

“Things that go bump in the night”

FADE IN on a university campus; two professors, NEILL and HWA, walk together past a bell tower. A huge flash overhead, followed by an enormous crash in the near distance.

PROFESSOR NEILL: My God! Hwa, did you see that?

PROFESSOR HWA: That didn't look like a plane ...

The men walk rapidly and soon come upon a clearing with the blazing wreckage of what is obviously a spacecraft. Two things have been thrown clear: a medium-sized, vaguely rectangular scrap with writing on it, and a body, unmoving. The men run to the body, see there is nothing they can do, and look at each other with puzzlement and horror. Hwa picks up the scrap, which seems to cling to him oddly. Zoom in on the scrap:



CIENDATRESS IDAAN GREENMENHA
POASAMAGAZ STBULLMOOSE GOS EEMARS

PROFESSOR NEILL: *(pulls out his cell phone)* Emergency? Help! Get me the Pentagon. We're under attack! Alien attack! Help!

*NARRATOR: There is a 51st dimension, beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as Berkeley and as timeless as half a year. It is the middle ground between summer and autumn, between logic and intuition, and it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. It is a dimension not of sight or sound but of mind. You're playing in a place we call ... **THE EQUINOX ZONE.***

FADE OUT.

FADE IN on a university professor's office: desk, chairs, bookshelves. Through the glass panel on the door, backwards, can be read: "Dept. of Linguistics, E. Jose, Chair." A clock on the wall reads 12:00. In the office are NEILL and HWA and a four-star general; at the desk is PROFESSOR JOSE.

GENERAL: Professor Jose, we are preparing troops to attack as soon as we can figure out where this message came from.

JOSE: "Where" is the wrong question, General.

NEILL: What?

JOSE: No, "When."

HWA: Why?

JOSE: Surely it must have struck you that this message looks remarkably like English.

GENERAL: Nonsense. I can't read it.

JOSE: Not English as we know it. English from another time.

HWA: A time when they have UFOs?

JOSE: Exactly: Gentlemen, this is the English of the future. You are aware, of course, that I am the country's foremost paleofuturologist? Indeed. The English language is a constantly evolving organism, gentlemen. We do not speak or write today as Chaucer or Shakespeare, or even Jacqueline Susann, did. Words change. Spelling changes. This – this is extreme, but it is merely a puzzle.

NEILL: "Merely a puzzle?" A man is dead! I mean, an alien from the future is dead! We're under attack by aliens from the future!

GENERAL: Aliens from the future, nonsense. We are under attack by an enemy and must retaliate, with a nuclear option if necessary.

JOSE: No, no. Calm, gentlemen. It appears to me that we have here words that can be broken down into fragments which have undergone some sort of phonetic shift from English as we know it. Now all I have to do is figure out these linguistic shifts, work them backwards, and you'll be able to read the words the way we'd write them today. I shall solve it. Come back at five, gentlemen. Good day.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN: Professor Jose's office. 5:00. NEILL, HWA, and THE GENERAL arrive.

JOSE: *(Holding out a piece of paper filled with writing)* Gentlemen, I have uncovered the mystery of our future language, and you can too. I want you to share in the discovery.

GENERAL: What's this nonsense? This isn't a translation, it's another puzzle! Do you think we're here to play games? This is war!

JOSE: War? You fool! This was no attack ship! Figure it out! *(shaking the paper at them and gradually dissolving into wild hysterical laughter)*

NARRATOR (voice over): An unusual college town yields an unusual assignment with some very unusual repercussions. Repercussions probably never dreamed of by the owner of the vehicle that brought the message that started the whole thing, a visitor who began a war but may have been just a weekend warrior out for a spin that went very wrong in ... THE EQUINOX ZONE.

FADE OUT

From the Desk of Professor E. Jose

As I suspected, this is a drastically phonetically shifted message, from English into future-English. Fascinating, how our beautiful language has changed, that is, will change! Oh, the beauty of seeing the future! I want you to share in my joy of discovery! Here are clues to help you.

Each word can be broken into fragments. Each fragment has undergone a linguistic transformation, which can be decoded as follows: You will find two columns of definitions below. Once you find the words that the definitions clue, you will notice that pairs of words, one from each column, have parts in common. In all cases, the common part is at least two letters long. The common part may be at the beginning or the end of the word, or it may be around the middle; it will be in the same place for both words. (Note: you may find more than one apparent pairing for a word, but there is a unique solution to decoding the message!)

The clued words in each column are in alphabetical order, and paired words are not necessarily opposite each other. Cross out the common part from each word in the pair. (The remaining parts from the two words are not necessarily of the same length.) The rest of each word from the “future” column will be found somewhere in the mysterious text. Substitute the rest of the appropriate, paired word from the “present” column for the “future” piece to see the text as we would read it today. And then you’ll know what our visitor from the future – may he rest in peace – wanted to tell us.

	<u>FUTURE</u>		<u>PRESENT</u>
Place for pitchers (7)	_____	_____	Quaking tree (5)
I see Paris, I see France, I see the dancers’ underpants! (6)	_____	_____	Crabby disease? (6)
Ward off (with <i>off</i>) (4)	_____	_____	Confronted (5)
Man or His Girl (6)	_____	_____	Shortest evergreen (3)
Simpleton, or poke on the butt (5)	_____	_____	Foamy, sudsy (6)
Catherine, Santini, or balls of fire (5)	_____	_____	Elephantine party? (3)
Rancho (8)	_____	_____	Bad actor (3)
What ghosts do (5)	_____	_____	Averages, or goes with ways (5)
Monthly (8)	_____	_____	Christmas (4)
Cat call (4)	_____	_____	Kick or boat (4)
Where (although hopefully not what) soldiers eat (4)	_____	_____	3 rd place (4)
Talking through your hat? No, through your nose (5)	_____	_____	Is math sexy? This function is famous for its curves. (4)
Deck on a ship, or what a baby produces (4)	_____	_____	Rosebud, e.g. (4)
Appeared (6)	_____	_____	Row (4)
One night or Custer’s Last (5)	_____	_____	Stodgy (5)
Pokey (4)	_____	_____	That and that and that (5)
Locks (7)	_____	_____	Deutsch Dad (5)
Scram (7)	_____	_____	Avoirdupois (6)
Models or grinds down (5)	_____	_____	Kneeling guys wait for this (3)