly like us so that we couldn't recognize them.

MAX

Really? And how would that thought make you feel? How would you feel if you were told that some "aliens" were roaming about, disguised as human beings?



ALI

I don't know. It's a little creepy to think about it.

MAX

Fear.

ALI

I guess so.

MAX

And what if you found one out? What would you do?

ALI

I guess I'd tell my dad. I'd tell someone. I'd have to.

MAX

And what would happen then?

ALI

Well, to be honest, I'd have to say he'd probably be detained or questioned. If he didn't disappear first.

MAX

Arrested more likely and put in prison. And why? Because of fear.

ALI

You know, I'd never thought about it before, but I think you have a point.

MAX

The sad thing about it is that fear would wreck everything. Our first contact with extraterrestial beings should be an opportunity to learn great things, to share our knowledge and our different technologies. But instead, it would turn to violence because of fear and distrust.

ALI

Whoa! That's pretty heavy, Max. Do you think about that stuff a lot?

MAX

Yes, all the time.

ALI

Really? Why?

MAX

Because I would like it to be different. I would want to know that we could be open-minded. It would be so awesome to share our thoughts with other beings and be friends.

ALI

But why is it so important to you? I mean really, what are the chances of meeting aliens . . . huh . . . I mean extraterrestial beings?

MAX

Higher than you think.

ALI

You don't know that.

MAX

Actually, I do know.

ALI

(skeptical) Really? And how's that?

MAX

Because, Ali, I am not from here.

ALI

So?

Max looks at her. Suddenly she understands. Her eyes widen and her face pales. Max touches her hand and suddenly she relaxes. She lays her head in her folded arms and falls asleep. Max slowly gets up and walks away.

