

ONE NIGHT IN A CORNFIELD . . .

by Megan Orr

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ONE NIGHT IN A CORNFIELD . . .

A One-Act Sci-Fi Comedy

by Megan Orr

SYNOPSIS: Strange things have been happening just outside the town limits of Rockford. And now four friends with something to prove have decided to spend the entire night in a nearby cornfield. This one act sci-fi comedy contains a surprise ending the audience will never see coming!

DURATION: 45 minutes.

SETTING: A cornfield on the outskirts of the small town of Rockford; Midwest, USA.

TIME: Present day; early November; Friday evening.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 8 either)

- TAYLOR MONTGOMERY (m/f)..... Editor-in-chief of the school newspaper; organized, logical, and efficient but doesn't have the best people skills. *(141 lines)*
- BLAKE THOMPSON (m/f)..... Youngest child in a family of star athletes but completely uncoordinated; looks out for Alex. *(128 lines)*
- JESSE O'MALLEY (m/f)..... Fifth child in a family of nine kids; used to being overlooked; low key and laidback. *(103 lines)*
- ALEX SCHMIDT (m/f)..... Only child with an overprotective single mom who smothers them; small; nervous mannerisms. *(57 lines)*
- MALLORY MOSSBROOK (f)..... The school queen bee and resident bully. *(55 lines)*
- MINION 1 (m/f) Mallory's minion. *(12 lines)*
- MINION 2 (m/f) Mallory's minion. *(15 lines)*

MINION 3 (m/f) Mallory's minion. *(15 lines)*
MINION 4 (m/f) Mallory's minion. *(6 lines)*

CAST NOTE: To increase flexibility in casting, gender neutral character names have been chosen with the exception of Mallory. Personal pronouns may be adjusted as needed throughout the script.

SET

All three scenes occur in a cornfield but the entire theater, including the back of the house and the aisles through the audience, can be incorporated to give the audience the sensation of being seated in the actual cornfield. The set is simply cornstalks across upstage and in the downstage corners. If available, cornstalks may also be used throughout the theater. Cornstalks can be hung from above using fishing wire or attached to an upstage curtain. (The curtain must remain stationary for the entire performance.)

LIGHTS

Outdoor lighting is used throughout the play, beginning with sunset to midnight to 2 A.M. Lights fade and rise between scenes and also, more abruptly, when characters disappear into spaceships in Scene 3. Eerie lighting (flashing lights, colored lighting), accompanied by “sci-fi” music, is used whenever an alien arrives. If available, a spot may be used for scenes in which characters run through the audience.

SOUND EFFECTS

- ☐ hooting owl
- ☐ eerie sci-fi music
- ☐ church bell
- ☐ crickets
- ☐ metallic scrapes

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I highly recommend producing this play in late October/early November. You may even be able to get a local farm or corn maze to donate stalks in exchange for publicity in the program.

MALLORY'S MINIONS: Mallory's minions always line up in their given order, adjusting how close they stand to Mallory as they are promoted or demoted.

SCENE 2: You can play up the eeriness factor of the cornfield by having someone run behind the cornstalks lining upstage.

SCENE 3: Unless you want a mess to clean up in your auditorium, I recommend having Jesse only pantomime dropping cornflakes as they walk from the back of the auditorium up to the stage, not actually leave behind a trail of cornflakes.

PROPS

- ☐ 4 backpacks
- ☐ 4 sleeping bags
- ☐ 4 cell phones
- ☐ 3 binoculars
- ☐ 9 flashlights
- ☐ 3 whistles
- ☐ 1 kazoo
- ☐ 1 digital camera
- ☐ 1 bag of corn chips
- ☐ 1 "Future POTUS" button
- ☐ 1 large bag of cornflakes
- ☐ 1 bandana
- ☐ 1 rope

SCENE 1
SUNSET

AT START: *Lights rise on the stage. TAYLOR, BLAKE, and JESSE enter, each with a backpack and sleeping bag.*

TAYLOR: Listen to this: *(Reading from cell phone.)* "Local Rockford authorities have not yet identified the source of the cornfield destruction, but residents are cautioned to stay at home after dark and on their own property." That's the local paper. Now if we look at Big Red Online...

ALL walk to center stage, stop, and drop their belongings.

BLAKE: Nobody cares about our rinky-dink school paper, Taylor.

TAYLOR: I do!

BLAKE: You have to. You're the editor-in-chief.

TAYLOR: Here it is. Okay, Blake. Stop talking.

BLAKE: So rude.

TAYLOR: It says here that according to one of our school's best investigative reporters—

JESSE: Let me guess. You?

TAYLOR: Naturally.

JESSE: *(To BLAKE.)* She does realize that she's the only reporter on our school's newspaper, right?

TAYLOR: Ahem. As I was saying... according to the article, "In an interview with local farmers, each was asked to describe the unusual occurrence."

JESSE: Actually, this could be good.

TAYLOR: "Benjamin Raymond of Prairie Dairy Farms said he awoke at approximately three in the morning to a metallic screech. He reports noticing flickering lights out of his window, but by the time he got out of bed to look, no light was in sight."

BLAKE: No light was in sight? That can't be right.

JESSE: Maybe it took flight?

BLAKE: It might. It was night.

TAYLOR: *(Sarcastically.)* Nice. If we ever decide to add a poetry section to the paper, I'll keep you two in mind.

BLAKE: Sorry. Sometimes I just can't help myself.

JESSE: And nobody else can help you either.

BLAKE: (*Giving JESSE a shove.*) Go ahead, Taylor. We're listening.

TAYLOR: (*Reading.*) "Bill Gamble of Sunshine Farms describes several large, interlocking circles inexplicably burned into the corn fields just behind his house on the north side of town. 'Whatever it is, I'm glad it missed the house,' he said. 'Though I am disappointed in the crop loss.' When asked what he thought had caused the damage, Gamble grew quiet. 'I don't think I want to know,' he said."

JESSE: Guys, remind me again... why are we spending the night in a cornfield?

BLAKE: Come on, Jesse! After eight years together, haven't you figured it out by now? Taylor is crazy.

TAYLOR: Thanks for the vote of confidence, Blake.

BLAKE: You're welcome.

TAYLOR: With friends like you, who needs enemies?

JESSE: None of us, that's for sure.

BLAKE: Speaking of enemies, did you guys hear what happened to Alex during PE today?

TAYLOR: Where is Alex? I thought she said she was doing this with us.

BLAKE: She is. She's coming.

JESSE: She better not be bringing her mom again.

BLAKE: Don't worry. I'm pretty sure she's planning to sneak out this time.

JESSE: Good. That was probably the most embarrassing Halloween of my life. And that includes the Halloween my mom made me wear a Mr. Peanut costume.

TAYLOR: Mr. Peanut? Aren't you allergic to nuts?

JESSE: Yes.

TAYLOR: Kind of a sadistic sense of humor, don't you think?

JESSE: Taylor, I'm one of nine kids. I'm surprised my mom hasn't tried to knock a few of us off on purpose.

BLAKE: I'm guessing you didn't have to sneak out tonight then?

JESSE: Sneak out? Are you kidding? There's so many of us coming and going at all hours my dad says he's going to have a revolving door installed.

TAYLOR: But back to Alex...

BLAKE: Right. You know Mallory Mossbrook?

JESSE: Mean Mallory? Yeah, of course. Everyone knows her.

BLAKE: Well, one of Mallory's minions told Alex that Coach was having them run laps outside on the track for PE today.

JESSE: He wasn't having them run laps on the track, was he?

BLAKE: Nope. They locked Alex out of the building for almost the entire class hour. And then hid her books. She was late to math.

TAYLOR: Poor Alex. I bet if her mom stopped writing all those nasty emails, Alex wouldn't get picked on so much.

BLAKE: Yeah. What bully wants to get called out by the victim's mom? Especially electronically.

JESSE: But she really crossed the line when she made us TP their houses with her. I say it again, worst Halloween ever!

BLAKE: Anyway, Alex should be here soon. Sans crazy mother.

JESSE: Good. So what do we do now? Start a campfire? Set up a motion-detecting perimeter?

TAYLOR: Absolutely not! Are you crazy? Any light or sound and they'll know we're here!

JESSE: They who?

TAYLOR: Who do you think?!

BLAKE: (*In a creepy voice.*) The aliens are among us!

JESSE laughs.

TAYLOR: Well, they are! Don't tell me Mallory Mossbrook is perfectly normal! They don't grow them that big. At least, not on this planet.

JESSE: So what are we supposed to do? Sit in the dark all night and wait to see what happens?

TAYLOR: Yes! Exactly!

JESSE: (*To BLAKE.*) You're right. She is crazy.

TAYLOR: How great would it be if we were the first ones in Rockford to get the inside scoop on what's really been going on here in town? We'd be heroes! Famous!

BLAKE: Oh sure. "From Zeroes to Heroes: A Cornfield Cinderella Story."

TAYLOR: Hey, if you compose, I'll write the lyrics for that musical!

BLAKE: (*Under her breath.*) And star in it too, I'm sure.

JESSE: (To TAYLOR.) You don't seriously believe we're going to discover... something out here, do you? I mean, the police have been investigating for weeks, and they haven't found anything.

TAYLOR: Ah, but have any of them spent all night in a cornfield?

JESSE: I'm going to say... no?

TAYLOR: Exactly! Tonight's our night!

JESSE: (To BLAKE.) I'm pretty sure Alex's mom said the exact same thing the night we TPed those houses.

ALEX rushes in from stage left with a backpack and rolled-up sleeping bag, breathing heavily. She stops at center and bends over to drop her things and catch her breath.

TAYLOR: Speak of the devil!

JESSE: I think you mean the devil's spawn.

BLAKE: (To TAYLOR and JESSE.) Shut up, you guys. (To ALEX.) Alex! You're here!

JESSE: Alone, right?

ALEX: Yes, alone. I know I'm late. I'm sorry. I had to wait until Mom fell asleep. What did I miss?

BLAKE: Taylor's writing a musical.

TAYLOR: (Shoving BLAKE playfully.) Just us talking about how famous we're all going to be after tonight.

ALEX: Yeah... I don't know about that, guys. Aren't we just sitting ducks out here all alone? In the dark?

BLAKE: Relax, Alex. We're all the way out in the middle of nowhere. Nobody's going to find us.

TAYLOR: No. But we may find them!

ALEX: That's what I was afraid of.

BLAKE: (To ALEX.) Come on. Buck up. It'll be fun!

TAYLOR: Now that we're all here, let's do a supply check.

TAYLOR opens her backpack. Following her lead, BLAKE, JESSE, and ALEX open their backpacks as well.

TAYLOR: Okay. Binoculars?

BLAKE and JESSE: (Holding up binoculars.) Check.

TAYLOR: Alex?

ALEX: I... I don't have any binoculars. My mom won't let me get a pair.
She says only crazy psycho stalkers own binoculars.

JESSE: She would know.

ALEX: But I do have a telescope in my room. I could run home and get it!

ALEX jumps up, eager to leave.

BLAKE: No, you don't. You're not getting away that easily. Stay here.
You can borrow mine.

BLAKE hands binoculars to ALEX.

ALEX: *(Lackluster.)* Oh. Great. Thanks.

TAYLOR: *(With a sigh, shaking head.)* I can see this mission is going to go along swimmingly. *(To ALL.)* Flashlights?

BLAKE and JESSE: *(Holding up flashlights.)* Check!

ALEX: *(Delayed, unenthusiastically.)* Check.

TAYLOR: Whistles?

BLAKE and JESSE: *(Holding up whistles.)* Check!

TAYLOR: Alex?

ALEX: Uh, I don't have a whistle either. But I brought a kazoo. Does that count?

JESSE: Why do we need whistles anyway?

TAYLOR: To signal each other if we get separated.

ALEX: *(Nervously.)* Separated? Why would we get separated?

TAYLOR: And finally, cameras.

BLAKE and JESSE: *(Holding up cell phones.)* Check!

ALEX: Uh... check. *(Holds up a digital camera; JESSE grabs it.)*

JESSE: Dude! They still make these?!

BLAKE: *(To TAYLOR.)* She's trying.

TAYLOR: I guess it'll have to work.

JESSE: You forgot one thing, Taylor.

TAYLOR: I did?

JESSE: Yes. The most important thing. *(Holding up a bag of chips.)*
Snacks!

BLAKE: Now I remember why we're friends.

ALEX: Check!

BLAKE and ALEX converge on the chips.

TAYLOR: Okay, okay. You can snack, but listen up. Now that we've gone through an equipment check, we need to talk about procedures.

ALEX: Procedures? (*To BLAKE.*) What's she talking about? I thought we were just camping out overnight in a cornfield?

TAYLOR: This is more than just a camping trip, Alex. This is real investigative reporting! A firsthand exclusive!

JESSE: (*Pretending to read a newspaper headline.*) "Local Teens Encounter Extraterrestrial Invaders."

ALEX: (*Alarmed.*) Encounter?!

TAYLOR: Yes. But first we have to find them! So here's what's going to happen: every half hour, one of us will walk the cornfield in one direction and another will walk the opposite. Two will stay back here at camp. We'll take our flashlights and scan the surrounding area. If we see anything, we'll signal.

BLAKE: With our whistles?

TAYLOR: With our whistles. (*A beat later.*) Or kazoo. The cameras are for recording evidence.

ALEX: Evidence? What kind of evidence are you expecting to find?

TAYLOR: I don't know. It could be anything! Strange sounds, flashing lights, more crop circles, UFOs, extraterrestrial life! ...Basically, if anything looks or sounds unusual, record it. (*To ALEX.*) Or... take its picture. (*To ALL.*) Everybody got that?

JESSE: You're the boss, Taylor.

BLAKE: Please. Don't encourage her.

TAYLOR: Now which two want to make the first lap of the night?

ALEX: (*Immediately.*) I'll stay behind here at camp! With Blake!

TAYLOR: (*Aback.*) Okay... then. Jesse? Looks like we're up first. I'll head east, you take west, and we'll meet back here.

JESSE: East and west? Yeah, I'm just gonna wait until you leave and then go the opposite direction, okay?

TAYLOR: All right. Here I go! Wish me luck!

TAYLOR pockets her cell phone and whistle, turns on flashlight, and exits stage right and down through the audience, sweeping the audience with her flashlight beam as she goes.

JESSE: I guess that must be east. Okay. My turn.

JESSE hops up, puts cell phone and whistle in pocket, and grabs flashlight.

JESSE: You two will be okay here, right?

BLAKE: That depends. Are you leaving the chips?

JESSE: *(Grinning, tosses the bag to BLAKE.)* Here. But don't eat them all!

BLAKE: I won't. But I can't speak for any other lifeforms.

JESSE: Ha ha. Very funny. Just wait until it's your turn to go off into the dark alone!

JESSE exits stage left and down through the audience, sweeping the audience with her flashlight beam as she goes.

BLAKE: I feel kind of bad for her. I bet she had to fight off like four or five brothers and sisters to get this one bag of chips.

ALEX: Some people like big families.

BLAKE: Not Jesse. I've heard her refer to her parents as "the breeders." *(Rolls up the bag of chips and drops it on top of JESSE'S backpack.)* So... now that Pinky and The Brain are gone... spill. Is it true?

ALEX: Is what true?

BLAKE: Are you and your mom leaving town?

ALEX: How did you know?

BLAKE: Your mom told mine. It's a small world.

ALEX: I guess! *(With a sigh.)* And yes, it's true.

BLAKE: Why? It's not because of the unusual "extraterrestrial activity" lately, is it?

ALEX: Oh no. Nothing like that. Mom's been thinking about making the move for a long time now. You know. Due to all the bullying.

BLAKE: Aw, Alex. I'm sorry. That sucks!

ALEX: (*Shrugging.*) Yeah, well... human beings can be horrible creatures sometimes.

BLAKE: Where will you go?

ALEX: No idea. But hopefully somewhere far, far away. (*Looking off toward stage left.*) Hey... is that a light?

BLAKE and ALEX jump to their feet.

BLAKE: Yeah. I think it is!

ALEX: (*Nervously.*) Well, what... what do we do? Do we take a picture? (*Fumbles to get her digital camera out.*)

BLAKE: A picture? No. It's just Taylor coming back. Relax.

ALEX: Easy for you to say!

TAYLOR enters stage left and shuts off her flashlight.

TAYLOR: Well, that was uneventful.

BLAKE: Come on, Taylor. You can't expect some alien lifeform to leap out of the corn at you on your first lap around.

TAYLOR: Did you guys see anything while I was gone?

BLAKE: Nope. Not a thing.

TAYLOR: Drat. Maybe Jesse found something.

BLAKE: Jesse would be better off getting kidnapped by extraterrestrials. It would probably be the most attention she's gotten all year.

ALEX: Must be nice. Lots of siblings. Being able to blend in. I can never hide from my mom. Well, except tonight.

BLAKE: Just because Jesse has a big family doesn't mean she isn't just as lonely as the rest of us.

TAYLOR: Speak for yourself. I'm not lonely. My life is perfect.

BLAKE: You're kidding, right?

TAYLOR: Not at all! I'm editor-in-chief of our school newspaper, I'm on track to become our class valedictorian—

BLAKE: And you have, like, four friends on social media!

TAYLOR: Which social media?

BLAKE: All of them!

ALEX: I'm one of those friends, right?

BLAKE: Listen, Taylor, we know you can be a lot of fun to be around, but most of the rest of the school thinks...

TAYLOR: What? Thinks what?!

BLAKE: (*Putting an arm around TAYLOR.*) Let me put it this way: Welcome to the Losers' Circle, kid.

TAYLOR: No. No way! I don't believe you!

ALEX: But you believe in extraterrestrials?!

BLAKE: Face it, Taylor. You're a loser just like the rest of us. Whether you like it or not.

TAYLOR: No! I... I'm not like you guys. I fit in completely!

JESSE enters stage right, flashlight off.

JESSE: Fit in where?

TAYLOR, BLAKE, and ALEX jump and yelp in surprise.

TAYLOR: Jesse! There you are! What took you so long?

BLAKE: And what happened to your flashlight?

JESSE: (*Tossing the flashlight onto backpack.*) Batteries are dead. I think my little brother traded them for the ones in his remote-controlled drone.

ALEX: A drone? I've always wanted a drone!

JESSE: Let me guess; your mom won't let you have one?

ALEX: No.

JESSE: The next time my brother tries to ram my face with his, I'll give it to you. Along with my brother.

TAYLOR: So... did you see anything?

JESSE: Yeah.

TAYLOR: You did?!

JESSE: Corn. Lots and lots of corn.

TAYLOR: Jesse! You know that's not what I meant!

JESSE: Relax, Taylor. It's barely nine. If anything's out there, I'm sure it's going to wait until well past midnight before showing its slimy little face. Now... where did you guys put my chips?

BLAKE tosses the bag of chips to JESSE. ALL sit on the ground except for TAYLOR who wanders toward stage left.

JESSE: (*Gesturing to TAYLOR.*) What's eating her?

BLAKE: She was just inducted into the Losers' Circle. It didn't go well.

TAYLOR: (*Whirls around to face BLAKE.*) You know what, Blake? Your life isn't all that rosy either!

JESSE: (*To BLAKE.*) Look out. Hurricane Taylor's about to hit.

TAYLOR: (*To BLAKE.*) Tell me again how many times you've tried out for some sport and didn't make the team?

BLAKE: (*Shrugging.*) I don't know. Three or four?

TAYLOR: Seven. It's seven.

BLAKE: (*Sarcastically.*) Gee. I didn't realize you were keeping track.

TAYLOR: Three times for soccer, twice for basketball, twice for track. And they almost never cut anyone from track.

BLAKE: So? What's your point?

TAYLOR: I'm saying that the only reason you're so quick to point out losers is because you are one.

JESSE: Ouch.

BLAKE: So I'm not that athletic. Whatever. It's not that big a deal.

TAYLOR: It's not? Even though both of your older sisters are school sports legends?

JESSE: (*To ALEX.*) Oh no. She mentioned the sisters!

TAYLOR: Let's see... Serena was the volleyball star, right? And she got a free ride to Stanford, am I right?

BLAKE: Yep.

TAYLOR: And then there's Claire, who our athletic director still can't stop talking about. I think she broke something like, what, twenty school records for basketball?

BLAKE: (*Coolly.*) I'm surprised you don't already know. You apparently like keeping track of things.

TAYLOR: And if I'm not mistaken, she got a scholarship too, right?

ALEX: Yeah! To Baylor!

BLAKE and TAYLOR give ALEX a confused look.

ALEX: (*Apologetically to BLAKE.*) I... I went to her signing in the gymnasium last spring. It was kinda cool.

JESSE: Go, Lady Bears!

BLAKE: It's no big deal, Alex. It doesn't bother me.

TAYLOR: But what about your mom and dad? I bet it's a huge disappointment to them, isn't it?

BLAKE stares down TAYLOR for a moment.

JESSE: *(Softly to ALEX.)* Sucker punch with the parents! That's low! Even for Taylor!

BLAKE: You know what? I think I'll take my lap around the field now.

BLAKE grabs a flashlight and exits stage right and into the audience, sweeping the audience with her flashlight beam as she goes.

TAYLOR: She'll be lucky if she doesn't trip over her two left feet and impale herself on a cornstalk.

ALEX: Blake! Wait! I'll go with you!

ALEX grabs a flashlight and runs off stage right and into the audience after BLAKE, sweeping the audience with her flashlight beam as she goes.

TAYLOR: Alex! That isn't the procedure! You're supposed to go the other way! *(Throwing hands up.)* Great. Just great. *(To JESSE.)* I guess I'll take west this time.

TAYLOR snatches up her flashlight and stomps off stage left and into the audience, sweeping the audience with her flashlight beam as she goes.

JESSE: Finally! A little peace and quiet!

JESSE leans back against the pile of backpacks and stretches out legs in front of her. After a moment, she looks around, nervously. OPTIONAL SFX: a hooting owl. JESSE jumps up, tossing the useless flashlight aside.

JESSE: Hey, Taylor! Wait for me! I can't handle the dark!

JESSE runs off stage left and into the audience. The stage is empty for a long moment. Then stage lights flicker. SFX: eerie music plays. Lights fade.

SCENE 2

CORNFIELD AT MIDNIGHT

AT START: *SFX: in the distance, a church bell sounds twelve times. Lights rise on the stage as the last church bell sounds, though dimmer than the previous scene. For a moment, the stage is empty. Suddenly, something skitters behind the cornstalks across upstage, first in one direction, then the other. Finally, MINION 4 hesitantly enters, stage left, peering out at center stage from behind a cornstalk.*

MINION 4: Mallory! I did it! I found them!

MINION 4 disappears again. A moment later, MALLORY and MINIONS 1-4 enter, each with a flashlight, stage left.

MALLORY: Yes, you certainly did. Nicely done. I'm promoting you to Minion Number One.

MINION 4: Me? Minion Number One? Really?!

MINION 1: Hey! What about me?! I'm Minion Number One!

MALLORY: *(To MINION 1.)* I gave you one simple job to do: find four losers in a cornfield. And you couldn't even handle that.

MINION 1: But—

MALLORY: *(Waving off MINION 1.)* Back to the bottom, Number Four.

MINION 1 sighs and moves farthest away from MALLORY.

MALLORY: Two? What's new on social media?

MINION 2 fumbles to take out a cell phone as quickly as possible.

MALLORY: C'mon, Two. I don't have all night.

MINION 2: Uh... it looks like Taylor's last Twitter post was about three hours ago.

MALLORY: About?

MINION 2: Two hours and twenty-four minutes ago.

MALLORY: That's better. You know, you only got to be Minion Number Two because of those math skills. Don't forget that.

MINION 2: Yes, Mallory!

There is an awkward pause.

MALLORY: Well? What did the post say?

MINION 2: Oh! Right!

MALLORY: *(With a sigh.)* I'm surrounded by idiots.

MINION 2: She said, "Time to unearth the truth about these nocturnal activities in Rockford! #OneNightInACornfield"

MALLORY: *(With a satisfied sigh.)* They make it almost too easy.

MINION 3: Uh... Mallory?

MALLORY: *(With a sigh.)* What is it now, Three?

MINION 3: I'm sorry, Mallory, but... why exactly are we out here?

MALLORY: Seriously? Do I seriously need to spell it out for you again?

MINION 3: Umm... yes?

MALLORY: One? Tell her.

MINION 1: So Taylor wrote this really gross article about Mallory in the school paper—

MALLORY: Not you, Four. New One.

MINION 4: New One? Oh! That's me!

MALLORY: Yes, One. So... get on with it!

MINION 4: *(Nervously.)* Right. Well, there was the gross article in the school paper and then, um, the TP attack on Halloween, so now we're basically... um...

MALLORY: Out to destroy Taylor Montgomery's life. And all her little friends, too.

MINION 3: *(Nervously.)* Literally?

MALLORY: No, of course not literally! What's wrong with you?! One more dumb question like that from you, Three, and I'm demoting you to Four.

MINION 1: Then I'll be Three!

MINION 3: *(Quickly.)* Sorry, Mallory.

MALLORY: Just shut up, both of you. And go through their stuff. See if there's anything worth taking.

MINIONS 1-4 scurry over to the pile of backpacks at center stage and begin rummaging through them while MALLORY studies her fingernails.

MINION 1: Yep. It's definitely them. I've got Taylor's backpack here.

MINION 2: How do you know it's Taylor's?

MINION 1: Who else would have a button that says "Future POTUS"?

MINION 3: *(Whispering to MINION 4.)* What's a POTUS?

MINION 4: "President of the United States."

MINION 3: Ohhhh! Yeah, now that makes sense.

MALLORY: Three.

MINION 3: Yes, Mallory?

MALLORY: I heard that.

MINION 3: Oh. I was just—

MALLORY: Demoted.

MINION 3: *(With a sigh.)* Yes, Mallory.

Head hanging, MINION 3 moves to the spot farthest from MALLORY.

MINION 1: Yes! Movin' on up!

MINION 1 slides one spot closer to MALLORY.

MALLORY: Enough wasting time! Is there anything worth stealing or not?

MINION 2: I found a bag of chips...?

MALLORY: Take them. Now let's hide before they get back.

MINION 3: Hide? Why?

MINIONS 1, 2, and 4 look at MINION 3 in alarm.

MINION 3: What? I've already been demoted to Minion 4. How much worse could it get?

MALLORY: *(Threateningly.)* Much worse. Much, much worse.

MINION 3: *(In a squeaky voice.)* You're right! Sorry, Mallory!

MALLORY: *(In a slow, patronizing voice.)* We have to hide so we can scare them when they get back. Comprende?

MINION 3: Yes! Got it!

MALLORY: Good. Now let's move. I hear something.

MALLORY exits stage right as MINION 2 grabs the bag of chips and ALL MINIONS scurry off stage right after MALLORY. A moment later, ALEX blows a kazoo from the back of the house on the stage left side of the audience. Then two flashlights sweep through the audience as BLAKE and ALEX approach the stage, ALEX nervously blowing on her kazoo.

BLAKE: Alex! Stop it. Put that kazoo away! There's nothing to be afraid of. Except maybe Taylor when she hears the racket you're making.

ALEX: I... I heard something! I'm telling you! It sounded like it was coming from our camp!

BLAKE and ALEX enter from stage left.

BLAKE: Well... here we are. Back at camp. And what do you know? No one's here.

ALEX: Maybe my kazoo scared it away.

BLAKE: Alex... don't tell me you actually believe all this nonsense of Taylor's about catching some sort of extraterrestrial life red-handed?

ALEX: Well... maybe. I mean, there could be something out there.

BLAKE: Alex...

ALEX: (*Hurriedly.*) And wouldn't it be great if we did find something and proved we aren't really losers after all?

BLAKE: Alex. We are not losers.

ALEX: But... you told Taylor—

BLAKE: I told Taylor what she needed to hear. That she's not the center of the solar system. At least, not this one. (*Putting an arm around ALEX.*) You, Alex? You're one of the best people I know. And definitely not a loser.

ALEX: At least, not until Mallory and her goons realize I fit in a locker.

BLAKE: Well... let's just hope that never happens.

TAYLOR and JESSE walk through the audience from the back of the house toward the right side of the stage, flashlight skimming across the audience.

ALEX: Hey, look! Taylor and Jesse are back.

BLAKE: Yippee.

TAYLOR and ALEX enter, stage right. TAYLOR freezes abruptly upon seeing BLAKE.

TAYLOR: *(To BLAKE.)* Hey.

BLAKE: *(To JESSE.)* Hey.

TAYLOR: See anything?

BLAKE: Nope. You?

TAYLOR: No.

There is an awkwardly long moment of silence. Optional SFX: crickets.

JESSE: Alrighty then. Now that we've made it through the awkward part of the reunion... how about some chips to celebrate? *(Crosses to the backpacks at center stage.)*

BLAKE: *(To TAYLOR.)* That's it? You don't have anything else to say?

JESSE: Oh.... So we're not done with the awkward part of the reunion.... Cool.

TAYLOR: *(To BLAKE.)* What? Are you expecting an apology?

BLAKE: Something like that.

JESSE: *(Aloud to self.)* We're more likely to be eaten by aliens before that happens, but go ahead. Dream big.

ALEX: *(Nervously.)* Guys, please don't fight. We're supposed to be friends.

TAYLOR: Friends? Friends don't call friends losers!

JESSE: Great! And now that that's cleared up, who wants some chips? *(Starts rummaging through the backpacks again.)*

BLAKE: Friends also don't treat friends like losers, Taylor.

TAYLOR: Excuse me? How have I been treating you like a loser?!

BLAKE: It's not just me. It's the way you've been treating all of us!

JESSE: Uh... guys?

TAYLOR: Oh really? Care to enlighten me on how I've been treating all of you like losers?

BLAKE: Are you kidding me right now?!

JESSE: Guys, my chips are gone!

BLAKE: (To TAYLOR.) You boss us around like you own the school!
You talk down to us like we're a bunch of idiots! You're... you're just as bad as Mallory Mossbrook!

There is a moment of stunned silence.

TAYLOR: You... take... that... back. Now!

BLAKE: Why? It's the truth, isn't it?

JESSE: Guys!

TAYLOR: (Simultaneously.) What?!

BLAKE: (Simultaneously.) Jesse! What is it?!

JESSE: My chips are gone!

TAYLOR: Chips, Jesse? Really? That's what you're worried about?!

BLAKE: Come on, Jesse. You probably just ate them all. You know you can never eat just one.

JESSE: No! I mean, they're completely gone! Something was here! It stole my chips! The bag and everything! Look!

JESSE holds open an empty backpack and shows the group.

BLAKE: Okay, let's just... stay calm. It was probably just some sort of wild animal.

ALEX: (In a scared squeak.) Wild animal?!

BLAKE: Yeah, you know. A squirrel or... a raccoon or... maybe a really fat chipmunk...?

TAYLOR: (Gleefully.) Or an alien!

ALEX: (Alarmed.) Alien?! Aliens eat corn chips?

TAYLOR: Holy smokes! That's it!

BLAKE: What's it?

TAYLOR: It's the corn! Corn field, corn chips... that's the lure! That's why they're here! They've come for the corn!

JESSE: (To BLAKE.) What nonsense is she spouting now?

TAYLOR: Hmmm. But now that it's after harvest, they must be looking for a substitute...

BLAKE: (To JESSE.) I think Taylor's lost her cornflakes.

TAYLOR: Cornflakes! Yes! That's perfect! Blake, you're a genius!

BLAKE: Me? A genius? Well, this is a sudden turnaround. Thank you... I think.

TAYLOR: Okay! Next step...

JESSE: Go home and get more chips?

ALEX: (Fearfully.) Or just go home and stay home?

TAYLOR: We need cornflakes! Lots and lots of cornflakes!

JESSE: Oh, I've got that. My mom buys those jumbo economy bags of cornflakes big enough to feed an elephant.

BLAKE: I thought elephants ate peanuts?

JESSE: They do. Or at least, they did. Until my parents got the hospital bill from my last anaphylactic shock. "Peanuts" is now considered a dirty word in my house. So is Snickers, by the way.

TAYLOR: Guys, focus!

BLAKE: Right. Cornflakes. Sorry.

TAYLOR: Jesse, can you run home and get that bag of cornflakes without anyone noticing?

JESSE: No problem. Maybe then it'll force my mom to finally break out the Cocoa Puffs she's been hiding. (Jogs off, stage left.)

TAYLOR: (Calling after JESSE.) And get some new batteries while you're there! (To BLAKE and ALEX.) Okay. While we're waiting, Blake and I will take another lap around the field. Look for anything out of place—broken stalks, trails of chips, any kind of tracks—

BLAKE: Got it. I'll go west this time.

TAYLOR: Meet you back here in twenty.

BLAKE switches on the flashlight and jogs off stage left and into the audience toward the back of the house, skimming the audience with the flashlight as she walks.

ALEX: What about me? What do I do?

TAYLOR: You stay here and keep an eye on camp. Whatever took that bag of chips could come back for more.

ALEX: Come back for more?!

TAYLOR: Keep your eyes peeled and your camera ready! If you see anything, I want photographic proof!

ALEX: Wait a minute, Taylor, I really don't think this is a good—!

TAYLOR: Eyes peeled, Alex!

TAYLOR switches on the flashlight and jogs off stage right and into the audience toward the back of the house, skimming the audience with the flashlight as she walks. ALEX shakily takes out her camera.

ALEX: Eyes peeled. Eyes peeled, eyes peeled. Oh, why does that have to sound so disgusting?

ALEX looks around nervously. There is a shuffle behind the cornstalks and ALEX jumps, pointing her camera first in one direction, then another.

ALEX: H-hello? Is... is anyone there?

More shuffling behind the cornstalks. ALEX dives into the pile of backpacks at center stage and tries to hide.

ALEX: Never mind! I don't want to know! Photo shoot's over! Just go away, aliens!

ALEX covers her head. MALLORY and MINIONS 1-4 enter stage from all directions and surround ALEX.

MALLORY: Well, well, well. ...What do we have here?

ALEX: Wait a minute. I know that voice. That's not an alien. That's...
(*Looking up at MALLORY.*) Mallory Mossbrook?!

MALLORY: If it isn't our friend from PE! Little Alex Schmidt!

ALEX: Help! I think I prefer the aliens!

MALLORY: Now... what's this I hear about you fitting into a locker?

Lights fade.

SCENE 3**CORNFIELD AT 2 A.M.**

AT START: *SFX: in the distance, a church bell sounds two times. Lights rise on the stage as the last church bell sounds. The stage is now clear of backpacks. The stage is empty for a long moment. Then stage lights flicker. SFX: eerie sci-fi music plays. TAYLOR, BLAKE, and JESSE enter from the back of the house and approach stage left, TAYLOR and BLAKE with flashlights, and JESSE with a large bag of cornflakes. They are searching for ALEX as they walk.*

BLAKE: *(Calling.)* Alex? ALEX!

TAYLOR: Not so loud! If anything's out there, you'll scare it away!

BLAKE: I don't care! Alex is missing!

JESSE: And all our stuff!

BLAKE: Are you still worried about your chips?!

TAYLOR: *(To JESSE.)* More importantly, are you still leaving a cornflake trail?

JESSE: Yep. Like Hansel and Gretel!

BLAKE: Jesse, Hansel and Gretel left a trail of breadcrumbs.

JESSE: Oh.

TAYLOR: And the birds ate their trail!

JESSE: Oh. *(Looking behind.)* Do birds like cornflakes?

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