

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
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# E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial (1982)

Steven Spielberg

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### OVERVIEW

**Auteur** Stephen Spielberg's work spans many genres. While he is most famous for blockbuster films such as *Jaws* (1975), *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), and *Jurassic Park* (1993), each of which has a firm foothold in horror and science fiction, his filmography also reveals a deep commitment to asking questions about history and humanity. Spielberg's diverse collection of work has been widely recognized as pioneering, frequently engaging with unexplored themes and techniques that have earned Spielberg a reputation as an innovator and a master artist. He has been awarded three Academy Awards, the AFI Life Achievement Award, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. His films have likewise collectively placed him at the top of the list of the most profitable film directors in history.

**Film** Inspired by the success of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), Spielberg turned again to the theme of human engagement with alien life in *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982). While Spielberg had originally intended his second foray into this theme to be a scary story about a family harassed by small aliens, his interactions with Melissa Mathison, who wrote the script for *E.T.*, made Spielberg realize that a family-friendly film would have more success. *E.T.* was a hit at the box office, allowing Spielberg to reclaim the "highest-grossing film of all time" title from George Lucas, whose *Star Wars* took the title from *Jaws* (1975) in 1977.

**Background** *E.T.* is a film that engages with two traits that become a hallmark of Spielberg's work throughout his career: animatronics and talented child actors. As Spielberg enjoyed working with Cary Guffey in *Close Encounters*, he felt willing and able to take on a larger cast of children in *E.T.* The film was shot in roughly chronological order to give the children a chance to experience a full range of emotions – meeting *E.T.*, spending time with him, and then feeling truly sorry when they had to say goodbye. A great deal of time and effort went into creating the alien puppet for *E.T.*, which came to a sum cost of 1.5 million dollars. Three different actors were hired to walk around in the suit while a team of puppeteers animated the facial features.

### SYNOPSIS

An alien spaceship lands in the forest and several small aliens explore their surroundings, collecting specimens and bringing them inside their craft. When a car abruptly pulls into the forest, the aliens are forced to leave, accidentally leaving one of their own behind. This abandoned alien, who eventually comes to be known as *E.T.*, makes his way to the suburbs where he befriends Elliott, a ten-year-old boy who is very curious about him. Elliott and his family live an average suburban life, though their father recently left them and is vacationing in Mexico with his new girlfriend.

Elliott brings *E.T.* inside the house and takes care of him, introducing the alien to his brother, Michael, and his little sister, Gertie. The children keep the alien secret from their mother and hide *E.T.* in their closet. Elliott and the alien grow closer, eventually sharing emotions so that Elliott feels what *E.T.* feels even across great distances. *E.T.* explores the house, learning about life on Earth. Inspired by a cartoon in the newspaper, *E.T.* begins to build a machine that will help him contact his alien brethren. Elliott helps *E.T.* bring the machine to the forest and, while they set it up, *E.T.* grows ill. *E.T.* and Elliott grow sick together, suggesting that their connection is physical as well as emotive, and Michael finally shows the alien to their mother just before government scientists break into the house, intent on studying the alien lifeform. *E.T.* dies shortly thereafter, leaving Elliott alone and desolate.

The film comes to a close when E.T.'s chest begins to glow red, which only happens when his alien friends are near. He comes back to life, and Elliott and Michael help E.T. escape the government scientists and return to the forest so that he can rejoin his spaceship and leave Earth.

## MAJOR CHARACTERS

*Elliott Taylor*      The middle child of a suburban family

*Michael Taylor*    The eldest child of a suburban family

*E.T.*                    An alien who is accidentally left behind on Earth

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### **Elliott**

Elliott is a ten-year-old boy who lives with his mother, brother, and sister in the suburbs on the edge of a large forest. He hears a noise outside of his house one evening by chance and begins an enduring friendship with a lost alien whom he names 'E.T.'

*Rejected* – From the start of the film, Elliott wants to be accepted and involved. He begs his older brother, Michael, to allow him to join in on the game of Dungeons and Dragons that Michael plays with his friends, but Michael tells him to go wait for the pizza man instead. Elliott's father has also recently left the family. In combination, these events suggest that Elliott is a boy who is lonely and lost – perhaps the perfect person to meet an alien who feels precisely the same way.

*Curious* – Elliott first encounters E.T. by chance when he hears a noise in his backyard. When Elliott throws a ball into the shed, something throws the ball back. This frightens Elliott, who runs inside to tell his family, but he later returns to the scene with courage and curiosity. While other children would be frightened or disinterested, Elliott eagerly searches for whatever was in the shed and is rewarded by a unique friendship with the alien who eventually comes to trust him.

*Loyal* – Although Elliott is aware that government forces are searching for E.T., he is very dedicated to keeping his friend safe, which means keeping him a secret. While many children would tell their parents, at least, about an alien they found in the backyard, Elliott works hard to help E.T. build his machine and take it to the forest without adult intervention. In the end, Elliott breaks several laws and risks his life to get E.T. safely home, suggesting that though Elliott is young he is indeed a loyal friend.

### **Michael**

The eldest child in the home, Michael is a complicated older brother to Elliott. Although he teases and rejects Elliott at the beginning of the film, Michael ultimately supports Elliott in his mission to help keep E.T. safe and help him return home.

*Teasing* – Michael is not initially a kind older brother to Elliott. He does not allow Elliott to join in his game of Dungeons and Dragons and orders him to go away. When Elliott reports that he saw something scary in the backyard, Michael continually teases him about finding a "goblin." All of this hurts Elliott's feelings and does not make him feel accepted and understood in his home.

*Dedicated* – As the movie progresses, however, Michael turns into a supportive older brother. He respects Elliott's dedication to helping E.T. and, in turn, becomes dedicated to helping Elliott. Michael keeps Elliott's secret, helps him sneak out of the house on Halloween, finds E.T.'s body when it is lost in the woods, and eventually steals a van to help Elliott and E.T. on their quest to get E.T. to the spaceship.

### **E.T.**

A small, squat, curious alien who is unwillingly left behind on Earth, E.T. is kind and gentle, bringing flowers back to life and healing Elliott's finger when he cuts it. While E.T. wishes to return home, he is also a good friend to Elliott.

*Emotive* – From the moment that E.T. and Elliott meet, it is clear that they have become attached. The audience first sees this when E.T. scratches his face after Elliott scratches his, and then they both yawn at the same moment. While friendships between humans likewise result in deep connections and shared feelings, the film implies that there is something about E.T.'s physicality that makes even deeper emotive bonds possible.

*Gentle* – While many films of this era and genre were intent on portraying aliens as destructive and dangerous, E.T. is another example of Spielberg's experimentation with the idea of a kind, curious alien. E.T. has an affinity for plants and feels most at home in the forest. He also gently plays with children, learning from and working with them to complete his quest. Not once does E.T. ever seek to be selfish or to harm his friends; even as he dies, he releases Elliott from their deep connection so that Elliott can live.

## THEMES

**Environment** When the alien spaceship arrives on Earth, it is not bent on any kind of destruction. Instead, the aliens only seem interested in the flora in the woods outside of Elliott's suburban town. The aliens collect a variety of plants and carry each specimen carefully onto the spaceship. This suggests that E.T. and his friends are kind aliens who are more comfortable in the forest than they are in the suburban landscape next to it. While E.T. is intrigued by suburban life, he must return to the forest to contact his friends and to meet his spaceship. E.T. also has the power to give life to plants within the film, allowing him to bring dead flowers back to life. The film overall does not contain overarching messages about threats to the environment; however, it certainly uses the aliens' affinity for natural spaces to suggest that aliens – like the forest they prefer – are calm, gentle, and peaceful.

**Government** The government forces within the film are starkly at odds with the alien. While E.T. is aligned with the naturalness of the forest and the curiosity of childhood, the government in this film wraps itself in synthetic plastics and elaborate technology to capture and study the alien. It takes the scientists a great deal of time to find E.T., but it only takes Elliott one afternoon and a handful of candy to gain his trust. While the film certainly marks the government forces as taking the wrong route to studying alien life, it doesn't mark them as all bad. Instead, it suggests that an over-reliance on research and technology makes these scientists and bureaucrats miss the true beauty of the thing that they study: E.T.'s emotional connection with his human host. The one government scientist who is very kind to Elliott and respects his relationship with E.T. is rewarded by being allowed to see E.T. leave the planet with his alien friends.

**Childhood** *E.T.* is a film that respects children, both in terms of actors and characters. The children within the film are not simpering or overly angelic; instead, they are fully realized characters whose lives are perhaps even more passionate than the adults with whom they interact. While the government workers struggle to search and capture E.T., it is Elliott's gentle calls and presents of candy that eventually encourage the alien to appear again in his backyard and to trust him. Elliott does not seek to study E.T., but merely to befriend and help him. When Michael and Gertie are let in on the secret of the alien in the house, both are likewise kind. Gertie plays with E.T., dressing him in costumes and teaching him to talk by using the early literacy lessons that she herself is using. While media has for a long time insisted that children are the least capable actors within a society, needing care and guidance from adults to survive, *E.T.* contrarily suggests that children are the best able to understand what the alien needs and how to help him.

**Family** *E.T.* is a film that continues to explore Spielberg's fascination with broken homes. Perhaps inspired by the fact that Spielberg's father left his family at a young age, the story revolves around a complicated single-parent household. Elliott is an angry boy who struggles to find a place in his family. His father is absent and his other brother, Michael, is more interested in his own friends than his little brother. When Elliott turns to E.T. it is as much for companionship as curiosity – both are, in a way, abandoned by their families and become an emotional refuge for each other. Elliott is heartbroken by E.T.'s eventual decision to leave Earth on his spaceship. However, Elliott respects that E.T. needs to leave. When Elliott is invited to join E.T. on the spaceship, he decides to stay home with his family. The film ends by suggesting that though incredible bonds can be made between people and alien, family is ultimately more important for health and well-being.

**Quest** Much of the storyline of *E.T.* revolves around the alien's quest to return home with his people. Although E.T. is lost at the beginning of the film and struggles to find a safe space, as soon as he is welcomed into Elliott's home, he begins to make his plans to create the machine that will help him contact his alien friends. Elliott helps E.T. in this quest, going so far as to endanger his life to ensure that the alien completes his mission. Elliott and E.T. stay all night in the forest when they set up the machine, and as E.T. grows ill so does Elliott, as the two have become emotionally and physically linked. When E.T.'s friends return to earth and E.T. comes back to life, Elliott again endangers himself and his family by stealing a van and then running from the police so that E.T. can get to the forest. In the end, the film suggests that all of this effort was worth it to reunite the alien with his family. E.T.'s quest isn't for fame or glory but is, instead, a Homeric quest in which the hero merely tries to return to his home.

**Friendship** E.T. and Elliott have an interesting friendship throughout the film. Although they are initially frightened of each other – when they meet face-to-face in a cornfield behind Elliott's house for the first time both scream – they eventually form a very deep bond. The film suggests that there is something about E.T.'s alien nature that allows him to create deep emotive bonds with those who are around them, bonds that go so far as to align the two friends' brain waves and allow them to feel each other's emotions. This is very useful for Elliott and E.T., who use their connection to communicate and build a powerful machine to contact E.T.'s alien friends. However, it is also dangerous for them. When E.T. accidentally gets drunk in Elliott's home, Elliott gets drunk at school. When E.T. gets sick, Elliott likewise gets sick. Friendship in this film is marked as a remarkably powerful force, but one which has detriments as well as beauty.

**Appearance** While E.T. is gentle and kind, he is also very ugly. Regarding the puppet created for the role, Spielberg said that it had a face only a mother could love. Carlo Rambaldi, who designed the character, was invested in creating a creature that would be totally foreign to human viewers. However, he was also intent on making it into something with whom humans could relate. One way of doing this was to invest deeply in the creation of E.T.'s blue eyes, which were created to be very expressive and pretty so that audiences could see him as a character who holds a great deal of childlike joy and curiosity. Each of the children in the film is initially frightened of E.T.'s appearance, but they all quickly get past it and realize the beauty of the alien's spirit behind his unusual appearance. All of this reinforces a cultural message that physical beauty is ephemeral; beauty of the heart and spirit is what truly matters.

**Loneliness** At the start of the film, both E.T. and Elliott are lonely characters. Indeed, they end up being doubles for each other and it is unlikely that it is a coincidence that the first letter of Elliott's name is E and the last one is T. While E.T. is unwillingly left behind by his family, Elliott's father leaves by choice. Despite this difference, the result is the same: both characters are looking for companionship at the start of the film. In E.T.'s case, companionship seems to be a biological necessity. As he spends more time on Earth, his body suffers and he dies. However, as soon as his alien friends come close enough in their spaceship, E.T. comes back to life and is as healthy as he was before they left. While Elliott is not biologically dependent on the physical proximity of his family in the way that E.T. is, his friendship with the alien still cures his craving for loneliness and allows him to reconnect with his mother, brother, and sister by the end of the film. *E.T.* implies that loneliness can be a destructive force for any species, but that caring for each other can be a productive cure.

**Caring** The aliens in *E.T.* are incredibly caring creatures, a trait that allows them to heal and give life within the film. When the aliens are around each other, their chests glow with a red light. While the film does not explain the biological mechanism behind this, this imagery immediately suggests that their hearts are glowing. This physical emphasis on the aliens' big, bright heart carries through the film, as E.T. is consistently gentle with Elliott and wants to help the lifeforms around him. When Elliott cuts his finger, E.T. heals it. When E.T. sees that the plant that Gertie brings him is dying, he uses his powers to bring it back to life. Even when Michael wears a Halloween costume that makes it look as if a knife has gone through his head, E.T. raises his glowing hand and attempts to heal him, saying "Ouch!" This emphasis on caring for each other persists throughout the film, with Elliott taking care of his alien friend and the siblings coming to aid each other in times of need. Overall, *E.T.* is a film that strongly emphasizes the importance of caring for family and friends, suggesting that it saves and sustains lives.

## SCENES

**Left behind** A strange craft sits in a dark forest, flashing lights and emitting steam. Around it, strange creatures with large heads and spindly arms rustle through the forest, collecting plants and bringing them aboard their ship. One wanders away, peering at the lights of the suburbs below. A car suddenly appears, startling the creature into hiding. The rest of the creatures board the craft, and the wandering creature runs for it, chased by the men from the car. While the lost creature attempts to get back in time, the ship lifts into the air without him and flies away. The lost creature, alone, gives a mournful cry. Men with flashlights search the area, but they cannot find it.



**Dungeons and Dragons** A group of boys cluster around a table in a suburban home playing Dungeons and Dragons. A younger boy called Elliott begs to play, but the older boys tell him he has to go wait for the pizza before he will be allowed to play. When the delivery man comes, Elliott pays for the pizza at the end of the driveway. He carries back to the house but hears a rustling noise. He calls the dog's name into the darkness behind the house but nothing responds.





**In the Shed** The noises continue and Elliott walks slowly towards the shed carrying the pizza. He puts it on the ground as he stands outside the shed and tosses a ball in. When the ball is thrown back out, Elliott gasps and runs into the house, stepping on the pizza on the way. He runs inside and cries to his mother that something is in the shed. Worried, he warns his brother and his friends that no one should go outside. The older boys are quiet for a moment before they laugh and jump up from the table, heading outside.



**Investigation** Everyone troops outside to investigate the shed. They find strange three-toed footprints, but Michael – Elliott's older brother – concludes that it was coyotes. The older boys scold Elliott for ruining the pizza while their mother scolds the older boys for ordering one in the first place. She ushers the children back into the house. Once everyone is gone, the small creature's hand curls around the edge of the shed's door.



**Second Look** Later in the evening when the house is quiet, Elliott goes back outside with a flashlight. He wanders through the cornfield at the back of his house and sees more of the three-toed footprints. Elliott follows them. When his light lands on the creature it screams and Elliott does too. The creature runs away, knocking over trashcans as he goes. Elliott chases after, but does not pursue beyond his fence, the gate of which is swinging open. Elliott smiles, gazing in the direction that the creature ran.



**Searching** The next morning, Elliott gets on his bike with a full backpack. He rides through the hills that surround his suburban town, scattering Reese's Pieces, a hard-shelled peanut butter candy, in the wooded areas, whistling and shouting "hello." When he sees another man looking in the same area, Elliott first hides and then runs away. As Elliott rides away, the camera pans to a tree and shows the creature's finger drifting down a log, suggesting that he was there.





**Family Dinner** Elliott and his family sit down for dinner. His little sister asks what he is being for Halloween. Michael, teasing and assuming it's not real, suggests that Elliott go as the goblin – Michael's nickname for the creature. Elliott insists that it was real. Michael teases Elliott until Elliott snaps, shouting at him. Once Elliott calms, his mother suggests that he call his father and tell him about the creature. Elliott says he can't because his father is in Mexico with Sally. Getting upset, Elliott's mother moves into the kitchen and starts to cry. The children fight, Michael blaming Elliott for upsetting their mom.



**Encounter** Elliott falls asleep in a lawn chair in his backyard. When he wakes, he sees the creature standing in front of the shed. Elliott attempts to call for Michael and his mom, but his voice comes out as a squeak. The creature shuffles forward and when it draws close it reaches out a hand and leaves a small pile of Reese's Pieces on the edge of Elliott's blanket.





**Inside** Elliott leaves small piles of Reese's Pieces in a line along his hallway, walking backwards after each one. He crouches in the doorway to his bedroom and the creature crawls up the stairs, reaching for each new pile and eating the candy. After the creature is lured into his room, Elliott shuts his door and the creature explores, cooing and knocking over Elliott's toys. Elliott and the creature stare at each other. The creature begins to mimic Elliott, rubbing his nose after Elliott rubs his. Amazed, Elliott whispers "Wow." When Elliott gets sleepy, the creature gets sleepy. They both fall asleep.



**Official Search** Uniformed men with flashlights use electronic equipment to search the forest. One finds a pile of Reese's Pieces and eats one. The next morning, Elliott fakes an illness to stay home from school, pressing his thermometer against the light bulb of his lamp to raise its temperature. When his family leaves, Elliott closes his blinds and coaxes the creature out of his closet.



**Home Alone** Elliott tries to teach the creature his name, but when the creature is uninterested Elliott instead shows the creature his toys and his pet fish. When the creature attempts to eat a car, Elliott asks if he is hungry, and then declares that he is hungry. Elliott instructs the creature to stay in his room. When Elliott opens the door the dog breaks in and scares the creature, who screams. The creature explores upstairs while Elliott rummages through the fridge. When the creature opens an umbrella and screams in surprise, Elliott also screams and drops the food he was carrying.



**Meeting Michael** Elliott goes upstairs and finds the creature hiding amongst his teddy bears, shaking. He offers him a coke. Outside, Michael runs up the driveway in his football uniform. He comes inside, singing and likewise grabbing a coke. Elliott invites Michael into his room and says he has something important to show him. Michael teases him about the goblin, but Elliott pulls Michael into the room and sits him down, asking Michael to close his eyes and making him swear that he, Elliott, has "absolute power." Michael does so and, when he opens his eyes to see the creature, his face falls in complete shock.





**Meeting Gertie** As Michael stares at the creature, Gertie's voice is heard calling down the hall. She suddenly bursts into the room and comes face-to-face with the creature, who extends his neck. Gertie screams and so do the creature and Elliott until Elliott covers Gertie's mouth with his hand. When their mother comes home, Michael rushes with Gertie and the creature to hide in the closet. Their mother comes into Elliott's room, asking about the mess, but Elliott says he is reorganizing.



**In the Closet** Elliott joins his siblings in the closet and they stare at the creature together. Elliott declares that he's keeping him and Gertie asks questions about the creature. Elliott warns Gertie that she can't tell their mother about the creature, threatening to hurt her doll if she does. Gertie and Michael promise to keep the creature secret.



**Home** The men with equipment continue to search the forest, moving closer to the suburbs. Inside the home, Gertie brings a wagon full of supplies into Elliott's room, including a flower pot with dead flowers. As the creature eats, the siblings speculate about what he is. Elliott shows the creature an atlas and a globe, attempting to describe their location. He asks the creature where he is from and the creature points at the window. Elliott shows the creature a picture of the solar system and points to the earth, saying home. The creature carefully sets round objects on top of the other planets in the picture and then stares at them. As he does, the table shakes and then the objects rise in the air, orbiting around each other.



**Close to Home** The children watch in wonder until Elliott shrieks and the objects fall out of the air. Michael asks what is wrong and Elliott says he doesn't know, but it's something scary. Elliott goes outside where he hears the beeping of the investigating men's equipment. He peers over the back gate. Inside the house, the creature looks through a child's spelling book. He turns towards the dead flowers Gertie brought and as he hums the flowers refresh and come back to life.





**To School** The next morning Elliott and Michael head to school. Michael takes the bus while Elliott rides his bike. Their mother sends Gertie to the car but when she hears a noise upstairs, she checks Elliott's closet. Inside, the creature hides amongst Elliott's stuffed animals.



**Frog Dissection** In science class, Elliott's teacher informs the students that they will be dissecting frogs today. At home, the creature wears a robe and goes downstairs to the kitchen. He explores the refrigerator while the dog eagerly watches. The creature opens a can of beer and drinks the whole thing. In class, Elliott burps. The creature stumbles drunkenly around the kitchen, walking into the cabinets. Elliott drunkenly slumps in his seat. When the creature falls in the kitchen, Elliott falls out of his seat. The creature continues to drink beer.



**Television** The creature plays with toys, including a speak-and-spell, and inadvertently turns on the television. In class, Elliott's teacher drops chloroform-laced cotton balls into jars with individual frogs. The creature explores a comic strip about people sending help signals via radio in outer space. He looks with interest at the telephone. In the classroom, Elliott whispers, "Save them," and then shouts to let the frogs go free. He tips his jar over, releasing the frog, and then begins to set the rest of the frogs free, shouting, "I've got to let 'em go!"



**Building the Machine** At the house, the creature begins to take apart the speak-and-spell toy, fiddling with its inner mechanics. His attention is caught by a program on the television, where a romantic scene unfolds. Dozens of frogs run free in the classroom, but as the creature watches the romantic scene, Elliott grabs a blonde girl and re-enacts the kiss that the creature sees on television. The children drop the frogs out the window, setting them free.





**New Plans** The creature gathers a great number of electronics and drags them behind the television. Elliott's mother comes home with Gertie as the creature shuffles around downstairs. Gertie tries to show the creature to her mother, but she's too distracted by putting away groceries to see him. Gertie watches a show aimed at teaching children to read; all of the words shown begin with the letter "B." The creature pops his head up above the television and says the letter "B." Gertie congratulates the creature, saying, "B! Good!" The creature repeats the phrase. Elliott's mother gets a call from the school saying Elliott is intoxicated. She leaves Gertie alone to pick up Elliott.



**E.T.** The creature moves to the phone, pressing the numbers. Gertie tells him it's called a phone; the creature repeats the word. When Elliott gets home, he hears his sister in her room telling someone to stay there. Elliott drops his bag and goes to investigate. In his sister's room, he discovers that Gertie has dressed the creature up in a dress, wig, and hat. Initially dismayed, he is then thrilled when the creature begins to say his name over and over. Gertie smiles, saying she taught him how to talk, and pointing out that the creature brought many electronics upstairs by himself. Elliott asks the creature if he can say "E.T." The creature repeats it over and over again, Elliott laughing with delight.



**Phone Home** E.T. points to the cartoon with the radio distress call and then begins to say the words “home” and “phone,” pointing out the window. Elliott and Gertie figure out that E.T. wants to call home. When Michael comes into the room, he’s shocked to discover that E.T. is talking. When it says, “E.T. phone home,” Elliott whispers “And they’ll come.” A van drives slowly through the neighborhood that night, using electronic equipment to listen in on conversations within the houses. The van drives past Elliott’s house, where Michael and Elliott search for equipment to build a “radar.”



**We’re Fine** Michael points out that E.T. isn’t looking as good as he used to, and Elliott protests, shouting “We’re fine!” Michael asks why Elliott is saying “we,” and Elliott avoids the question, simply insisting that they’re fine. The man in the van overhears this conversation. The boys reminisce about their missing father when they find one of his shirts. In her bedroom, their mother reads Peter Pan aloud. The creature stands in the closet, listening.





**Ouch** Elliott brings supplies up to his bedroom and cuts his finger on the sharp edge of a rotating saw. He says “Ouch,” and E.T. repeats the word, reaching out a glowing finger and pressing it to Elliott’s injury, healing him instantly. Elliott and E.T. sit together in the closet, listening to the Peter Pan story. Later, Michael and Elliott watch E.T. use the supplies that Elliott brought him to build something. Michael points out that E.T.’s breathing is labored, but Elliott says that he’s all right, he’s just feeling everything. The camera cuts to the flowers that E.T. brought back to life, which are beginning to wilt.



**Halloween** Elliott and Gertie get ready for Halloween in the bathroom. Gertie is dressed as a cowgirl while Elliott paints his face grey. He asks her if she understands the plan and she insists that she does. In the closet, Michael and Elliott put a sheet over E.T. and pretend that it is Gertie beneath the sheet. After their mother takes a picture, Elliott and Michael take E.T. out with them, pretending that they are going trick-or-treating. Gertie, also dressed as a ghost, waits just outside of town next to a bicycle. E.T. stumbles through town, looking with interest at everyone dressed up as Halloween. When he sees a child dressed as Yoda from the *Star Wars* trilogy, he tries to run toward him, saying “Home!”



**To the Forest** Michael, Elliott, and E.T. meet Gertie with the bike and Elliott rides with E.T. deep into the forest. Elliott sighs, declaring the terrain too bumpy to ride anymore, but his bike suddenly surges forward. Elliott shouts, but his bicycle lifts into the air, soaring above the forest. Elliott shouts for joy as he and E.T. fly past the moon. They come to a hard landing in the forest. At home, Elliott's mother waits, alone and worried. The children have missed their curfew.



**The Machine** Elliott and E.T. construct an elaborate machine in the forest with some elements that look like a satellite. Worried, Elliott's mother leaves the house in her car. When she is gone, men with silver briefcases go inside and begin to investigate. In the forest, the machine begins to work, clicking and using the speak-and-spell to create a message. Elliott shouts that it is working and E.T. says "home!" Elliott tells E.T. that they have to leave the forest because it's late and begins to cough. E.T. doesn't move, and Elliott encourages E.T. to give his friends some time. Then, Elliott tells E.T. that he could stay with him and take care of him.



**Foggy Morning** Elliott wakes up alone in the forest the next morning. Confused, he calls for E.T. At home, Michael sits with Gertie in his lap as their mother reports Elliott as a missing person to a policeman. Elliott suddenly appears and his mother cries with relief, but Elliott looks very sick. As his mother escorts the policeman from the house, Elliott asks Michael if E.T. is at the house. When Michael says no, Elliott cries and says that they have to find him.



**Finding E.T.** Michael leaves the house on his bike and is followed by a blue car. He cuts through backyards in an attempt to lose the tail, eventually succeeding. Michael shouts for E.T. in the forest and recovers the ghost costume that E.T. wore. He finally finds E.T. lying in a river, looking very pale.





**Showing Mom** Inside the house, Michael asks his mother to come with him. He tries to make her swear that she will listen, but she just insists on knowing what he's talking about. Michael opens the door to the bathroom, where Elliott and E.T. lay next to each other with Gertie perched on the sink. Elliott tells his mother "We're sick, I think we're dying," and she orders Michael to take Gertie downstairs. Then she grabs Elliott and pulls him from the room. E.T. cries as Elliott goes and Elliott protests that they can't leave him alone.



**Invasion** Michael opens the front door to find a man in a space suit. His mother comes down the stairs and sees the astronaut. She runs from him, but three more astronauts break into the house as well. She protests that this is her home, but they do not stop. An astronaut goes upstairs and discovers E.T., who reaches for him.





**Police Presence** The police and scientists arrive, tenting the entire house and placing it in quarantine. One man dons a blue hazmat suit and goes inside via a long plastic tube. Doctors ask Elliott's mother many questions about E.T. but she insists she doesn't know the answers, begging to know what is wrong with her son. Another man questions Michael about what E.T. is like, and Michael reports that E.T. uses Elliott to communicate and that Elliott feels E.T.'s feelings. Scientists perform a great number of tests, saying that E.T.'s brain wave activities are synchronized with Elliott's.



**Sickness** Elliott and E.T. are held in adjoining hospital beds and Elliott begs them to leave E.T. alone, saying he can take care of him. The man who entered the house peers curiously at E.T. and then taps on the glass next to Elliott's bed. He tells Elliott that he's been to the forest and saw E.T.'s machine. He asks what the machine does. When Elliott hesitates to tell him, the man says that he doesn't want E.T. to die – that he's been wishing for this since he was ten years old. Elliott says that E.T. needs to go home and that he's calling his people.



**Separation** The doctors report that the brainwaves between E.T. and Elliott are separating. Elliott begs E.T. to stay, but E.T.'s machines begin to suggest that his body is failing. While Elliott begins to heal, the doctors say that E.T. is dying. Michael sits alone in the closet, very upset. He eventually falls asleep. When he wakes, he sees that the flowers that E.T. brought back to life are dying. Alarms begin to ring and Elliott shouts E.T.'s name. Doctors attempt to revive E.T., but they fail. Elliott is dragged from the room and his mother holds him tight while he cries.



**Pack it Up** The scientists begin to pack up and a crowd gathers outside Elliott's house, including Michael's friends on bikes. Inside, the doctors order E.T.'s body packed in ice and they wheel in a small freezer with a clear window on top. Elliott accepts the offer to spend a moment alone with E.T.'s body, saying that he doesn't know how he feels anymore and telling E.T. that he loves him. As Elliott closes the freezer, though, E.T.'s chest starts to glow red. Elliott walks away but suddenly notices that the flowers come back to life. He opens the freezer again and is thrilled to see that E.T. is alive. E.T. repeats "E.T. phone home!" over and over and Elliott asks if this means that the other aliens are coming. E.T. says yes. Elliott begs him to be quiet.



**Escape** Elliott shuts E.T. back in the freezer and pretends to cry loudly so that the scientists won't hear E.T. However, Elliott's false cries turn quickly into cries of joy as he tells Michael that E.T. is alive. The scene cuts to Gertie running into the living room with the flowers, asking her mother if the boys are gone. Her mother asks what she means and Gertie gives her a note that she was instructed to hand over after the boys have left. Elliott's mother reads the note and sighs. The scene moves to Elliott climbing into the van with E.T.'s freezer. Michael is disguised in a hazmat suit and sitting in the van's driver's seat. He is recognized by an official and Elliott tells him to drive away immediately.



**Chase** Michael peels out of the driveway, dragging part of the plastic quarantine tunnel behind him with two men still in it. Michael stops when he sees his friends at the end of the driveway, instructing them to meet him at the playground. They eagerly agree. The men in the tunnel attempt to climb into the van, but Elliott detaches the tunnel as Gertie and her mother pull their car out of the garage. The kind scientist stops them and asks where they're going. Gertie says, "To the spaceship!" and he eagerly comes along.





**Alive** Michael, Elliott, and E.T. meet Michael's friends at the playground. The friends stare at E.T. in awe as his chest glows bright red. The police and scientists finally catch up with the van at the park, but it is empty.



**To the Forest** The boys all ride quickly down the street on their bikes, E.T. in Elliott's front basket. When asked where they're going, Elliott shouts, "To the forest!" The boys ride fast, evading police cars and going off-road where they cannot be followed. When a car tries to trap them at the bottom of a hill, they simply ride over the roof of the car. When it appears that the boys will be trapped, E.T. lifts all of the bikes into the air and they fly away over the town.





**The Ship** The boys land safely in the forest. Elliott begins to wipe debris from the machine, but lights shine on his hands and he stands straight. E.T.'s chest glows red as the large ship from the beginning of the movie descends from the sky. All of the boys watch in awe and E.T. says, "Home." The ship lands and Gertie runs up as a ramp lowers from the ship. Gertie says goodbye to E.T. and gives him her plant. E.T. tells her to be good and she kisses his nose. Michael strokes E.T.'s head as another alien creature appears at the door to the ship.



**Goodbye** Elliott's mother and the kind scientist arrive as Elliott stands before E.T. E.T. invites Elliott to come with him, but Elliott says he will stay. Elliott cries and hugs his friend goodbye. E.T. holds up a glowing finger between them and says, "I'll be right here." Elliott, crying, simply says an emotional "bye." E.T. gathers up his flowers and climbs up the ramp onto the ship. The ramp closes, showing E.T. standing at the door, looking at Elliott as a circular door spirals shut. The ship rises into the sky and very rapidly flies away, leaving a bright rainbow behind.

