ALIEN NATION

By Rini Tarafder

Cast of characters

ALIEN 1: any age gender race

ALIEN 2: any age gender race

HUMAN 1: any age gender race

HUMAN 2: any age gender race

HUMAN 3: any age gender race

Note: The director could choose to differentiate between Aliens and Humans or not. Interesting ways to represent Aliens could be with imaginative costumes, coloring actors’ skin a strange color or using symbolic props such as a headlamp with a painted eye or anything really.

Setting

Another world

Time

Another time

At rise: A bare stage with a smaller stage (or a hollow frame or other framing device) creating a stage within a stage. All the humans are present in the inner stage. They do not notice the aliens or audience and behave as if they are waiting for their parts until they have lines. Actors can behave like they behave backstage but silently – warm up, read a book, have headphones on, brush their teeth etc. No other set or props. ALIEN 1 and ALIEN 2 stand in the outer stage facing each other and arguing.

ALIEN 1

End!

ALIEN 2

Beginning!

ALIEN 1

End!

ALIEN 2

Beginning!

Both notice the audience

ALIEN 1

We seem to have

ALIEN 2

Drifted into something here.

ALIEN 1

Or they seem to have

ALIEN 2

Drifted into something else.

ALIEN 1

In any case

ALIEN 2

Now that the audience is here

ALIEN 1

They might as well –

ALIEN 2

But the context

ALIEN 1

Yes, the context.

beat

ALIEN 2

Do you remember?

The naming of the first tree?

ALIEN 1

Did you know that

They are not *from* here?

They came from somewhere else.

Lights up on inner stage

HUMAN 1

Alas! Were this not in my hands?

HUMAN 2

Bestow it unto mine.

While aliens converse, humans stand looking at them waiting for their cue

ALIEN 2

Is *that* how you imagine humans speak amongst themselves?

ALIEN 1

Yeah. Why? I've read their books.

ALIEN 2

Can't you make them speak like *we* speak?

So that *they* (points to audience) can understand?

ALIEN 1

Fine. You tell it then!

Lights up on humans

HUMAN 1

I wish this wasn't so difficult.

HUMAN 2

What is so difficult? We’re finally going to get our hands on some alien technology.

HUMAN 3

Yeah. Talk about an easy decision! One seed for teleportation? Besides, the trees died out for a reason. We made them obsolete! Of what use is a seed to us now anyway?

HUMAN 1

I can’t listen to this. How can you not see how crucial this is? This is *the* turning point.

HUMAN 3

What's so crucial? We are fine without trees. And have been for a long time.

HUMAN 2

And we really need teleportation.

HUMAN 1

But we spent so much time trying to make this seed grow. And now that it has, you just want to give it to someone else?

HUMAN 2

We're not just giving it to someone. We’re getting so much more in return! Those aliens are really naive.

laughs

HUMAN 3

And what would we have done with one tree anyway?

HUMAN 1

Restore our atmosphere. Make a forest. Try to reintroduce new species. Re-create life as it once was. Trees. Animals. Maybe actually go outside!

HUMAN 2

Do you really think we can could make all that with one seed?

HUMAN 3

Face it… human… a tree is of no use to us now.

HUMAN 1

But it germinated… We succeeded after so many experiments… against all odds. You're just going to let it all go?

HUMAN 2

Do you know how much time it will take for us to grow a forest? Do you know how much time a forest takes to grow?

HUMAN 3

Yeah. We would have to wait for this tree to grow. For years. And then produce seeds. For decades. And then wait for those to grow.

HUMAN 2

And then there's the question of *if* they will grow at all.

HUMAN 1

I can't just give it all up like that! I really can't understand how you can. It’s not about what we’ll get in return. It's about us! How will we *be*?

HUMAN 2

Yeah. You're right! And we’ll *be* much better off with teleportation.

HUMAN 3

Just think of the possibilities. We can go anywhere at any time: to the Samhan Republic and back in an instant. Think of all the money and time we’ll save.

HUMAN 1

So, you’re ready to exchange lives for time and money? What about everyone else?

HUMAN 2

Teleportation will benefit everyone! It can be used for medical research, for exploration. We can go where we've never gone before. Find another planet we can inhabit!

HUMAN 3

When are they getting here anyway?

HUMAN 1

Shouldn't we get a second opinion before selling the fate of the human race?

HUMAN 2

We're not selling our fate! Relax! It is better if the world doesn’t know. Something like this could only cause wars. They voted on it. The orders were very clear. Let them in. Facilitate the exchange. Store the device in this container. Let them out.

HUMAN 3

How are they getting here? In a flying saucer?

HUMAN 2

They can teleport, remember? Maybe they'll materialize right here.

HUMAN 3

How will we understand what they say? Will they talk to us?

HUMAN 2

The Babel fish!

HUMAN 3

Oh right.

HUMAN 1

We don't have to listen to the orders. Please listen to me! I think you’re making a mistake! Maybe we can offer them something else in exchange?

HUMAN 3

What would you have us do? Run? Kill the aliens? Kill the leaders? If everyone thought like you, we would all be dead very soon.

HUMAN 1

If everyone thought like YOU, we would have been dead sooner.

Lights go out on humans. They resume being actors. Lights on aliens

ALIEN 1

And this was?

ALIEN 2

Yes, this was the end.

ALIEN 1

The last one.

ALIEN 2

We don't talk about it much.

ALIEN 1

We're not proud of what we did.

ALIEN 2

We didn't do anything wrong. It was the end.

ALIEN 1

That it was. Our world was shutting down.

ALIEN 2

The heat was unbearable. We couldn't go outside.

ALIEN 1

We couldn't breathe. The air was so toxic…

ALIEN 2

That our generators had begun to corrode.

ALIEN 1

We didn't know what to do.

ALIEN 2

Till we discovered what Earth had been.

ALIEN 1

That, not long ago, Earth had life form which sustained itself by filtering its atmosphere.

ALIEN 2

A symbiotic life force.

ALIEN 1

There wasn't any then. But we kept searching.

ALIEN 2

If this species existed before, it could exist again.

ALIEN 1

Time is reversible.

ALIEN 2

We waited until we discovered a tiny clearing.

ALIEN 1

And a tiny hole in the tiny clearing.

ALIEN 2

And a tiny seed in the tiny hole in the tiny clearing.

ALIEN 1

How did we know?

ALIEN 2

We initiated the exchange. A secret signal. An offering.

ALIEN 1

We really should have given them something else.

ALIEN 2

We didn’t ask.

ALIEN 1

Did we have nothing else to offer in return?

ALIEN 2

They wanted the teleportation device.

ALIEN 1

Did anyone tell them the truth?

ALIEN 2

No.

Lights out on alien.

Voiceover: Get Out! Perhaps just rumbling and rocks falling sound? I don’t quite get the yelling of get out! A Brechtian device where titles are replaced by voiceovers. We can see how this works.

Lights up on humans

HUMAN 2

Get away from there!

Pulls HUMAN 3 aside. A loud crashing sound. They look down as if a chunk of the room has collapsed. HUMAN 3 is shocked for some time

HUMAN 2

I think we’re trapped.

Tries moving fallen debris but finds it heavy. Everyone keeps searching for something as they speak. Either a way out or a clue as to where they can find the teleportation device.

We’ll have to look for some other way out. Do you think there are any teleportation devices are inside the lab? I’m curious about this location, could it perhaps be different? The point is that they are still in the same place they were in the first scene. With the world being destroyed, they all thought they could find the teleportation device in the lab and thus went there. I tried thinking if they had families and what happened to them. But the aliens who are controlling them would not know about families, thus there is no backstory as such. Think of this as what the aliens think the humans did to get to their planet.

HUMAN 3

Finds a screen (a device with a catalogue) to look through

I’ll find out. We really need to get out of here!

HUMAN 2

Where do you think we should go? The earth is pretty much destroyed.

HUMAN 1

We should find a way out of here the lab and see if anyone is alive outside.

HUMAN 3

I don’t think I’ve seen anyone in days. I’m surprised to find both of you had made it.

HUMAN 2

There was just debris. I came here to find the old prototype that we had made.

HUMAN 1

Maybe we could make it work to get out of this place.

HUMAN 2

Look who is into teleportation now. Aren’t you part of one of those back-to-the-future movements? The ones who abstain from technology?

HUMAN 1

Yes, I was. And I still believe teleportation destroyed our planet! But right now, it is the only way out. We have no other option

HUMAN 2

I can’t believe you’re still stuck on that!

The ground shakes, things shift, and debris falls around them.

All humans, who were acting, drop to the floor as if they've lost all control and lie on the floor almost lifeless but making small movements.

Lights up on the Aliens abruptly.

ALIEN 1

what...

ALIEN 2

what is this...

ALIEN 1

did you..

ALIEN 2

I didn't do anything

ALIEN 1

how is this

ALIEN 2

possible? I don't know

ALIEN 1

did we..

ALIEN 2

I don't think so

ALIEN 1

let's

ALIEN 1

yes let's

ALIEN 1

begin again from

ALIEN 2

the beginning

ALIEN 1

no from where we

ALIEN 2

left off

They rearrange the humans as they want them to. Probably, different from where they were.

The conversation between the Aliens as they rearrange the humans, if required, can be improvised with the actors. I can write the specific dialogue down after this.

HUMAN 3

The tectonic plates are shifting again. I don’t think we have a lot of time here. Let’s just stop arguing okay.

HUMAN 1

The teleportation system was so convenient that it spread very quickly. No one highlighted the effect it was going to have on the environment. There is nothing irrational about this fact!

HUMAN 3

Have you found the key code to the archive logs?

HUMAN 2

If you're talking about emissions, it was proven that the teleportation system was perfectly within limits.

HUMAN 1

That was based on the research that the aliens had given to us. Why do you think they needed the tree?

HUMAN 2

Are you saying that they lied? Falsified information?

HUMAN 3

That doesn’t make any sense! Please let us just get … we don’t have time for this.

HUMAN 1

We shouldn't have given them our last tree! Things got bad so fast. The atmosphere heated up just like we expected, and nobody did anything! All because teleportation was so convenient. Now look what has … War destroyed most of the population when the heat forced humans out of the tropics. The rest of us have been holding on to an Earth which has been trying to shake us off.

HUMAN 2

But why would the aliens lie to us?

HUMAN 1

Because they needed trees to absorb the excess carbon dioxide from their atmosphere. They knew what they were doing to us. They knew we would end up here.

HUMAN 3

But what does that have to do with this?

HUMAN 2

You mean to say the aliens gave us teleportation in exchange for the very thing that could’ve saved us?

HUMAN 1

Isn’t that what I have been saying to all of you from the beginning.

silence and searching

So, what do we do now?

HUMAN 3

I don't know. Wait for the world to end, I guess.

HUMAN 2

Can't we do anything to survive?

HUMAN 3

What can we do? Nothing works.

HUMAN 1

We don’t even know if we’re the only ones left.

HUMAN 2

What about the trees? Can't we try to grow some more?

Debris falling sounds

HUMAN 1

We tried after the exchange. It didn’t work. The seed we traded was the only one to start germinating. I wonder if the aliens got the tree to grow…We need to get out of here! Where can we go?

HUMAN 1

I don’t know. The earth is destroyed. I don’t know what other planet we could go to.

HUMAN 2

What about the planet where the aliens came from. The people who have our tree.

HUMAN 1

That’s a start

HUMAN 3

I found It! The teleportation device!

Lights dim on the prisoners.

ALIEN 1

And that's how they got here?

ALIEN 2

That's how they got here.

ALIEN 1

They thought we wouldn't know.

ALIEN 2

They thought we wouldn't see.

ALIEN 1

Where did they find a portal?

ALIEN 2

They used one of the devices we had given them originally.

ALIEN 1

That one had been forgotten and compressed.

ALIEN 2

They got here in the middle of things.

ALIEN 1

In the middle of a circle.

ALIEN 2

In the middle of a circle of us waiting for them.

ALIEN 1

We should have helped them.

ALIEN 2

And what about the tree? Would you let them have that too?

ALIEN 1

The tree rightfully belongs to them. And besides, we've grown so many trees now.

ALIEN 2

It belongs to us. We bought it from them. And then we grew them ourselves.

ALIEN 1

We deceived them!

ALIEN 2

But we gave them what they asked for.

ALIEN 1

We shouldn’t have lied to them.

HUMAN 1, HUMAN 2 and HUMAN 3 mime banging on the walls

HUMAN 1

YOU LIED TO US!

(This is a moment when the Human breaks away from the control of the aliens, and they will say something that signals their disappointment and anger.)

ALIEN 1 starts as if they have heard something far off. ALIEN 2 doesn't hear anything. The Humans go back to being prisoners but are more frantic

ALIEN 1

Did you hear that?

ALIEN 2

What? No, what do you mean?

ALIEN 1

I thought I heard someone yelling.

ALIEN 2

It wasn’t us. And it can’t be the prisoners.

ALIEN 1

Of course. I don’t think it’s possible for anyone to break out of the mental block.

ALIEN 2

What do we do with them now?

ALIEN 1

We could give them what they want.

ALIEN 2

But what would they do with it now? They can’t go back.

ALIEN 1

Yeah. I guess they can't go back.

ALIEN 2

They can’t. There is no trace of life on Earth.

ALIEN 1

But they could change that.

ALIEN 2

They can't do anything.

ALIEN 1

They could return with trees and recreate life.

ALIEN 2

They would not survive. Nothing can survive there now.

ALIEN 1

We could help them. This could be a new beginning.

ALIEN 2

It's not going to work. This is their end.

ALIEN 1

It's a beginning!

ALIEN 2

It's an end!

ALIEN 1

Beginning!

ALIEN 2

End!

ALIEN 1

Beginning!

ALIEN 2

End!

ALIEN 1

Beginning!

ALIEN 2

End!

ALIEN 1

Beginning!

Lights Out

THE END