

# The Alien in the Garage

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by Rob Keeley

Alternative ending...

**In *The Alien in the Garage*, Neil never found out that Jamie's imaginary friend was in fact real. But in this alternative extended ending, he did... This version of the story has never been published.**

“He’s going tonight,” Jamie said. “I’m going to miss him. I’ll be in bed when he leaves.”

“Oh, dear.” Mum smiled.

“Who’s coming next then?” Neil asked.

“I don’t know.” Jamie frowned. “I got a call from a magic rabbit... but then I’ve got the unicorn to fit in. I’ll have to think about it.”

He took a thoughtful mouthful of pasta.

“That’s the trouble, you see. With having so many friends.”

Neil just grinned.

“I’ve got this, anyway.” Jamie took the plastic ball from his pocket and placed it on the tabletop. “Souvenir.”

“What’s that?” Neil picked it up.

“Hey, careful!” Jamie made a grab for it. “That’s a piece of alien technology.”

“Oh yeah?” Neil turned it over and over between his fingers. “Which one of those boxes under the stairs did you find this in?” He flicked the ball carelessly back to Jamie, who caught it in a single frantic leap.

“Wonder what it was?” Mum paused, and gave the object a funny look. “I don’t remember it.”

“Probably packaging,” Neil suggested.

He raised his glass of water to his lips.

“Sort of thing that –”

He never finished that sentence.

There was a flash of light, a deafening thunderclap, and a sudden tremor seemed to shake the house.

“Bleurghh!” Neil spluttered, caught drinking water at just the wrong moment. He gasped and choked.

“What on Earth –?” Mum headed for the back door. A warm, sunny evening lay beyond. She turned back to Neil. “You all right, love?”

Soaked, wide-eyed, Neil gaped at Jamie.

Jamie just went on eating his tea.

“Told you.” He reached for a piece of bread. “Sounds like he’s gone early.” He took a bite, and spoke with his mouth full. “Probably didn’t want to upset me.”

He munched for a moment, totally unaware of both Mum and Neil staring at him.

Then he held out the plastic ball again to Neil.

“Actually, maybe you’d better have this, Neil. After all, I can’t do everything myself. He might want to come and see *you*. Next time.”

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