

THE STARFISH CENTRE PRIZE

by

LIZ STOCKLEY

Music by

CHRIS WILCOCK

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

THE STARFISH CENTRE PRIZE

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PRODUCTION NOTES

The play is set in the future when teams of astronauts are gathered at the great Starfish Space Centre ready to set out in search of something which will be of the greatest use to the human race. The Host introduces them and keeps the show rolling with plenty of Audience participation and entertainment from the wonderful Hernia dancers and the Heavenly Bodies singing group.

From time to time throughout the play the newsreaders report on the progress of the teams and also on world news, particularly environmental crises. We follow the progress of the green team who land on a planet where they meet some aliens about to embark on a mission of their own. They decide to go with them - and find themselves very surprised by the destination.

The play has an underlying message about taking care of the environment and plenty of opportunities for action and humour, with over-affectionate giant spiders, a translation machine with a mind of its own, and many other weird creatures.

The parts of the Newsreader(s) and the Host have a great many words but most of these could be read from notes, if desired.

There are eight songs:

The Starfish Centre Prize.
Watch This Space.
Definitely Rather Weird.
The Great Galactic Gallop.
Space to Breathe.
A Great Big Exciting Universe.
Heavenly Bodies.
This Is Our Earth.

Scene 1	At the Starfish Centre
Scene 2	Inside the spaceship and on an alien planet
Scene 3	In a field somewhere on earth
Scene 4	At the Starfish Centre

CAST

(Number of speeches after each name)

Newsreader(s)

Gameshow Host

Navigator (24)

Captain (37)

2nd Officer (31)

Crew 1 (18)

Crew 2 (11)

Crew 3 (3)

Crew 4 (3)

Crew 5 (2)

Computer (4) *(could use notes)*

Translation machine (11)

Ground Crew (1)

Alien 1 (21)

Alien 2 (7)

Alien 3 (4)

Captain Jones (7) *(quite long speeches)*

Captain King (9) *(quite long speeches)*

Cow 1 (10)

Cow 2 (8)

Cow 3 (7)

Policeman 1 (11)

Policeman 2 (5)

Non-speaking parts:-

Additional ground crew

7 other members of Blue Team

7 other members of Red Team

The Hernia Dancers.

The Heavenly Bodies.

[These can be the Hernia dancers again or a different group if required].

**More aliens, singing children and chorus members
as required.**

[The chorus could be assorted aliens or planets or even astronauts].

THE STARFISH CENTRE PRIZE

by Liz Stockley

Music by Chris Wilcock

SCENE 1

A CHILD'S voice off singing "**TWINKLE, TWINKLE LITTLE STAR**", unaccompanied, before the lights slowly come up on the NEWSREADER in the T.V. Screen which is in front of SR and raised up as high as possible. The NEWSREADER speaks over the song to start with.

Child: (off) *Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are,
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.*

Newsreader: There is mounting concern tonight about the increase in pollution levels; people are being advised to stay indoors during the hot weather as there is a build up of dangerous fumes in all urban areas. Another tanker has shed a vast oil slick in the North Sea and wildlife experts fear that this may wipe out the last remaining colony of grey seals. Refugees are still fleeing from the area around the crippled nuclear power station in Texas. Scientists say it is too early to assess the effects of the accident, but it is likely that the area will have to be evacuated for some time. That is the end of the news. Now we are going over live to our outside broadcast team in the famous Starfish Space Centre, Florida, where three teams of astronauts are due to leave earth any minute in an attempt to win the richest and most prestigious prize the world has ever known - the Starfish Centre Prize!

(Competition Host runs in to lively music and loud applause).

*MUSIC No. 1 - THE STARFISH CENTRE PRIZE
[Played as an instrumental INTRO]*

Host: Thank you! Thank you! Good evening everyone and welcome to this wonderful building, the world famous Starfish space Centre. Tonight is the start of the competition held only once every five years, in which teams of astronauts leave earth to find something in the universe which will be of the greatest benefit to mankind. Over the years winners of this great prize have brought back to earth such wonderful discoveries as the Plutonian Roastbeef tree, the metal eating pig from Mars which has revolutionised the waste disposal industry, and last but not least of course, the amazing dancers from the planet Hernia who will be entertaining you later.

(Applause).

Host: But first, let me introduce you to the three teams of finalists in the competition who will be leaving earth tonight on their mission, full of hope that they too will change the pages of history. First, here on my right are the blue team! On my left, the red team! And here, behind me are the green team!

(Lots of applause throughout this and then the music starts immediately for the first song).

[Additional singers could be GROUND CONTROL CREW. The dancers from HERNIA also perform during this song - it needs to be a big production number].

Teams: *We're crossing the very last frontier,
We're blasting off far into space,
We want to be first in the whole universe,
We're hoping to win the race.*

Chorus: *The way may be long and dangerous,
Out in the starry skies,
But we're setting our course for the highest there is,
The Starfish Centre Prize.*

*Leaving our friends and our families,
They're sad as they watch us go,
But proud of our chance to help mankind advance,
They patiently wait below.*

*We may face unknown hazards and dangers,
As we travel to alien worlds,
But we won't be afraid as new history's made,
And the hearts of mankind are stirred.*

(The HERNIA DANCERS do their dance before the final chorus. Then everyone sings first verse again and lights come up on the GROUND CONTROL CREW who are sitting in front of their control panels and doing a hand jive to symbolise using their computers. The ASTRONAUTS mime getting into their capsules and as the music stops, the countdown starts - perhaps by NEWSREADER - and there is a blackout at lift off. ASTRONAUTS get quickly offstage and lights come up on GROUND CREW cheering and shaking hands).

[Another verse and chorus of the song perhaps before scene changes into the inside of the GREEN TEAM'S spaceship].

(The CREW are standing in positions behind the CAPTAIN'S chair, the SECOND OFFICER is on his right, NAVIGATOR on his left, all facing the front, i.e. looking out over the heads of the audience).

Navigator: O.K., Captain. We're out of orbit now and steady on course.

2nd Officer: Shall I switch to automatic now, Sir?

Captain: Yes. All right, relax everyone. Well done. *(He stands up and walks to the front of the Ship, i.e. stage front, peering out).* Look. What a view!

Crew 1: Can we still see Earth, Sir?

Captain: No, but can you see that star. Just to the left a bit?

Crew 1: Yes.

Captain: That's our sun. About eleven light years away now.

2nd Officer: Ninety-six million million kilometres.

(They are all silent for a moment).

Crew 1: Quite a thought.

Crew 2: It's hard to believe somehow.

Crew 3: Funny; however many flights you make, you never quite get used to it.

Crew 4: I knew I should have had my boots mended.

Crew 5: Why?

Crew 4: Long walk home.

(They all laugh and then all peer out to the left, following with their eyes something which moves fast past the ship).

Crew 2: What was that?

Navigator: Meteor. You don't often see them that close.

Crew 1: Just as well I should think.

Navigator: Oh you needn't worry. That was still a very long way away from us.
There's plenty of room out here.

Crew 3: I wonder how the other teams are getting on.

Captain: I expect they are doing exactly the same as us. Watching. Watching and wondering.

(Music starts for next song. GREEN TEAM sing on stage, BLUE and RED TEAMS enter, one on each side of the hall and sing from just in front of stage).

MUSIC No. 2 - WATCH THIS SPACE

Chorus: *Silently sailing the seas of the sky,
 Marvels and miracles round us fly,
 Secrets of heaven before your face,
 Come to the window and watch this space.*

Verse: *What do you see in the black of the night?
 What do the meteors pass in their flight?
 Systems and galaxies far from the earth,
 From people we love and the place of our birth.*

Chorus: *Silently*

Verse: *What do you see in the cosmos's deeps?
 Space has her secrets but many she keeps,
 White suns and red dwarfs and black holes that yawn,
 Planets and comets which die and are born.*

Chorus: *Silently*

Verse: *We may have learnt much but we can't pretend
 To know what there is at the universe end,
 But one thing we're sure of wherever we go,
 There are secrets too great for us ever to know.*

Chorus: *Silently*

(Then, as the lights fade, the BLUE and RED TEAMS exit, GREEN TEAM settle back into their positions for flight, and curtains close).

SCENE 2

(Child's voice off sings second verse of "TWINKLE, TWINKLE", unaccompanied).

Child: *(off)* *When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkling bravely through the night,
Twinkle when the day has gone,
Twinkle brightly on and on.*

(The scene which opens then is the same as at the end of SCENE 1 with the CREW in their "flight positions").

Navigator: Retro-boosters on.

2nd Officer: Decelerating.

Navigator: Height above planet surface two thousand metres.

2nd Officer: Computer has located a suitable landing area.

Navigator: Stand by for landing.

2nd Officer: Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one.

Navigator: Touch down. Height above planet surface is minus one metre.

Captain: What exactly does that mean?

Navigator: *(Looking out of window, above heads of Audience).* We seem to have sunk into a bit of a hole, Sir. Nothing to worry about.

Captain: Right. Can we have computer checks on the planet's environment, please.

[The COMPUTER is a robot who can walk and who talks in a slightly electronic voice].

Computer: Data for unnamed planet orbiting G type star NGC 5993 in the galaxy M732 is as follows. Diameter 11,550 kilometers, distance from NGC 5993 137, 40 million kilometers, orbital period 308 earth days. Surface gravity 10 Newtons, atmosphere 75% nitrogen, 20% oxygen, 5% carbon dioxide and

inert gases. The weather is sunny today with the possibility of thundery showers by evening, the wind is light but variable and the pollen count is low. Have a nice day.

Captain: Just a minute, did you say?

Computer: Data now completed. Have a nice day.

Captain: Thank you. Well, we'd better decide on our next move.

Computer: Traffic conditions are generally good, but there is a build up of congestion in the Andromeda region, due to a heavy cargo ship having shed its load whilst in transit between space stations. It is recommended that all spaceships avoid this area for the moment. Have a nice day.

Captain: What ever is that?

(There is a loud banging noise which seems to be coming from beneath the floor of the ship. Everyone looks down, then at each other. The banging continues).

Navigator: No sign of any mechanical reason for it, Sir.

Crew 1: But we are picking up something on the ship's sensors.

Crew 2: Look!

(He moves forward and points out of the window. They all follow and gaze out with exclamations of amazement).

2nd Officer: Now what on earth are those?

Captain: Well, on earth is something they certainly are not.

Navigator: I've never seen anything like it. I wonder if they're picking it up on the monitors back on earth.

Ground Crew: Yes, yes. We're getting pictures now. How extraordinary!

(The rest of the GROUND CREW make appropriate noises, gazing at their monitor, and the music starts for the next song which could be sung in groups perhaps - SPACE CREW doing line 1, GROUND CREW line 2, and GREEN and RED teams could be drafted in for extra volume if necessary. The chorus of ALIENS can come in here to help sing and to do an alien dance).

MUSIC No. 3 - DEFINITELY RATHER WEIRD

Crew: *It's definitely rather weird.
It hasn't any hair nor beard,
It doesn't look a lot too tall,
Nor yet particularly small,*

*But it's definitely definitely rather weird.
It's definitely something new,
It looks as if there's quite a few,
It's just impossible to see
Exactly what their shape can be,
But it's definitely definitely something new.*

*It's definitely quite bizarre
We really can't say what they are,
Although they don't appear to be
Too cross that we've arrived for tea,
But it's definitely definitely quite bizarre.*

*It's definitely a surprise
We really can't believe our eyes,
They seem to know that we are here,
And so we won't go very near,
But it's definitely definitely a surprise.*

Crew 2: They all seem to be coming out of those holes.

Crew 3: Perhaps they live in them.

(More banging).

Crew 4: Well, if they do, it's no wonder one of them is annoyed. We've probably parked on its front door.

Crew 5: Can't we move along a bit?

Navigator: Not that easy.

2nd Officer: Well, we've got to do something to stop that noise.

Navigator: I suppose we could just push it a bit. If the atmosphere's all right and the gravity's not too strong, there shouldn't be much of a problem.

2nd Officer: Right. Open the hatches and prepare for landing party exit.

Crew 1: Everything ready, Sir. Off you go.

(NAVIGATOR, CAPTAIN, CREW 3, 4 and 5 exit. Just after they've gone, NAVIGATOR re-enters for a moment).

Navigator: Have you put it in neutral?

Crew 2: Yes, Sir.

Navigator: Right, thanks.

(The remaining CREW all come to peer and point through the window, and during the following conversation, a group of the ALIENS walk in, unnoticed, behind them and stand in a cluster peering and pointing at them).

2nd Officer: There they are, look. Gravity and atmosphere seem to be O.K.

Crew 1: Funny, though, there's no sign any more of those whatever they were.

Crew 2: If we were right about the holes, then they've probably gone back down them.

2nd Officer: Oh, look. The Captain's waving.

(They all wave back. Behind them, the ALIENS wave too, in a slow and rather puzzled manner).

Crew 1: It looks as if everything's all right. He's giving a thumbs up.

(Again they all do a thumbs up sign and the ALIENS copy it).

Crew 2: They're about to start pushing the ship along a bit. Look out, it might be a bit bumpy.

(There is more banging and thumping and the movement of the ship can be indicated by both CREW MEMBERS and ALIENS swaying violently first to one side and then the other a few times. One of the ALIENS loses his foothold and is thrown towards the front of the ship where he bumps into the 2nd OFFICER who is standing just behind the other 2).

2nd Officer: *(Without looking round).* I say, steady on!

(He then does a double take of the other 2, still in front of him, and turns slowly round to see the ALIEN. The other 2, sensing something, turn as well, and there is a moment of amazed silence as both groups look at each other and the ALIEN moves back to join his fellows).

Crew 1: Oh dear! I think someone must have left the door open.

2nd Officer: All right, everyone. Don't panic.

Crew 2: They don't look unfriendly.

2nd Officer: We'd better try communicating. *(He lifts one hand in a salute and steps forward).* Hallo there!

(The ALIENS all lift their hands too).

Aliens: Gobbledegook!

2nd Officer: Well, they seem to have got the right idea. What next?

Crew 1: I believe the usual thing is "Take me to your leader".

2nd Officer: Good idea. Take me to your leader.

Aliens: Gobbledegook, gobbledegook.

Crew 1: What about, "Do you do Bed and Breakfast?".

2nd Officer: No, I don't think so. Umm, I know. We come in peace.

Aliens: Gobbledegook, gobbledegook, gobbledegook.

2nd Officer: No, this isn't getting us anywhere. Let's try that new translation machine, shall we?

(CREW 1 and 2 exit and return with the machine which consists of another robot with two large funnels, one held in each hand. The ALIENS and the 2nd OFFICER smile at each other in an uneasy silence).

Crew 1: Here we are. We just switch on here, and then you stand here, like this. *(He positions 2nd OFFICER on one side of machine, pointing the funnel towards him).* And if we could get one of these er gentlemen or ladies to stand on the other side.

(2nd OFFICER beckons to the front ALIEN who eventually comes and stands on the other side of the machine with the other funnel pointing towards him).

Crew 1: Now, if you speak into here, the machine will translate and your message will come out over there.

2nd Officer: That's amazing.

Crew 1: Yes, it is rather. The machine can pick up and categorize communication patterns for any language at all - even if it's never heard it before.

2nd Officer: Really? Well, let's try it, shall we? I'll tell them we don't mean any harm. *(He clears his throat).* Greetings. We come from the planet Earth and bring the good wishes of all its inhabitants to you. We are friendly.

(The machine whirs and clicks a bit, CREW 2 shows the ALIEN how to put his ear by the "receiver" [i.e. the funnel which acts both as microphone and speaker] and he does so).

Machine: Gobbledegook, gobbledegook.

Alien: Gobbledegook.

Machine: Gobbledegook, gobbledegook, gobbledegook.

2nd Officer: Do you understand?

Machine: Gobbledegook, gobbledegook, gobbledegook, gobbledegook.
Gobbledegook.

Alien: Gook?

Machine: Gook?

2nd Officer: What do you think that means?

Crew 1: Difficult to say. It all sounds like gobbledegook to me.

2nd Officer: Mm. Let's try something different. What lovely weather you're having here; is it always so nice?

Machine: Gob.

Alien: Gook, gook, gobbledegook, gook gook gook, gobbledegook. Gook.

Machine: And double gook.

2nd Officer: Oh dear, we don't seem to be getting very far.

Crew 1: Oh here comes the captain. He'll know what to do.

(The CAPTAIN and LANDING PARTY enter).

Captain: Ah, I see you've met the natives. How are you getting on? Wonderful machine that, isn't it? *(He walks across and speaks very loudly into the machine).* Good afternoon! My name is Captain Clayton. What is your name?

Machine: Bonjour, je m'appelle Gook gook gobbledegook.

Alien: Gook gook gobbledegook?

Captain: No, no, Captain Clayton. Je m'appelle No, that's wrong. Why is this machine speaking French?

Crew 1: It doesn't seem to be working awfully well, sir.

Crew 2: Shall I try it with a bit of German? Ich heisse Captain Clayton? Wie heissen Sie? Wo ist der Rathaus?

Machine: What?

Alien: Gook?

Captain: Oh this is ridiculous, there must be something wrong with it. I'll try once more. Hallo! We come in peace, we have come in a spaceship all the way from Earth which is the five thousand and ninety second planet on the left in the Milky Way. Can you understand me?

(The MACHINE goes into a lot of whirring and clicking, and finally there is a long pause while they all watch it, expectantly).

Machine: Goo.

Alien: Gloo?

Machine: No. Goo.

Captain: Oh, you stupid machine.

Machine: I'm not telling him that.

Captain: Oh, switch it off. We'll have to think of something else.

(CREW 1 and 2 take the MACHINE out and then one of the aliens comes forward holding a stick. He touches his own forehead with it, and then holds it up obviously wanting to touch the CAPTAIN'S forehead with it too).

Captain: Oh dear, do you think it's all right?

2nd Officer: Well, it doesn't seem to have hurt him, sir.

(The CAPTAIN leans forward and the ALIEN touches him with the stick).

Captain: Right. Now what?

Alien: Now you can understand what I'm saying.

Captain: That's amazing. So I can! And can you understand me?

Alien: Of course. It's really quite simple. Allow me.

(He goes round touching everyone else on the forehead with the stick and they all immediately start shaking hands with each other, chattering and laughing. After a minute, the CAPTAIN holds his hands up to silence everyone, and they eventually quieten down).

Captain: Well, I think we've all made our introductions and on behalf of my crew I should like to thank you for your welcome. I should explain that we are on a mission to find something anywhere in the universe which will be of the most benefit to our home planet, Earth.

Alien 1: And what sort of thing exactly are you looking for?

2nd Officer: Well, personally, I have to say that that stick you've used to make us all understand each other would be an awfully useful thing.

Navigator: There are hundreds of different languages on our planet and that would save an enormous amount of trouble.

Alien 1: Well, we have many of them. Allow me to present it to you and your race with our best wishes. And now, I'm afraid we must leave you.

Captain: Leave so soon? But we had hoped you might be able to show us round a bit.

Alien 2: We would love to. And perhaps one day you will come back and spend longer here. But you have arrived just as we were about to leave and I'm afraid our journey is too important to delay.

Captain: May we ask where you are going?

Alien 2: Let me show you.

(He leads them to the front of stage, the others cluster round, and he points out across the heads of the Audience. They all follow where he is pointing with their eyes).

Alien 2: Do you see that tiny galaxy? Just to the left a bit. There. It looks tiny but of course it's actually quite a big galaxy, and in it there is a planet which is in trouble. We are going to try to help.

Navigator: What sort of trouble?

Alien 2: It seems that some of the creatures who live there have become so greedy that they are killing off all the others and spoiling the planet so that before long nothing at all will be able to exist there and the planet will be destroyed.

2nd Officer: But that's terrible. Will you be able to stop them?

Alien 1: We hope so. We shall try, but of course we can only tell them and who is to know if they will listen to us. We will use no violence.

Alien 2: Perhaps you would like to come with us? A different voice from a different planet may help. Who knows.

Captain: Well, I suppose we could. After all, we've completed our mission now. I don't think either of the other teams will come back with anything more useful than this stick. What do you all think?

2nd Officer: I say, yes. I can't bear to think of a planet being ruined by that that sort of thoughtlessness.

Navigator: Quite. It's really terrible. I think we should do anything we can to help.

Crew: Yes, yes. We should go. Let's try. Good idea

(Music starts for next song. Other TEAMS and GROUND CREW could also sing this if required).

MUSIC No. 4 - THE GREAT GALACTIC GALLOP

Crew: *The galactic gallop is the dance for me,
You can do it in the morning, you can do it after tea,
You can do it with your family or friends who come to call
You can do it any time or place, it's lots of fun for all.*

Chorus: *The great galactic gallop,
For exercise the best,
The great galactic gallop,
Forget about the rest,*

*Just let your inhibitions go
And join in all the fun,
The great galactic gallop,
It's the only one!*

*If you're feeling low and really don't know what to do,
You can try a course of tranquillising tea to get you through,
You can go and have some therapy but better far, my dear,
Do the great galactic gallop till your worries disappear.*

*They are doing it just everywhere across the Milky Way,
Wherever you may travel to, you'll hear the people say:
"Come in and have a cup of tea and then we'll have a ball
With the great galactic gallop which is lots of fun for all."*

Captain: All right. Everyone is agreed. We'll come with you.

Alien 1: Good. Follow us then

Navigator: Don't drive too fast, will you?

(Everyone exits. Lights down. A child's voice off could sing the nursery rhyme):

Child: *(off)* *There was an old woman tossed up in a basket,
Seventy times as high as the moon,
Where she was going I couldn't but ask it,
For in her hand she carried a broom.
"Old woman, old woman, old woman," quote I,
"Where are you going to up so high?"
"To sweep the cobwebs out of the sky,"
"May I go with you?" "Aye, bye and bye."*

(Lights up on the television screen and newsreader again).

Newsreader: There is concern tonight about the build-up of radioactive material after tests in Alaska. Government representatives in America and in Europe are meeting to discuss emergency measures. Scientists are still hopeful that the world's only two remaining African elephants, who are being kept in a secret location, will breed next year. This week they were introduced to each other and so far seem to be getting on very well. This will be the last chance to prevent the species from becoming extinct. Ultra violet levels are reaching

a new high in the south of England, and people are being advised to go outside as little as possible. And now we take you over once more to the Starfish Centre in Florida for a latest update on the progress of the teams in the great Starfish Centre Prize.

(Competition host runs in to music and applause).

Host: Thank you! Thank you! Good evening once again and welcome to the Starfish Centre. As you will have heard, all our teams of astronauts left earth safely and are now well into their missions. Tonight we are hoping that it may actually be possible to speak to some of them and to find out exactly how they are getting on. Hello, this is the Starfish Centre calling Captain Jones. Can you hear me, blue team?

(CAPTAIN JONES appears on the television screen, half hidden by a very large egg. There are intermittent thudding noises).

Cap. Jones: Yes, I can hear you Starfish Centre. And I don't know if you are able to see us on the monitor, but if so you will see that we have landed on this very beautiful planet and behind us there is a magnificent sunset over the mountains.

Host: And can I ask if you think there may be anything on this beautiful planet which may be prize-winning material in this wonderful competition?

Cap. Jones: Well perhaps you can see this egg. It's far larger than anything you would ever find on earth and yet it is also far more nutritious and delicious. The huge birds who produce these, lay them while actually on the wing, and the noise you can hear is these huge eggs falling on the ground around us and on the roof of the ship.

Host: Don't they break?

Cap. Jones: No, they have extremely tough shells, and it also seems that the birds can lay quite a few each day. Anyway, we hope to investigate more closely tomorrow, but we do feel that the possibilities are tremendous.

Host: Tremendous indeed! Thank you, Captain Jones and may we all wish you the best of luck. Now, I wonder if we can reach Captain King of the red team? Are you there Captain King?

(CAPTAIN JONES has by now disappeared, and CAPTAIN KING appears. He is holding a thick piece of rope).

Cap. King: Yes, here we are. Receiving you loud and clear.

Host: And how is your mission going so far? Any exciting discoveries yet?

Cap. King: This may look like an ordinary piece of string to you back on earth, but it is in fact a piece of spider's web, and it is stronger by far than any material yet manufactured on earth. Our tests so far indicate that it is actually unbreakable.

Host: That's amazing!

Cap. King: Yes, it is, isn't it?

Host: And what about these spiders who produce the material?

Cap. King: Well this may be the only problem, and *(As he speaks one or two large hairy spider's legs start to stretch across the screen and he becomes increasingly agitated)* we have yet to find a way of communicating with these creatures and just a minute that's better *(He disentangles himself from a leg)* er, they seem quite friendly, but they are rather large and anyway, I think I'd better go now and er

(He disappears from the screen).

Host: Yes, well, good luck with that, Captain King. As you can all see, *(to Audience)* the exploration of new planets is not always without its problems. Anyway, now we are going to contact our final team, the green team. Captain Clayton, this is the Starfish Centre, are you receiving me?

Cap. Clayton: Yes, Starfish Centre. We can hear you.

Host: And how are you getting on, green team?

Cap. Clayton: Well, we have been having quite an exciting time here. We have made contact with the inhabitants of this planet and we are now able to join them on their own mission to rescue another planet which is on the brink of destruction.

Host: And any luck so far with a discovery which might win your team the prize?

Cap. Clayton: Oh, I think so. You see this stick? This is a remarkable piece of technology which can enable any race or species to understand and be able to speak to any other race whatsoever.

Host: A sort of universal translator?

Cap. Clayton: Exactly.

Host: Well, may we wish you all the very best of luck. Let's all hope that you will be able to save the threatened planet and come home safely with your wonderful translating stick. And now let me welcome once again the Hernia dancers to round off this evening's show. More news from the Starfish Centre at the same time tomorrow. See you then!

(HERNIA dancers come in and there is a reprise of MUSIC No. 1 - THE

STARFISH CENTRE PRIZE. *GROUND CREW and ASTRONAUTS could be brought in again to sing, possibly the CHORUS too).*

SCENE 3

The Scene is a field somewhere on earth and the ALIEN SPACESHIP has either just landed there or is about to land.

(In the darkness a child's voice sings):-

Child: *(off)* **Sally go round the sun, Sally go round the moon,
Sally go round the chimney pots on a Saturday afternoon.**

(CREWS, ALIENS, GROUND CREW enter to sing):-

MUSIC No. 5 - SPACE TO BREATHE

*Such a crowded planet, spinning round its sun,
On this tiny planet is there room for everyone?
Earth and air and water, sunshine, all is free,
But will it last for ever and for eternity?*

Chorus: *Such a crowded planet, spinning round in space,
Crowded full of creatures and the human race
Such a tiny planet, what will be its fate?
We must take good care of it before it is too late.*

*Such a crowded planet, spinning round its sun,
On this tiny planet our lives were all begun,
Mountains, valleys, rivers flowing to the sea,
Will it last for ever and for all eternity?*

Chorus: *Such a*

(Lights come up very slowly on to a night scene in the field. ALIENS enter cautiously. Sound of owls hooting, cows lowing. Suddenly three COWS enter from the other side and the ALIENS and the COWS stop dead and look

at each other).

Alien 1: Gobbledegook, gobbledegook.

Cow: Moo, moo.

Alien 2: Goo, goo? Gobbledegoo?

(ALIEN 1 takes a translation stick and touches first himself and the other ALIENS and then all the COWS with it).

Alien 1: There, that's better.

Cow 1: Haven't you brought a bucket?

Alien 1: A bucket?

Cow 2: A bucket of feed.

Cow 3: The grass isn't what it used to be, you know.

Alien 2: The grass?

Cow 1: Grass. Like you're standing on. In fact, would you mind just moving your foot a bit. There's a juicy patch just there. Thank you.

Alien 2: What's happened to the grass then?

Cow 2: No quality, that's what. Like everything these days. I put it down to traffic pollution myself.

Alien 3: Traffic?

Cow 3: Cars. Those terrible tin can things on wheels. Make a terrible smell and it hangs around all over the grass.

Alien 3: So these "cars" are responsible for all the problems on your planet?

Cow 2: Well, that's what I say, yes.

Alien 1: Can you take us to meet them? We may be able to help find the answer to all your trouble with the grass.

Cow 1: *(Thoughtfully).* I don't think they talk.

Cow 2: No, I don't think they do.

Cow 3: What you need is a human.

Alien 1: A human?

Cow 1: One of those funny little things with two legs.

Cow 2: And big heads with fur on the top.

Cow 3: You don't see them out a lot.

Cow 1: They live in those big box things.

Cow 2: When they come out they move about in cars.

Cow 3: Can't think what they do all the time really.

Cow 1: No use for much.

Cow 2: Except buckets.

Cow 3: Yes, buckets. Didn't you bring any buckets?

Alien 2: No, I'm sorry, we didn't. But we'll go and look for one if you like.

Alien 3: And see if we can find any of these humans.

(ALIENS exit, COWS graze and lights come up on NEWSREADER).

Newsreader: We interrupt this programme to bring you a newsflash. Authorities have admitted that the rumours that an alien spaceship has landed in the south of England are true. For the moment the exact location is being kept a secret, but police say that the situation is completely under control and there is no need for panic. As soon as we have more details we will of course bring them to you. Stay tuned.

(Lights fade on NEWSREADER, there is the sound of police sirens, flashing blue lights etc., and then the lights come up on the field where ALIENS come in pursued by two local POLICEMEN).

Police 1: Right. I want you to stand exactly where you are and not move. Got it?

Police 2: I don't think they understand you, sir.

Police 1: Oh, they've got the idea all right. They're not moving look.

Police 2: I don't think they seem unfriendly though.

Police 1: One of the first things you learn in this job, lad, is never trust anyone or anything. We'll just keep them here till reinforcements arrive. Stand well back.

Alien 1: Gobbledegook?

Police 1: None of that, now. Just you keep quiet

Police 2: I think he's trying to talk to us, sir.

Alien 1: Gobbledegook, gobbledegook!

Police 1: No, I don't like his tone at all. Just you be quiet! And you can put that down straightaway.

(The ALIEN touches himself and the other ALIENS with the stick and attempts to touch the POLICEMEN with it).

Police 1: Oh no, you don't. Make a note of that, lad. Attempted to assault a police officer.

Police 2: I don't think it was

Police 1: Who's the senior officer here? Who's got ten times as much experience as you? Right, enough said. Attempted assault. Write it down. I can't think where those reinforcements are.

(There is a loud noise as of SPACESHIP landing, and then a squeal of brakes).

Police 1: Whatever was that?

(The CAPTAIN and CREW of green team run in).

Navigator: Oh, here you all are. We lost you after you turned left at The Great Bear.

Alien 1: We're very pleased to see you. We don't seem to have met with a very friendly welcome.

Navigator: But what are you doing here? This is Earth; this isn't where you were going.

Alien 1: Oh, but it is. There's no question about that.

Police 1: Just a minute, just a minute. I'm afraid I shall have to ask you your business, sir. You see I could charge you with obstructing a police officer in the course of his duty.

Captain: What are you talking about?

Alien 3: I'm afraid they won't let us use the translator with them. They can't understand anything we're saying.

2nd Officer: It's all right, officer. These people are friends of ours and they mean no harm.

Crew 1: Just let him tap you on the head with that stick, and you'll be able to understand their language.

Police 1: I'm afraid I must ask you if you have been drinking, sir.

Crew 1: No, of course, not. We've been driving a spaceship.

Police 1: Oh, dear. Drunk in charge of a spaceship. Make a note of that, will you. I'm afraid that's rather a serious offence.

Captain: Look, this is hopeless. These visitors should be treated with the proper respect.

Alien 3: We do have an important message for this planet.

(The COWS, who have been grazing nearby, have wandered over).

Cow 1: It's a message about grass and cars.

Cow 2: And buckets.

Cow 3: You ought to listen.

Police 2: I don't believe it. Are those cows talking to you?

Navigator: They are. And we can talk to them too.

Police 1: All right, sir. Would you mind just blowing into this bag?

Crew 2: Watch. I'll ask her to do something for me. Excuse me, do you think you

could just bring me that gentleman's hat, please?

Cow 1: Hat?

Crew 2: That thing on his head. It's a sort of bucket really.

Cow 1: Bucket, you say. Oh yes. Right.

(She removes the OFFICER'S hat and gives it to CREW 2).

Police 1: Oy, you, get off! I just don't believe it. I'm getting out of here. This is no job for the police. Come on!

2nd Officer: There are many things in the universe that we have to learn to understand, officer. These people will tell us about them.

Captain: Listen.

(Music starts for next song).

MUSIC No. 6 - A GREAT BIG EXCITING UNIVERSE

*It's a great big exciting universe,
It's a great big exciting space,
It's so big and so truly wonderful,
Expanding at a quite amazing pace,
We've seen planets, quasars, asteroids,
Red dwarfs and white ones as well,
Things so amazing and extraordinary
You never would believe the things we tell
It's a great big exciting universe,
It's a great big exciting space.*

*It's a great big exciting universe,
It's a tapestry made of stars,
Full of strange-sounding places far away,
Andromeda and Jupiter and Mars,
We've seen black holes, white holes, meteors,
Stars that go shooting in the night,
Things so amazing and extraordinary,
You'd think that we had problems with our sight.
It's a great big exciting universe,
It's a great big exciting space.*

Repeat Verse 1

Navigator: So it really is the Earth you meant to come to?

Alien 1: Oh yes, there is no doubt about it. And this Earth is your planet?

Navigator: Yes, this is our home.

Alien 1: But you seem like reasonable beings. How could you have treated your home so badly?

Navigator: I don't think we realised we were.

2nd Officer: May I suggest that we all go over to the Starfish Centre. It seems to me that you need to give your message to someone more important than us.

Alien 2: Good idea. How do we get there?

2nd Officer: You follow us this time. Don't miss the left turn at the coast of America.

Cow 1: Do you think you could bring some buckets when you come back?

Alien 3: I hope we can bring you something better than buckets.

Captain: Yes. Clean grass for ever!

(They all exit, leaving the cows gazing upwards as there is the sound of the spaceships revving up and leaving. COWS exit too and there is a sound of a CHILD'S voice off again) :-

Child: *(off)* ***Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon,
The little dog laughed to see such fun,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.***

(The HERNIA DANCERS enter to sing the next song).

MUSIC No. 7 - HEAVENLY BODIES

(This is a 4 chord 60's style number with a background chorus of Shuwadebop etc. It would be nice sung by a glamorous all girl group dressed in 60's gear, in close harmony).

***Heavenly bodies,
Drifting round in space,
Heavenly bodies,
Move at quite a pace.
Each fiery comet in the night,
Each shooting star you see,
Will fill your heart with happiness***

*'Cos it's so heavenly,
Heavenly bodies.*

*Heavenly bodies,
The beauty out in space,
Heavenly bodies,
Amaze the human race.
Each planet dancing round its sun,
The moon whose light we see,
Will fill your heart with happiness
'Cos it's so heavenly,
Heavenly bodies.*

*Heavenly bodies,
Their orbits come and go,
Heavenly bodies,
A celestial movie show,
Go out and look into the sky,
The beauty's all for free
Your heart will fill with happiness
'Cos it's so heavenly,
Heavenly bodies.*

SCENE 4

(Lights go up on the NEWSREADER).

Newsreader: And that is the end of the news for this evening. We will of course bring you the latest updates on the smog situation as soon as we can, but meanwhile we must repeat the advice given to people in built up areas to stay indoors if possible. And now, on a lighter note, we are taking you over once again to the wonderful Starfish Centre in Florida for the final judging of the great Starfish Centre Prize!

(HOST runs in, Music (THE STARFISH CENTRE PRIZE) and applause, and lights come up to reveal we are at the Starfish Centre again. GROUND CREW are in their places and all three TEAMS are there).

Host: Good evening and welcome to you all! It's marvellous to see such a great and enthusiastic audience here tonight. And I know it's going to be a fantastic evening so sit back and enjoy yourselves. As you will by now know, our three teams of astronauts are safely back on earth, and from what I've been hearing, they've all had a fantastic time. So first of all let's talk to the Blue Team, led by Captain Jones.

(The BLUE TEAM run in to centre stage, to applause and music).

Host: Well now, Captain Jones. The last time I spoke to you, you were very excited - or should I say eggcited *(Tries to elicit laugh from Audience!)*. So have you brought one of the giant eggs back for us, or did you find something even better?

Cap. Jones: Can I ask you to just taste this?

(One of the TEAM MEMBERS passes him a jam jar and spoon and he offers some to the HOST who tries it and makes appreciative noises).

Cap. Jones: What do you think?

Host: Absolutely delicious. I can safely say that this is the very very best peanut butter I have ever tasted. That's quite a find, Captain Jones.

Cap. Jones: Ah, but that's only part of it. You see this box?

(TEAM MEMBERS hand him a box. A buzzing noise can be heard in it).

Cap. Jones: In this box is a bee; no ordinary bee though.

Host: You mean it's a peanut butter bee?

Cap. Jones: Indeed it is. But that's only if it feeds on nectar from peanut flowers. Feed it on strawberry flowers and it makes strawberry jam. Feed it on orange flowers and it will make marmalade.

Host: Really? Well, that is a remarkable discovery and will no doubt be of great benefit to all those sandwich eating people of the Earth. I'm sure we'd all like to congratulate the Blue Team, so let's hear it for the Blue Team!

(Applause. The BLUE TEAM move back, and RED TEAM come to centre stage to applause and music).

Host: Welcome, Captain King and the Red Team. Now, Captain King, last time I saw you you were spinning a yarn *(laugh!)* about spiders' webs. How did you get on with that in the end?

Cap. King: I'm afraid we had to give that up. The spiders were just too friendly. It isn't easy to deal with a buffalo-sized spider that wants to cuddle you all the time.

Host: No, I can quite see that.

Cap. King: So we moved on and found something else which will be welcomed as a life-saver by cooks everywhere.

Host: Something else to eat?

Cap. King: No. Look at this.

(TEAM members hold up a small freezer).

Cap. King: It's a freezer that can travel in time. How often have you been out for the day and come home to find you'd forgotten to take the joint out of the freezer? With this, all you'll need to do is to send your freezer back twelve hours in time, take your joint out, and return it to the present - all de-frosted and ready to cook!

Host: My word! Isn't that wonderful!

Cap. King: And there are other possibilities. If there's a power cut, you send your freezer back to before it started, rescue your food and return to the present.

Host: Brilliant! Well, thank you to Captain King and the Red Team. Can we have a big round of applause for the Red Team and their time-travelling freezer!

(Applause and music. RED TEAM move back and GREEN TEAM come in to centre stage).

Host: Now, it's good to see you back, Captain Clayton. I've been looking forward to seeing this wonderful translation stick.

Captain: The translation stick is only part of what we found. Our discovery is something quite different and extremely important.

Host: Tell us about it.

Captain: First let me introduce the friends we met who have come back with us. As I told you, they were going on a mission to rescue a planet on the brink of destruction. We went with them, and that planet turned out to be Earth!

Host: Earth?

Captain: Yes. It seems that time is running out for the Earth. As we all know, pollution has become a serious problem here but these people who are way ahead of us in their technology, have come to warn us and to show us ways of stopping it.

Host: In fact you're saying that we must listen or our planet will die.

Captain: That's right. But we can save it if we all make a real effort.

Host: Well, an important message then. And a message which none of us can afford to ignore. And I believe you are hoping to organise a conference of world leaders next week to meet your friends and discuss the way forward.

Captain: That's right.

Host: Thank you, Captain Clayton and the Green Team. A vital message for us all. Let's hear it for the Green Team!

(Applause and music. GREEN TEAM move back).

Host: And now for the really exciting bit. This is your chance to vote for the team you think should win the great Starfish Centre Prize. In front of you, you will see three buttons; I'm going to ask you to press the button for the colour team of your choice. So first, all those for Captain Jones and the Blue Team - press the blue button now!

(Some sort of electronic noise perhaps).

Host: And now, everyone for Captain King and the Red Team - press the red button now! And finally, if you'd like Captain Clayton and the Green Team to win - press the green button now! Yes, yes, and we have a score coming up now. Could we have the results now please?

(The COMPUTER enters and reads the scores).

Computer: The results of the voting in the Starfish Centre Prize are as follows. For the Red Team - ninety million, seven hundred thousand and sixty-four votes! For the Blue Team - seventy-one million and two! For the Green Team - eight hundred million, fifteen thousand and forty-six! Have a nice day!

Host: So there we have it. Green Team with their amazing message for the Earth, are the runaway winners of this tremendous competition. I know you'll agree with me that it's been a wonderful event. Thanks and congratulations to everyone involved!

(Music starts for next song. ENTIRE CAST enters for this finale number).

MUSIC No. 8 - THIS IS OUR EARTH

(The words in brackets to be sung by a second group)

*This is our earth, (What are we doing?)
This is the planet that we love,
This is our earth, (Can you believe it?)
We ought to thank the stars above,
For sending us this warning,
And we promise that we'll try (We will try)
To do what we can, (What we can)
To do what we can
And proudly say, (Proudly say)
This is our earth.*

*The earth is dying (We have to save it)
This is the planet where we live,
It's not too late, (We still can save it)
We've got our time and care to give,
So listen to the warning
And we promise that we'll try (We will try)
To do what we can, (To do what we can)
To do what we can,
And proudly say (Proudly say)
This is our earth.*

(At end of song, lights dim and come up on the NEWSREADER. As he reads this, the CHILDREN'S voices come in with a verse of "TWINKLE" again).

Speaker: It is evening now in Florida and the sun is setting low on the horizon over the Starfish Centre. It is truly a most glorious sight, the sky is pink and orange, streaked with clouds, and a pale moon is rising through it all. May we wish you all a very good night.

Children: *(off) Then the traveller in the dark
Thanks you for your little spark
He could not tell where to go,
If you did not twinkle so,
Twinkle twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.*

(A verse / reprise of THIS IS OUR EARTH as finale).

THE END

