

SATURDAY EXTRA: Children's Short Story competition winners

The UFO

By *JANINE WITT*

THE CRAFT hovered about 50 metres above the cosy farmhouse. It was egg-shaped and glowing, with lights around the bottom. A beam of light originating from somewhere inside the small craft seemed to be examining the area. Inside the farmhouse Mrs Russell and Mrs Bradford were preparing to leave on a shopping spree into the town.

"Now, you will watch the kids, Fred, won't you? Don't forget to give them their ..."

"I know, I know, they'll be fine."

"Alright Fred, bye bye."

Fred waited until he heard the car drive off, before going to the fridge and getting a beer. He settled back into his favourite chair and looked towards the lounge-room floor, where Bobby and Penny were playing with their toys. Bobby was Mrs Bradford's son who had just turned four years old, while Penny was a mere 3½. Bobby's favourite "toy" was an old golf club of Fred's that had broken halfway up the handle, so it was just the right size for him to swing at things and break them.

Fred had finished his beer and was now snoring loudly. Penny said to Bobby,

"Let's go outside!"

"All right," agreed Bobby as they made their way to the door. As they sat in the garden, all the lights flickered and went on again.

"What was that?" asked Penny.

"What was that?" asked Penny.

"Everything blinked!" giggled Bobby.

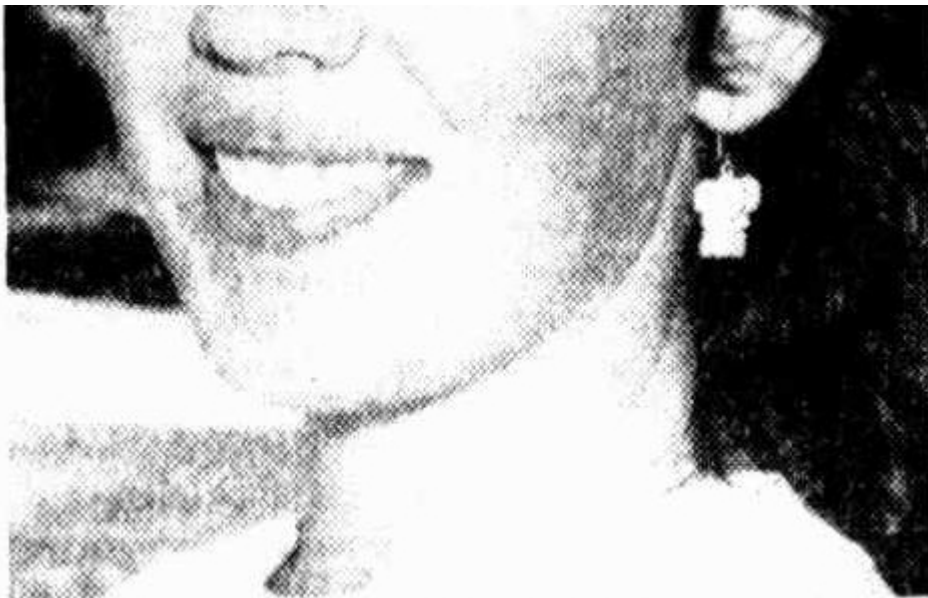
Just then the beam of light hit them, and they found they couldn't move. What's more, they were being pulled towards the ship. As they felt themselves being drawn upwards, a hatch opened and they were drawn inside. The next thing they knew they were sitting on the floor of the strange little craft. Bobby was surprised to hear a voice next to his ear. Turning his head he saw a small man-like creature not more than three feet tall. The facial features were vaguely human, but the head was larger and the eyes an odd shade of lavender. He motioned for them to put a small disc on their ears that enabled them to understand him.

"I am XK-4 of the third scout patrol to your planet, and this is Ship. He's got an action-voice modulator that allows me to fly the ship by voice control."

"What do you want with us?" asked Penny.

"Well, you see, on our planet, we have built a huge indoor city, that covers almost our entire





Janine Witt of Weston Creek High School, winner of the junior section of the school section with 'The UFO'.

planet, so that we don't have enough room to grow our food. So now we intend to take over and invade your planet," said XK-4 calmly.

"What!" exclaimed Bobby. "You can't!"

"Shhh, we're nearing the city now. Ship, get permission to land."

"Okay, but don't take too long, you know how I hate it there."

When Bobby, Penny, and XK-4 left Ship, they stepped on to a mobile footpath which took them to a small room where they were given many tests.

"What are all these tests for?" asked Bobby.

"Well you know how I said we planned to invade your planet? These tests are to find out if you are more or less intelligent than us. If you are superior to us it would be too much trouble to try to overpower you," stated XK-4 matter-of-factly. "There is only one more test". He turned to a globe with many dials and buttons below it. He pressed two buttons and the globe lit up.

"What you must do is make the light go out. Bobby, you are first."

BOBBY, you are first.

Bobby walked up to the globe and placed his hands on the surface, squinting at the light. Then, his mind made up, he picked up his favourite toy — the golf club — and brought it down hard on the globe. The light did indeed go out.

"Incredible. You did it in 30 seconds! No-one has ever done it in less than 10 minutes before! I must tell the Imperial Leader."

He walked over to a screen and pressed a button. The face of the Imperial Leader appeared.

"So XK-4, what have you discovered?"

"The earthling Bobby has solved the globe problem in less than 30 seconds."

"Amazing how did he do it?"

"He broke the globe!"

"Broke the globe? Fascinating! The absolute simplicity of the solution is brilliant."

"XK-4, can we go home now?" Penny broke in, "our mothers will be worried about us."

"Your mothers!"

"We're only babies you know!" said Bobby.

"Imperial Leader, I have just discovered that the earthlings are only BABIES!"

"Babies, impossible."

"M-may I take them back to their planet now?"

"Of course, as quick as possible. It would be dangerous to have such superior beings amongst us!"

So it was not long before XK-4 was taking off again with Penny and Bobby aboard.

"How long till we get home?"

"We're nearly there now, Penny. I'll be beaming you down in a second. I can put you right back in your house if you like."

"Thank you XK-4 and Goodbye."

A few minutes later Penny and Bobby were both back in the lounge room. Fred was just waking up.

"I hope you've been good kids. Otherwise your mothers will kill me."

"Who will those mothers? Kill you, Fred?" said

MOTHERS WILL KILL ME.

"Why will 'your mothers' kill you, Fred?" said Mrs Russell just walking in.

"Oh no reason," said Fred chuckling.

"Were they good?" asked Mrs Bradford.

"I hardly knew they were there", replied Fred.