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SF PERUSALS

WELCOME TO OUR VILLAGE, PLEASE INVADE CAREFULLY

Series 1

As heard on BBC Radio

By Eddie Robson

SAMUEL FRENCH

samuelfrench.co.uk

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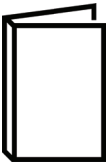
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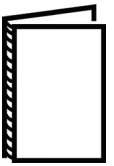
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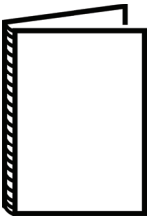
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eddie Robson was born in York in 1978. He spent several years working mainly as a journalist and critic, producing books including *Coen Brothers* (Virgin, 2003) and *Film Noir* (Virgin, 2005), before moving into scriptwriting and prose. He wrote for BBC Radio sketch shows including *That Mitchell And Webb Sound*, *Look Away Now*, *Recorded For Training Purposes*, *Newsjack* and *Small Scenes*, as well as over twenty *Doctor Who* radio plays broadcast on BBC Radio 4 Extra and released on CD.

He created and wrote *Welcome To Our Village, Please Invade Carefully* which aired on BBC Radio between 2012 and 2014. Subsequently he has written a novel, *Tomorrow Never Knows* (Snowbooks, 2015), a stage adaptation of *Beauty And The Beast* (The Dukes Lancaster, 2015-16), several comic strips for *2000AD*, and episodes of *Hollyoaks* (Channel 4, 2014-15) and *Sarah & Duck* (CBeebies, 2015-16). He is married with two children and lives in Lancaster.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In 2009, Ed Morrish – a BBC producer I'd worked with on a Radio 4 sketch show called *Recorded For Training Purposes* – asked if I had any ideas for a sitcom. My first attempt came to nothing, but then I came up with something called *The Resistance*.

The original inspiration was to do a sort of comedy version of the 1960s TV show *The Prisoner*: a sitcom in which the protagonists are constantly trying to escape. The village setting then developed with reference to rural *Doctor Who* (most obviously the 1971 serial "The Daemons") and Simon Nye's sitcom *How Do You Want Me?*, and I wrote a script which involved four people attempting to escape the village of Cresdon Green in the postal van of a train. As well as Katrina and Lucy, those four people included Weird Patrick, the village conspiracy theorist, and Mike, Katrina's ex-boyfriend from their schooldays. These four were the titular resistance against an alien invasion.

However, we realised it wasn't clear where the focus of the show was. There was conflict within the resistance about how to achieve their aim, but also the bigger conflict with the invaders. Furthermore, Katrina's parents had too little to do: eight regulars was way too many. We opted to focus away from the resistance: Katrina needed someone to plot with and of the other three, Lucy offered the most interesting dynamic so we kept her. Weird Patrick became a one-off character in the episode "Minimum Volume"; Mike was never heard from again.

I then wrote a second script. This one was a "premise episode" – which is what we call an opening episode of a sitcom which explains how the situation came about. So the invasion happened, Uljabaan revealed he was an alien and Katrina decided to form the resistance. However, the problem with premise episodes is it can be hard to make them funny. I was commissioned to write a third script, and everyone agreed starting with the invasion already underway was better, so that became the pilot in this book.

All this development ultimately took two years, before it found a home in a run of Radio 2 comedy pilots under the title *Welcome*

To Our Village, Please Invade Carefully. (It's not very tweetable, but it takes up a satisfyingly large amount of space in the cramped newspaper radio listings.) We got a terrific cast together and the pilot aired on 5th July 2012, which annoyingly ended up being the same day I moved house.

Radio 2 gave us a series, which I found a considerable learning curve. I'd written lots of spec scripts over the years, but this was the first time I had been asked for another four. I worked like mad on the scripts, but it proved difficult to repeat the very good response we got to the pilot. The first episode to be recorded, "Power Block", took a while to warm up in front of the audience, so we moved it to third in the broadcast order. A lot of credit goes to Ed, who tightened all the episodes up in the edit. I'm still proud of that series, but there were some gruelling lessons on the way. I've never developed more as a writer than I did across the two series of *Welcome To Our Village*.

The scripts here are as broadcast. Clearly, a degree of adaptation is needed to take them from radio to stage. Feel free to abridge these five episodes or drop some of them entirely, whether for length or practicality. There are three key locations – the Lyons's house (with several rooms), Uljabaan's house and the cricket pavilion. You may want to move some other scenes to those locations to reduce the number of sets you have to create.

John-Luke Roberts, who played the Computer, doubled up as Graham, a sort of all-purpose village idiot. Depending on the size of your company, you may wish to make use of that same doubling. The minimum cast size to perform the series as written is probably eight, with two cast doubling up as guest characters and minions (and you may need to change the gender of some guest characters). With creative rewriting, you may be able to make it work on fewer; you're welcome to try.
Uljabaan is meant to be in human guise at all times, unlike his minions. I never pinned down exactly what the Geonin look like, and this became a sort of running joke, mentioning details but never describing them. They can look however you want them to look. We used an effects mic for the minions and the Computer, and got some good cheap laughs out of silly voices. It will certainly be to the production's benefit if you can play in sound effects, as a lot of scenes rely on this.

Ultimately, I'm delighted if anyone wants to perform these scripts. It's your production, do what's needed to make it the best it can be. If I can make it down there to see it, I will.

Eddie Robson, 2016

WELCOME TO OUR VILLAGE, PLEASE INVADE CAREFULLY

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CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Katrina Lyons – thirty-two/thirty-four, Katrina grew up in the Buckinghamshire village of Cresdon Green but has since moved to London, to work for an educational charity helping disadvantaged children. It's important to her to be seen to be doing the right thing – sometimes more important than getting the right thing done – and so she started the resistance against the invasion. More than anything, Katrina hates not being taken seriously.

Uljabaan – seems thirties/forties, but is an alien in human guise. Uljabaan is a warlord in the Geonin military, who are engaged in an endless war with their enemies the Thoufron. He's able to project an aristocratic surface charm, but is also quite smug and complacent. In truth he's a low achiever within the officer class, and has been posted to Earth to keep him out of the way: this is his chance to prove himself.

Margaret Lyons – early sixties. Katrina's mother. Margaret has lived in the village all her life, and effectively runs the place. Whilst the invasion isn't ideal, she can't help but feel flattered and a little excited that events of global importance are taking place on her doorstep. She doesn't really have a sense of humour and gets annoyed when things don't proceed exactly to her design.

Richard Lyons – early sixties. Katrina's father. Richard is a chartered accountant who was only a few years off retirement, and was looking forward to a quiet life, playing some cricket and maybe finishing that detective novel he's been working on. He avoids conflict where possible at home and takes the same approach to the invasion. He's warm, usually relaxed and a little diffident.

Lucy Alexander – Sixteen/eighteen. Lucy is the only child and keen to be noticed. She's joined the resistance mostly for this reason; also, all her friends live outside Credson Green and there's no internet since the village got cut off from the outside world, so she's incredibly bored. She gets stoned a lot and is regularly a beat behind the conversation.

Computer – Uljabaan's Computer runs the entire invasion scheme, on Uljabaan's orders. It speaks with an almost, but not entirely, emotionless voice. Hugely advanced, it has a personality as part of its interface and although it's not supposed to have desires and whims, it can be rather chippy. (The part could be played by an actor of any gender.)

WELCOME TO OUR VILLAGE, PLEASE INVADE CAREFULLY

Pilot – “Lock-Out”

Scene One

Int. village hall.

Effects: a meeting settling down. The meeting is chaired by **RICHARD.**

RICHARD Now, you should all have a copy of the agenda – between item nine, repairs to the fence between the playground and Colney Drive, and item ten, any other business, could you please add item nine b, the recent invasion of the village by beings from another world.

Effects: people do this. There are some tuts of irritation.

KATRINA Er, Dad?

RICHARD Yes, Katrina?

KATRINA Why item nine b?

RICHARD We can't put it after any other business because we always do any other business last. We can't do the other business, then have another piece of business.

KATRINA *(beat)* Right, I thought the direction of my query was obvious, but apparently not – I meant, why aren't we discussing the alien invasion first?

RICHARD Because minutes of the previous meeting come first.

KATRINA Who cares about the minutes of the previous meeting?

RICHARD Well Sandra does, she compiled them.

SANDRA *sniffles.*

KATRINA Sorry, Sandra, I'm sure you've done a cracking job. But recent events have not just overshadowed everything you

were planning to discuss, but also everything else that's ever happened in Cresdon Green ever.

GRAHAM Actually in 1941 the village was visited by His Royal Highness Prince George, Duke of Kent.

KATRINA And did His Royal Highness Prince George, Duke of Kent erect an impenetrable force field around the village, cut off all communications in both directions, and create a mental block preventing anyone in the outside world seeing or even thinking about the village and its inhabitants?

GRAHAM No, but—

KATRINA OK, moving on.

CHRIS You're not technically supposed to be at this meeting at all, Katrina. It is a residents' meeting.

KATRINA I didn't plan to become a resident when I popped home to see Mum and Dad –

RICHARD And ask to borrow the deposit for a flat—

KATRINA To which they said no, but that's their prerogative, I'm FINE about it – but then the force field came down before I could leave, so how much more residential do you want me to be?

RICHARD *(sighs)* All right. For those of you who've been out of the loop, Cresdon Green has been invaded by aliens and sealed off from the outside world.

OLD MAN Really?

RICHARD Yes.

OLD MAN Good grief.

RICHARD So. What are we going to do about it?

Silence.

GRAHAM Do we have to do something about it?

RICHARD That's a good question.

KATRINA No it isn't.

GRAHAM Shouldn't the police do something?

CHRIS Yes, or the government, or the army…

GRAHAM The FBI dealt with this sort of thing in *The X Files*.

RICHARD They don't have any jurisdiction outside of America. It would have to be the CIA.

GRAHAM You can't trust them, Richard.

KATRINA This is all academic, as well as being largely based on things you've seen on television. The world doesn't know this has happened and we can't call anyone in. Not the police, not the army, not the FBI, not the CIA, not the BBC, QPR or REM. So it's up to us.

RICHARD What do you suggest, love?

KATRINA We could stop helping the aliens.

CHRIS I'm not helping them.

KATRINA But you're still serving them in the village shop, Chris.

CHRIS Their money's as good as anyone's. Better, in fact – it all looks brand new.

GRAHAM Be fair, Kat, it's just common politeness. They've been very nice to us so far.

KATRINA Because they want us to co-operate. You know who else co-operated with their invaders? The French.

Effects: hissed intakes of breath all round.

That's right. They want to take over the world, for God's sake – however nice and polite they seem, they're a bunch of malign, manipulative thugs who—

RICHARD *(low)* Love, you might want to calm down.

KATRINA No, Dad, this has to be said – thugs without morals, or ethics and—

RICHARD *(low)* You're being a bit rude.

ULJABAAN Richard, it's fine. I'm not offended.

KATRINA I don't care if you are. *(Beat)* Why aren't you offended?

ULJABAAN I want you to speak freely. I'm just sitting in. I'm not even here.

KATRINA Yes, you are. That's exactly the problem.

OLD MAN But he's not one of the aliens, he's Lord Ullswater.

KATRINA Yes, Lord Ullswater. The long-lost heir to Aulderley House who nobody had ever heard of until he laid claim to the place eighteen months ago.

OLD MAN What are you suggesting?

ULJABAAN She's suggesting I made it all up, which I did. I am in fact an alien in human guise. My name is Uljabaan. Anyway, carry on.

KATRINA I will.

ULJABAAN Please do.

KATRINA *(beat)* I've forgotten where I was.

ULJABAAN Thugs without morals or ethics.

KATRINA Yes – and we should stop co-operating with them. Who's with me?

Effects: uneasy mutterings.

ULJABAAN Don't hold back on my account. We appreciate we're putting you all to a lot of trouble by being here, and if you're uncomfortable about co-operating, absolutely feel free to say so.

KATRINA Um. Yes. So, who's with me?

Effects: others say "er…yes, all right" etc.

RICHARD Motion more or less carried…is that all right?

ULJABAAN Of course, Richard.

KATRINA Good.

RICHARD So, item two…siting of the new bus stop on Park Crescent.

GRAHAM Ah, now *that* is a bloody disgrace.

Effects: chorus of "hear, hear" from attendees.

Scene Two

Int. shop.

Effects: shop doorbell. One of **ULJABAAN***'s minions enters.*

CHRIS Morning sir.

MINION *(gutteral alien language)*

CHRIS What can I do you for?

MINION *(gutteral alien language)*

CHRIS You're sure you don't want the low tar?

MINION *(gutteral alien language)*

CHRIS Yes, of course, it's up to you.

Effects: cash register. Shop doorbell. **KATRINA** *and* **MARGARET** *enter.*

MARGARET Really, Katrina, it's not as if your job is so vital that everything will fall apart if you don't get back to it.

KATRINA Mum, I work for an educational charity that helps disadvantaged children.

MARGARET Well exactly, they'll still be disadvantaged when you get back.

KATRINA Oh, you mean *after* the world's been taken over by marauding—

MINION *(gutteral alien language)*

Effects: **MINION** *stomps past them and leaves. Shop doorbell.*

MARGARET Some of them can be rather brusque, can't they?

CHRIS Yeah, but he's a nice lad. Gets stuff down from the high shelves for old folks and so on.

KATRINA Chris, I thought you were going to stop serving them?

CHRIS Yeah, but I don't want to annoy them, they could cut off my stock. And business is booming now that people can't get to that bloody Tesco down the road, choking the life out of local businesses.

KATRINA Chris, most of us can't get to our jobs. The aliens are keeping us fed. It doesn't matter if you work or not.

CHRIS For some of us it's not just about making money. It's about building something and being part of a community. Plus, the aliens have agreed that when they take over the world, I can run Tesco.

KATRINA You're a disgrace to humanity. We're not shopping here. Come on, Mum.

Effects: **KATRINA** *storms out, slams door.*

CHRIS *(beat)* You're not going, Margaret?

MARGARET No, I need to buy some things. Could I get eight bags of white flour, six of wholemeal, three kilos of caster sugar…

Scene Three

Int. **ULJABAAN***'s house.*

Effects: **ULJABAAN** *is talking to his computer.*

ULJABAAN Date: 15 point X K point 759. Location: Earth, Europe, United Kingdom, Buckinghamshire, Cresdon Green. Sender: field commander Uljabaan. Thus far, the mission has –

COMPUTER It sounds like you're dictating a field report. Would you like some help?

ULJABAAN Just dictate the field report without help, thank you, Computer. Thus far, the mission has progressed satisfactorily. *(Beat)* That sounds boring. Thus far, the mission has progressed… Thus far, the mission has been a success. Thus far, the mission has been a great success. Exclamation mark.

COMPUTER Which of those words are supposed to go in the report?

ULJABAAN Can't you tell when I'm doing my dictating voice? My old computer could tell.

COMPUTER With respect, your old computer went mad and had to be melted down before it killed again.

ULJABAAN *(sighs)* Just put "Thus far the mission has been a great success"—

COMPUTER Exclamation mark?

ULJABAAN No, that's just grating. Er, "area sealed off, population subdued, commencing research programme into human behaviour, weather wonderful, speak soon". And send.

COMPUTER Done.

ULJABAAN What else is on my to-do list for today?

COMPUTER Write your column for the parish newsletter.

ULJABAAN Does anyone actually read that?

COMPUTER No, but they see your face while they're putting it in the recycling, and that you wrote some words, and are slightly impressed.

ULJABAAN *(sighs)* All right. Er… "I'm aware there is some concern over property prices falling as a consequence of the invasion.

I can reassure you that, when I rule this planet, I will revalue all your houses at a hundred million pounds each... I also definitely have no plans to knock down the war memorial and replace it with a solar-boosted fusion reactor for recharging our spaceships".

COMPUTER But you do have plans to do exactly that.

ULJABAAN Yes, that's just how they talk here.

Scene Four

Int. cricket pavilion.

Effects: **KATRINA** *tries the door, it won't open.*

KATRINA *(off)* Lucy? Are you in there?

LUCY Is that you, Kat?

KATRINA *(off)* Let me in.

Effects: **LUCY** *pushes a chair away from the door and opens it.*

Very clever, block the door in case the aliens drop in.

LUCY I suppose it would work for that too. I mainly wanted to keep my parents out.

KATRINA Are you stoned again? I wish you wouldn't use the cricket pavilion for that, Lucy.

LUCY You did when you were my age.

KATRINA It wasn't Resistance HQ then.

LUCY Where else am I meant to go? I can't get served at the Rose and Crown, my parents would go ballistic if they found out. And they would find out, because they pay the regulars to inform on me.

KATRINA Maybe just stay sober? You're in the resistance now, Lucy, you have to be alert.

LUCY *(longish pause)* I am alert. Anyway I've got to pass the time somehow, with no phone or internet or other human beings I actually like. I read a *book* the other day.

KATRINA I take it we haven't had any more recruits?

LUCY No, it's still just you and me.

KATRINA Of course, because giving a toss about the world being invaded is so boringly right-on, isn't it.

LUCY *(beat)* Is it?

KATRINA No, I was voicing what appears to be the opinion of the rest of the village. It's a sort of rhetorical device.

LUCY Oh.

KATRINA Nobody's going along with the policy of non-compliance. And they've all got such crap reasons – it'd be fair enough if they said, "sorry but they threatened to kill me", but one of them actually said, "but they asked so nicely".

LUCY And then there's that meet-and-greet your mum's holding for the aliens.

KATRINA Meet and what?

LUCY They're holding it at the pub this afternoon. She's making cakes.

KATRINA That explains what all those scones were doing in our kitchen. She said it was for the annual traditional scone fight on the village green.

LUCY We don't have an annual traditional scone fight on the village green.

KATRINA It did seem strange that a tradition like that had sprung up in the fifteen years since I last lived here. Well, we've got to put a stop to it.

LUCY I told you, there isn't a traditional scone—

KATRINA I obviously meant the meet-and-greet.

LUCY I do realise these things eventually, you just have to give me a second sometimes.

Scene Five

Int. pub.

Effects: **RON** *is restocking with bottles, whistling tunelessly. Knock at door.*

RON We're not open until twelve.

KATRINA *(off)* I know. I want to talk to you, Ron.

Effects: **RON** *unlocks door.*

RON What about?

KATRINA I hear you're hosting a meet-and-greet for the aliens this afternoon.

RON Yeah, your mum talked me into it.

KATRINA I take it you're not a fan of our visitors?

RON Yeah. They can't just slither in here and take over our homes.

KATRINA They don't slither.

RON They would if they could.

KATRINA I'm not sure what your point is but the tone of your remark is encouraging. I think you should refuse to serve collaborators.

RON But the aliens can cut off my stock.

KATRINA Then we'll tell everyone it's the aliens who've deprived them of their pub. They must need us for something – what'll they do if everyone turns against them?

RON I dunno…

Effects: "Jerusalem" starts quietly in the background, then gets louder.

KATRINA Ron, imagine what'll happen to the British pub under alien rule. They'll make you use their measurements. A pint will be 144.54 tetravillions.

RON What's a tetravillion?

KATRINA It's a word I've just made up. But the real one will probably sound stupider than that. And instead of the Queen's head on the money, it'll be the face of an amorphous twelve-eyed blob that doesn't even have a face.

RON Amorphous, you say?

KATRINA And they'll ban traditional British ales and force landlords to serve balloons full of marsh gas or something. Would Churchill have stood for this, Ron?

RON Probably not.

KATRINA "Probably"? No. He wouldn't. He's Churchill.

RON No. You're right! No surrender!

Effects: music very loud now.

KATRINA You can turn it down now, Lucy.

LUCY *(off)* Right.

Effects: music goes quiet.

RON How did she get in here?

LUCY *(off)* Now that I have, how about an Archer's and lemonade?

RON Get out.

Scene Six

Ext. pub.

Effects: **ULJABAAN**, **RICHARD** *and* **MARGARET**, *aliens and villagers approach the pub.*

MINION *(gutteral alien language)*

ULJABAAN I agree, Farateel, these cakes look delightful.

MARGARET I didn't go to any special effort.

RICHARD She only slept for two hours last night.

MARGARET Nonsense.

RICHARD In fifteen minute spells, whilst the pastry for the jam tarts was in the oven.

ULJABAAN I see your daughter's here already.

MARGARET What's she doing here?

RICHARD *(to* **KATRINA***)* Hello love. We thought you weren't coming.

KATRINA I'm not. Nobody is. Because this pub *(raises voice)* is no longer serving collaborators.

Effects: consternation from villagers.

MARGARET I'm ever so sorry about this.

ULJABAAN It's not your fault.

MINION *(gutteral alien question)*

ULJABAAN No, I don't see any need to deal with her like that yet. She has one building, I have the rest of the village. Miss Lyons, could you let any stragglers know we've decamped to the village hall?

KATRINA No.

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