

When the Aliens Came  
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My brother said they would come down in space ships, but they didn't. They came from inside.

"I bet they'll have a big flying saucer," Toby said, his eyes shining. Toby was three years older than me. "They'll open the hatch and come out, hundreds of them with suckers and ray guns and they'll *zap* your brains right out of your head. Zap, Alice! Zap your brains!"

I ran to Mom because I didn't want my brains zapped out of my head.

Mom said the aliens might not come at all. But everyone knew they would. It was just a matter of time. That's what they said on the news. They pressed their lips tight and said, *It's a matter of time.*

One of the newsmen cried.

Dad said we were being stupid. "A few objects enter orbit and the world goes hysterical," he growled at the TV over dinner. "Everyone assumes we're being invaded by little green men. It's pathetic!"

I poked my tongue out at Toby.

"They'll get you first, Alice," Toby whispered. "Stupid little girls like you they'll get first."

The night before the aliens came, Toby tossed and turned in the top bunk, keeping me awake. "They'll come soon," he said, maybe to himself.

"They might not," I said. "Nobody knows."

Toby's head popped down and I gave a little scream. "They *will*. And they'll get you first. They'll suck your brains out and—"

I covered my head with my pillow.

The next day, I went outside to look for frogs and it rained metal. I hid under a tree and watched it come down. The raindrops looked hard like diamonds but when I touched one it was soft and wet. It made my fingers feel funny. I didn't touch any more raindrops.

When the rain stopped, the army told everyone to get inside. *Pronto*, they said. I ran home and Mom hugged me tight. We went over to the big window and stared at the shiny rain lying in the street.

"I *told* you they'd come from the sky!" Toby yelled. "Stupid, I told you!"

"Shut up!" I shouted, louder than I meant to because I was scared and my whole body was starting to feel kind of sick and squishy.

"I was right about the space ships. And I'm right about them getting you first."

"They are not space ships!" I screamed. Then my new wings came out my back and my new claws came out of my hands. I jumped at Toby and I made him shut up. But even after it was over—over everywhere—I was still mad at him for being right.

[end.]