



In Plain Sight



By Robert Prins

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Marty finally relaxed as he closed the door and collapsed on his couch. It had been another stressful day. The Department of Alien Forestalling and Termination (DAFT) was tense. Marty's crew numbered in the thousands as they scanned the skies from Earth and space with telescopes, radars and the latest Forensic Undulating Telepathic Intelligent Listening Equipment (FUTILE) which was designed to pick up sounds, voices, and even thought waves from space. Unidentified Flying Object (UFO) reports had flooded in, sounds had been picked up, but every report and every sound had been cleared by his staff and personally checked off by Marty himself.

If aliens ever made it to Earth, Marty was the man who would know. The responsibility of protecting Earth from alien invasion lay heavily on his shoulders.

A meow at his feet brought a smile to his face. With a light jump, Marty's long-haired Birman cat jumped onto his lap and began padding Marty's knees as she prepared to lie down. Marty stroked the beautiful animal. "It's good to see you, Celon. My day gets so much better when I come home to you."

Celon lay down and began to purr. She knew her purring would relax Marty. She knew he would tell her everything about his day.

And so it happened. Without thought of listening ears, Marty disclosed every detail of his day to Celon. From office gossip, through to the latest classified information and confidential plans, Marty got it all off his chest. It was safe talking to a cat. He could talk to no one else; the information he held was too sensitive. Celon lay still and listened. When she wanted more information, she would lazily stretch and dig her claws into Marty's leg until he told her more.

"You are such a good listener," Marty sighed, "but I have to get up and make dinner." He stood, and Celon scrambled off his lap.

Celon's food bowl clanked to the floor. *Fancy Feast*. Why did humans think cats like mushy fish and chicken, she wondered. Marty proceeded to make his own dinner while Celon sat patiently watching him and washing the disgusting fish smell off her face. When Marty headed for the shower, Celon's mission began.

She slipped quickly through the cat door and into the night. Over fences, down side streets, through yards, around a lake, then delicately balanced herself on a fencepost and pretended to wash her leg. She surveyed the area. No one had followed. She jumped down from her post and squeezed through a small crevice in a cliff face, then turned left into a large opening in the side of the fissure, alive with alien technology.

Celon slipped into a cubicle and downloaded the top-secret information she had gleaned from Marty. It was time. The plan had come together. Celon and her team were ready. They had always looked like they owned the world; now they would.

The aliens didn't have to *arrive*. They were already here, hidden in plain sight. The daft humans with their futile equipment had no idea.



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THE PEOPLE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ALIEN FORESTALLING AND TERMINATION (DAFT) WERE TENSE AS THEY SCANNED THE SKIES FOR ALIEN ENCOUNTERS. BUT AS MARTY SAT WITH HIS CAT AT THE END OF THE DAY, HE HAD NO IDEA HOW CLOSE THE WORLD WAS TO A REAL ALIEN ENCOUNTER.



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