



Roswell High: The Outsider (TV Series)

By Melinda Metz

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The Roswell High series gets off to a slow start with this rambling tale introducing a trio of teen aliens and several of their human pals. Long on extraneous dialogue and short on action, the story is set in Roswell, N.M., renowned for an alleged UFO landing in 1947. Hours after a military spokesperson had proclaimed that the flying disk had crashed in the desert, a second announcement insisted that the object was only a weather balloon. But Max, his sister Isabel and their friend Michael know better: they are the orphaned survivors of the spaceship crash, who eventually hatched from incubation pods that had protected them for years. Liz, the prettiest girl at Roswell High, has long admired handsome, quiet Max from a distance. But she gets a close-up look at just how special he is when his superhuman hands heal her from a gunshot wound to the stomach in the opening scene. Liz and two classmates are soon in on the aliens' secret identity, which the mean-spirited Sheriff Valenti, a key member of an alien-hunting organization (Project Clean Slate), suspects. Will he discover the truth about their background? Given this series' wishy-washy posture between mainstream and science fiction, many readers may not stick around long enough to find out. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From School Library Journal

Grade 6-9-Alien conspiracy fans will not be disappointed to learn that there really are aliens among us. Michael, Max, and Isabel were hidden on Earth in incubation pods after the famed spacecraft crash of 1947 and adopted by well-intentioned humans who didn't know their history. Now attending a high school in New Mexico, the teens are trying to remain unnoticed by Project Clean Slate, whose purpose is to capture aliens living in the United States. All would be fine except that Max has fallen in love with a human classmate, Liz, and is compelled to heal her with his alien ability when she is shot and sure to die without his intervention. This act has brought unnecessary attention in their direction and now they must protect their secret. Liz's best friends Maria and Alex join the group after they struggle with their own fears and concerns over what doing the right thing means. Readers who like a little romance in their science fiction might enjoy this novel, which introduces all of the characters and lays the groundwork for future struggles to keep their anonymity. Hardcore fans of the genre might find the plot unwieldy and difficult to believe as it offers glimpses of alien "magic" without any explanation.

Tracey Firestone, Suffolk Cooperative Library System, Bellport,
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Chapter 1

"One Sigourney Weaver and one Will Smith." Liz Ortecho slid two thick burgers onto the table -- one with avocado and sprouts, one with jalapeño peppers and cheese.

Then she waited. The customers in the booth were obviously tourists. And every tourist who came to the Crashdown Cafe had at least one question about...the Roswell Incident.

"So is your family from around here?" the guy in the *Lost in Space* T-shirt asked. The blond woman sitting across from him flipped open a battered notebook and stared at Liz.

"Yeah," Liz said. "My great-great-great-grandfather inherited a ranch outside town. My family's been in Roswell ever since."

The woman uncapped her pen. The man cleared his throat. Here it comes, Liz thought.

"So did any of your relatives ever tell you any stories about, you know, the UFO crash?" the guy asked.

These two were a total trip. I bet they have every episode of *The X-Files* on tape, Liz thought.

"Well..." Liz hesitated. "I guess it would be okay to show you." She pulled a worn black-and-white photo out of her pocket and gently placed it in front of them. "A friend of my grandmother's took this picture at the crash site -- before the government cleaned it up."

The two tourists leaned over the blurry photo and studied it carefully.

"Whoa," the woman mumbled. "Whoa."

"This looks exactly like the alien from the autopsy video," the guy exclaimed. "Same oversized head and small, hairless body. I've got to get it on my Roswell Incident web site." He reached for the photo.

"You'd be dead by the end of the week." Liz snatched the photo away. "Just because its been more than fifty years since the crash doesn't mean the air force wants the truth exposed. They still want everyone to believe that weather balloon story they used as a cover-up," she explained.

Liz glanced around the cafe nervously. She wanted to make sure her father wasn't in earshot. If Papa heard her telling this story, he'd rip off her head and feed it to her for breakfast.

"I shouldn't have shown this to you. Just forget about it, okay? You never saw it." Liz rushed back behind the counter.

Maria DeLuca shook her head, sending her blond curls flying around her face. "You are so bad."

"Hey, they'll have a great story to tell when they get home. And I'll have a great tip," Liz answered.

Maria sighed. "You and your great tips. I've never known such a money-hungry waitress."

Liz shrugged. "You know how I feel. I need as much money as I can get because --"

"One day after grad it's *adios* and *hasta la vista*, baby," Maria interrupted. "I know, I know You're not going to spend your life in a town that has two movie theaters, one bowling alley, one lame-o comedy club, one even more lame-o dance club, and thirteen alien-theme tourist traps."

Liz had to smile. Her best friend did an almost perfect impression of her. "I guess I say that a lot, huh?"

Maria grabbed a dish towel and started wiping down the counter. "Only ten times a day since fifth grade," she joked.

"If I didn't have five thousand relatives watching me all the time," Liz said, "maybe I could have some fun once in a while."

She sighed, imagining a life where she didn't have to worry about doing something -- anything -- that would make her large, loving extended family worry about her future. She was the first daughter in her family headed for college, and her family wanted to make sure that she stayed on track. And not turn out like her sister, Rosa.

Liz pulled a handful of change out of her pocket and dumped it on the counter.

"Wow," Maria said. "Great tips. Maybe I should get my own picture of a baby doll someone left out in the sun too long." Maria scrunched up her nose. "Though I don't know if I could do that whole 'you'd be dead by the end of the week' thing without cracking up."

"Just practice in front of the mirror. That's what I did," Liz told her.

"It would take a lot of practice," Maria complained. "Everyone always knows when I'm lying. My ten-year-old brother is a better liar than *me*. The guys my mom goes out with never believe me when I say how nice it is to meet them."

Liz snorted. "Big surprise." She popped open the cash register and traded her change for bills. Thirty-three more dollars for the Hasta la Vista Fund. Thirty-three seventy-three, actually.

The opening notes of the *Close Encounters* theme played as the cafe door swung open. Max Evans, tall and blond, with killer baby blues, and Michael Guerin, dark and intense, ambled over to the corner booth in the back. Both were students at Liz and Maria's high school.

"Of course they sit in *your* section," Maria grumbled.

Liz and Maria each covered six of the cafe's flying-saucer-shaped booths. They divided the dining room in half from front to back so they each got a couple of booths by the windows. Those were the most popular.

"You get the tourists and the cute guys, and I get those two," Maria continued. She jerked her chin toward the booth nearest the door. "They're having some big fight. They just scowl at me every time I get near them."

Liz glanced at the two men in the booth. One was big and beefy. The other was smaller but muscular. They were leaning across the table toward each other, talking intently. She couldn't hear what they were saying, but they both looked furious.

"I think you deserve a good table after dealing with those guys. You can take Max and Michael," Liz volunteered.

Maria narrowed her blue eyes. "Okay, what's going on?"

Liz wrapped her arm around Maria's shoulders. "You're my best friend. Can't I just do something nice for you out of the goodness of my heart?"

"Nope." Maria shrugged Liz's arm away. I repeat -- what's going on?"

"Nothing," Liz insisted. "I just feel like taking a little vacation from all the testosterone junkies."

Maria raised one eyebrow. "Translation, please."

"Guys," Liz explained. "I'm so tired of their...guyness."

"All guys aren't like Kyle Valenti, you know," Maria told her. "Take Alex. He's totally cool."

Alex Manes *was* totally cool. Liz could hardly believe she and Maria had only been friends with him for a year. She felt as if she'd known him forever.

"You're right. Alex is the best. But he doesn't count."

Maria frowned. "Why not?"

"Cause he's *Alex*," Liz said with a shrug. "He's not a guy guy. Not like Kyle. You should have seen Kyle after school today. He will not accept the fact that I won't go out with him again. He actually got down on his knees and followed me down the hall with his tongue hanging out, begging. All his friends were watching, laughing like the idiots they are."

It made Liz wish she knew karate. She could have really given his friends something to laugh about.

"How romantic. And that classy move didn't convince you to go out with him again?" Maria's voice rose in fake shock.

"Uh -- that would be *no*. And I'm not going out with anyone else for a while, either," Liz declared. "I'm going to stay home, rent chick flicks, take bubble baths, and wear comfy old sweatpants."

Liz was looking forward to it. To be fair, most guys she'd been out with -- not that there had been that many -- weren't losers like Kyle Valenti. Kyle actually had thought Liz would *enjoy* sitting next to him on the couch watching him play Nintendo. He hadn't even offered her a turn!

But even with the other guys, there had just been that "sameness" about them.

"My love life is pathetic," Liz mumbled. "I just need some time to myself, for myself."

"Well, I can mix you up some great herbal bath oils," Maria offered. "But if you stop dating, there are going to be some very unhappy boys at Ulysses F. Olsen High."

"Like who?" Liz demanded.

Maria glanced over at the booth, where Max and Michael were sitting. "Max Evans," she said.

"Max?" Liz repeated. "Max is my buddy. He's not interested in me like that."

"Oh, please," Maria shot back. "How could he not be interested? You look like some kind of Spanish princess or something with your long black hair and your amazing cheekbones. And let's not talk about your skin. Do you even know the word *zít*? Plus you're smart and --"

Liz held up both hands. "Stop!"

Maria was the most loyal person Liz knew. If you were her friend, she stuck by you no matter what. And Liz and Maria had been friends since the second grade, when they bonded over a hurt baby bird.

"Okay, I'll stop," Maria answered. "But believe me, Max Evans is more than interested. He probably has the words *Property of Liz Ortecho* tattooed on his chest. Max --"

"Hi, Michael!" Liz said loudly as Michael walked up to the counter. She hoped he hadn't heard any of their conversation.

"Hey." Michael raked his fingers through his jet black hair, making the top even more spiky. "I was wondering if you had a job application I could fill out."

It was hard for Liz to picture Michael working in the cafe, busing tables and making change and stuff. It seemed too normal, too ordinary for Michael. He should have a job as a Navy SEAL or something like that. Michael was always joking around, but there was a definite edge to him.

Liz reached under the counter and pulled out a pad of forms. "We don't have any openings right now. But I'll talk to my father, and as soon as something comes up I'll have him call you."

"Oh, I think you're going to be having some openings real fast," Michael answered in a serious tone. "Unless your dad likes waitresses who stand around gossiping instead of waiting on tables." He winked.

Maria threw her dish towel at him. Michael cracked up.

"I'll go," Maria said. She picked up two menus and followed Michael over to his booth.

Liz shot a quick glance over at Max -- and found herself staring directly into his bright blue eyes. They were such an unusual shade, strange and beautiful. Not the blue of the sky or of the ocean.

Max held Liz's gaze for a second, then he looked away.

Maria wasn't right about Max -- was she? Liz had known Max since third grade. He had been her lab partner since they were sophomores. But they never hung out outside of class. And Liz hadn't picked up on any vibe signaling that Max wanted to be more than friends.

Liz grabbed the nearest napkin holder and restocked it. What would it be like to go out with Max? He wasn't really her type. He was quiet. And kind of a loner.

He saw the world in a different way from most people. He said things that made Liz stop and think. Like when those scientists in Scotland cloned that sheep. A lot of people talked about who they would clone if they could -- scientists or athletes or movie stars. But Max was more interested in whether or not the soul could be cloned -- and if it couldn't, what that meant. Spending time with Max definitely wasn't boring.

Liz wiped a drop of milk off the counter. She moved the ketchup bottle up a fraction of an inch so it was exactly even with the mustard bottle. Then she stole another peek at Max.

No one could say the boy was homely, that was for sure. If there were a beefcake calendar of Ulysses F. Olsen High hotties, Max would be in it. Tall, blond, buff, with those blue, blue eyes...

Liz felt her face get hot. It was weird thinking of Max that way. Most of the time she forgot he was certifiably gorgeous. Max was just *Max*. She couldn't --

"I don't want the money tomorrow. I want it now!"

The angry voice interrupted Liz's thoughts. She jerked her head up and saw everyone in the cafe staring at the men in the booth by the door. The beefy man clenched and unclenched his fists as he glared at the muscular man.

I'd better go get Papa out of the office, she thought. Their argument looks like it's about to get ugly.

Liz turned toward the door marked Employees Only.

"He's got a gun!" Maria screeched.

Liz spun back toward the dining room. Her heart slammed against her ribs. No. Oh no. That's all she could think. Over and over.

The muscular man held a gun to the beefy man's head. "You won't need any money if you're dead," he said. His voice was calm. Calm and cold.

Click.

The muscular man cocked the gun.

Liz wanted to run, she wanted to scream for help, but she was paralyzed. Her mouth refused to open. Her legs refused to move.

The beefy man gave a howl of fury. He launched himself across the table at the muscular man.

An eardrum-shattering explosion rocked the room.

Liz flew off her feet. She hit the wall behind her, then slumped to the ground.

She felt something warm and wet gushing across her stomach, soaking into her uniform.

"There's so much blood," Liz heard Maria cry.

But she sounded so far away.

So far...

Max sprang up from his seat in the booth. Instantly Michael grabbed him by the arm and jerked him back into his seat.

"Let go of me," Max cried. "Liz could be dying. What are you doing?"

"No, what are *you* doing?" Michael tightened his grip on Max's arm. "Are you planning to heal her in the middle of a restaurant? Why not just send the government an invitation -- hi, I'm here, why don't you come on over and get me?"

Michael was right. Healing Liz would attract attention -- a lot of attention. But if he let Liz die when he knew he could save her...

That was just not an option.

"I'm willing to risk it," he told Michael.

"*You're* willing to risk it. But what about me? What about Isabel?" Michael demanded.

Max stared down at the table. He didn't answer. He couldn't answer. He would risk his own life for Liz. But how could he risk the lives of his sister and his best friend?

"If the government has proof that one of us exists, they'll know there are more. They won't stop searching until they find us -- *all* of us," Michael continued.

"I can't stop the bleeding!" Maria screamed from behind the counter.

Max's heart slammed against his ribs. Liz was dying! He bolted to his feet. "I'll think of something. I promise," he said in a rush.

Before Michael could stop him, Max raced to the counter and vaulted over it. Pain filled his heart as he stared down at Liz. He swallowed hard.

Maria held a thick towel over Liz's stomach. But nothing could stop the blood pouring from the gunshot wound.

Max heard Liz's father on the kitchen phone, giving the cafe's address to the ambulance. They're going to be too late, Max thought. He knew it. He could see it.

The halo of color surrounding Liz was usually a warm, rich amber that made Max wish he could wrap himself up in it. But now her aura had turned a dull, muddy brown. And it was growing darker by the second.

Darker and darker as her life force drained out of her.

Every person's aura was different, as unique as a fingerprint. But the only time anyone's aura turned black was at the moment of death.

Max pulled Maria out of the way, trying to ignore the tremors of fear racing through her body. He wanted to comfort her, but he didn't have one second to spare.

He knelt beside Liz and placed his hands over her wound. In an instant his fingers were slick with blood.

I love her. The thought exploded in his mind. It was true. He'd been keeping it a secret, even from himself. Loving a human wasn't smart. It wasn't safe. But he couldn't help it. He loved Liz, and he would not let her die.

"Let me through!" he heard Liz's father yell from behind him. "Let me see her!"

Max didn't move. He didn't answer. He had to focus on Liz now. Liz was the only thing that mattered.

He closed his eyes and began drawing deep, even breaths. Trying to make the connection.

Think about Liz, he ordered himself. Anything about her.

The way her hair always smelled of jasmine. The way a dimple appeared in her left cheek when she smiled. The way she loved to tell stupid alien jokes. The way she listened with total concentration when he talked to her.

Ahhh. He almost had it. He almost had the connection. He just needed to get a little closer...

"The ambulance is almost here," Michael muttered behind him.

Max took another breath.

Images flashed into his mind, coming so fast, Max could hardly register one before the next appeared.

A stuffed dog with a chewed-off ear. A Mr. Wizard junior chemistry set. A blond little girl holding a baby bird. An onrushing car. Liz at about age five in a pink dress covered with cupcakes. A valentine. The high dive of a large swimming pool. Max's own face.

And he was in. Connected.

He could feel the blood gushing out of Liz's body as if it were his own. Feel her breath in his own lungs. Hear the sound of her heartbeat in his own ears.

First the bullet, Max told himself. He focused his attention on Liz's body. On *their* body.

Yes. There it was. He could sense the exact position of the bullet. Of the lead. Of the molecules of lead.

Then he *nudged* the molecules. That's the only way he could describe it. He nudged them, and they broke apart. The bullet dissolving into microscopic particles. Harmless now as they were swept away in Liz's bloodstream.

"The ambulance is pulling up out front," Max heard Michael say.

But he sounded far away. So far...

Max focused on Liz's somatic cells. The cells of her body. Of her stomach. Of her muscles and tendons. Of her skin.

And instead of nudging he *squeezed*. Squeezed with his mind. Urging the cells closer together. Healing.

Max felt hands on his shoulders, shaking him. "You've got to disconnect. Now, Max," Michael ordered. "The ambulance crew is coming through the door."

And he was out. Separate again. Alone again. A wave of coldness washed through him, and he shivered.

Max slowly raised his hands and stared down at Liz's stomach. Under the blood her skin was whole and perfect. He released a shaky sigh of relief.

Liz opened her eyes and stared at him. "I...you..."

"I'll explain everything later," Max whispered. "But now I need you to help me."

He grabbed a bottle of ketchup off the counter and smashed it against the floor. He dumped the contents over the blood on Liz's uniform.

"You broke the bottle when you fell," Max told her. "Okay, Liz? You broke the bottle when you fell, that's all."

A man and woman dressed in white jumpsuits hurried behind the counter. "Everyone move aside and give us some room," the woman paramedic instructed.

Max backed away. Did Liz even understand what he'd asked her to do?

Liz struggled to sit up. "I'm okay," she said. Her voice sounded hoarse. "When I heard the gunshot, I jumped. Then I fell. I...I broke this ketchup bottle and spilled ketchup all over myself."

She held up the broken bottle so everyone could see it.

Then Liz looked straight at Max, her dark brown eyes melting with emotion. He felt his breath catch in his chest.

"I'm okay," she repeated.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Linda Gaitan:

As people who live in the particular modest era should be upgrade about what going on or details even knowledge to make these people keep up with the era which is always change and move ahead. Some of you maybe will certainly update themselves by looking at books. It is a good choice to suit your needs but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know what one you should start with. This Roswell High: The Outsider (TV Series) is our recommendation to help you keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and want in this era.

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Lynn Hardie:

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