

The Day the Earth Stood Still

Adapted by

John F. Barber

From the radio script by
Milton Geiger

for

The Lux Radio Theatre, 4 Jan. 1954

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Final Draft

Re-Imagined Radio (reimaginedradio.net)

The Day the Earth Stood Still
an episode of
Re-Imagined Radio

Adapted from
The Lux Radio Theatre performance
4 Jan. 1954

Synopsis

A humanoid space alien and a giant robot arrive in Washington, DC, via flying saucer, and give humankind an ultimatum: live peacefully or be destroyed as a danger to other planets.

Original Story

Bates, Harry. "Farewell to the Master." *Astounding Science Fiction*, 1940.

Original Movie Adaptation

The Day the Earth Stood Still, Twentieth-Century Fox, 1951.

Starring Michael Rennie as Klaatu and Patricia Neal as Helen Benson.

Original Radio Adaptation

Lux Radio Theatre, 4 Jan. 1954.

Starred Michael Rennie as Klaatu and Jean Peters as Helen Benson.

Works Cited

Edelson, Edward. *Visions of Tomorrow: Great Science Fiction from the Movies*. New York: Doubleday, 1975.

Billips, Connie and Arthur Pierce. *Lux Presents Hollywood: A Show-by-Show History of the Lux Radio Theatre and the Lux Video Theatre, 1934-1957*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1995.

Color Code

SFX, sound effect(s), either pre-recorded or created for episode. Pre-recorded audio is used as content in this episode.

~~Magenta highlighted text with strike through~~ was deleted for episode timing

MUSIC, pre-recorded

MUSIC, bespoke, to be created for this episode

COLD OPEN

SFX: SAMPLE FROM EPISODE

SFX: CROWD MURMURS ... OUT WITH--

KLAATU

(SLIGHT ECHO, A SPEECH) ~~You people of Earth! You men of science. You are here from all over your world -- Europe, Asia -- representing many nations, many ideas. I am leaving soon. You will forgive me if I speak bluntly. The universe grows smaller every day. Where I come from, we believe there must be security for all -- or no one is secure. This does not mean giving up any freedom except the freedom to act irresponsibly. This is the message that I ask you to take back when you return to your native lands. Tell your people and your governments that we have created a race of robots whose function it is to patrol the planets in spaceships and preserve the peace. At the first sign of treachery, they will act automatically. Nothing you have here on Earth can stop them. The penalty for provoking their action is too terrible to risk.~~

SFX: CROWD MURMURS ... OUT WITH--

KLAATU

Your choice is simple. Live in peace or perish in violence. We shall be waiting for your answer. The decision rests with you.

MUSIC: RIR THEME, FADE UP UNDER PREVIOUS, ESTABLISH, THEN OUT

SFX: RECORDED ANNOUNCER

INTRODUCTION

ANNOUNCER

Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio, a program about radio storytelling. I'm Jack Armstrong. With each episode we combine dialogue, sound effects, and music to engage your listening imagination. This episode is no different, and here to tell you about it is John Barber, producer and host.

HOST OPEN

HOST

Thank you Jack. Hello everyone. Welcome.

As Jack told you, Re-Imagined Radio is a program about radio storytelling. This episode is based on the story "Farewell to the Master" by American science fiction writer and editor Harry Bates, and published in the October 1940 issue of *Astounding Science Fiction*.

That story was adapted by Edmund H. North into the 1951 movie *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, starring Micheal Rennie and Patricia Neal.

The movie story retained the flying saucer, alien in human form, and 8-foot-tall metal robot introduced by Bates. These were themes common to science fiction literature. To them North added Cold War paranoia about invasion (Edelson 1) and concerns about world destruction from nuclear war using "intercontinental missiles armed with hydrogen bombs" (Edelson 51).

The movie ~~was serious science fiction~~ and created an impression on public consciousness. So much so that just three years later, January 4, 1954, Lux Radio Theatre offered a radio adaptation by Milton Geiger, starring Michael Rennie and Jean Peters.

Re-Imagined Radio is pleased to share that radio adaptation, along with commentary in this episode.

Re-Imagined Radio is supported by KXRW-FM, community radio station for Vancouver, Washington. We thank them for their support.

And we thank YOU for joining us as Re-Imagined Radio presents "The Day the Earth Stood Still."

MUSIC: DRAMATIC TRANSITION

ACT 1, SCENE 1 -- ARRIVAL

MUSIC: INTRODUCTION ... CROSS FADE TO THEN BEHIND NARRATOR

NARRATOR

~~It was a pleasant spring day -- an ideal day for a walk in the park, a day to push the baby buggy and be glad you were alive. There'd been at least twenty such sparkling days that spring and perhaps a billion or more of them since the Earth began, and nothing had ever happened to spoil them but a few small fires or a slight head cold in the evening, or a rain squall. This spring day, in the middle of the marvelous twentieth~~

~~century, was different. It was the most different day that had happened to mankind since the first Christmas.~~

~~SFX: BEEP-BEEP OF RADAR ...~~

~~CONTINUES IN BG~~

NARRATOR The thing was noticed in Hong Kong first on the British radar.

1ST BRITISH But that's impossible! That thing must be doing about four thousand.

2ND BRITISH That can't be aircraft, sir. Must be a buzz bomb.

1ST BRITISH Better give an alarm. Keep it steady, though. May be faulty equipment.

~~MUSIC: ACCENT ... THEN BEHIND~~

~~NARRATOR--~~

~~NARRATOR If the British radar in Hong Kong was faulty, so was the radar all over the Orient, and Asia, and Europe. So were the announcers on the radio.~~

~~MUSIC: ACCENT~~

~~RUSSIAN This is Moscow!~~

~~MUSIC: ACCENT~~

~~INDIAN This is Kalkipur, India.~~

~~MUSIC: TWO ACCENTS~~

~~3RD BRITISH This is Radio Luxembourg!~~

MUSIC: BIG ACCENT ... THEN BEHIND

NARRATOR--

NARRATOR The American radar screen quickly confirmed the fact that there was nothing wrong with the British radar and that there was something very gravely wrong forty miles out in space, far above the earth.

AMERICAN Luckton at Ferris to Baker, Ferris to Baker. I have an object at two zero zero thousand feet, four zero zero zero miles an hour.

SFX: ALIEN SPACECRAFT APPROACHING

... GROWING LOUDER DURING

FOLLOWING--

NARRATOR Then it was here. Incredibly, it was here! Burning down through the sky over Washington, D. C., hovering over the Mall. Descending.

VOICE They're here! They've come! They're here, they're here!

SFX: ALIEN SPACECRAFT LANDS NOISILY

AND GROWS SILENT ... BIRDS CHIRP

QUIETLY

NARRATOR Not a sound. Stillness. Not a move from the cordon of tanks and armored cars and troops in full battle dress. Not a sound or gesture from the monstrous domed disk resting on the grass.

SFX: TRANSITIONAL PAUSE

NEWSCASTER

The ship, designed for travel outside the earth's atmosphere, landed in Washington today at three forty-seven p.m. Eastern Standard Time. We still do not know where it came from. The ship is now resting exactly where it landed two hours ago. So far there is no sign of life from inside the ship. Behind the cordon of troops, tanks, and artillery is a huge crowd of curiosity seekers. Every eye, every weapon, is trained on the ship. The atmosphere is one of terrific tension rather than of fear. It's been that way for-- Just a minute, ladies and gentlemen! I think something's happening! The spaceship is opening up! Someone is coming out!

MUSIC: STIRRING, MAJESTIC ACCENT ..

THEN OUT BEHIND--

SFX: CROWD REACTS WITH MURMURS AND GROWING UNEASE ... THEN IN BG

OFFICER

Keep calm, everybody! Don't get excited! Keep calm! Quiet!

SFX: CROWD GROWS SILENT BEHIND--

NARRATOR

A wedge is opened in the smooth unbroken metal skin of the spaceship. A ramp slithers out on the grass. Against an eerie glow of unearthly light from inside the spaceship stands the Spaceman. He is a man, entirely like ourselves. He wears a close-fitting suit like a deep-sea diver's armor, but of alien material. A spherical helmet

entirely conceals his head. He holds up his hand. He is going to speak.

KLAATU We have come to visit you in peace and with good will. Receive me as a friend.

SFX: CROWD MURMURS UNCERTAINLY

MUSIC: UNEASY, IN BG

OFFICER (GUARDED) Here he comes, men. Watch it. Keep that BAR trained on him.

SOLDIER (VERY NERVOUS) He - he's going for something in his tunic, sir.

OFFICER Quiet.

SOLDIER (PANICS) It's a ray gun or something! I'm gonna let him have it!

OFFICER No! No! Wait!

SFX: GUNFIRE! ... CROWD REACTS, THEN MURMURS IN BG

OFFICER You fool, he's down! Hold back that crowd! (TO ALL) Everybody -- back!

KLAATU (HEAVY BREATHING)

OFFICER Your wound doesn't look too bad. I'm sorry, but you shouldn't have gone for that ray gun.

KLAATU (WEAKLY) It - it was not a weapon.

OFFICER (ASTONISHED) He understands us.

KLAATU It was a gift for your President. With it, you might have studied life on other planets.

SFX: CROWD REACTS IN HORROR

OFFICER What's bothering the crowd, Lieutenant? Tell 'em to-- (QUIETLY STUNNED) Oh, no! Oh, no.

MUSIC: FOR A GIANT ROBOT ...

OMINOUS ... THEN IN AGREEMENT WITH FOLLOWING--

NARRATOR A nightmare stands on the ramp leading out of the spaceship. A mechanical giant -- monstrous -- all metal and menace -- with a visor in his helmet lifting slowly, revealing a dreadful light, boiling within that metal head. And suddenly out of that incandescence, a narrow ray.

SFX: BZZZZ! BZZZZ! AS RAY BEAM IS REPEATEDLY FIRED, DISINTEGRATING VARIOUS WEAPONS AS CROWD PANICS ... THEN OUT BEHIND--

NARRATOR Rifles, tanks, artillery glow with that terrible incandescence and become vapor and a mush of puddled steel. And in the deathly silence that follows, the robot strides down the ramp -- the Avenger -- from where?

MUSIC: DURING ABOVE ... EXTREMELY OMINOUS ... TO PAINT A PICTURE OF THE MENACING, ADVANCING ROBOT

KLAATU (URGENT, TO ROBOT) Gort! Deglet ovrosco!

MUSIC: ABRUPTLY OUT

KLAATU (TO OFFICER) He won't hurt you now.

OFFICER Let's get you to a hospital.

MUSIC: UP, THEN FADES OUT

HOST You're listening to Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is "The Day the Earth Stood Still."

The first scene is loaded with science fiction themes, including a flying saucer, a humanoid alien, and a giant robot.

Alien life forms inside flying saucers have been imagined in many forms. But aliens that look like humans would be unsettling. How can we know they are aliens?

And the robot? Well mechanical beings have often represented the dark side of technology, and our fear that machines will replace humans. That fear persists today with regard to Artificial Intelligence.

So, with these story elements in place, let's continue listening to "The Day the Earth Stood Still."

ACT 1, SCENE 2 -- HOSPITAL

MUSIC: BRIDGE. CROSS FADE TO

SFX: CROSS FADE TO HOSPITAL SOUNDS,
BEEPING INSTRUMENTS, BREATHING,
HEART BEATS, ETC. FADE OUT UNDER
THE FOLLOWING.

HARLEY Good afternoon, sir.

KLAATU Good afternoon.

HARLEY The doctors here tell me your wound is not serious.

KLAATU No. It amazes them that it's almost healed already.

HARLEY I'm very glad.

KLAATU It should serve as some sort of indication of our powers.

HARLEY My name is Harley, secretary to the President. I've been told you speak our language fluently, that your name is Mr. Klaatu.

KLAATU Just Klaatu.

HARLEY The President has asked me to convey our deepest apologies for what has happened.

KLAATU Sit down, Mr. Harley.

SFX: HARLEY SITS

HARLEY I'm sure I don't have to point out that your arrival was something of a surprise. Er, had you been traveling long?

KLAATU About five months. Your months.

HARLEY You must have come a long way.

KLAATU About two hundred and fifty million of your miles.

HARLEY Er, naturally we're very curious to know where you come from.

KLAATU From another planet. Let's just say that we're neighbors.

HARLEY Huh. It's rather difficult for us to think of another planet as a neighbor.

KLAATU I'm afraid in the present situation you'll have to learn to think that way.

HARLEY The -- present situation?

KLAATU I mean the reasons for my coming here.

HARLEY Would you care to talk about it?

KLAATU Not now, nor with you alone.

HARLEY Perhaps you'd rather discuss it personally with the President.

KLAATU I want to meet with the representatives from all the nations of the Earth.

HARLEY I'm afraid that would be a little awkward.

KLAATU Why?

HARLEY In view of the tensions and suspicions in our world today, such a meeting would be impossible.

KLAATU Mr. Harley, my mission here concerns the existence of every last creature who lives on Earth. It must not be complicated by the childish jealousies, intrigues, suspicions of your planet.

HARLEY Our problems are very complex. You mustn't judge us too harshly.

KLAATU I'm impatient with stupidity. My people have learned to live without it.

HARLEY The President will, of course, do his best to bring about the meeting you desire. I know it will be quite useless. I wish it were otherwise.

SFX: SCRAPE OF CHAIR AS HARLEY RISES

HARLEY I'm very sorry, Mr. Klaatu.

KLAATU Wait. Before making any grave decisions, I think I should get out among your people and become familiar with the basis for these strange, unreasoning attitudes.

HARLEY Our military people insist that you do not attempt to leave the hospital. The

door will be locked. I'm sure you understand. Good day, Mr. Klaatu.

SFX: HARLEY'S FOOTSTEPS TO DOOR
WHICH OPENS AND SHUTS AS HE EXITS
... DOOR IS THEN LOCKED

KLAATU (AMUSED, TO HIMSELF) The door will be locked. (CHUCKLES) Will it now?

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

HOST In addition to science fiction, Cold War distrust and paranoia are also part of our story. For more than 50 years, 1947-1991, former World War II allies, the United States, championing democracy and capitalism, and the Soviet Union, promoting authoritative control and communism, struggled against each other for global ideological and geopolitical dominance.

Klaatu comes from outer space. He possess technology superior to any known on Earth. His robot, Gort, seems invincible. He must be detained. But will a locked hospital door be sufficient? Let's continue listening to our story.

ACT 1, SCENE 3 -- KLAATU AT LARGE

MUSIC: BRIDGE ... THEN BEHIND
NARRATOR--

NARRATOR Klaatu escaped. Nor could the embarrassing news of his disappearance long be suppressed. It was read about in the papers and described in excited tones over the radio.

RADIO COMMENTATOR (FILTER) The authorities at Walter Reed Hospital still refuse to comment on how he managed to escape except to say that he broke into a hospital locker and stole clothing belonging to a staff doctor. While the government does not minimize the crisis, (CONTINUES UNDER NARRATOR BELOW) it urges people all over the world to remain calm, and further advises that the facilities of all federal agencies are being brought to bear.

NARRATOR (OVERLAPS COMMENTATOR AND MRS. CROCKETT) This was the latest and the only news, and among the countless millions listening, were two women and a boy in an ordinary home on an ordinary street in Washington -- Mrs. Crockett's rooming house. There was Mrs. Crockett and Helen Benson and little Bobby Benson.

MRS. CROCKETT (OVER THE COMMENTATOR) Calm, he says?! Just terrible.

RADIO COMMENTATOR (CONTINUED FROM ABOVE, FILTER) --We are warned, however, that this is no ordinary manhunt and we may be up against powers that are beyond our control or understanding, and that we--

SFX: CLICK! AS RADIO IS SWITCHED OFF WITH--

MRS. CROCKETT Oh, I just can't stand any more of this.

HELEN Oh, I wanted to hear more, Mrs. Crockett.

BOBBY It's exciting, isn't it, Mother?

HELEN Hush, Bobby.

MRS. CROCKETT Exciting?! It's enough to drive a person-- (STARTLED) Ohh! Who are you?

KLAATU I'm sorry. I saw your sign outside and the door was open. My name is Carpenter.

MRS. CROCKETT Yes?

KLAATU I'm looking for a room.

MRS. CROCKETT (RELIEVED, STAMMERS) Oh. Oh, yes, I do have a nice room.

BOBBY Are you a G-man?

KLAATU (AMUSED) No, I'm afraid I'm not.

BOBBY I bet he is, Mom. I bet he's looking for that space man!

HELEN (LIGHTLY) I think we've all been hearing too much about space men, Mr. Carpenter.

MRS. CROCKETT This is Mrs. Benson, Mr. Carpenter.

HELEN How do you do?

MRS. CROCKETT And this is little Bobby, my youngest guest.

BOBBY

Hi.

MRS. CROCKETT

I'm Mrs. Crockett. You're a long way from home, aren't you, Mr. Carpenter?

KLAATU

How did you know?

MRS. CROCKETT

(PLEASED WITH HERSELF) Ho ho! I can tell a New England accent every time. ...

(MOVING OFF) This way, please, Mr. Carpenter.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

HOST

Since publication of British writer H.G. Wells' novel *The War of the Worlds* in 1898, visitors from space have been seen as invaders.

An attitude of "shoot first" or "detain" is an easy attitude to adopt when confronted by some thing or some one who appears in any way different.

Let's continue listening to the Lux Radio Theatre adaptation of "The Day the Earth Stood Still."

ACT 2, SCENE 1 -- BREAKFAST

MUSIC: BRIDGE

SFX: BREAKFAST TABLE BACKGROUND ...

RUSTLE OF NEWSPAPER

MRS. CROCKETT

(READS) --"and so, this Sunday morning, we ask the question that has been

plaguing the entire world for two days now -- 'Where is the creature and what is he up to?'"

HELEN Eat your cereal, Bobby.

BOBBY Aw, Mom, I'm almost full as it is.

~~KLAATU (GENTLY CHIDES) Bobby.~~

~~BOBBY Okay, Mr. Carpenter.~~

HELEN I'm sorry, Mrs. Crockett. Please go on reading.

MRS. CROCKETT (TO HERSELF, FINDS HER PLACE) Ummm, "creature and what is he up to?" (READS) Uh, "If he could build a space ship that can fly to Earth -- and a robot that can destroy our tanks and guns -- what other terrors can he unleash at will?"

BOBBY What a man.

MRS. CROCKETT (READS) "Obviously we must track down this monster and destroy him -- before he destroys us." (SOUND: RATTLES PAPER) Correct! Then why don't they do it?

HELEN (THOUGHTFUL) This space man -- or whatever he is. We automatically assume he's a menace. Maybe he isn't after all.

MRS. CROCKETT Well, then, where is he, Mrs. Benson? What's he up to?

HELEN Maybe he's afraid.

MRS. CROCKETT (HEAVY IRONY) Ah, he's afraid!

HELEN Well, after all, he was shot the minute he landed here. I just was wondering what I'd do.

KLAATU Perhaps before deciding upon a course of action, you'd want to know more about the people here.

MRS. CROCKETT Nothing strange about Washington.

KLAATU A person from another planet might disagree with you.

SFX: DOORBELL RINGS

MRS. CROCKETT (STARTLED GASP) Oh!

HELEN (REASSURING) It's all right, Mrs. Crockett. That's Mr. Stevens calling for me. I'll go to the door.

MRS. CROCKETT (FADES AS HELEN GOES TO DOOR) That awful robot standing there like an ugly iron statue-- It gives me the shivers.

SFX: FRONT DOOR OPENS

HELEN Morning, Tom.

TOM Hello, Helen.

SFX: FRONT DOOR CLOSES

~~TOM (LOW) Hey, can anybody see us?~~

~~HELEN No. (GIGGLES AS HE KISSES HER)~~

TOM ~~(HUNGRILY) Mmmmm. So, all right, we're all set. I picked up some sandwiches and put gas in the car, and the radio is busted so we can forget about this space man for a day, huh?~~

HELEN (APOLOGETIC) I haven't been able to arrange for anyone to stay with Bobby. Mrs. Crockett's going out and, uh, I don't suppose we could take him with us.

TOM (UNHAPPY) Oh. Erm, we could.

HELEN Just today. Mrs. Crockett has plans and I don't know who else to ask.

KLAATU (APPROACHES) I haven't any plans.

HELEN Oh, Mr. Carpenter!

KLAATU I'd be glad to spend the day with Bobby, if you'd let me.

TOM Great, thanks!

HELEN Well, it's very nice of you to offer. Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Carpenter, this is Tom Stevens.

TOM Hi.

KLAATU How do you do? Bobby and I had a fine time yesterday afternoon. I thought he might show me around the city today.

HELEN Well--

KLAATU Please, I'd enjoy it.

KLAATU I've been far away, Bobby.

BOBBY Don't they have places like this where you've been?

KLAATU Not like this one. You see, they - they don't have any wars. Let's walk.

BOBBY All right.

KLAATU What would you like to do now?

BOBBY Go to the movies.

KLAATU All right.

BOBBY No foolin'?

KLAATU No fooling. Uh, do you have to have money to go there?

BOBBY Well, I've got two dollars. I'll treat you, okay?

KLAATU No, I want to take you. Look, do you think they'd accept these?

BOBBY Gee! What are they? Diamonds?

KLAATU Well, in some places these are what people use for money. They're easy to carry and they don't wear out.

BOBBY I'll bet they're worth a million dollars.

KLAATU Would you give me your two dollars for two of these?

BOBBY Sure, okay.

KLAATU There you are.

BOBBY ~~Um, let's not say anything to Mom about this, huh?~~

KLAATU ~~Why not?~~

BOBBY ~~Well, she doesn't like me to take advantage of people. . . .~~ Hey, before we go to the movies, would you like to see the Abraham Lincoln Memorial?

KLAATU Thank you, yes, I would.

MUSIC: WARMLY PATRIOTIC BRIDGE . . .
WITH A TOUCH OF "BATTLE HYMN OF THE
REPUBLIC" . . . THEN IN BG

BOBBY Well, this is it. That's the Gettysburg speech up there.

KLAATU (READS) "That this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth." Those are great words.

BOBBY That's some statue.

MUSIC: OUT BEHIND--

KLAATU That's the kind of man I'd like to talk to. (BEAT) Bobby, who is the greatest man in America today?

BOBBY ~~Gee, I don't know. The space man, I guess.~~

KLAATU ~~(AMUSED) I was speaking of earth men.~~

BOBBY Oh, I don't know. The President?

KLAATU I mean the greatest philosopher -- the greatest thinker, scholar.

BOBBY Oh. Well, that's Professor Barnhardt, I guess.

KLAATU Yes? Professor Barnhardt?

BOBBY He's the greatest scientist in the world. He lives right here in Washington. Right near where my mother works.

KLAATU Where is that?

BOBBY Department of Commerce. She's a secretary. Why?

KLAATU I have an idea, Bobby. Let's go see Professor Barnhardt.

BOBBY What for?

KLAATU You just said he's the greatest man in America.

BOBBY (AMUSED) You're kiddin', aren't you?

KLAATU Wouldn't you like to meet him?

BOBBY Well, sure I would. Aw, go on. I bet you'd be scared.

KLAATU Maybe we can scare him more than he can scare us.

BOBBY (WITH A CHUCKLE) I like you, Mr. Carpenter. You're a real screwball.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

HOST Mr. Carpenter, Klaatu, the space man, has studied the humans of Earth, has purposely landed his spacecraft in Washington, DC, a center of world power, and seeks to bring his message to leaders who can make decisions and inspire others.

Let's continue listening to "The Day the Earth Stood Still."

ACT 2, SCENE 3 -- OFFICE VISIT

MUSIC: BRIDGE

SFX: DOORBELL RINGS

BOBBY ~~(BEAT) Gee, maybe the professor isn't at home.~~

KLAATU ~~Let's take a look through that window.~~

~~**SFX: KLAATU AND BOBBY'S FOOTSTEPS TO WINDOW**~~

BOBBY I'll bet this is where he works. Look in there. Books all over. Blackboard's full of stuff.

SFX: LOCKED DOOR RATTLES

BOBBY (DISAPPOINTED) Aw, door's locked, too.

KLAATU Is it?

SFX: DOOR OPENS

KLAATU Why, no, it isn't, Bobby.

BOBBY (MYSTIFIED) Well, that's funny.

KLAATU We'll go in and wait for him. I'm sure he won't mind.

BOBBY Gee, just think -- all the brains that goes on in here. What's all that stuff on the blackboard?

KLAATU It's a problem in celestial mechanics. (CLICKS HIS TONGUE DISAPPROVINGLY)

BOBBY What's the matter?

KLAATU He'll never get the answer that way. Let's see.

BOBBY (URGENT) Hey, it says, "Don't erase, don't touch"!

SFX: MARKS ON BLACKBOARD BEHIND--

KLAATU This is right. (MARK) Check. (BEAT) Correct. (MARK) Correct. (MARK) And here's where he gets off the track. Well, we'll fix that. (SCRIBBLES) So-- So.

BOBBY (IMPRESSED) You must be an arithmetic teacher, I bet.

KLAATU (READS ALOUD AS HE SCRIBBLES)
"Differentiate - the - equation." There.

SFX: KLAATU DROPS CHALK, WIPES
HANDS

HILDA (APPROACHES, INDIGNANT) Who are you?

BOBBY Uh-oh.

HILDA How dare you come in like this? How dare you write on that blackboard? Do you realize the professor's been working on that problem for weeks?

KLAATU He'll solve it in no time now.

HILDA What do you want?

KLAATU We came to see Professor Barnhardt.

HILDA Well, he's not here. And he won't be back until evening. I think you'd better leave.

KLAATU Will you tell him that Mr. Carpenter was here? 1615 M Street, Northwest. I think he'll want to talk to me.

HILDA Indeed?

KLAATU Thank you. (SLIGHTLY OFF) Oh, it may have entered your mind to erase what I've written on the blackboard.

HILDA It certainly has!

KLAATU (SLIGHTLY OFF) I wouldn't do that. The Professor needs it very badly. Come on, Bobby.

SFX: DOOR SHUTS

HILDA (REPEATS TO HERSELF) Carpenter! Sixteen Fifteen M Street, Northwest, Carpenter, M Street.

MUSIC: SNEAKS IN BEHIND--

SFX: PHONE RECEIVER UP ... OPERATOR DIALED

HILDA Operator, give me the police!

MUSIC: TRANSITION

HOST Scientists of all types were important to the Cold War Space Race between the United States and the Soviet Union. And for the many other technological competitions between the two world superpowers, including the creation and detection of atomic weapons.

ACT 2, SCENE 4 -- GOVERNMENT AGENT

MUSIC: INTRODUCTION ... THEN BEHIND NARRATOR--

NARRATOR It is early evening of the same day. Tom Stevens and Helen Benson drive up to the boardinghouse after their picnic, quite

unaware of the dark squad car parked at the curb a few feet ahead.

SFX: TOM'S CAR PULLS TO A STOP ...

ENGINE OUT

TOM (SLIGHTLY DEJECTED) Well, here we are.

HELEN Thank you, Tom. It was a wonderful day.

TOM You, um, still haven't answered my question.

HELEN Oh, you know how I feel, Tom. But I still want time to think it over.

TOM (LIGHTLY) If I could only tell the boss I was getting married and acquiring two dependents.

HELEN (AMUSED) You're a good salesman.

TOM A good salesman wouldn't give you time to think about it.

HELEN (CHUCKLES) Good night.

SFX: CAR DOOR OPENS

~~TOM Uh, didn't you forget something? (PAUSE AS THEY KISS) Mm. Now good night.~~

HELEN (CHUCKLES) Good night.

SFX: CAR DOOR SHUTS ... HELEN'S FOOTSTEPS TO FRONT DOOR WHICH OPENS

TOM (OFF) 'Night!

SFX: FRONT DOOR SHUTS

HELEN (STARTLED) Oh, Mr. Carpenter!

BOBBY Hi, Mom.

HELEN Hello, darling.

KLAATU Uh, Mrs. Benson -- this is Mr. Brady.

HELEN How do you do?

BRADY (STERN) How do you do?

BOBBY Mr. Brady's a government agent.

HELEN (SURPRISED) Oh? Did you have a nice day, Bobby?

BOBBY We had a swell time. Didn't we, Mr. Carpenter?

KLAATU Yes, we did.

BOBBY We went to the movies -- and had a banana split -- and went to see Daddy.

HELEN (MOVED AND GRATEFUL) Oh, I don't know how to thank you, Mr. Carpenter.

KLAATU I enjoyed every minute of it.

BRADY We better get going.

KLAATU Yes. Good night, Bobby.

BOBBY Good night.

KLAATU I'll tell you the rest of that story tomorrow. Good night, Mrs. Benson.

HELEN (PUZZLED) Good night.

SFX: FRONT DOOR OPENS

BRADY Nice meeting you, Mrs. Benson.

HELEN Thank you.

SFX: FRONT DOOR SHUTS

BOBBY (BEAT) Why did Mr. Carpenter have to go with Mr. Brady?

HELEN I don't know. (WITH A SHRUG) Maybe it was a mistake. (MOCK STERN) Upstairs with you.

BOBBY Yeah. We sure had fun today. We went all over Washington and went to see Professor Barnhardt.

HELEN (SURPRISED) Professor Barnhardt?

BOBBY Oh, sure.

HELEN (TO HERSELF) Barnhardt? (TO BOBBY) Up to bed now. Pronto!

MUSIC: RIR BREAK THEME

BREAK #1--THE FUSEBOX BREAK

HOST You're listening to Re-Imagined Radio. This is John Barber, producer and host. We'll return to our episode in just a moment. But first I want to introduce

The Fusebox Show . . . It's a different kind of radio storytelling, with its own alien life forms. Here's a sample . . .

SFX: THE FUSEBOX SHOW TEASER

HOST The Fusebox Show is available wherever you get your podcasts, or at *The Fusebox Show* website, thefuseboxshow dot com.

MUSIC: RIR THEME, RETURN. ESTABLISH, THEN FADE OUT UNDER THE FOLLOWING

ACT 3, SCENE 1 -- MEETING PROF BARNHARDT

HOST You're listening to "The Day the Earth Stood Still," an episode of Re-Imagined Radio. Klaatu, the humanoid alien from a distant planet, is about to meet with Professor Barnhardt. What will they discuss? Let's listen . . .

MUSIC: BRIDGE

SFX: DOOR OPENS

BRADY Is this the man you wanted to see, Professor Barnhardt?

BARNHARDT Oh, thank you, Mr. Brady. If I may speak to Mr. Carpenter alone, please?

BRADY I'll wait outside, Professor.

SFX: DOOR CLOSES

BARNHARDT You are Mr. Carpenter--?

KLAATU Yes, Professor.

BARNHARDT --who wrote those equations on my blackboard?

KLAATU My clumsy way of introducing myself.

BARNHARDT Forgive the manner in which you were picked up. Hilda called the police before I saw your annotations on the board.

KLAATU I appreciate the need for security, Professor.

BARNHARDT I have not quite fathomed the problem, even with your remarkable assistance, Mr. Carpenter.

KLAATU Let's look at it, sir. All you have to do now is substitute this expression at this point.

BARNHARDT Yes. That will reproduce the first order term, but what about the effect of the other terms?

KLAATU Negligible. With variation of parameters, this is the answer.

BARNHARDT How can you be so sure? Have you tested this theory?

KLAATU I find it works well enough to get me from one planet to another.

BARNHARDT (BEAT, REALIZES, QUIETLY) Klaatu!

KLAATU I spent two days at your Walter Reed Hospital. I was interviewed--

BARNHARDT (DISMISSIVE) I need no proof. This blackboard is proof.

KLAATU If you're not interested, or if you intend to turn me over to the Army, we needn't waste any more time.

BARNHARDT (ARE YOU KIDDING?) Interested?! Will you excuse me one moment, please?

SFX: DOOR OPENS

BARNHARDT Mr. Brady, you may go now. Please thank General Cutler and tell him-- Tell him that I know this gentleman.

SFX: DOOR CLOSES

BARNHARDT So much for that, Klaatu. Now, please sit down.

~~**KLAATU** You have faith, Professor.~~

~~**BARNHARDT** Faith and, uh-- Uh, curiosity. Do sit down. I have several thousand questions to ask you.~~

KLAATU I would like to explain my mission here.

~~**BARNHARDT** That is my first question.~~

KLAATU ~~It was my hope to discuss this officially with all the nations of the world. I was not allowed the opportunity.~~ Now, we know from scientific observation that your planet

has discovered a rudimentary kind of atomic energy. We also know that you're experimenting with rockets.

BARNHARDT Yes -- that is true. What exactly is the nature of your mission?

KLAATU To warn you that your planet faces danger. What I have to say must be said to all concerned. I come to you as a last resort. Must I take drastic action in order to get a hearing?

BARNHARDT (UNEASY) What sort of action do you mean?

KLAATU Violent action? Perhaps leveling the island of Manhattan -- or toppling the Rock of Gibraltar into the sea? (BEAT) Well?

BARNHARDT Would you, for example, be willing to meet with a group of scientists I am calling together? We're having our first meeting tonight. Perhaps you could explain your mission to them, and they in turn could present it to their various peoples.

KLAATU That is what I came to see you about.

BARNHARDT One thing, Klaatu. Suppose this group should reject your proposals. What is the alternative?

KLAATU There is no alternative, Professor. In such a case, the planet Earth would have to be eliminated.

BARNHARDT Such power exists?

KLAATU I assure you, such power exists.

BARNHARDT The scientists who are attending these meetings have come here from all over the world. This power you speak of-- They must be made to realize that it exists. Now, you mentioned a demonstration of force--

KLAATU Yes.

BARNHARDT Something that would affect the entire planet?

KLAATU That can be arranged.

BARNHARDT (NERVOUS, STAMMERS) Perhaps a little demonstration.

KLAATU (CHUCKLES) Something dramatic -- but not destructive. (INTELLECTUALLY AMUSED) It's quite an interesting problem. Would tomorrow be all right?

BARNHARDT If you say so.

KLAATU Say about noon?

BARNHARDT Then -- tomorrow at noon? Good.

MUSIC: FOREBODING TRANSITION

HOST Encounters between aliens and humans is a well-established science fiction theme. If aliens come to Earth from outer space, assumably they have far greater technology, wisdom, and perhaps,

advice. Klaatu mentions experiments with atomic energy and rockets. If humans continue, he says, Earth will have to be destroyed.

At the time of this radio program, missiles carrying atomic and hydrogen bombs, developed by the United States and the Soviet Union as part of the Cold War nuclear arms race, made it possible for humankind to destroy itself through misuse of power created by modern science. Klaatu's warning was true, and heartfelt. Humankind was not ready for the grim gift of the atomic age (Edelson 53).

This is Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is "The Day the Earth Stood Still." Let's continue listening.

ACT 3, SCENE 2 -- JITTERY

MUSIC: BRIDGE

KLAATU Going out tonight, Mrs. Benson?

HELEN (STARTLED) Oh! Oh, it's you, Mr. Carpenter.

KLAATU I'm afraid I startled you.

HELEN Yes, I am going out. Mr. Stevens is calling for me.

KLAATU Everyone seems so-- so--

HELEN Jittery is the word.

KLAATU (CHUCKLES) Bobby's the only person I know who isn't -- "jittery." He's a fine boy, Mrs. Benson.

HELEN Naturally I think so.

KLAATU Warm, friendly, intelligent. He's the only real friend I've made since I've been here.

HELEN Mr. Carpenter -- this is none of my business, but -- why did that detective come here last night? That Mr. Brady?

KLAATU (WITH EASY FRANKNESS) Bobby and I tried to see Professor Barnhardt in the afternoon, but he wasn't in. Apparently they thought I was looking for secrets of some kind.

SFX: DOORBELL RINGS

HELEN Oh, that must be Tom now.

SFX: FRONT DOOR OPENS, OFF

MRS. CROCKETT (OFF) Oh, Mr. Stevens. Do come in. Helen is in the sitting-room.

SFX: FRONT DOOR CLOSES, OFF

HELEN (LOW AND DRY, TO KLAATU) Alert Mrs. Crockett -- she has a romantic mind.

TOM (APPROACHES) Hello there, Helen. Not a minute to spare. You ready? (UNHAPPY TO SEE HIM) Hello, Carpenter. (IMPATIENT,

TO HELEN) Picture starts at eight-fifty on the dot, Helen.

HELEN I'll be ready in a minute. I was just talking to Mr. Carpenter.

TOM (SARCASTIC) Oh, I hope Mr. Carpenter won't think I'm intruding.

KLAATU (UNPERTURBED) Excuse me. I was just going up to my room. Good night.

HELEN (EMBARRASSED) Good night, Mr. Carpenter.

KLAATU (MOVING OFF) Have a good time, both of you.

HELEN Thank you. (QUIETLY) Tom, that was awful.

TOM (NOT SORRY) I'm sorry. I guess I'm just tired of hearing about "Mr. Carpenter, Mr. Carpenter."

HELEN Ssh!

TOM I don't like the way he's attached himself to you and Bobby. After all, what do you know about him?

HELEN Very little, it's true. Well, let's not stand and talk about it any more. I'll go up and get my things.

MUSIC: BRIEF BRIDGE

~~BOBBY Gee, Mr. Carpenter. Thanks a lot for helping me with my homework.~~

~~KLAATU That's all there is to it, Bobby, my boy. All you have to remember is first find the common denominator, then subtract.~~

~~BOBBY I gotcha. Thanks, Mr. Carpenter.~~

~~SFX: BEDROOM DOOR OPENS~~

HELEN I'm leaving with Tom, Bobby. You'll go to bed on time now, won't you?

~~KLAATU I'll say good night again, Mrs. Benson.~~

~~HELEN (WANTS TO APOLOGIZE ABOUT TOM) Mr. Carpenter--?~~

~~KLAATU Yes?~~

~~HELEN (BUT IT'S TOO COMPLICATED) Nothing. Good night.~~

~~KLAATU Good night. 'Night, Bobby.~~

~~SFX: BEDROOM DOOR CLOSING AS KLAATU EXITS~~

HELEN Bobby -- I think it would be better if you didn't see quite so much of Mr. Carpenter.

BOBBY Well, gee, why, Mom? He's swell. I like him. And he's awful good at arithmetic. He even helped Professor Barnhardt.

~~HELEN I -- I'm sure he's a very nice man. I just think he might prefer to be left alone. Now go to bed, darling.~~

BOBBY ~~Why would he want to be left alone?~~

HELEN Don't forget to brush your teeth.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

HOST Tom Stevens is jealous of Klaatu. Thinks him an alien in the sense that he is intruding, perhaps threatening a relationship with Helen. This is exactly why Klaatu sought to go among the humans of Washington, DC. To understand the "unreasoning suspicions and attitudes" that lead to conflict and fighting among humans. Will he be able to convince humans to change their ways or face destruction? Let's continue listening to "The Day the Earth Stood Still."

ACT 3, SCENE 3 -- STRANGE ADVENTURE

MUSIC: BRIEF BRIDGE

SFX: KNOCK ON BEDROOM DOOR

BOBBY Come in.

SFX: BEDROOM DOOR OPENS

KLAATU Bobby, do you have a flashlight I might borrow for tonight?

BOBBY Oh, sure, Mr. Carpenter.

SFX: DRAWER SLIDES OPEN

BOBBY It's a real Boy Scout one.

KLAATU Thank you, Bobby.

SFX: DRAWER SLIDES SHUT

BOBBY Why do you want it?

KLAATU The light in my room went out. See you tomorrow. Better get into bed now.

SFX: BEDROOM DOOR CLOSES

BOBBY (BEAT, TO HIMSELF) Gee, I wonder if the batteries are any good. (CALLS) Mr. Carpenter?!

SFX: BOBBY STEPS TO BEDROOM DOOR WHICH OPENS

MUSIC: QUICK TRANSITION ... THEN IN BG, IN AGREEMENT WITH FOLLOWING--

NARRATOR Bobby went to the door and opened it. What he saw down the hallway puzzled him. Mr. Carpenter's door was ajar and light was pouring out of his room.

BOBBY (TO HIMSELF) Funny -- he said his light went out.

NARRATOR (WITH MACABRE DELIGHT) Then Mr. Carpenter came out carrying the flashlight and stealing down the steps like a thief. This was peculiar. But this was adventure. Bobby followed Mr. Carpenter and what he saw couldn't have been a dream; it was too real. But it couldn't have been true, either; it was too deliciously frightful.

Dream or not, it was filled with darkness, stung by staccato flashes from a genuine Boy Scout flashlight -- flashes that activated a giant robot into knocking out his guards so that Mr. Carpenter from the boardinghouse could get into the shed the Army had built around the spaceship.

And dream or not, Bobby saw this Mr. Carpenter go in to the spaceship. And then a wave of sheer terror swept over Bobby at last and he turned and ran wildly away -- the way little boys always run in nightmares, trying so hard and moving so slowly, and all the time falling down. It was awful.

It was swell.

When his mother came home around midnight, Bobby was curled up on the sofa. Instantly, he jumped up and ran to her and to Tom Stevens as they came into the hallway.

MUSIC: OUT

BOBBY (EXCITED) Mom! Mom! Listen!

HELEN Bobby! What are you doing down here at this hour fully dressed?

BOBBY Hello, Mr. Stevens. Mom, I had to tell ya!

HELEN Tell me what?

TOM What's the matter, Bobby?

BOBBY (RAPIDLY) I followed Mr. Carpenter tonight -- right after you left -- and, gee, where do you think he went? Right into the spaceship!

HELEN Now, Bobby, just one minute--

BOBBY Honest, Mom, I saw him. They got a shed built around the spaceship so nobody can get to it. But Mr. Carpenter flashed a signal to that iron man up there and what do you think?!

HELEN Bobby, have you've been dreaming again?

TOM (CHUCKLES) Why, sure.

BOBBY (DESPERATE) No, Mom, honest, I haven't. I promise you. I saw it!

TOM Where did you see all of this?

BOBBY Well, I'm telling ya. On the lawn, down at the mall. In that place where the soldiers are all out in front.

TOM Oh? And where were the soldiers all this time?

BOBBY Well, that robot fella grabbed 'em and knocked 'em out!

HELEN (CHIDES) Oh, Bobby--

BOBBY (RAPIDLY) Yeah, and then Mr. Carpenter walked into the shed and the spaceship opened up, and he walked right inside and it closed again. Gee, I like Mr. Carpenter, but -- I'm scared, Mom.

~~HELEN Darling, it was just a bad dream. We'll prove it to you. Tom, will you see if Mr. Carpenter's still up? Ask him to come down here a minute.~~

~~MUSIC: BRIEF BRIDGE~~

~~TOM Helen?~~

~~HELEN Yes, Tom?~~

~~TOM Helen, he's not there. But look what I found on the carpet.~~

~~HELEN (BEAT) It can't be a diamond -- can it?~~

~~TOM I don't know.~~

~~HELEN It's much too big.~~

~~TOM It looks real to me.~~

~~BOBBY Aw, Mr. Carpenter's got lots of 'em. He gave a couple of 'em to me. Here.~~

~~HELEN (AMAZED) He gave you these?~~

~~BOBBY Well, not exactly. I gave him two dollars.~~

~~TOM I don't know, but this whole thing-- It just doesn't make sense. Look, Helen, do you think it's all right for you to stay here?~~

~~HELEN There's a strong lock on my door. And Bobby's going to sleep in my room tonight.~~

BOBBY (RELUCTANT) Okay.

HELEN Upstairs, nightmare boy.

BOBBY (MOVING OFF) It wasn't a nightmare.

HELEN Bobby?

BOBBY (SLIGHTLY OFF) Yeah, Mom?

HELEN Bobby, your shoes are soaking wet!

BOBBY (SLIGHTLY OFF) Yeah -- grass on the mall was kind of wet. Good night, all!

HELEN (BEAT, REALIZES) Oh, Tom! I wonder--

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

HOST Helen is starting to realize that Billy's "nightmare" makes sense. Tom also has an idea where the story leads, but sees only benefit for himself.

This is Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is "The Day the Earth Stood Still." Let's continue listening.

ACT 4, SCENE 1 -- A LITTLE DEMONSTRATION

MUSIC: BRIDGE

~~NARRATOR Klaatu had promised what Professor Barnhardt termed "a little demonstration" -- promised it for the following day at noon. It is now two~~

~~minutes to twelve. In the Department of Commerce building, Helen Benson has left her office on her way to lunch. She stands in the corridor waiting for an elevator.~~

SFX: BUZZ OF CROWD NEAR ELEVATORS,
IN BG

KLAATU (APPROACHES) Mrs. Benson?

HELEN (SURPRISED) Mr. Carpenter -- what are you doing here?

KLAATU I came to see you.

HELEN Well, I was just going to lunch. What is it?

KLAATU I saw Bobby this morning before he went to school.

HELEN Yes--?

KLAATU I want to know what he told you.

HELEN (NERVOUS LAUGH) Oh, Bobby has such an active imagination.

KLAATU Did you believe what he told you?

HELEN Really, Mr. Carpenter -- this is where I work and I only have a short time for lunch today. If you'll excuse me--

KLAATU I'll go down with you.

HELEN (BEAT) If you like. The service elevator's open.

SFX: THEY WALK INTO ELEVATOR, THEN STOP

HELEN (BEAT) You'll have to press the button, Mr. Carpenter.

KLAATU Oh, yes. Yes.

SFX: ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSE ... ELEVATOR WHIRS

MUSIC: ACCENT ... THEN BEHIND NARRATOR--

NARRATOR It was just five seconds before noon of that fateful day when Helen Benson and Mr. Carpenter stepped into that electric elevator. At that same moment, the enormous commerce of our briskly modern world roared and thundered in the streets.

SFX: TRAFFIC BACKGROUND

NARRATOR Five seconds to noon.

Four seconds, three seconds, two seconds.

One.

Zero.

SFX: TRAFFIC SLOWS TO A HALT

MUSIC: AN EERIE, QUIET BACKGROUND
BEHIND NARRATOR--

NARRATOR

High noon, and silence. All over the world, traffic stopped dead in a million streets. Here and there, a horse-drawn vehicle clopped its melancholy way among the motionless motors. Bicycles moved, before awe and the common desolation made the riders stop of their own free will. Electric clocks stopped on the dot of noon. All across the powered world, the machines stood still. Toasters failed to pop and battle fleets on maneuvers drifted aimlessly on their dead propellers. Joe Smith's milkshake didn't spin. And the humming turbines deep in Hoover Dam didn't produce current. Mrs. Housewife's washer stopped in the middle of its cycle. And electric lights went out all over the world. At a conference table in Washington, a hasty council of the armed services was held.

SFX: COUNCIL MURMURS .. THEN QUIETS
BEHIND--

GEN. CUTLER

As far as we can tell, gentlemen, all electric power has been cut off, all over, with few exceptions. And even these exceptions are remarkable -- hospitals, planes in flight, that sort of thing. I wish I could be more specific, but all communications are out. I can tell you that we are preparing to declare a state of national emergency, but before we start discussing plans, I want a report from Colonel Ryder.

COL. RYDER All I can report, General, is that the robot at the spaceship was discovered to have moved last night. It knocked unconscious the two soldiers guarding the entrance to the shed the Army Engineers had built around the spaceship, indicating that someone, presumably the space man, had wanted to get into the ship for one reason or another.

GEN. CUTLER In all likelihood to signal for this demonstration of his planet's power. Go on, Colonel.

COL. RYDER Well, that's all, sir.

SFX: COUNCIL MURMURS ("WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF THAT." ET CETERA) ... THEN QUIETS BEHIND--

GEN. CUTLER Now, gentleman-- Until now we've agreed on the desirability of capturing this "man" alive. We can no longer afford to be soft in this matter. We will get him alive if possible, but we must get him! ~~Is that clear, gentlemen? Dead or alive. Get him.~~

MUSIC: INTRODUCTION ... THEN BEHIND NARRATOR--

NARRATOR All over the world, electric power has been neutralized on the stroke of noon -- as a token of the space man's power and as a warning to the Earth. While they've been trapped between floors in an elevator, the space man has

told Helen his identity and purpose here.

KLAATU (FADES IN) I've already told you more than I told Professor Barnhardt, because my life, in a sense, is in your hands. But if I die, a world -- your world -- may die, too.

HELEN Yes, I - I understand.

KLAATU I thought if you knew the facts you'd appreciate the importance of my not being caught before the meeting tonight with the world's scientists.

HELEN Yes, of course. Of course I do. You hold great hope for this meeting, don't you?

KLAATU I can see no other hope for your planet. If the meeting should fail, then I'm afraid there is no hope.

SFX: ELEVATOR WHIRS TO LIFE

HELEN (STARTLED) Oh! The lights. And we've started again.

KLAATU It must be twelve-thirty.

HELEN (ASTONISHED) Yes -- exactly.

SFX: ELEVATOR STOPS ... DOORS SLIDE OPEN ... THEIR FOOTSTEPS

HELEN Where are you going now?

KLAATU Back to the boardinghouse. I'll be safe there for the afternoon. I'll be able to keep an eye on Bobby. He's the only other person who knows about me.

HELEN No. Wait a minute. There is someone else.

KLAATU How? There can't be.

HELEN Tom. He was with me last night when Bobby told me what he saw.

KLAATU (EXHALES UNHAPPILY)

HELEN Well, of course, he doesn't know anything definite and-- Well, he'd talk to me first before-- But then we can't take a chance, can we?

KLAATU Can you get in touch with him?

HELEN I think so.

KLAATU I mean, at once -- now.

HELEN I'll try.

KLAATU You will. You must.

~~MUSIC: NERVOUS BRIDGE ... THEN IN
BC~~

~~HELEN (FADES IN) Hello? Hello?!~~

~~SFX: RATTLES CRADLE~~

~~HELEN (INTO PHONE, DESPERATE) Operator, I was connected with my party! Please-- Hello?~~

~~Oh. Is this Mr. Tom Stevens' office again? We were disconn-- Well, I must speak to Mr. S-- No, Mr. Stevens. Yes, this is Mrs. Benson. Benson. ... Well, when do you expect him in, then? ... Well, will you tell him I called and please not to leave his office. I'm coming down to see him. ... Yes! Yes, it's very important! To you, too!~~

MUSIC: UP AND OUT

HOST

Helen Benson, and other Earth citizens see the importance of Klaatu's warning about continued conflict. Politicians and military leaders are more interested in conflict, and control. By the way, did you recognize the voice of General Cutler? That was William Conrad, to whose million dollar radio voice we have paid tribute previously. Let's listen to what happens next.

ACT 4, SCENE 2 -- KLAATU EXPOSED

**SFX: OFFICE DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES
AS TOM HURRIEDLY ENTERS ... LIFTS
INTERCOM RECEIVER**

TOM

(INTO INTERCOM, BREATHLESS) Margaret, this is Mr. Stevens; I just got in. Now, listen, call the Pentagon-- ... Who? ... Mrs. Benson? When? ... Yeah, well, never mind. This is more important. Listen. Now, call the Pentagon and find out who's in charge of this space man

business. Whoever it is, I want to talk to him.

SFX: OFFICE DOOR OPENS ... HELEN ENTERS

HELEN (URGENT) Tom!

TOM (INTO INTERCOM) Call me back right away and don't take any other calls. Brush 'em off fast!

SFX: INTERCOM RECEIVER DOWN

HELEN Tom, I've been trying to get you all afternoon.

TOM I have got some pretty terrific news about your good friend, Mr. Carpenter.

HELEN (BEAT)

What about him?

TOM He's the man from the spaceship! I had that diamond, or whatever it is, checked at three different places. Nobody on earth's ever seen a stone like that! And after what Bobby's told us, that's enough for me! Why is it nobody knows about this Mr. Carpenter? Why hasn't he got any money?

HELEN All right, Tom -- it's true.

TOM (TAKEN ABACK) It--? How do you know?

HELEN You've just got to promise me you won't say a word to anybody.

TOM Oh, nobody but the Pentagon.

HELEN Please, Tom--!

TOM Are you crazy? After what happened today? He's a menace!

HELEN You don't understand. You don't realize how important this is.

TOM Important? Of course it's important. And we can do something about it.

HELEN We mustn't do anything about it, Tom. Believe me, I know what I'm talking about.

TOM I say he is dangerous. It is our duty to turn him in.

HELEN He isn't dangerous! He isn't a menace! He - he told me what he came here for.

TOM (CONDESCENDING) Oh, honey, don't be silly because you happen to like the guy. Do you realize what this'll mean for us? I'll be the biggest man in the country. I'll write my own ticket.

HELEN (COLD) Is that what you're thinking about?

TOM Listen, somebody's got to get rid of him.

SFX: BUZZ! OF INTERCOM

HELEN Tom, I'm not gonna let you do it!

SFX: RECEIVER UP

HELEN Tom, don't do it!

TOM (INTO PHONE) Hello, Margaret? ... Yeah?
General Cutler? Good. I'll hold on.

HELEN You don't know what you're doing! It
isn't just you and Mr. Carpenter.

TOM (DERISIVE) Mister Carpenter.

HELEN It's everybody! The rest of the world is
involved!

TOM I don't give a hang about the rest of
the world! I'm in this for me.

HELEN Tom--!

TOM Now, you'll feel different when you see
my picture in the papers. (CHUCKLES)

HELEN (DEFLATED) I feel different right now.

TOM Well, you'll see. You're gonna marry a
hero.

HELEN I'm not going to marry anybody. (MOVING
OFF) Not even a hero.

SFX: OFFICE DOOR OPENS AS HELEN

EXITS

TOM (CALLS) Hey, Helen--

SFX: OFFICE DOOR SLAMS SHUT

HOST

This is Re-Imagined Radio. We're listening to "The Day the Earth Stood Still" and considering its Cold War connections. The Cold War began in 1947 as the United States and the Soviet Union began a struggle for global ideological and geopolitical influence.

Led at the highest levels of government, the Cold War was concerned only with its desired outcomes, and not, as Tom stated, for anyone else. Let's continue listening.

ACT 4, SCENE 3 -- TROOPS DEPLOYED

TOM

(INTO PHONE) Uh, hello? ... General Cutler? Uh-- (PLEASED AND PROUD OF HIMSELF, ENUNCIATES POMPOUSLY) General, my name is Tom Stevens. With a "v." ... I - I have positive information about the space man and where he's staying. ... Right. Yeah. ... Yeah, of course I'm sure. He's living at a boardinghouse at Sixteen Fifteen M Street, Northwest. ... That is correct, General.

SFX: TOM FADES OUT AS GENERAL

CUTLER FADES IN

GEN. CUTLER

Yes, I have all of it now, Mr. Stevens. And thank you very much, indeed. I'll want to talk to you further, but I haven't time now. We want to act on this.

SFX: SLAMS RECEIVER DOWN ... CLICK!
OF INTERCOM

VOICE (FILTER) Yes, sir?

GEN. CUTLER Have Colonel Ryder deploy all Zone Five units according to Plan B immediately. Investigate One-six-one-five M Street, Northwest, for presence of space man. Repeat--

ACT 5, SCENE 1 -- TRAPPED

MUSIC: BRIDGE

SFX: HELEN'S FOOTSTEPS TO FRONT
DOOR WHICH OPENS

HELEN Mr. Carpenter?

KLAATU (APPROACHES) Right here. Did you see Tom? What does he say?

HELEN It's no good. It's too late. I've got a taxi outside. Hurry.

MUSIC: BRIEF BRIDGE

RADIO VOICE (FILTER) Attention, Zone Five! Attention, Zone Five! Man and woman observed entering taxi at One-six-one-five M Street, Northwest. Man is probably Klaatu, alias Carpenter. Establish roadblocks according to Plan Baker and maintain station. Remain on radio alert until further orders. (FADE OUT)

SFX: FADE IN TAXI ENGINE ...

CONTINUES IN BG

KLAATU I don't know. I think we may have been seen getting into the taxi.

HELEN Where can you go?

KLAATU I'm sure Barnhardt can arrange to hide me until the meeting tonight.

HELEN Where is it going to be?

KLAATU At the ship. Now, look there -- Army cars.

HELEN Full troops in full gear.

KLAATU The alarm is out all right.

HELEN It's only a few more blocks to Professor Barnhardt's.

KLAATU I'm worried about Gort. I'm afraid of what he might do if anything should happen to me.

HELEN Gort? But he's a robot.

KLAATU He's a product of centuries of refinement.

HELEN But what could he do without you?

KLAATU There's no limit to what he could do. He could destroy the earth.

HELEN And the city is swarming with patrol cars -- hunting you. How can we tell them?

KLAATU They won't listen. You must listen! If anything happens to me, you must go to Gort. You must give him this message. "Klaatu barada nikto." "Gort, Klaatu barada nikto." Say it!

HELEN (UNCERTAIN) "Gort, Klaatu barada--"

KLAATU "--nikto"!

HELEN "Gort, Klaatu barada nikto." (TO HERSELF) "Klaatu barada nikto."

KLAATU Remember those words.

HELEN (TO HERSELF) "Klaatu barada nikto."

MUSIC: TRANSITION ... THEN IN BG

RADIO VOICE (FILTER) Attention, Zone Five! Taxicab moving north on Fourteenth street from Harvard Street, man and woman in back seat. License number H-oh-oh-one-two. H-oh-oh-one-two! Section Two, close in! This is your target vehicle!

MUSIC: UP AND OUT

SFX: TAXI ENGINE ... CONTINUES IN BG

KLAATU We're hemmed in. (UP) Driver, we'll get out here.

SFX: RUSTLE OF PAPER MONEY ... TAXI
PULLS TO A STOP BEHIND--

KLAATU I'm gonna try to run for it. If they get me, you get to Gort! Now!

SFX: TAXI DOOR OPENS ... RUNNING
FOOTSTEPS

ARMY There he is! Stop or we'll shoot! Stop or we'll fire!

SFX: GUNFIRE!

HELEN Mr. Carpenter!

SFX: CROWD GATHERS, REACTS, MURMURS

KLAATU (DYING, TO HELEN) Gort! Run!

HELEN (HORRIFIED EXCLAMATION)

SFX: HELEN'S FOOTSTEPS AWAY

ARMY Never mind her! Check the guy.

SFX: CROWD MURMUR UP

HOST Helen is now involved in events far larger than herself. This theme of ordinary citizens getting involved in world altering events is another science fiction, even popular culture theme. For example, recall the "Miracle on Ice" when the United States defeated the Russian hockey team to win the Gold Medal at the 1980 Winter Olympics, Lake Placid, New York, one of the biggest upsets in Olympic sports history.

ACT 5, SCENE 2 -- INSTRUCTIONS TO GORT

MUSIC: FOR A DESPERATE RUN ... IN BG

SFX: HELEN'S RUNNING FOOTSTEPS

HELEN (BREATHING HARD, TO HERSELF) Klaatu barada nikto. Klaatu barada nikto. Klaatu--

MUSIC: TRANSITION ... THEN IN BG, IN AGREEMENT WITH FOLLOWING--

NARRATOR Centuries, ages of superhuman, superplanetary skill had bred intuition and a dim power of reason into the enormously complex intelligence inside of Gort's metal brain case. When Helen Benson stumbled up to the shed that housed the space machine, the guards were not there. Then she saw them. They were lying inside, their rifles fused and bent. Gort somehow knew that Klaatu was dead. Gort was already on the move. He was on the move toward Helen.

HELEN (TERRIFIED, SLOWLY) No! No! Gort, no!

MUSIC: FOR VISOR OPENING ... THEN IN BG

NARRATOR The visor of his helmet was opening on that cosmic incandescence within,

seething with world ruin, aiming
impassively at Helen.

HELEN (DESPERATE, SLOW, BREATHLESS) Gort!
Gort! Klaatu-- Klaatu barada -- barada
nikto.

MUSIC: UP, THEN DIES OUT

NARRATOR Helen Benson fainted.

SFX: EERIE ELECTRONIC HUM ...

CONTINUES IN BG

NARRATOR When she returned to consciousness, she
was lying on a dais bathed in a soft,
shadowless light, in a chamber vaguely
circular, of completely unfamiliar
build.

SFX: ELECTRONIC HUM RISES IN PITCH
AND WILDNESS, IN BG

NARRATOR She was in the space machine. Across the
room stood Gort, with his back to her,
and lying in front of him on a platform
was Klaatu.

HELEN (QUIETLY SURPRISED) Mr. Carpenter--

SFX: ELECTRONIC HUM HITS A PEAK
BEHIND--

NARRATOR Gort the machine, the automaton, was
applying electrodes to his master and a
piercing, whining, maddening sound
filled the ship.

SFX: ELECTRONIC HUM UP AND OUT

NARRATOR (BEAT, IN AWE) Klaatu moved. He sat up.
Stood up.

HELEN (STUNNED) Mr. Carpenter--!

KLAATU (WEAKLY) Hello.

HELEN I - I thought you were--

KLAATU I was. They took me to an emergency hospital at the city jail. Gort broke in and took me back here. This technique can restore life, in some cases, only for a limited time.

HELEN How long?

KLAATU No one can tell. Time enough and more for me to go outside and speak to Professor Barnhardt's scientists. I must speak to them. It's what I came for. Gort will put out the ramp.

ACT 5, SCENE 3 -- WARNING /
ULTIMATUM

MUSIC: BRIDGE

SFX: CROWD MURMURS ... OUT WITH--

KLAATU (SLIGHT ECHO, A SPEECH) You people of Earth! You men of science. You are here from all over your world -- Europe, Asia -- representing many nations, many ideas. I am leaving soon. You will forgive me if I speak bluntly. The

universe grows smaller every day. Where I come from, we believe there must be security for all -- or no one is secure. This does not mean giving up any freedom except the freedom to act irresponsibly. This is the message that I ask you to take back when you return to your native lands. Tell your people and your governments that we have created a race of robots whose function it is to patrol the planets in spaceships and preserve the peace. At the first sign of treachery, they will act automatically. Nothing you have here on Earth can stop them. The penalty for provoking their action is too terrible to risk.

SFX: CROWD MURMURS ... OUT WITH--

KLAATU

Your choice is simple. Live in peace or perish in violence. We shall be waiting for your answer. The decision rests with you. (BEAT, TO GORT) Gort -- berengo.

MUSIC: TAG ... FOR PUNCTUATION ...
THEN OUT

KLAATU

(ECHO) Remember.

HELEN

(I'll remember --- Mr. Carpenter.)

SFX: OMINOUS RUMBLE AS SPACESHIP
SLOWLY LIFTS OFF AND FLIES AWAY ...
CROWD REACTS ... RUMBLE HITS A
PEAK, THEN FADES OUT BEHIND--

NARRATOR

And, as they had seen him come, so did they see him depart. And the people of the Earth pondered upon the warning.

MUSIC: CURTAIN

SFX: APPLAUSE

MUSIC: RIR BREAK THEME, OPEN. ESTABLISH, THEN FADE OUT UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

BREAK #2--THE RIR BREAK

HOST

This is John Barber, producer and host of Re-Imagined Radio. With each episode we combine voices, sound effects, and music to spark your imagination . . .

SFX: RE-IMAGINED RADIO TEASER

Visit our website for more information and listening opportunities. Or subscribe to our podcasts. That's reimagedradio dot net

MUSIC: RIR THEME, RETURN. ESTABLISH, THEN DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

HOST CONCLUSION

HOST

This is Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is "The Day the Earth Stood Still," performed by the Lux Radio Theatre, January 4, 1954. Michael Renne stars as Klaatu. Jean Peters voices the part of Helen Benson.

This radio story features powerful science fiction themes, along with fear of invasion and nuclear destruction fostered by the Cold War struggles between the United States and the Soviet Union.

And there is the idea that some "other worldly" event might be the only way to break through human intransigence. The alien, Klaatu, arrives on Earth with a message and ultimatum: live peacefully or be destroyed as a danger to other planets.

Today, in our world, we face a similar message and ultimatum: address climate change or face extinction. Yet we continue our unreasoning suspicions and attitudes, thinking only of ourselves. Is it time for aliens to arrive?

**MUSIC: RIR THEME, UP, THEN DUCK
UNDER THE FOLLOWING**

HOST CREDIT ROLL

HOST

Re-Imagined Radio is produced with support from KXRW-FM. Vancouver, Washington's community radio station.

Content curation and script by John Barber.

Sound Design, music composition, and post-production by Marc Rose.

Graphic design by Holly Slocum Design.

Our announcer is Jack Armstrong.

This is John Barber, producer and host. Thank you so much for listening, and please, join us again for another episode of Re-Imagined Radio where we will continue our exploration of radio storytelling. Until then, all our episodes are available as podcasts. Download or subscribe wherever you get your podcasts.

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, THEN DUCK
UNDER THE FOLLOWING

CLOSE

SFX: RECORDED ANNOUNCER CLOSING
REMARKS

ANNOUNCER

This is a production of Re-Imagined
Radio. Our radio broadcasts are heard on
local, regional, and international
community radio stations.

For on demand streaming, point your
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(all one word, no punctuation) DOT net.

Thank you so much for listening, and
please, join us again for another
episode of Re-Imagined Radio as we
continue our exploration of radio
storytelling.

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, AND TO END