Exercise 3.3

Part II

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True
6. True
7. True
8. False
9. True
10. True

Part III

1. Hasty generalization
2. Missing the point
3. No fallacy. (A promise is not an argument.)

4. Argument against the person, circumstantial

5. Accident

6. No fallacy. (Hawking is a qualified authority.)

7. False cause (gambler’s fallacy)

8. Appeal to force

9. Appeal to the people, indirect variety

10. Straw man

11. Weak analogy

12. No fallacy

13. Red herring

14. Argument against the person, abusive

15. No fallacy

16. Missing the point

17. Appeal to unqualified authority.

18. Missing the point

19. Weak analogy

20. Argument against the person, circumstantial

21. Appeal to pity

22. No fallacy

23. *Tu quoque*

24. Red herring

25. Appeal to ignorance

26. Accident
29. Appeal to unqualified authority

30. Slippery slope

Part IV
The fallacies are noted in brackets throughout the text:

"Hi! Glad you could make it," Ralph says to his friend Claudia, at a Friday night party. "Hey, you just missed a great discussion that Tom, Ruben, and I were having about abduction by extraterrestrials. Ruben just left, but he said he's been reading this book by Whitley Strieber--I think it's called Transformation--in which Strieber describes being kidnapped by creatures from outer space."

"Good grief! You don't actually believe that nonsense, do you?" Claudia asks incredulously. [Possible *ad hominem* abusive]

"Well, I don't think Strieber would lie. Also, Ruben told us an amazing personal story. He was out camping a year ago, and after he'd killed off a couple of six packs of Moosehead, he says he saw a UFO. So, I think we have to conclude there really are UFOs." [Appeal to unqualified authority]

"What a joke!" Claudia laughs scornfully. "Ruben was probably hallucinating. [No fallacy] By the way, didn't he fail most of his classes last semester? His parents are spending a fortune for his education, and all he does is party, sleep, and ignore his studies. I think that's immoral. [Red herring] As for Strieber, does he give any evidence?"

"As a matter of fact, he does," Ralph replies smugly. "Apparently, a few years ago, he was driving with his wife on some country road, when both of them experienced an unusual blackout. When they woke up, they were thirty-five miles further down the road, and they had no recollection of how they got there. Later, both began having dreams about extraterrestrials performing experiments on them while they were on board their spacecraft. Extraterrestrials must have abducted them, then hypnotized them so they wouldn't remember what had happened." [False cause]

"Oh yeah, now I remember who Strieber is," answers Claudia, caustically. He's that weirdo who dreams up all kinds of fantastic stories just so he can write books about them and make lots of money. [*ad hominem* abusive and circumstantial] If you give that sickie one minute of your time, then you're crazier than he is." [Ad hominem abusive]

"I think you're prejudiced," Ralph says. "Why, recent surveys show that sixty-four percent of the American public believe in UFOs, and the number is growing every day. That alone should convince you they're real." [Appeal to the people--indirect]

"You've got to be kidding," Claudia mutters, shaking her head in disbelief.

"Well then, consider this," insists Ralph. "There are hundreds of people out there who've had similar dreams and the same unaccounted for time lapses. They can't all be fantasizing." [No fallacy]

"I know that Strieber is a kook," Claudia persists, "so all the others must be too." [Hasty generalization]

"Now, now, aren't we jumping to conclusions?" her friend asks condescendingly. [No fallacy]
"Not at all. First it was UFOs and little green men. Now those little creatures are abducting people and experimenting on them. Before long they'll be manipulating our genes and trying to infiltrate the human race. In the end, everyone will suspect everyone else of being an alien, mass terror will prevail, and civilization will collapse!" Claudia exclaims in mock horror. [Slippery slope]

"Don't be a fool!" Ralph barks, irritated. "The problem with you is, you're an agnostic. [Ad hominem circumstantial] Obviously, you're saying we should refuse to believe in anything we can't clearly see or touch. So, logically, God doesn't exist, and there is no immortal soul. [Straw man] Tom, that's what she's saying, isn't it?"

"More or less," Tom agrees halfheartedly.

"Again, not at all," Claudia responds. "What I'm saying is, people have to be just a little bit critical about what they believe. Apparently you believe any cockamamie story that comes your way. You're just so gullible. If you keep it up, everyone and their dog will take you for a ride." [Probably no fallacy]

"Oh yeah? If I were you, I'd take a close look at my own beliefs," Ralph gibes. "Didn't I see you reading the astrology column just the other day? [Tu quoque] Nobody in their right mind believes in astrology. [Ad hominem abusive] Maybe I should start screaming 'Claudia believes in astrology! Claudia believes in astrology!' Then everyone will gawk at you, and that sexy physics major you're dying to get a date with will think you're a nut." [Appeal to force]

"Oh, shut up!" says Claudia, blushing. "I may read the astrology column, but I certainly don't believe it. I just read it for fun. But, the fact is, during the past twenty-five years there have been thousands of alleged sightings of UFOs, and not a single one has led to any solid evidence of their existence. [No fallacy] What do you make of that?"

"I think we should look at this situation the other way around," Ralph says. Up until now, nobody has shown that UFOs don't exist, so I think we should give those people who claim they have seen them the benefit of the doubt. We should believe in UFOs and extraterrestrials until the sightings are proven false. [Appeal to ignorance]

"Well, okay, let's suppose, just for the sake of argument, that I admit the existence of UFOs and their little green drivers. How are we supposed to respond to them? What are we supposed to do?" Claudia asks.

"For starters, we should extend an open invitation to them," answers Ralph. "They may come from a dying planet where millions of their compatriots desperately struggle for survival. Their sun may be burning out, their water supply exhausted, and their soil poisoned with toxic chemicals. Surely they deserve a second chance on a new planet." [Appeal to pity]

"Maybe so," Claudia says in a patronizing tone. "And now that you mention it, we probably have a legal obligation to let them in. Our current immigration laws say that we have to admit at least ten thousand applicants annually, from every major nation. If those aliens would just sign the right papers, we'd have to give them permanent residency. [Accident] However, what worries me is, they may have the wrong intentions. After all, didn't they conduct experiments on those people they abducted?"

"Yes, but don't we experiment on animals? If the animals don't complain, why should we? [Weak analogy] Also, medical experimentation often leads to wonderful new cures. I'm certain we have nothing to worry about," says Ralph, proud of his logic. [Missing the point] "Humph! I hope you're right. Well, I've got to go now--and don't let any green men kidnap you," Claudia says with a barb.

"And you either," Ralph answers.