



The Aliens

Annie Baker

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Professional slackers and best friends KJ and Jasper spend their days talking music and Bukowski outside the back of a small coffee shop in Vermont. Seventeen-year-old Evan is eking out his summer working at the caf?. When he meets the two young men he is irresistibly drawn to their world of magic mushrooms, philosophical musings and great-bands-that never-were.

One of the freshest voices to come out of America in recent years, Annie Baker's gentle, engaging and deeply funny play introduces two cult heroes in the shape of KJ and Jasper, and puts modern day America under the microscope. What happened to the generation who never grew up?

The Aliens opened at the Bush Theatre, London in September 2010. The play's world premiere was held at the Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, New York, in April of the same year.

The Aliens Details

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Author : Annie Baker

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From Reader Review The Aliens for online ebook

Aaron says

Interesting setting. Back alley behind a coffee shop, a fenced in area where only employees are supposed to come. Mainly features two, sort of, losers. Late twenties, early thirties. Messed up kids. I think you would call it a Language Play because it's got all its pauses very much built in. It's got a whole thing about the intentional use of what might be considered a gratuitous amount of silence. I'm not sure what this silence could be doing. But it must be doing something. In my read of it, it seemed to add this sort of gravity that settles continually onto things.

The plot follows the disjointed rambling hanging out of two friends, one who graduated highschool but didn't go to college, the other a college dropout. Drinking tea, doing shrooms, playing guitar, and sort of serving in friendship as a lozenge to the suffering of the other. A third character, a painfully shy / embarrassed teenager who works at the cafe begins to feature in their tight nit relationship. The play has a slow, hulking development that for all the casual seeming randomness of the train of conversation feels deliberate and mounting with weight. You feel the texture of these people as it goes.

Could you say it is a study in compassion towards people who have given up? These are hurting people. But not without humor or humanity. And they're making it through the moments, the difficult moments of consciousness--I don't know how to fucking describe this play. I enjoyed it though. I thought about re-reading it during the week but I didn't find the time. There seemed to be an ample amount of love in there. Somehow.

Shannon McGovern says

UGH TEAR ME UP INSIDE

Kacey says

Wait. What? Wow.

(Lots if pauses, this review should take, like, 3 minutes to read. Minimum. With a break. The break is really important for lots of reasons I will never divulge)

Frank Hering says

More recently, Annie Baker is the Pulitzer Prize winning writer of The Flick. You can get a copy of The Aliens, much more economically, in Annie Baker's collection The Vermont Plays. And you can see a fabulous production of it at Yale on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARXKW...>

The play opens with K.J., a bearded man in his late 30s, sitting in back of a coffee shop, drinking his signature 'shroom tea. He is joined by his more literary bearded friend, who is a budding novelist, and then

by a high-school employee, who at first tells them they can't be back here, employees only. The characters are believable and endearing. Annie Baker says there were a number of college dropouts walking around bearded and in sweatpants in her hometown. The conversations and situations ring true, especially when they have their own 4th of July party.

I leave it to readers to figure out what the title refers to, but if you're looking for little green men, you may be disappointed.

Renarde says

Holy crap but this was amazing. I read the entire book in one sitting while sitting outside on a little bench overlooking the water, and let me tell you: it was an experience. There is just so much one can do with this play. I wasn't expecting to enjoy it so much, but it was great!

Matthew says

Maybe some of this was lost on me, because I thought what Jasper read of his novel was awful. Was I supposed to like it?

Still, I see the redeeming features: the quirks and subtle depths of character, the natural lope of the dialogue. Hopefully this will grow on me in time to come, since I'll be working on it in this semester's directing class.

Cary S says

There was something (almost bizarrely) beautiful about this play. I can't exactly put my finger on it (I'm not sure I want to). Considering how short it was, the characters erupted off of the page. Fantastic!

Maria says

The writing was captivation. Annie Baker makes frequent and striking use of silence, adding this note at the top of the play:

"At least a third of this play is silence. Pauses should be at least three seconds long. Silences should last from 5 to 10 seconds. Long pauses and long silences should, of course, be even longer"

In an interview with her she says that she wanted to write a naturalistic play that she would want to see and I think she did really well on that front. The three characters are unique and realistic and pop off the page. My one major complaint is that they're all men. But that's selfish, and the characters are the right ones for the play. I'm just hoping she'll do an all female play next.

Lindsay Heller says

I was one page into reading this play when I realized I had seen it performed years ago. I remember liking it

well enough, despite its total lack of female characters. But this play really stuck with me, even though I couldn't remember the name. It's a really quiet story about two loafers with delusions of grandeur that they may or may not be able to back up. And that's really all. But sometimes that's enough.

Ella says

God I fucking love Annie Baker

David Laurin says

Beau mélange d'humour, d'intelligence, et de profondeur. Trois personnages. 31 ans, 30 ans, et 17 ans. Parfait pour une salle intime. Construction intéressante. Beaucoup de silence, mais peu de longueurs. Auteure américaine à surveiller.

Daniel Pivonka says

4.5/5

Steven says

An odd but likable little play, filled with silence and eccentric characters.

Grant Conversano says

One of my favorite plays.

Ian Hrabe says

Another beautiful and devastating piece of literature from Annie Baker. This one lends some poetry to the world's burnouts and the writing is just...it's just so so so so so goddamn good. Every one of her plays I've read, the dialogue just puts you RIGHT THERE. The plays are quiet and they are built on myriad silences (I believe this one has a note that says if the play isn't half silences and pauses, you're doing it wrong), but they are impossible to put down and unforgettable.
