

Can we go home now?

A system lite SF/Horror/Action RPG scenario for 4 -6 players

A group of young children wake up in the middle of the night to find that they're not in their beds. In fact, they're not in their houses at all. They're in a strange looking room, and there are other children - children they don't recognise - all around them...

GM's Summary

This scenario deals with 3 groups of characters, and their interactions over the course of an evening. Initially, the players play a group of children who have been abducted by aliens. They play through waking up, investigating their surroundings, and reacting to an attack on the ship they are in. They will then play through the scenario again, in a shortened form, as the abducting aliens. Finally, there is a short, violent segment where the players portray the attacking aliens. This last segment will involve much dice rolling, killing of former PCs, and general mayhem. The first section of the game, where the PCs are human children, can stand alone as a short scenario.

System

In all tasks, the players must roll a number of d6, and try to get a higher total score than either their opponent or a target difficulty set by the GM. Some items or skills will give a bonus to that roll. Broadly speaking, when playing the child characters, players roll one die, when playing a Largonian they roll two, and when playing a Moolarbo they roll four dice. Special abilities and items will provide bonuses on top of that base roll.

<u>GM'S SUMMARY</u>	<u>1</u>
SYSTEM	1
BACKGROUND OVERVIEW	3
ULAN'S EXPERIMENT	3
<u>PART ONE – LOST CHILDREN</u>	<u>4</u>
OPENING SCENE - THE HOLDING BAY	4
THE EXPERIMENTAL CHAMBER	5
ENCOUNTER WITH ULAN	6
MOOLARBOS ATTACK	7
TEDDY BEARS GONE MAD	7
THE COMMAND DECK	8
ESCAPE	9
MILK AND COOKIES	9
<u>PART TWO - LARGONIAN SECURITY</u>	<u>9</u>
THE SITUATION	9
GOALS:	10
OBSTACLES:	10
<u>PART THREE – MOOLARBO ATTACK</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>ALTERNATE OPTIONS</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>CHARACTER SHEETS</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>MAP</u>	<u>15</u>

Background Overview

A large number of children have been abducted by a group of aliens called Largonians. The Largonians are not malevolent - in fact they have permits from most of the major governments of Earth, and Galactic Police Experimentation Licences. They regularly abduct people, perform non-intrusive experiments on them, wipe their memories if necessary, and put them back. Occasionally things go a little wrong, and stories end up in the media, but the Galactic Police, with the cooperation of Earth's dominant governments, covers up most of these stories.



The children abducted tonight were picked up at 12:30am, taken quietly from their beds. The plan is to return them before their parents wake up, at around 5am. In the mean time, the Largonians on board will conduct a series of tests and experiments, mostly physical, on the children. The ship is called the Zenthar. It is a High School ship, and most of the aliens on board are students. This is their mid-term exam in xenobiology and experimental procedure.

Ulan's Experiment

An enterprising young Largonian called Ulan has decided to perform a psychological experiment on a group of Earth children. He has arranged for them to wake up at approximately 1am, in the main holding chamber. He will observe them via concealed cameras, and record their actions. He will also attempt to communicate with them without the aid of any translation devices. Given that Largonians resemble giant, 12 foot tall praying-mantis like bugs, and are unable of replicating human speech, communicating instead through clicks, chirps and gestures, this will prove challenging to say the least. As a safety measure, the Largonian ship is currently filled with an approximation of Earth air - the children will be able to breathe without difficulty (though there is a strange odour in the air). The Largonians are capable of going for extended periods without breathing (up to 2 hours), and have access to air-locks and gas masks when needed.

The children are, unfortunately for Ulan, not normal Earth children. None of the children remember their secrets at first (due to the drugs they've been knocked out with), but they are the Goblin King's child, a reincarnated Galactic Police officer, a ninja, a robot, and a conspiracy nut who has accidentally gotten engaged to an alien in a chat room. The optional character is the conspiracy theorist's annoying younger sibling, who is secretly possessed by a guardian angel. All the player characters have

been given gender neutral names, so any desired mix of male/female characters can be produced.

Before the game starts, hand out the character sheets and allow the players to read them. Be sure to keep hold of the 'secret' sections of the sheets, as they should be handed out later in the game. If you are able to provide or ask players to bring props, they may add to the atmosphere of the game. Pyjamas, blankies, teddy bears, and a miniature screwdriver set would all be appropriate.

Part One – Lost Children

Opening Scene - The Holding Bay

Box text has been provided as a quick start to each scene. GMs are encouraged to modify and embellish as they see fit.

You wake up groggily, in the middle of the night. The bed on which you are lying is harder than your usual bed, and you don't have any blankets over you. You sit up slowly, and look around, and you realise with horror that you are not in your bedroom any more. You are in a strange grey room, with soft light coming from the high ceiling. You're lying on a flat, slightly spongy table that's about 6 feet up off the ground. Looking around you can see other kids on tables around you - 6 in total. They're waking up too. You're still in your jim-jams, but you're definitely not in your bed any more...

The PCs wake up in the middle of the night to find that they're not in their beds. In fact, they're not in their houses at all. They're in a grey room, thirty feet across, with a 15 foot high ceiling. There are 5 other children - children they don't recognise - all around them on very tall tables. As the PCs wake up, have them describe themselves, and what actions they take.

This scene is likely to involve crying, confusion, and possibly speculation or blaming. Try to encourage players to roleplay their characters' reactions to the situation as fully as possible.

Once a suitable period of reaction has taken place, players should be encouraged to begin investigating their surroundings. Ulan is patient, so they'll have over an hour to wait before anything will happen.

There are 6 padded tables in the room, each with a child lying on it. If the kids look around from their vantage point on top of the tables they will see that there are kids on the other 5 tables. The tables are too far apart to jump from one to the other, and are about 6 feet high. Once the kids climb down onto the cold, shiny ground, they cannot see what's on top of each table.

There are 2 doors out of this room, but one is locked and cannot be opened. The other door opens automatically as the PCs approach. Through the doorway is another similar sized chamber.

The Experimental Chamber

You pass through the automatic doors, into a similar sized chamber to the last one you were in. It's creepy in here - the same dim light, the same grey walls. There are big tables in here too, but they look different. There are tubes and stuff coming out of them, and there are some big trolleys between the tables. The walls have giant cabinets with glass fronts, and you can see some sort of jars or bottles inside. The air has a funny taste to it - like the cleaning stuff they use at school when someone's sick on the carpet. There's a quiet sort of humming noise in the background too.

Ulan has arranged for this room to be empty of Largonians during his experiment. There are six tables in this room, and several cabinets. The tables are approximately twice the height of an average Earth table. From the side, they appear to have nothing on them. The kids will have to help each other climb up in order to see what's on top. This should encourage cooperation.

The cabinets are also very tall (11 feet high) and have windows across their fronts, though the glass is very murky and difficult to see through. Inside the cabinets, it is possible to make out strange metallic shapes – perhaps tools of some kind? The cabinets are stuck shut, with no obvious locks or opening mechanisms. The ‘glass’ panels in the doors of the cabinet are shatter proof – it would take a very strong force to break into them. The only person in the group capable of breaking in is the robot, once its survival memory kicks in. It could burn its way into the cabinets, gaining access to the medical equipment inside. The tables are flat and mostly featureless, though they do have small channels running around their edges, with drains at the foot of the tables. They are very slightly inclined. Between the two rows of tables, there are two supply trolleys.

There are a total of 4 hypodermic guns with huge handles (small needles) and 2 large U-shaped cold metal devices with big switches on the inside (alien stun-guns) on the supply trolleys. There are also 3 laser scalpels, which resemble spears to the children, with a button on one side. There are also things like giant clipboards, with funny symbols written on them. If Kelly looks at these, he/she will be able to recognise them as alien writing. He/she will also be able to decode part of the writing - it is medical information about the height, weight, blood pressure and heart rate of the children. If Kelly spends a long time studying the charts, he/she will

realise that Sam weighs almost twice as much as anyone else, despite being the same size.

The stun guns and laser scalpels are quite dangerous, if the children work out how to operate them. They are capable of severing limbs, in the case of the scalpels, and of knocking a human or Largonian unconscious for several minutes. **Stun Gun** - add an extra die to any attack. If you are successful, the victim is stunned for 1d3 minutes. **Laser Scalpel** - difficult to use, this powerful weapon adds 2d6 to your roll when attacking someone. If your attack succeeds, some part of the victim will be disfigured or severed. The exact effects of this are left to the GM's discretion.

This is one area where Ulan will not score well on his assessment - it is far too dangerous to leave such tools lying around where children can find them. Unfortunately for Ulan and the kids, the attention of the teachers on board the ship is going to be drawn elsewhere very soon.

Encounter with Ulan

The door at the far end of the chamber hisses quietly as it opens. It is dark outside, but framed in the darkness of the doorway is a shape - a glistening, insectoid shape that sways gently, then begins to step into the room. It is tall, almost twice as tall as a grown-up, with spindly legs, and huge pincers, and black, emotionless eyes. It's like a giant praying mantis, with shiny chitinous armour covering its thin body. It begins to click and chitter at you, waving its huge claws in the air and occasionally lifting one of its supporting legs...

Once the PCs have thoroughly investigated the Experimental Chamber, Ulan will enter and attempt to interact with them. He is an eleven foot tall, chitinous creature with enormous black eyes. He makes clicking noises, and waves his huge pincers around in the air. He is probably very scary for the children, and they may well run away. If his gestures are incomprehensible to them, Ulan will pick up a clipboard and write them a message (in Largonian, which Kelly can read - hand the player their secret memory). The message is "hello Earthlings, I mean you no harm."

Ulan will do his best to communicate with the PCs. He wants to ask them questions about where they think they are, and who they think he is. He also wants to ask them if the air tastes right. He will record their answers on his clipboard, and offer them a cup of Largonian Tea (a bitter drink which, whilst not poisonous for humans, is nonetheless very unpleasant to drink).

It is likely that Ulan's arrival will cause either expository dialogue, translated by Kelly, or a fight. Either way, it will be cut short by the following event.

Moolarbos Attack

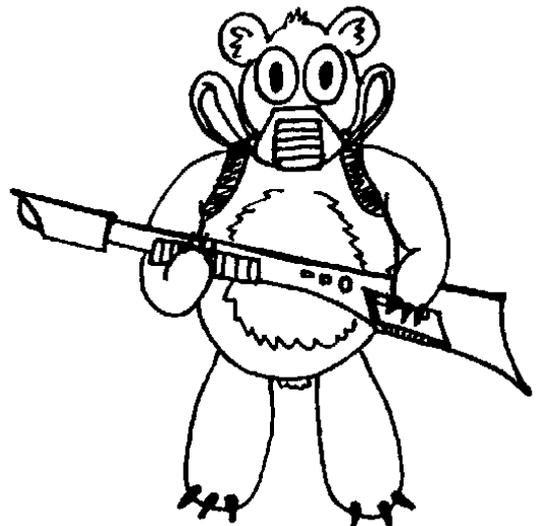
A shudder runs through the floor, and you hear the creaking moan of tearing metal. The giant bug creature turns and lopes out of the room at break-neck speed, and you hear a very high pitched, yet strangely gentle siren sounding out in the corridor. There's a hissing sound, and the air begins to grow increasingly bitter in this room. It's fresher out by the corridor...

It's time for the PCs to move out. The air in the experimental chamber will start to go bad, as the damage to the ship from an alien attack causes a malfunction in the life support systems. Give the PCs some time to choose what to do, then have Ulan return. He has a device like a trumpet, which is a communication tool. He will begin talking with the player characters in rushed, breathless sentences. He's a nice guy, and he wants them to be safe, so he does everything he can to get them to safety. Safety to him is the command deck, where they can try to get to a shuttle to take them home. You may wish to hand out further secret memories here.

Teddy Bears Gone Mad

You emerge into the corridor, as smoke begins to curl around your feet. The lights are flickering, and in the distance you see a figure striding towards you. It's about your height, but very round, and kind of fluffy. As it emerges from a cloud of smoke, you see that it's a cuddly giant teddy bear! It has a breathing mask on, and is carrying some sort of gun. As it approaches, a big bug guy comes out of a door carrying a tray with lots of glass vials on it. The teddy bear looks at him, raises the gun, and fires. You could swear you heard it laughing as it killed the bug guy...

The Moolarbos are an aggressive race of warriors, who happen to look like giant teddy bears. This is an unauthorised raid by a bunch of teenage Moolarbos. They are hoping to provoke the peace loving Largonians into a war. Their plan is to blow up as much stuff as possible, steal the plans for the ship, and then rig the guidance systems to crash the ship into the Earth. They're not very nice. Moolarbos always roll at least 3 dice in combat - more if circumstances favour them.



This section should have the feel of a chase, with Moolarbos on the PCs' tail at every turn. Ask the PCs for rolls to succeed in evading shots or clambering over obstacles - failure can result in injury, loss of precious items like blankies, and the deaths of innocent Largonian bystanders. The PCs themselves should not be killed, but there are lots of ways for them to suffer if lady luck does not

favour them. If they try to stand and fight, overwhelming numbers will force them back. There is only one effective way to retreat: ultimately the children will reach the Command Deck - in whatever state of distress.

This is a good sequence in which to introduce the remaining secret memories to the PCs.

The Command Deck

When the PCs reach the command deck, they will have some breathing space. The command deck is heavily fortified, and well defended. There is an important choice for the PCs to make whilst on the command deck - one which will have big consequences.

A large, particularly dark skinned alien stands in front of you, with an impressive sash draped around its neck. It takes the speaking trumpet from Ulan, raises it to its mouth-parts, and begins to talk. "Younglings, I am glad to see that you are safe. As you can see from the view-screens, we are under attack. We want you to make an appeal to the commander of the enemy ship, explain who you are and what's going on. Perhaps, if they knew innocent children were on board..."

The commander of the ship, a Largonian called Cluefit, knows what is going on. He knows that the PCs are innocent children, he knows what the Moolarbos are doing, and he knows that the PCs may be their only hope. He hopes that the children's pleas may save his ship, though he does not think it is likely.

The captain of the Moolarbo ship is a gruff bear called Rupert. He is young, only a teenager himself. He has long wanted to avenge the deaths of his grandparents, who died in the Apex uprising fifty years ago. Peace has been enforced by the Galactic Police, but he and his shipmates no longer care. They are out for blood, and don't care who gets hurt in the cross-fire. Rupert will apologize gruffly to the kids, but his heart is cold and stony, and he has no mercy.

Cluefit also knows that a Moolarbo droid has placed a device deep in the core of the ship, which has disabled its self-repair systems. As long as that device is in place, the ship is doomed. Unfortunately the access path is bot-sized, and all the bots are inoperative. A human child could fit down the tube, and could remove or destroy the device, but it would be risky. Even if the attack stops (which is not likely), the ship is still doomed unless the PCs help.

Cluefit does not want to risk the lives of innocent people, so he will present the PCs with a choice: flee in an escape pod and take their chances, or stay and try to save the ship.

If the PCs stay and try to save the ship, they will need to overcome 3 obstacles - defeat a defence droid (target number 7), disable the device (target number 9) and escape the reactor core (difficulty 6). Many of the PCs special abilities will help with this, so it should be a bit of a challenge, but not impossible.

Escape

There are escape pods which the PCs can get into. As they approach, they will see 2 droids attempting to get into an escape pod. They are having trouble with the opening mechanism. One is a golden android, the other is a trashcan-tripod droid. They are very polite to the PCs, but are single-minded in their goal of getting into an escape pod and off the ship.

Milk and Cookies

The PCs should be able to make it off the ship, if they are determined. This can be done using their individual skills, or using an escape pod. They will see the Moolarbo ship, which looks oddly like a giant chocolate-chip cookie, floating beside the Largonian flying saucer. Explosions and laser fire light up the blackness of space. If the PCs have helped, the Largonian ship will hold together long enough for the Galactic Police to arrive, like Men in Black, and start kicking ass and taking names. If they refused to help, they will see the Largonian ship start to list, then plummet through the atmosphere and crash into the Earth, dangerously close to (or on top of) their home town.

PCs who saved the day will be reunited with their parents, in front of cameras, in a Weekly World News exclusive. PCs who did not save the day will end the game floating in space, slowly dropping toward Earth, surrounded by wreckage.

Part Two - Largonian Security

In this segment, the players play through a short action based scenario of perhaps 20 to 30 minutes in duration. It is a tactical mission to save their ship, and the human test subjects on board. You may wish to use miniatures for this section, and a more rigorous combat system such as d20 or White Wolf's storyteller system.

The Situation

A group of Largonian security officers are in the staff room of the ship enjoying a cold tea, when an alarm goes off - the ship is under attack!

It's a pretty ordinary Wednesday. You're reclining on your leaf-like sofas in the ship's staff room, when a piercing alarm goes off. Seconds later, the ship rocks as something collides with you. Chief of security Klator's face appears on the com-screen, his mandibles clicking fiercely. "All security personnel, this is not a drill. I repeat, this is not a drill. We are under attack! You must get the Earth children to safety, and do everything you can to save the ship. You are authorised to use any means necessary to preserve life. Oh god, they're coming, I'll hold them off as long as I can..."

The screen flickers, and a blast of energy rips across the room where Klator was just standing. You hear the tearing of metal and the thud of a blow against carapace, then the screen goes black. Out in the hall, you hear a hissing noise, and the door slides open, revealing flickering light and the distant sound of commotion.

Goals:

- Save the lives of the children, at all costs.
- Protect the ship - try to repel the invaders
- Seal off the command deck to prevent alien takeover

Obstacles:

- Gun wielding Moolarbos
- The need to repair the hull
- Moolarbos going for the munitions store!
- Crying children (other than the PCs) who need to be herded into escape pods

This section should be stressful, and should emphasise the responsibility that these security agents feel. They are grown up Largonians on a teen-ship, under unexpected attack, with Earth children to protect. It should be a tense section, where the players get to see just how high the stakes of the attack are. Children may die, many Largonians will be injured and killed, the ship will be in significant danger. Players get to roll 2 dice as Largonians, and can gain bonuses for acts of heroism or using the environment in clever ways.

Part Three – Moolarbo Attack

Lastly, the players will have a chance to experience the attack from the Moolarbo point of view. This will be a brief bloodbath, ending in defeat at the hands of the Galactic Police. Whether the Largonian ship is destroyed will depend on the prior actions of the PCs.

Your furry paws grip tight to your blaster rifles as you slip the breathing apparatus over your mouth. Glancing around in the dim red lighting of the ship, you see your fellow Moolarbos tensed for combat. You can feel your fur tingling in anticipation. The captain strides into the room, and begins talking in a low, gruff growl.

“Well boys, this is it. We’re far enough from home that the damn Galactic Police shouldn’t get a chance to interfere. Like you, I’m sick of living in poverty while those damn Largonians live it up in their fancy ships. They ripped the heart out of our planet, and got nothing more than a slap on the claw from the Galactic tribunal. My grandparents, they were killed in a peaceful protest. You all know the pain we’ve suffered – it’s time to make it right. It’s time to take back the pride of the Moolarbo people. Are you with me?”

The ship decloaks and fires a breach-barb into the side of the Largonian ship. The breach tunnel opens, and you rush forward, ready to kill. It’s time for some revenge.

Mayhem and madness ensues. Moolarbos roll 3 dice in all conflicts, and their weapons are entirely lethal.

Alternate Options

Enterprising GMs may wish to mix up the structure of the game a little. Running the first part as written, up to the Moolarbo attack, then changing to Largonian characters for the chase scene, then switching to Moolarbos for the attack, then back to the children would provide an interesting multiple points of view approach. There may be merit in this.

Character Sheets

Character sheets are given first, followed by secrets for each character. Give out the character sheets at the start of the game, then give out the secrets as seems fitting (towards the end of the first part of the scenario).

Alex Appleby (8 years old)

You live in a big house with your mother and your step-dad Steve. Steve is really nice, but he's not as cool as your real dad, David. You're a pretty excitable kid - you get really hyper at Christmas, your Birthday, or any other special occasion. You have lots of energy and lots of bounce. You started doing gymnastics when you were 4, so you are pretty bouncy and bendy. You are afraid of spiders, but you pretend not to be. You get a + 2 bonus to any roll involving jumping or gymnastics.

Kim Swanson (9 years old)

You're energetic and adventurous. You have an annoying younger brother called Tim, who you tend to ignore or avoid as often as possible. Your parents are pretty cool - they let you do most of the things you want to, and they don't stress out too much if you're out a little later than you expected to be. You're really good with gadgets and machines - you can even program a VCR! You also love running, jumping, climbing trees sort of games. You get a + 2 bonus to any rolls involving technology.

Yooto Nakamura (8 years old)

You are a Japanese-American kid. Your parents are from Okinawa, and they came to America years before you were born. They still speak Japanese sometimes, and you can speak a little Japanese. Actually, you're pretty good at languages in general. You're a fast learner, and you like to read about all sorts of stuff. You particularly like Noam Chomsky's theories about a Language Acquisition Device. You also love to build and pull apart machines. You always carry a screwdriver set and some tiny needle-nose pliers with you - you even have a special pocket for them in your pyjamas. When it comes to stressful situations, you're a pretty cool customer, except for that one time when you started shrieking, and shaking, and you collapsed on the floor. You saw a big spider, and you were pretty scared - you don't think there was any shame in it. You get a + 2 bonus to any roll when you are being brave.

Sam Callahan (8 years old)

You are a very helpful, happy, charming kid. You really like your mummy and daddy, and you help out doing the dishes and cleaning up your room whenever possible. You're quite level-headed, and you like to think about the consequences of your actions. You are also very brave, and like to look after others. You get a + 2 bonus to any roll where you are being sensible.

Kelly Wood (9 years old)

You are easily the smartest kid in your school. The others don't even begin to comprehend the mysteries of the universe. You know *so much*, sometimes it hurts to even think. For example, you know that aliens are real. You intercepted transmissions (and you think you've decoded them), and you've seen strange lights in the sky! You also saw Bigfoot one time, but nobody believes you! It's all true - the pyramids, the Nazca lines, cow lips, Area 51, all of it. Why will no one listen! You get a + 2 bonus to any roll if you are acting paranoid.

Alex's Secret: Your true father is the Goblin King. He occasionally visits you late at night with his goblin servants, and they sing songs to you. The Goblin King is not ugly, like his goblins. He is a magical King, and his existence is secret. You have sworn never to tell anyone about your father - if you do, even though he loves you, he will turn you into a goblin!

Alex's Special Skill - you have a psychic connection with your real father. If you concentrate really hard, and call out to him, he can hear you. He has sometimes come to help you when you called, racing to your house in the dead of night when you were being attacked by spiders. When you call him, you have to speak out loud whilst concentrating on sending the words to him.

Kim's Secret: You are actually a member of the Galactic Police. You are 87 years old. Your body was horribly mangled in a fire, but your brain was completely intact. The surgeons scanned your brain, cloned a new body for you, planted a chip in your head to program your brain. You are growing into your memories at a slow rate, skills first. This means that up till now you've been a pretty normal, if highly skilled kid. A self-defence mechanism has just kicked in, downloading a huge chunk of memory into your head in an attempt to keep you safe. You feel a little woozy, and find it hard to stand still. You now remember most of your prior life as a Galactic Police Operative. This ship is a Largonian vessel - the Largonians are an insectoid race, peaceful but inquisitive. They have licences to allow them to experiment on humans. The teddy-bear looking creatures are called Moolarbos, and they are a noble warrior race. There is an ancient rivalry between the Moolarbos and the Largonians, but a precarious peace treaty has existed between them for the past 50 years.

There have to be escape pods on board somewhere. You know that you could fly one to safety, if you can just get these kids to follow you.

If you have any questions about things you may or may not know, please ask the GM discreetly.

Yooto's Secret: Your parents are not really grocery store owners. Well, they are, but they are also secretly the heads of a powerful ninja clan. You have been trained in the martial arts, and you are capable of deadly attacks. You even know the terrible Vibrating Death Palm technique, though you have never tried it out. In theory, it works though...

Sam's Secret: You are an information gathering robot, working for B.O.G.D.O.R., a secretive organisation. Your mission is to record evidence of the existence of aliens, and their interaction with humans. You are to record as much visual and aural data as possible, without endangering yourself or jeopardising your ability to make it back to base. Your real mother and father, Dr Kent and Dr Osborne, take great care of you. They're always giving you upgrades (like the super-heat-cutters in your fingers and the booster jets in your feet), and talking to you just like you're their real child. You can't wait to get back to them with all the great alien stuff you've recorded - they'll be so happy!

Sam's Special Skills: You are very, very tough. You can fly using booster jets in your feet (these work best outdoors, and will work outside the earth's atmosphere). You have super arc-welder cutting tools in your fingertips. You have a photographic memory (it takes a few seconds to access it, though).

Kelly's Secret: You have been impersonating an alien on an inter-galactic chat line. You weren't really sure what you were saying until now, but seeing this alien write, you think you may have gotten engaged to an alien. The phrase, "Tall, dark and shiny," has a whole new meaning in light of what you've just seen. Some of the symbols are hard to interpret, and hard to fake on an Earth PC. This alien's name is Ulan, and it claims to come in peace. You think you would make an excellent ambassador and spokesperson to deal with the aliens.

Map

