

# **Return to Roswell**

**by**

**Page Petrucka**

# RETURN TO ROSWELL

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**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

TALITHA BOREALIS WILMAR (TALI): Female, forty, single. Older sister of Gemma and Mira. Southern dialect.

GEMMA ARIA WILMAR: Female, thirty-eight, divorced. Younger than Tali, older than Mira. The middle sister. Southern dialect.

MIRA CETI WILMAR: Female, thirty-five, engaged. Tali and Gemma's youngest sister. No dialect.

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### SCENE

The action of the play takes place in Tali's home in Lubbock, Texas, and at an RV park in Roswell, New Mexico.

### TIME

July, 2012.

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## SCENE 1

*TALI's home. A couch and end table sit off center, right. Behind and to the left of the couch is a kitchen table and three chairs. A laptop computer and stacks of paper cover the kitchen table. On stage left by the suggested front door is a blown up figure of an alien. GEMMA sits on the couch crocheting while Tali works on her computer. Tali is wearing a florescent t-shirt with a picture of an alien and a quote that reads, "I BELIEVE."*

**GEMMA.** I'm telling you, you should re-think that t-shirt.

**TALI.** She'll be fine with it.

**GEMMA.** No she won't. You know how she hates all of that stuff.

**TALI.** I don't get it. She's an aerospace engineer. Space, aliens, they kinda go together.

**GEMMA.** Not to her, and you know it. And you should probably move your little friend by the front door.

**TALI.** Who, Bob?

**GEMMA.** It has a name?

**TALI.** Come on, Gemma. He ain't hurtin' nobody.

**GEMMA.** And on account of what happened the last time she came home, I think it would be a good idea to avoid the subject of religion.

**TALI.** Religion is a big part of who I am, and it's important to me.

**GEMMA.** I know it is, but she made it abundantly clear that it's not to her. Not anymore.

**TALI.** Well, it should be.

**GEMMA.** You can't tell her that, Tali.

**TALI.** I don't want to have to turn my world upside down just because my sister is visiting.

**GEMMA.** This isn't just a visit. It's her bridal shower.

**TALI.** Which I am throwin'!

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**GEMMA.** I'm just sayin'--

**TALI.** I know you're just sayin', and I know you're tryin' to keep the peace--

**GEMMA.** That's my job, isn't it? Look, this weekend is about her. Try to remember that, okay?

**TALI.** *(Gives in.)* Alright, alright. I'll change my shirt and move Bob.

**GEMMA.** *(After a beat.)* You gonna tell her?

**TALI.** Holy cow, Gemma. She's not going to want to come home ever again!

**GEMMA.** *(Patiently.)* You've kept it from her long enough.

**TALI.** I know I have.

**GEMMA.** So you'll tell her?

**TALI.** Yeah.

**GEMMA.** Before the weekend is out?

**TALI.** *(Exasperated.)* I will!

**GEMMA.** Good. Now, why don't you let me in on what you've got planned for all of us this weekend.

**TALI.** Not a chance. It's a surprise. But this is going to be one weddin' shower unlike any other.

**GEMMA.** I hope this is the first and last for her. Divorce is not a pleasant thing, I tell ya.

**TALI.** Speakin' of, you're not goin' to worry about your boys this entire weekend, are you?

**GEMMA.** No, I won't. DeWayne and I have set down some ground rules.

**TALI.** Can he be trusted to keep them?

**GEMMA.** He better be. But I will contact the judge again if I have to. Those boys mean the world to me and I don't want my idiot ex-husband puttin' them in harm's way again.

**TALI.** I don't blame ya.

**GEMMA.** And if I have to drive all the way back to Albuquerque to oversee the setting of one more broken limb--

**TALI.** *(Seeing that Gemma is getting frustrated, Tali interrupts her.)* What time is Mira supposed to get here?

**GEMMA.** What time is it now? *(Looks at watch.)* Oh gracious me, could be any minute. *(Gathers up her crocheting.)* I'm so happy she's finally settling down.

**TALI.** Me too. Wasn't sure if she would be able to love anything as much as she

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loves that job of hers.

**GEMMA.** What is it she does again? She's tried to explain it to me at least a dozen times.

**TALI.** She works with, um, satellites.

**GEMMA.** But what does she do with them?

**TALI.** Well, she, you know, she checks them.

**GEMMA.** Checks them for what?

**TALI.** To make sure that they are sending the proper vibrations through the earth's atmosphere--

**GEMMA.** Girl, you have no idea what she does either, admit it.

**TALI.** Fine, I don't know. But it is somethin' to do with satellites. *(A noise is heard outside, and MIRA enters with suitcase and backpack, calling out.)*

**MIRA.** Hello? Anybody home?

**GEMMA.** *(Throws the scarf she's been crocheting over to Tali and gestures for her to put it on in order to cover up her t-shirt.)* Oh, honey! Get over here and give me a hug!

**MIRA.** Hi, Gemma. How are you?

**GEMMA.** Doin' just fine, how are YOU?

**MIRA.** Great.

**TALI.** *(Crosses to Mira and hugs her awkwardly.)* Hey there, little sis. Good to see you.

**MIRA.** You too, Tali.

**TALI.** *(After an uncomfortable pause.)* I wish you would've let me pick you up at the airport. It's only a few minutes away.

**MIRA.** I know it is, but I told you on the phone, I wanted to get a rental car.

**TALI.** You didn't need to spend the money, you could've used mine...

**MIRA.** I didn't want to put anybody out. It's really no trouble at all, Tali.

**GEMMA.** Never mind all that, let's see your ring! *(Takes Mira's hand and admires the ring.)* Oh my laws, how beautiful!

**TALI.** *(Notices the ring from a distance.)* That thing is huge.

**MIRA.** It's not that big.

**GEMMA.** Come and sit down on the couch, girl. Take a load off.

**TALI.** I'll take your bags into the study.

**GEMMA.** Forget about that Tali, come and sit with us. *(Tali brings a chair over to*

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*sit by the other two. She is a little quiet while Gemma and Mira catch up.)*

**MIRA.** It is really good to see you both.

**GEMMA.** I can't believe it's been three years since we've been together!

*(Uncomfortable pause.)* Alright, out with it. We want to know all about your honey.

**MIRA.** Josh? I've sent you pictures.

**GEMMA.** I know, but we've only seen how he looks. What's he like?

**MIRA.** Well, he's a scientist...

**TALI.** Like you.

**MIRA.** I'm not a scientist. I'm an engineer.

**TALI.** That's basically the same thing.

**MIRA.** No. To say that we're the same is like saying the Hubble telescope has exactly the same function as the International Space Station.

**GEMMA.** That reminds me. Neither of us seems to understand really what you do. Would you mind explainin' it to us one more time?

**MIRA.** My work focuses on the non-deterministic design and analysis of parameterized optical structures during the conceptual design of telescopes--

**TALI.** *(Long pause.)* That's kinda what I was thinkin' you did--

**GEMMA.** No it isn't! You said she works with satellite vibrations.

**MIRA.** Satellite vibrations? Where'd you get that?

**TALI.** I thought I heard you say somethin' to that effect.

**MIRA.** No. Not even close. But that barely scratches the surface of what I do. I'm also analyzing the conditioning, reduction, and disturbance of large order integrated models for space-based telescopes--

**GEMMA.** *(Very confused but supportive.)* Well, that's wonderful. Isn't it, Tali?

**TALI.** *(Also confused.)* Yeah. Really great.

**GEMMA.** *(Changes the subject.)* Anyway, tell us more about Josh.

**MIRA.** *(Notices that Tali is wearing a scarf.)* I will, but first, Tali needs to tell me why she's wearing a scarf during the month of July in Texas.

**TALI.** No reason. Gemma is making it for me, and we were checking the length.

**GEMMA.** That's right, I wanted to be sure it was long enough.

**MIRA.** It's kind of silly for you to keep it on.

**TALI.** Actually, I like it--

**MIRA.** It's 100 degrees out.

**TALI.** Maybe I should take your bags to the guest room now.



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**MIRA.** Tali, why don't you tell me what's on your t-shirt. Is it an alien?

**TALI.** Why would you say that?

**MIRA.** Because there is also a blow up one by the front door. This must be your very special way of putting out the welcome mat for me.

**GEMMA.** She was gonna change, Honey, but we got to talking.

**MIRA.** You don't have to defend her.

**GEMMA.** I'm not defending her. I'm just tellin' you the way it is.

**TALI.** *(Takes off the scarf and shows Mira the t-shirt.)* Ok, you got me. My t-shirt has an alien on it. And yes, I have placed Bob by the front door.

**MIRA.** You named a blow-up alien Bob?

**TALI.** And it's not a special "welcome mat," it's just me. I wear t-shirts, and I own a blow-up alien. Sue me.

**MIRA.** I thought maybe you would grow out of that... eventually.

**TALI.** If you mean grow out of believing in something as life-altering and ginormous as what happened to Daddy...

**MIRA.** I'm not going to get into this with you right now, Tali.

**TALI.** Get into what?

**MIRA.** You know exactly what.

**GEMMA.** Tali, remember what we were just talking about?

**TALI.** Look you two, Daddy saw something--

**MIRA.** When he was five years old!

**TALI.** Yeah, but Granddaddy saw it too, and so did a lot of other people.

**MIRA.** It shocks me that you still believe in this.

**TALI.** And it shocks me that you don't. Come on! You work with space crap. You have to be seein' things out there that you can't explain.

**GEMMA.** I would really like to hear more about Josh.

**MIRA.** I work with telescopes. Not space crap.

**TALI.** So in all the times you've looked through your little telescope, you and your scientist buddies--

**MIRA.** I told you, I'm not a scientist, I'm an engineer.

**GEMMA.** I bought a pineapple upside down cake for tonight. Tali, would you mind getting it out of the fridge?

**TALI.** Well, you and your little "engineer" buddies must have seen something you can't explain.

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**GEMMA.** How about an ice cream sundae?

**MIRA.** If you knew the slightest thing about engineers, which apparently you don't, and of course why would you--

**GEMMA.** Okay girls, time out. *(Both Tali and Mira are quiet.)* It's been a long time since we've all seen each other. It would be really great if we could set aside our differences and celebrate our sister gettin' married. Which would mean that I don't have to spend the rest of our time together being your referee.

**MIRA.** Sounds good to me.

**TALI.** Sorry, Gemma.

**GEMMA.** I have a great idea. Tali, you said you had a little bridal shower game to play, right?

**TALI.** *(Hesitates.)* I do.

**GEMMA.** Laws, I could go for a fun game right now. Why don't you go get it?

**TALI.** I don't think that Mira will want to play it.

**MIRA.** A game sounds great, Tali.

**TALI.** Well, if you're sure. Be right back. *(She exits to get the game.)*

**MIRA.** You always have to do that, don't you?

**GEMMA.** Break up your fighting'? Yep. It's a dirty job, but someone's got to do it.

**MIRA.** I don't know why she always has to be so difficult...

**GEMMA.** Hold it right there. You're just as guilty as she is. Man, you two can push each other's buttons. You're too much alike.

**MIRA.** We are not!

**GEMMA.** Oh yes you are. That's what Daddy used to say, anyway.

**MIRA.** *(After a pause.)* I miss him, Gemma.

**GEMMA.** I know you do, Honey.

**MIRA.** The house doesn't look any different.

**GEMMA.** You know Tali. She doesn't really like change. She's pretty happy with things the way they are.

**MIRA.** That's what I was afraid of.

**GEMMA.** I know how hard it must have been for you to come home, Honey.

**MIRA.** I never want to fight like that with Tali again.

**GEMMA.** My goodness, that was ugly! But we can laugh about it now, right? *(Chuckles, but notices Mira isn't joining her.)* No? Too soon? Alright, no laughing.

**TALI.** *(Enters with a stack of papers and a bag.)* I think I got everything we need.

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Are you two sure you want to play this?

**MIRA.** We're sure.

**GEMMA.** Bring it on!

**TALI.** Alright, we're goin' to play a little game called "This is Your Life."

**GEMMA.** Oooo, fun!

**TALI.** *(Hands out scripts to Mira and Gemma.)* This is a story I wrote about Mira's life, and in here are some props we can use as we read. I hope you like it.

Everybody line up here. I'll read the opening narration.

**GEMMA.** Is this a play?

**TALI.** More of a movie script, really.

**GEMMA.** Well alrighty, let's get started.

**TALI.** Okay. *(Reads from the script.)* Thirty-five years ago, Mira Ceti Wilmar was born into this world.

**GEMMA.** This is so sweet!

**TALI.** Shh!

**GEMMA.** Sorry.

**TALI.** She joined a family with two older sisters who would love and protect her throughout the rest of her life.

**GEMMA.** Awwww.

**TALI.** Her parents, Mary and Adam Wilmar, who incidentally both died way too young...

**GEMMA.** Amen to that.

**TALI.** ...were thrilled to be bringing home this little wonder. In fact, that's where her name came from. She was named after Mira Ceti, the star in the night sky. And the meanin' of her name is "wonderful."

**MIRA.** *(Surprised.)* Tali, this is actually very nice of you--

**TALI.** But to really get to know her and her family, we need to go way back in time. Sixty-five years ago, to be exact. To the year 1947. The place, Roswell, New Mexico.

**MIRA.** Wait a second.

**TALI.** *(Continues.)* Stephen Wilmar... *(She stops reading for a second.)* Mira, you read Granddaddy's part.

**MIRA.** Tali--

**TALI.** *(Takes a bandana from her prop bag and hands it to Mira.)* Here. Tie this

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around your neck. *(She begins reading again.)* Stephen Wilmar, and his five-year old son, Andy--

**GEMMA.** I want to read Daddy's part!

**TALI.** Sure. Here, put this on. *(Takes a baseball hat from the bag and gives it to Gemma to wear. She continues to read.)* Stephen Wilmar, and his five-year old son, Andy, were driving through Roswell late one night in early July, on their way back home to Lubbock, Texas.

**GEMMA.** *(Reads from script.)* "Gee, Daddy. I'm sure tired from all this driving."

**MIRA.** *(Also reading, but unenthusiastically.)* "Don't worry son, we'll be home in a few short hours."

**GEMMA.** "The stars are sure bright tonight, huh Daddy?"

**MIRA.** "They sure are."

**GEMMA.** *(Points at the sky.)* "What's that, Daddy?"

**MIRA.** "What's what?"

**GEMMA.** "What's that in the sky?"

**MIRA.** "That's strange. I've never seen anything like that before."

**GEMMA.** "Is it an airplane?"

**MIRA.** "No."

**GEMMA.** "Is it a weather balloon?"

**MIRA.** *(Stops reading.)* Tali, Dad didn't know what a weather balloon was when he was five.

**TALI.** Keep readin', we're getting to the good part.

**MIRA.** *(Continues reading.)* "No way can that be a weather balloon. Son, I think we're seeing ourselves a real, live, unidentified flying object." I don't believe this.

**GEMMA.** "Wow!"

**TALI.** "The following is pure speculation. But it's how things might have happened if our protagonists had actually encountered these special visitors."

**GEMMA.** "Daddy, stop the truck! There's something in the road."

**MIRA.** "Stay here, son. I'm going to get out and talk to them."

**TALI.** *(Tali pulls alien eye shaped glasses out of the bag and puts them on. She attempts to talk like an alien.)* "Greetings, earthling."

**MIRA.** Seriously?

**GEMMA.** That's not your line, honey.

**MIRA.** I know, but--

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**TALI.** "We come in peace."

**MIRA.** Tali, none of this ever happened.

**TALI.** I know, I said it was pure speculation.

**MIRA.** This has nothing to do with my life!

**TALI.** Sure it does! Now keep reading.

**MIRA.** *(Tries to stay calm.)* "Welcome to our planet. I'm Stephen."

**TALI.** "Stee-Ven. I am known as Beta Ophantus Botien."

**MIRA.** "Well that name is quite a mouthful. How about I just call you Bob?" Tali--

**TALI.** Keep reading.

**MIRA.** Absolutely not. This is ridiculous.

**TALI.** What's wrong with it?

**MIRA.** What's wrong with it? Are you kidding me?

**TALI.** I thought it would be fun!

**GEMMA.** I'm having a good time. *(Gemma sees how upset Mira is, and quickly changes her tune.)* But! Tali honey, even though it was fun, knowing how your sister feels about extra terrestrials, it probably wasn't the best idea to write a little skit about it.

**TALI.** But you both said you wanted to play a game.

**GEMMA.** We did. But I don't think either of us had any idea where you were gonna go with this.

**MIRA.** How could we? And how did my birth turn into a science fiction story?

**TALI.** I thought it was important to include it.

**MIRA.** Well, you thought wrong.

**TALI.** Okay fine. I have some other games we could play.

**GEMMA.** Great idea.

**MIRA.** I don't think so.

**TALI.** Why not?

**MIRA.** You know what I just realized? I'm really, really tired.

**GEMMA.** Already?

**MIRA.** Yes. I think I'm going to get ready for bed.

**TALI.** But you just got here.

**MIRA.** I know, but we'll have plenty of time to visit tomorrow. Which guest room am I in?

**TALI.** Your old room.

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**GEMMA.** Need a hand with your bags?

**MIRA.** No, I've got them. *(Starts to gather her bags.)*

**GEMMA.** Let us know if you need anything, alright?

**MIRA.** Will do.

**GEMMA.** Glad to have you home!

**MIRA.** Thanks, Gemma. *(She exits.)*

**GEMMA.** Turnin' in isn't such a bad idea. Maybe I'll get ready for bed, too. How about you?

**TALI.** No, I'm gonna stay up for a little while.

**GEMMA.** But not too long, you hear? We've got a big day tomorrow! *(Tali doesn't respond.)* 'Night, Sweetie.

**TALI.** 'Night. *(Gemma exits. Tali cleans up the props and scripts. Lights fade.)*

### SCENE 2

*Tali's house, the next morning. Gemma is sitting on the couch crocheting. Mira enters with a bag of pastries and hot drinks.*

**GEMMA.** Hey you!

**MIRA.** Hi, Gemma.

**GEMMA.** You're up early.

**MIRA.** Habit. I usually go for a run every morning.

**GEMMA.** Not today?

**MIRA.** Nope. Today I went straight for the pastries.

**GEMMA.** You just bring those puppies right over here!

**MIRA.** *(Crosses to the couch and shares the pastries with Gemma.)* If I remember right, Tali isn't much of a cook.

**GEMMA.** She's gotten a little better, but not much.

**MIRA.** You're up early, too.

**GEMMA.** Habit as well. Mothers of four don't get much of a chance to sleep in. It's a luxury, and comes in a limited supply.

**MIRA.** How are my handsome nephews doing?

**GEMMA.** Doin' just fine. Busy as ever. They are all involved in some kind of

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sport, which makes DeWayne so proud.

**MIRA.** They're coming to the wedding, too, right?

**GEMMA.** Sure are. We wouldn't miss it.

**MIRA.** Good.

**GEMMA.** I really am happy that you're getting married, Hon.

**MIRA.** Me too. You'll love Josh. *(Pause.)* You don't happen to know what Tali has planned today, do you?

**GEMMA.** Nope. She wanted it to be a surprise.

**MIRA.** I don't think I can take any more surprises.

**GEMMA.** I know you hated that story last night, and I'm sorry. But her heart is in the right place.

**MIRA.** She just doesn't get it. She doesn't get me.

**GEMMA.** Maybe not. But you don't really get her either, do you?

**MIRA.** No, I don't.

**GEMMA.** Just try to this weekend, okay? Try to go with the flow, no matter where it takes us.

**MIRA.** I don't know what this family would be like without you.

**GEMMA.** I know, I know. I'm a gem. Just like my name.

**MIRA.** Center star in the Northern Crown.

**GEMMA.** I don't know how Daddy convinced Mamma to name us all after stars, but he did. Amazingly, they all kinda fit us, don't ya think?

**MIRA.** They do. You know, Gemma is not only the middle star in the crown, but the brightest too. Some call it the jewel of the night sky.

**GEMMA.** Alright, that's enough.

**MIRA.** It's true! I love looking at that star.

**GEMMA.** What, through your fancy telescope?

**MIRA.** You mean satellite?

**GEMMA.** *(Confused.)* But you said last night--

**MIRA.** I was kidding. Yes, my telescope.

**TALI.** *(Entering.)* Hey, you two.

**GEMMA.** Mornin', Tali. Mira's got pastries!

**TALI.** You do?

**MIRA.** I do. Come have some.

**TALI.** You don't have to tell me twice. *(Tali crosses to the other two and grabs a*

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*pastry.*) Did you both sleep alright?

**GEMMA.** Like a baby.

**MIRA.** Just fine.

**TALI.** Good. Because you're both gonna need it.

**MIRA.** Speaking of which, what's on the agenda?

**TALI.** On account of my game being such a bust last night--

**GEMMA.** Come on now, Tali.

**TALI.** I thought we could forgo any other games... *(Tali crosses to the table and grabs paper and a pen, then returns to her chair.)* ...and help you plan your weddin'!

**GEMMA.** That's a wonderful idea.

**MIRA.** What do you mean?

**TALI.** *(Writes on paper.)* Well, you're getting married in October, right?

**MIRA.** Right.

**TALI.** That doesn't give us much time to plan everything. Have you decided on a location? I'll bet there are some beautiful churches in Pasadena.

**GEMMA.** *(Warning her.)* Tali.

**MIRA.** *(Uncomfortably.)* No church, we're going to have it outside. In a garden.

**GEMMA.** What about colors? I was thinking of --

**MIRA.** *(Interrupting.)* We already have our colors picked out.

**GEMMA.** You do?

**TALI.** What are they?

**MIRA.** Mint and coral.

**TALI.** Really?

**MIRA.** Yes, really.

**TALI.** When did you decide on colors?

**MIRA.** Quite a while ago.

**GEMMA.** But you just got engaged.

**MIRA.** Officially. But we've been talking about marriage for at least a year.

*(Pause.)* I told you both--

**TALI.** No, you sure did not.

**MIRA.** I didn't?

**GEMMA.** We had no idea.

**MIRA.** Oh. Well, yes, we picked out colors.



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**TALI.** Fine. Let's move on to the bridesmaid dresses. There are only certain styles that really look flattering on me.

**GEMMA.** I'm a little picky, too.

**MIRA.** Wait, wait. You both were planning on being bridesmaids?

**TALI.** Of course! You don't have any other sisters besides us, do you?

**MIRA.** No, but--

**TALI.** Then what's the problem?

**MIRA.** It's going to be a very small wedding. Josh is having just one groomsman and I'm having one bridesmaid.

**GEMMA.** Just one? Well, it should be Tali. She's the oldest.

**TALI.** No, Gemma, if she's just gonna have one it should be you.

**MIRA.** I didn't think either of you would want to be.

**TALI.** Why not?

**MIRA.** Well, because we hardly see each other. And our lives are so different...

**TALI.** But we're family.

**MIRA.** I know, and that's why I want you to be there.

**GEMMA.** So, who did you ask?

**MIRA.** One of my friends from work. In fact, she's the one who introduced me to Josh.

**TALI.** *(Tali is quiet for a moment.)* Are there any wedding plans we can help with?

**MIRA.** Josh and I pretty much have it covered. We've already booked hotel rooms for all of you. We'll have a nice, simple ceremony with the reception later that night. Neither of you have to do a thing. It'll be like a vacation for you both. *(Long pause.)* You know what? Why not have two more bridesmaids. Let's go shopping for some dresses today.

**GEMMA.** *(Quickly giving in.)* No, no, don't worry about it, Honey.

**MIRA.** I just didn't think that either of you--

**TALI.** *(Frustrated.)* Forget it. Doesn't matter now.

**MIRA.** *(Lightly.)* You can bring another guest if you'd like! Gemma, I know the boys are coming, but if you would like anyone else to join you...

**GEMMA.** You mean like a date?

**MIRA.** Aren't you dating again? I mean, you've been divorced, what, a year now?

**GEMMA.** I have been makin' appearances in certain social circles, but no one special as of yet. I will say that it did feel good to dump DeWayne's last name, and

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become a Wilmar again.

**MIRA.** And how about you, Tali? The most eligible bachelorette in all of Lubbock, Texas? There's got to be someone you have your eye on.

**TALI.** What, me? I don't think so. I gave up that pipe dream a long time ago.

**GEMMA.** What about Steve?

**MIRA.** Steve who?

**TALI.** Steve nobody.

**GEMMA.** Steve Jackson.

**TALI.** I am not seein' Steve Jackson.

**GEMMA.** Yes, you are!

**TALI.** We have lunch once in a while is all.

**MIRA.** Who's Steve Jackson?

**TALI.** I said, he's nobody.

**GEMMA.** *(To Mira.)* They dated in High School.

**TALI.** We went on one date.

**MIRA.** Why don't I remember him?

**GEMMA.** Because you were only ten when it happened, and Tali made me swear on my life never to tell anyone. But, Honey, it's been long enough, don't you think?

**MIRA.** *(Excited.)* What? What happened?

**TALI.** Now is not the time to be sharing the most humiliating experience of my life.

**MIRA.** Oh, now you've got to tell me, Gemma.

**GEMMA.** It's time to come clean, so to speak.

**TALI.** You tell this story, and I will leave.

**GEMMA.** Oh no, you won't.

**MIRA.** Come on, Tali. Think of it as an early wedding present.

**TALI.** An early wedding present? Really?

**MIRA.** Yes!

**TALI.** *(Reluctantly giving in.)* Fine. Tell the story.

**MIRA.** Thank you.

**TALI.** But hurry it up! The sooner you start talking, the sooner I can get my pride back.

**GEMMA.** Alright. Steve had heard that Tali had a huge crush on him, and he kinda liked her too, so he asked her out on a date. Tali was so excited! Well, being the

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cowboy that he was, Steve thought it would be a really great idea to surprise Tali by taking her 4-wheeling in his brand new, shiny red truck. Tali had no idea that's what they were going to do.

**MIRA.** I thought you liked 4-wheeling?

**TALI.** Not this time.

**GEMMA.** You've heard the old expression "don't spit in the wind," or "you can catch more flies with honey?" What are those things called again?

**MIRA.** Colloquialisms.

**GEMMA.** Right. Well, Tali learned a new one that day. "Never go 4-wheeling with a full bladder."

**MIRA.** Oh no.

**GEMMA.** Oh yeah. Poor thing! She kept telling him to head home, but he really wanted to see what his new truck could do, so he kept hitting those bumps as hard as he could. That leather seat never saw it coming.

**MIRA.** That's hysterical!

**GEMMA.** I know!

**MIRA.** What happened with Steve?

**GEMMA.** He felt so sorry for Tali, on account of it was kinda his fault for not telling her before hand what they were gonna do. He kept trying to ask her out again, but Tali just ignored him.

**TALI.** Of course I did! I was so horrified by what happened...

**GEMMA.** And the truck, well, it was never the same after that.

**MIRA.** How did you meet up again?

**GEMMA.** He's her pharmacist. He got divorced about five years ago, started asking Tali out about three years ago, and they finally had their first date about two months ago.

**MIRA.** Does he ever talk about it?

**TALI.** We try to avoid the subject as much as possible. He does slip in an apology every now and then though.

**MIRA.** Sounds like he really likes you. Maybe another Wilmar wedding is on the horizon.

**TALI.** I don't think so.

**MIRA.** Come on, Tali. Life is too short! *(Tali and Gemma pause uncomfortably.)*

**TALI.** What time is it? *(Looks at watch.)* Holy cow, we gotta get a move on!

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**MIRA.** What for?

**TALI.** Our next bridal shower adventure. Everyone hurry and pack an overnight bag. We gotta get on the road pretty quick.

**GEMMA.** Oooo - a road trip! Where we goin'?

**TALI.** That is a surprise! But I will tell you this, we're takin' the RV!

**MIRA.** Tali, is this a surprise I'm going to enjoy?

**TALI.** You're both gonna love it.

**MIRA.** Are you sure?

**TALI.** Of course I'm sure!

**MIRA.** I'm just a little leery of your surprises.

**TALI.** You gotta trust me, little sister. Anyway, I got the RV stocked up and gassed up.

**MIRA.** How long of a drive are we talking?

**TALI.** Not too long.

**GEMMA.** Will we get cell phone reception where we're headin'? In case the boys need to get a hold of me.

**TALI.** Oh yeah. Come on you two, let's get going.

**MIRA.** I guess a little road trip will be nice. At least it's not to Roswell. *(Looks at Tali who is trying not to give it away.)* It's not to Roswell, is it?

**TALI.** Roswell? No.

**MIRA.** Tali? Where are we going?

**TALI.** I can't say, because it will blow the surprise.

**MIRA.** I don't believe it.

**GEMMA.** Did I miss something?

**MIRA.** We're going to Roswell.

**GEMMA.** We are?

**TALI.** I didn't say that!

**MIRA.** You don't have to.

**GEMMA.** Wait, where are we going?

**MIRA.** I'm not stepping foot onto that RV until you tell me where we are going.

**TALI.** I really don't want to--

**MIRA.** Tali. Are we going to Roswell?

**TALI.** *(Long pause, and then she shows her excitement.)* We're going to Roswell!

**MIRA.** Why? Why would you do that? You know how much I loathe that place!

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**TALI.** Almost as much as you loathe bein' home in Lubbock, I know.

**MIRA.** I don't loathe being here.

**TALI.** Yeah, you do.

**GEMMA.** You kinda do, Sweetie.

**MIRA.** Fine. I hate it here, too.

**GEMMA.** Why do you hate it?

**MIRA.** Oh, I don't know. How flat it is? No, maybe it's the wind that never stops blowing. No! I got it. The never ending supply of dirt and dust in the air.

**TALI.** It does have nice sunsets, though.

**GEMMA.** Sure does.

**MIRA.** Anyway, we aren't talking about Lubbock.

**TALI.** No, we're talkin' about Roswell. Honestly, I just don't think you're giving it a fair shake.

**MIRA.** I don't want to go to Roswell!

**TALI.** This is why I didn't want to say anything.

**MIRA.** If you knew I wasn't going to like it, then why did you plan it anyway?

**TALI.** Because it's not really about the location, right? It's about us bein' together!

**GEMMA.** You might have thought to pick a less controversial spot, though.

**TALI.** Alright, hang on. Let me explain.

**MIRA.** I'm not going...

**TALI.** Let me explain! Twenty years ago Daddy took us all on that road trip to Roswell for the opening of the UFO museum, remember? And do you remember how excited he was about it? Well, that RV park we stayed at is still there. Daddy's not here to walk you down the aisle. But it would be a real nice tribute to him if we could go back to the place he loved so much and spend some time together.

**GEMMA.** *(Pause.)* That's actually a real nice idea.

**MIRA.** Gemma!

**GEMMA.** Well, it is!

**TALI.** Besides, I already paid for the camping spot, Mira.

**MIRA.** I'll reimburse you.

**TALI.** It'll be just like old times.

**MIRA.** I don't want to relive the "old times."

**GEMMA.** Honey, let's just do this. I know it isn't your favorite place, but it was Daddy's.

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**MIRA.** I know it was, but--

**TALI.** Gemma, you think we can bring that cake of yours along?

**GEMMA.** I don't see why not.

**MIRA.** I haven't even agreed to go!

**GEMMA.** You know, I think a road trip is just what this family needs.

**TALI.** I promise, I won't bring Bob.

**MIRA.** Why not? He'd fit right in.

**TALI.** So I can bring him?

**MIRA.** I was kidding.

**TALI.** Oh. Just checkin'.

**GEMMA.** What do you say, Mira?

**MIRA.** *(Long pause.)* Fine. Let's go to Roswell. *(Lights fade as Tali tries to contain her excitement.)*

### SCENE 3

*RV Park in Roswell, New Mexico, later that afternoon. The stage is set with a table only. Gemma and Mira enter carrying camp chairs to set around the table. Gemma also has with her a checkered table cloth.*

**MIRA.** Well, Tali's driving hasn't improved with time.

**GEMMA.** You are so right.

**MIRA.** She doesn't drive large vehicles much, does she?

**GEMMA.** How could you tell?

**MIRA.** Simple deduction. Taking into account both preliminary variables and parametric uncertainties, and also considering disturbance-input and performance-output--

**GEMMA.** Whoa, Whoa, Whoa, there, Sister! You made absolutely no sense just then.

**MIRA.** I didn't even say anything yet.

**GEMMA.** Let's keep it that way. I don't know how you do what you do. All that science talk--

**MIRA.** Engineer talk.

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**GEMMA.** You're real sensitive about that, ain't cha?

**MIRA.** As a matter of fact, yes. Engineers and scientists are two very different kinds of thinkers.

**GEMMA.** What's the difference?

**MIRA.** Honestly? Scientists figure out the why. Why something is the way it is. Engineers don't bother with the why. They take the data given them, and make sense out of it.

**GEMMA.** That sounds kinda fun.

**MIRA.** It is. I love it.

**GEMMA.** So, let me see if I understand this. As a scientist, Josh figures out why, and as an engineer, you figure out... everything else!

**MIRA.** Huh. I never thought of it that way, but, yeah.

**GEMMA.** *(Tali enters as Gemma talks.)* Sounds to me like a match made in heaven.

**MIRA.** Let's just call it a match, alright?

**TALI.** Come on, Mira. There's nothing wrong with your sister saying the word "heaven."

**GEMMA.** *(Changes the subject.)* Everything hooked up?

**TALI.** Yep. It was nice of the park manager to help us out. You know, when I camp I usually just use a tent. I haven't taken the RV out in a while.

**MIRA.** You don't say?

**TALI.** What do you mean by that?

**MIRA.** I'm saying I know just how you felt when you went on your first date with Steve Jackson.

**GEMMA.** *(Redirects the conversation.)* I think I would like to sit at this table here in this lovely RV park and relax for a while. How does that sound?

**MIRA.** Sounds good.

**TALI.** I'll sit in a minute. My legs need to stretch a little. *(Tali looks around.)* Things sure haven't changed much around here.

**GEMMA.** This is the same park we stayed in twenty years ago?

**TALI.** Yep.

**GEMMA.** I don't remember it. Wish I did. They say pregnancy does that to you. They also say you forget more after each kid. After four, I'm lucky I can remember my own name.

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**TALI.** *(To Mira.)* You and Josh gonna have kids?

**MIRA.** Eventually.

**GEMMA.** Have you talked about how many?

**MIRA.** One, maybe two.

**GEMMA.** You gonna wait long?

**MIRA.** Not too long, no.

**TALI.** On account of your biological clock is tickin' away?

**GEMMA.** Tali!

**TALI.** What? Mine's been on snooze for the past twenty years. In fact, I think the power went out on my biological clock during that terrible lightnin' storm 6 years ago and it's been stuck blinking on midnight ever since.

**GEMMA.** Still, you could have a little more tact with your sister.

**MIRA.** Not the most delicate way of wording it Tali, but yes, I want to take advantage of my remaining childbearing years.

**TALI.** I wish I would have had the chance to have kids.

**MIRA.** Come on Tali, you still have time.

**TALI.** No, I don't think that's what God intended for me. *(Mira is uncomfortable at the mention of God.)* Okay little sis, knock it off.

**MIRA.** What?

**TALI.** I'm tired of you squirming every time I mention something religious.

**MIRA.** Quit bringing it up, and I'll quit squirming. You know how I feel about it.

**TALI.** Oh I do. It is forever burned into my memory.

**GEMMA.** Tali, I thought that we were gonna avoid certain subjects.

**MIRA.** It's alright, Gemma. *(Takes a moment.)* I've already apologized for the way I told you both last time I was home.

**TALI.** Well, maybe you need to apologize again.

**MIRA.** You are so unbelievable!

**TALI.** You told us at our father's funeral that you don't believe in God.

**MIRA.** That is not what I said.

**TALI.** That's what I remember.

**MIRA.** Well, you're wrong.

**TALI.** Then what did you say?

**MIRA.** That I didn't know what I believed.

**TALI.** But you were raised--



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**MIRA.** I know how I was raised. Things change, though.

**GEMMA.** What changed, Sweetie?

**MIRA.** Nothing. Never mind.

**TALI.** Typical.

**MIRA.** What do you mean by that?

**TALI.** I mean that every time we are about to have a deep, meaningful conversation, you shut us out.

**MIRA.** That's not true. We talk all the time.

**TALI.** No we don't. And especially not about the real nitty gritty stuff. Safe stuff. "How was your day?" "Fine." "How was yours?"

**GEMMA.** Tali's got a point, Hon. You do kinda keep us at a distance. Almost like you have to protect yourself from us.

**MIRA.** Not from you.

**TALI.** From me?

**MIRA.** (*Exasperated.*) NO! Not you either.

**GEMMA.** Then what? (*Mira is quiet.*) You know, it seems to me that this all started when you were about eleven, when Mamma was, declining.

**MIRA.** That was almost twenty-five years ago.

**GEMMA.** I know. It was also when you and Tali started fightin' like cats and dogs.

**MIRA.** We were fighting long before Mamma got sick.

**GEMMA.** No, Sweetie. You used to practically worship your big sis.

**MIRA.** What are you talking about?

**GEMMA.** She was always, and I mean, ALWAYS watchin' out for you. Daddy picked the perfect star to name her after. Talitha Borealis: the compassionate healer.

**TALI.** Lookin' back, I don't think I was very compassionate after Mamma died. I kinda tried to take over for her.

**MIRA.** Yes. You did. The problem was, I didn't need another mother. I needed a sister. My big sister. I needed you to be just you.

**TALI.** I didn't realize that at the time.

**MIRA.** Of course you didn't. You never asked. You just barked out orders, and rules, and punishments. I couldn't talk to you anymore! And I certainly couldn't talk to God.

**TALI.** Is that where all of this came from? Why you stopped believing?

**MIRA.** I don't want to talk about this anymore.

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**TALI.** Come on! We're actually getting somewhere!

**MIRA.** Stop pushing me, Tali.

**TALI.** I not trying to push you, I just want you to open up!

**MIRA.** (*Exploding.*) What do you want me to say? Ok, fine. I used to pray. I used to believe in God. But that was before Mom died. I couldn't understand why an eleven-year old had to lose her mother. I kept looking up at the sky for some kind of sign that she was still there, still watching over me. And you know what? I saw nothing. I saw no sign of life, of Mom, of God. Nothing.

**TALI.** Just because you can't see something doesn't mean it's not there.

**MIRA.** Once something is gone, it's gone. You can't get it back.

**TALI.** Funny, that sounds exactly like what you said at Daddy's funeral.

**GEMMA.** (*Calmly.*) I think it's my turn to chime in here, if ya'll don't mind.

(*Pause.*) Mira, we all went through a terrible ordeal. Losing a parent at such a young age isn't something you get over. You learn to live with it, sure, but you don't ever get over it. Now, I don't pretend to understand everything about religion. I've had doubts myself on occasion.

**TALI.** Not you too, Gemma!

**GEMMA.** But one thing I've come to believe is that there has to be something greater out there. I mean, just look at the Grand Canyon! Something that breathtaking doesn't happen on it's own, I tell you what. I don't have to see you every day to know that I love you, and to know that I'll see you again. Maybe it's the same with Mamma and Daddy. (*Everyone is quiet.*) So, is anyone else hungry besides me?

**MIRA.** Gemma, why do you always do that?

**GEMMA.** Do what?

**MIRA.** Change the subject!

**GEMMA.** You weren't saying anything.

**MIRA.** I was thinking!

**GEMMA.** Well, I was uncomfortable!

**MIRA.** I had more to say!

**GEMMA.** So, go ahead. Nobody's stopping you.

**MIRA.** (*Thinking.*) I can't remember what we were talking about.

**TALI.** You were mad at Gemma for always changing the subject.

**MIRA.** That's right!

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**GEMMA.** Why?

**MIRA.** Because it drives me crazy!

**TALI.** She can't stand it when we fight. She especially can't stand awkward silences.

**MIRA.** I know!

**GEMMA.** Hey! Hold up right there. I thought you both appreciated it when I played the peacemaker.

**TALI.** Most of the time, yeah.

**GEMMA.** What I was going to say...

**MIRA.** There you go again!

**GEMMA.** What?

**MIRA.** Changing the subject!

**GEMMA.** Because I'm hungry and I would really like to eat something. Would that be alright with everyone?

**TALI.** *(Pause.)* Yeah, I'm kinda hungry.

**MIRA.** Me too.

**GEMMA.** I swear! You kids are drivin' me crazy!

**TALI.** I just have one more question to ask Mira...

**GEMMA.** Here we go...

**TALI.** Why don't you believe in aliens?

**MIRA.** *(Tries to remain calm.)* Tali, let me be clear. I do believe that life exists on other planets.

**TALI.** You do? I knew coming here was the right idea!

**MIRA.** *(Loud.)* However, I do NOT believe in extra terrestrial visitations.

**TALI.** Shhh! Are you crazy? You can't say a thing like that here in Roswell!

**MIRA.** *(Even louder.)* Aliens have not visited our planet. I mean, the thought of it is laughable.

**TALI.** Then you are laughing in the face of our daddy.

**GEMMA.** She is not. She's voicing her opinion.

**TALI.** Do you agree with her?

**GEMMA.** Well, now, I'm not quite sure. I believe that he and Granddaddy saw something. What it was, though, I don't rightly know.

**TALI.** *(Pouting.)* I know exactly what it was.

**MIRA.** You do not.

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**TALI.** It was a flying object in the sky. The unidentified kind. In other words, a UFO.

**GEMMA.** Hey you two. Remember how we were going to get ready for dinner? And before anyone jumps down my throat, yes, I did just change the subject.

**MIRA.** You don't always have to intervene when Tali and I are arguing.

**GEMMA.** Yes, I do. I sure do. I may not have been able to keep the family I created together on account of my no good ex-husband, but I sure as hellfire am goin' to do everything in my power to keep us together. Now, I am ready for dinner. Tali, what is on the menu?

**TALI.** Pork and beans.

**MIRA.** What?

**TALI.** It's what we ate twenty years ago here in this RV park. Daddy cooked it himself.

**MIRA.** You remember the menu?

**TALI.** I remember a lot of things about that trip.

**GEMMA.** I don't know if I can stomach that tonight.

**MIRA.** Let's go into town. I'll buy.

**TALI.** You can't buy! It's your bridal shower.

**MIRA.** Oh no. I've been to bridal showers. This little trip of ours doesn't resemble one in the slightest.

**TALI.** But the RV. I just got everything hooked up!

**MIRA.** We'll hook it all back up when we're done.

**TALI.** What if the manager's gone by then? Who's gonna help us?

**MIRA.** I'm an Aerospace Engineer. I build telescopes. I think I can plug in an RV. *(Mira starts to exit.)* Come on, old ladies. Let's move. *(Mira is off.)*

**TALI.** Did she just call us old?

**GEMMA.** That she did.

**TALI.** I don't know if I should be offended by that or not.

**GEMMA.** Why not? You've gotten offended by everything else she's said since she got here. *(Lowers her voice.)* And I am getting tired of waiting. Are you going to tell her, or not?

**TALI.** *(Defensively.)* I am! I will!

**GEMMA.** What are you waitin' for?

**TALI.** I haven't found the right moment. Besides, I don't want it to ruin our trip.

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**GEMMA.** I can't believe you just said that.

**TALI.** She only comes home once every few years, and I don't want her miserable the whole time she's here.

**GEMMA.** And just where have you been the past twenty-four hours?

**TALI.** I will tell her. Just give me a little more time.

**GEMMA.** You've got until we go to bed tonight. After that, I'm talkin'. (*Gemma stands up to exit. Tali doesn't move.*) What's the matter now?

**TALI.** I don't want her feelin' sorry for me.

**GEMMA.** She's gonna feel that regardless.

**TALI.** Then she'll feel obligated to help me, and that's the last thing I want.

**GEMMA.** I don't think you're giving our sister enough credit.

**TALI.** Maybe not. I just wish... (*Pause.*) I wish she could believe.

**GEMMA.** Nothing is goin' to convince her that little green men crash-landed here.

**TALI.** Not that. I wish she could believe in what comes next.

**GEMMA.** (*Pause.*) Come on, you. Let's help Mira with the RV so we don't have to eat your pork and beans.

**TALI.** They're good!

**GEMMA.** (*Grabs Tali's hand and pulls her up.*) No more whinin'. Up you get.

**TALI.** (*Rising.*) I do not whine.

**GEMMA.** Oh yes, you do.

**TALI.** I do not! I may pout a little, but I don't whine. (*Both exit.*)

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