

Synopsis of WILD ORCHIDS
(A Gardening Guide to the Galaxies)
(a full length comic drama in one act; fifteen scenes)

TIME:

The near future

PLACE:

The Mojave Desert near the fictitious town of Mescalina, California, at RIDELF: the Research Institute for the Discovery of Extraterrestrial Life Forms. The scenery suggests a laboratory for scientific analysis, a conference room, office, and greenhouse.

CHARACTERS:

NELLA KIMANJANO: a black African research chemist; born in Kenya and educated at Oxford, she has a British accent; age 20s

HOWARD GOLDEN: a molecular biologist; age 30s

JUDITH LLOYD AMBERS: an astrophysicist and galactic mapmaker; age 40s

LEONARD AMBERS: Judith's estranged husband; an orchidologist; age 50s

AURORA AMBERS: the daughter of Judith and Leonard; age 16

PLOT SYNOPSIS:

Nella Kimanjano, a research chemist, works at a laboratory managed by an astrophysicist and her daughter, Aurora, who are offering a reward to anyone supplying definitive proof of extraterrestrial life. They have employed Nella and a molecular biologist, Howard Golden, to analyze the hundreds of objects, photographs, and videos of abduction testimonials that pass by their microscopes and computers every day. After several futile months, the appearance of a single whisker reveals the presence of an alien microorganism. The whisker is followed by a hand, and soon Nella observes her own dark flesh turning a jaundiced yellow, then later a bilious green. At first she is devastated, isolated, and forced to reflect on her future, but greenness brings new insights that make Nella more sensual and sentient, and soon she is devising schemes for solving the problems of climate change, genocidal wars, and rendering obsolete the assumptions of a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-religious world.

Wild Orchids is a work of science fiction; it is also a parable about race that attempts to reflect upon political, scientific, and spiritual issues.

