

THE CASE OF THE MISSING GOBBLER

By Megan Orr

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CHARACTERS

(7M, 6W, 2 Extras)

MORTIMER	The narrator; a turkey
ED PARKER	44-year old father; a salesman who travels often; easy-going
SANDRA PARKER	42-year old mother; a homemaker; attractive, youthful, and energetic; often mistaken for the kids' older sister
EDEN PARKER	18-year old; responsible, but bossy at times; a motherly perfectionist
WILLIAM PARKER	17-year old; quiet, serious, almost militaristic; rarely talks but not sullen
MADELINE PARKER	16-year old; boy-crazy, telephone-hogging, shopping addict
IAN PARKER	13-year old; energetic; extremely imagination; self-proclaimed Sherlock Holmes
DEREK PARKER	12-year old fraternal twin; wears glasses; bookish; always arguing with DANI
DANI PARKER	12-year old fraternal twin; loud, athletic, prankster; always arguing with DEREK
JUSTIN PARKER	11-year old; clumsy, accident-prone; earnestly seeks the approval of his parents and older siblings
KARA PARKER	9-year old; an avid animal lover; drama queen
LILY PARKER	4-year old; quiet, shy; shadows Eden's every move much to Eden's frustration
GRANDPA LEARY	72-year old; SANDRA's father; his wife died five years ago; spry, ornery, stubborn; loud-spoken due to hearing loss; eyesight also questionable
POLICE OFFICER 1 (HANK)	

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POLICE OFFICER 2 (STEVE)

Time: Modern day; Thanksgiving Day, approximately eight o'clock in the morning

Setting: The Parkers' house

THE SET

Set instructions

The majority of the play takes place in the Parker family dining room and kitchen. A long dining room table with twelve chairs stands at center stage, the long side of the table parallel to the edge of the stage. Stage left of the table is an L-shaped kitchen counter top, the L pointing toward stage right (See Stage Lay-out Chart in Appendix). The exit to the "backyard" is upstage center, behind and stage left of the table. There is a mirror beside this exit. The exit to the "garage" is downstage right. The exit into the other parts of the house is stage left.

Three scenes take place in the barn. These scenes may take place in the extreme stage left or on a stage left wing. Bales of hay and other miscellaneous farm equipment are placed at random around this area.

Lighting instructions

Regular indoor lighting for scenes taking place in the Parker family dining room and kitchen. Dimmer "outdoor" lighting for the scenes taking place in the barn.

Property List for The Case of the Missing Gobbler

For Act I, Scene 1

Potatoes – Sandra
Vegetable peeler – Sandra
Briefcase – Ed
Ear phones – William
Orange juice – William

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Drinking glass – William
Santa Claus hat – Dani
Cell phone – Madeline
Cutting board – Eden
Cans of pumpkin – Sandra
Pumpkin pie shell – Sandra
“Spy” notebook – Ian
Telephone with extra long cord – Sandra
Axe – William
Notepad and pen – Sandra / Eden

For Act I, Scene 2

Magnifying glass – Ian

For Act II, Scene 1

Phone book – Ian
Handcuffs – Grandpa
Knife block with knives – Grandpa
Extra large fake knife – Grandpa
Homemade Thanksgiving decorations – Dani and Derek
Turkey feather – Kara
Bag of miniature marshmallows (1/2 full) – Lily
Television remote control – Dani
Thick book – Kara

For Act II, Scene 2

“Ransom” note – Ian

For Act III, Scene 1

Police whistle – Police officers
Megaphone, optional – Police officers

For Act III, Scene 2

Coffee cups (2) – Police officers
Cell phone – Kara

**William’s axe and Grandpa’s knife may be plastic or toys. Grandpa’s knife, in particular, is even more comical if it is an oversized, obviously fake plastic knife. Both the axe and the knife may be created out of cardboard and aluminum foil, if preferred.*

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Costuming List for The Case of the Missing Gobbler

Mortimer

Turkey costume

Ed

Business suit and tie

Sandra

Turtleneck shirt
Long denim skirt
Apron
Coat and scarf
Purse

Eden

T-shirt
Button-down cardigan
Khaki pants

William

T-shirt
Jeans

Madeline

Stylish shirt
Stylish pants, capris, or skirt
Accessories

Ian

Button-down shirt
Khaki pants
Sherlock Holmes hat

Dani

Denver Broncos jersey
Jeans

Derek

Button-down shirt
Sweater vest
Khaki pants
Large glasses

Justin

T-shirt
Dark sweatshirt or sweater
Black pants

Kara

Long-sleeved T-shirt
Khaki pants
Thin-framed glasses, optional

Lily

Casual, "little girl" dress

Grandpa

Flannel shirt
Jeans
Work boots

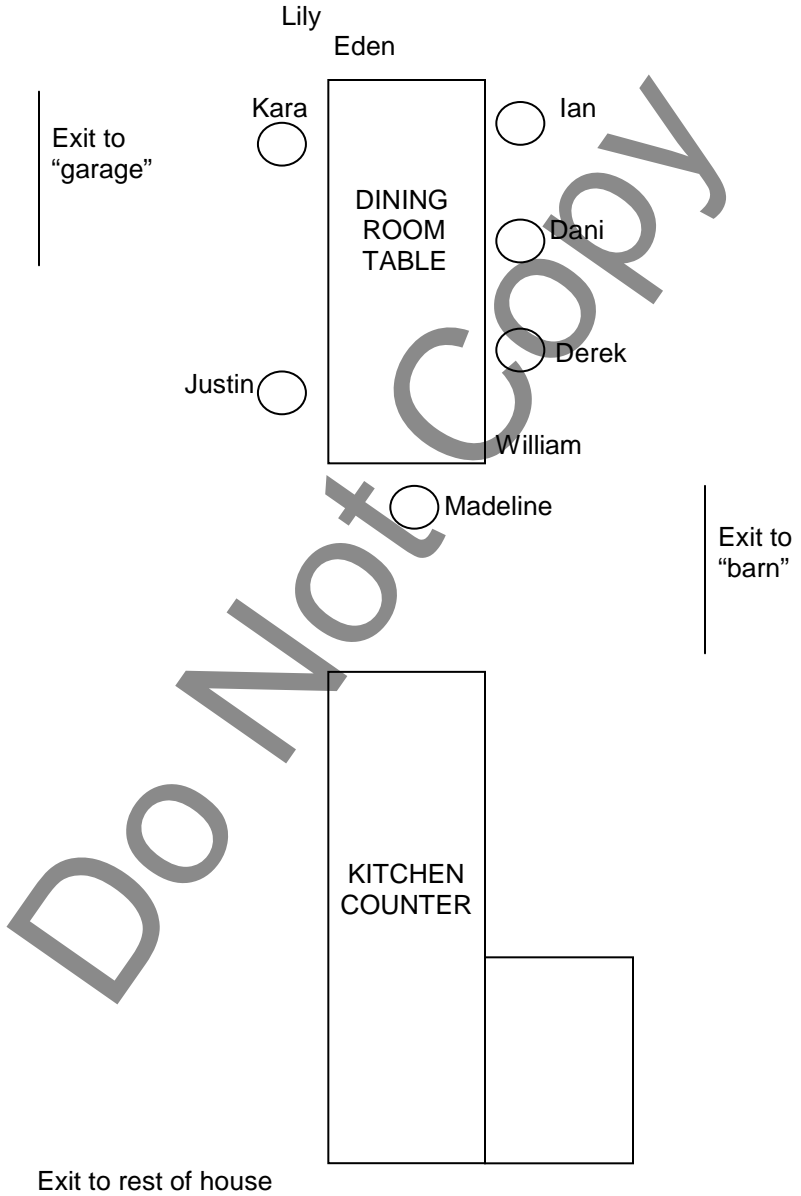
Police Officers

Uniforms

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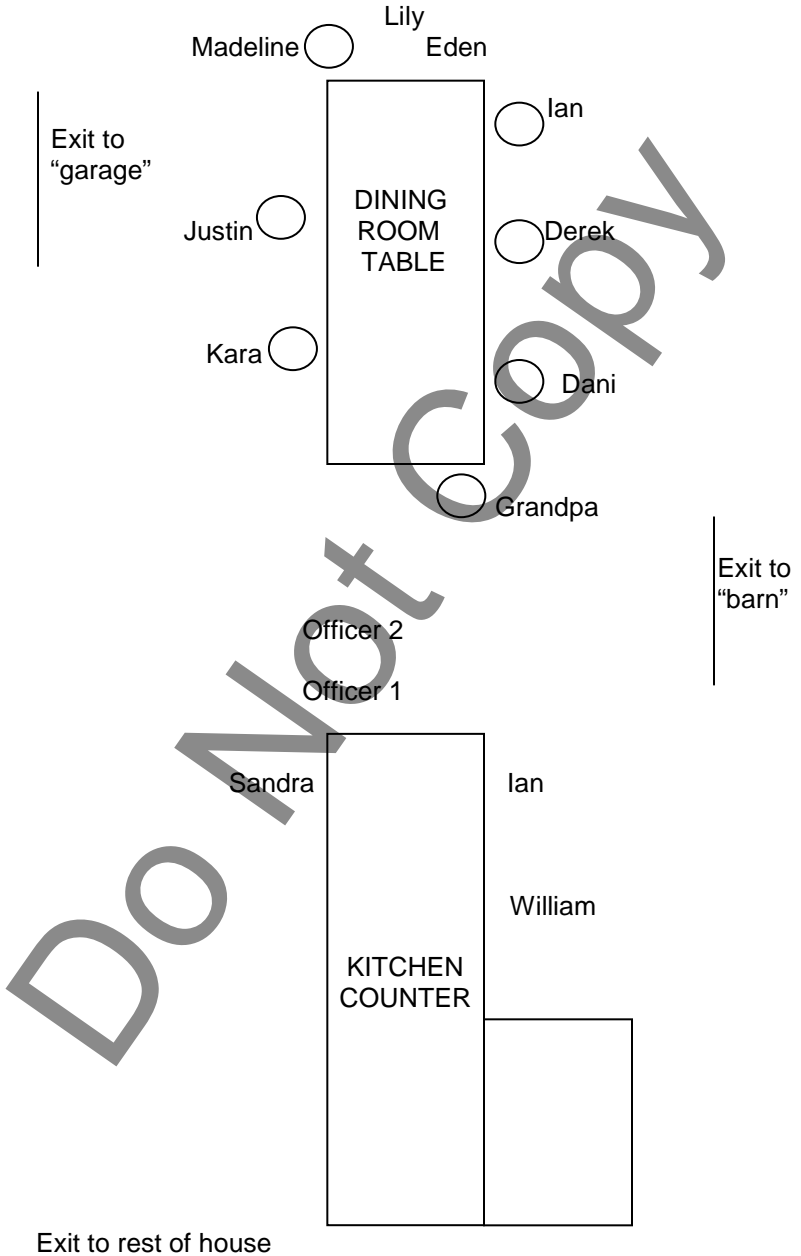
Stage Lay-out Charts for The Case of the Missing Gobbler

Act I, Scene 2



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Act III, Scene 2



Do Not Copy

THE CASE OF THE MISSING GOBLER
A Three-Act Thanksgiving Play

by
Megan Orr

ACT I

SCENE 1

**SET: The Parker family dining room/kitchen. The lights are dark.
*Plastic cutlery may be used to prepare the meal.**

MORTIMER: *(voice over)* Hi. My name is Mortimer, and have I got a story for you! Now, this isn't your typical Thanksgiving tale about Pilgrims and Indians. And good ole Chris Columbus won't be making an appearance, either. This story is about a family with *nine* kids. Count 'em. *Nine*.

Lights slowly begin to rise. ED, dressed in a business suit, is straightening his tie in front of the hall mirror while SANDRA, wearing an apron, is at the kitchen counter peeling potatoes. As MORTIMER introduces each, the character turns to face the audience and freezes in mid-motion until the introduction is over and then goes back into action.

MORTIMER: *(voice over)* What ever made Ed and Sandy want so many kids in the first place is beyond me. But, that's my own personal opinion.

ED: *(shouting to SANDY)* Honey! Have you seen my briefcase?

(ED turns to face the audience as he searches for his briefcase and freezes. SANDRA also freezes.)

MORTIMER: *(voice over)* There's the old man now. Not so bad-looking for being the father of nine. A hard worker, too, that Ed. He's even going to work on Thanksgiving Day.

(ED and SANDRA "unfreeze.")

SANDRA: *(shouting back to ED)* I think the kids were using it to play Office yesterday. Check the meat freezer.

ED: The meat freezer?! What in the world were they doing with it there?

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(ED crosses to downstage right exit.)

SANDRA: Oh, one of the kids got “transferred.” To the Arctic, I think.

ED: Nice office. Hope they’re not thinking of transferring me!

(ED exits downstage right and returns a moment later with his briefcase.)

SANDRA: Ed, are you *sure* you’ll be back by four? I’d hate to have all this food ready and then find out you’re still on the road.

(ED crosses to SANDY.)

ED: Don’t worry, hon. It’s just a quick trip down to Anderson. I’ll be back in plenty of time to help you carve the turkey.

SANDRA: Carve the turkey? I’m more worried about *protecting* the turkey. I’ve already gotten four dibs on two drumsticks.

ED: *(giving SANDRA a hug)* I’ll pick up a bag of frozen drumsticks on my way home.

(As ED releases SANDRA, the two freeze.)

MORTIMER: *(voice over)* In case you couldn’t tell, the pretty one in the apron is Sandy. Bet you thought she was one of the kids, didn’t you? Well, don’t feel too bad. It’s a common mistake.

(EDEN enters from stage left. She is dressed for the day and is pulling her hair back into a ponytail as she speaks. ED and SANDRA unfreeze as she speaks. ED shuffles through the papers in his briefcase as SANDRA turns to talk to EDEN.)

EDEN: Okay, Mom. I’m here. What do you need me to do?

(The three characters freeze.)

MORTIMER: *(voice over)* That’s Eden. She’s eighteen and she’s the oldest. And she never lets her brothers and sisters forget about it.

(The characters unfreeze.)

SANDRA: Oh, Eden! Good! Look, will you go make sure the kids are out of bed? I really need at least you, William, and Madeline down as soon as possible to help me out in the kitchen. Are they up?

EDEN: *(wryly)* I don’t know about William, but Madeline’s up.

SANDRA: Good. Would you go get her, please?

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EDEN: (*ominously*) I'll get her, but I don't think it'll do any good.

(*EDEN moves toward stage left exit just as JUSTIN runs in. They nearly collide.*)

EDEN: Hey! Watch out!

(*EDEN exits stage left as JUSTIN runs over to SANDRA.*)

JUSTIN: Hi, Mom! Happy Thanksgiving!

(*JUSTIN gives SANDRA a big hug, nearly knocking her over.*)

SANDRA: (*laughing*) Whoa, there! Happy Thanksgiving to you too!

JUSTIN: (*turning to ED*) Hi, Dad! Happy Thanksgiv—

(*As JUSTIN moves in to give ED a hug, he flings open his arms and knocks over ED's briefcase. Papers fly out everywhere.*)

JUSTIN: (*cont.*) Oh! Sorry.

(*The characters freeze.*)

MORTIMER: (*voice over*) And that would be child number seven. His name is Justin. He's at the awkward age of eleven and not exactly known for his coordination.

(*The characters unfreeze. ED and SANDRA bend down and start picking up the papers.*)

JUSTIN: (*eagerly*) I can help!

(*ED hands his papers to SANDRA and stands quickly while SANDRA scoops up the rest of the papers. He places his hands on JUSTIN'S shoulders and carefully moves him away from the briefcase.*)

ED: Actually, son, I've got a better idea. Why don't I give you a *special* Thanksgiving Day job to do?

JUSTIN: Me? Really??

ED: Yes. You. You know our turkey, Mortimer?

JUSTIN: The one that Mr. Williams gave us for Thanksgiving?

ED: That's the one! You see, I have to go on a quick business trip this morning, and I need someone to feed Mortimer.

JUSTIN: I can do it!

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(SANDRA places the papers back in ED's briefcase, returns to the kitchen, and continues peeling potatoes.)

ED: *(warningly)* Now, it's a very important job, son. And you've got to be careful to close the gate when you're through. We don't want Mortimer escaping. After all, he's the main dish!

JUSTIN: I'll be careful, Dad. I promise!

(KARA enters stage left.)

KARA: Who's the main dish?

ED: *(looking at KARA over his shoulder)* Mortimer.

KARA: *(horrified)* Mortimer?! Dad, do you mean we're going to eat Mortimer?!

(The characters freeze.)

MORTIMER: *(voice over)* That's Kara. She's nine, the next child under Justin, and probably the world's youngest animal rights activist.

(The characters unfreeze. SANDRA looks up from peeling potatoes.)

SANDRA: Now, Kara, we talked about this yesterday. It's Thanksgiving, and on Thanksgiving people eat turkey. Mortimer isn't a pet turkey; he's . . . an *eating* turkey.

JUSTIN: *(to ED)* Can I go feed Mortimer now, Dad?

ED: All right, Justin. But remember, be *careful*.

JUSTIN: Oh, I will! Thanks, Dad!

(JUSTIN runs off through upstage center door.)

KARA: *(to ED, accusingly)* You're fattening him up, aren't you? Just like in *Hansel and Grete!* You're fattening up Mortimer so we can eat him!

(SANDRA sets the potato and peeler down and crosses to KARA.)

ED: *(wearily)* Kara, I really don't have time for this . . .

SANDRA: *(to ED)* I'll take care of it. You'd better get going.

ED: Thanks. *(leaning down to give KARA a kiss)* Give your daddy a goodbye kiss, Kara Bear?

KARA: *(looking away, arms crossed)* Murderer!

ED: *(straightening up)* Okay, then. Happy Thanksgiving to you, too.

(ED leans in and gives SANDRA a kiss on the forehead.)

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ED: *(cont.) (to SANDRA)* I'll see you at four.

SANDRA: Drive safe, hon.

(ED picks up his briefcase and exits downstage right.)

SANDRA: *(cont.)* Now, Kara, you've got to understand that not every animal we bring home is meant to be your new best friend. It's like that time with the lobsters. You see, God made animals so that people—

(WILLIAM enters stage left, wearing ear phones. Without a word to anybody, he heads straight to the fridge.)

SANDRA: *(cont.) (to WILLIAM)* William! There you are.

(WILLIAM opens the fridge and pulls out the orange juice, still without a word.)

SANDRA: *(cont.)* William?

(WILLIAM pours himself a glass and heads back toward stage left.)

SANDRA: *(cont.) (loudly)* William!

(WILLIAM suddenly stops and turns around, surprised. He pulls out one of the ear phones.)

WILLIAM: Oh, hi, Mom. Hi, Kara. Happy Thanksgiving.

KARA: No, it isn't! It's a *horrible* Thanksgiving! They're going to eat Mortimer!

(KARA plops into a chair at the table and sullenly drops her head on her arms, burying her face.)

SANDRA: *(smoothing down KARA's hair)* There, there, honey. It's all right.

WILLIAM: What's *her* problem?

(SANDRA looks down at KARA cautiously and then back at WILLIAM.)

SANDRA: *(whispering to WILLIAM, voice lowering on the last word)*
William! Go get the axe.

WILLIAM: Huh?

SANDRA: *(softer)* Go get the axe!

WILLIAM: What . . . ? Mom, I can't hear you.

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SANDRA: The axe! Go get the axe!

KARA: *(looking up suddenly)* The axe? No! You can't kill him! I won't let you!

(KARA jumps up and runs out upstage center door.)

WILLIAM: Oh. You wanted the axe.

SANDRA: Great. Just great.

WILLIAM: She's going to hide it again, isn't she?

SANDRA: *(tiredly)* Every year.

WILLIAM: *(sighing)* I'll go find it.

(SANDRA crosses back to kitchen.)

SANDRA: Make sure you check up in the tree house. That's where she put it last time.

(WILLIAM crosses to upstage center door.)

WILLIAM: Next year, I think I'll just sleep with it under my pillow.

(WILLIAM replaces the ear phone in his ear and exits upstage center. SANDRA sighs, picks up the potato peeler, then freezes.)

MORTIMER: *(voice over)* Well, looks like you've already met William.

He usually doesn't have much to say. He's seventeen, the second oldest in the Parker family. Hmm . . . Now who else am I missing?

DEREK: *(offstage)* Mom! Make her stop!

MORTIMER: *(voice over)* Oh yes. The twins. Derek and Dani. They're twelve.

(SANDRA unfreezes. DEREK and DANI enter. DEREK has his hands over his ears. DANI, wearing a Santa Claus hat, follows DEREK loudly singing "Jingle Bells.")

DEREK: Mom! Dani woke me up singing Christmas songs!

DANI: So?

DEREK: So you're not allowed to sing Christmas songs until after Thanksgiving! It's a state law!

DANI: Well, somebody ought to tell that to Wal-Mart. *(loudly)* "Jingle Bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way!"

DEREK: Mom, make her stop!

SANDRA: Okay, Dani, that's enough. *(looking at DEREK)* And although it isn't *really* a state law—

DANI: *(to DEREK)* Hah! See!

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SANDRA: *(taking the Santa hat from DANI's head)* --it is a Parker family tradition to celebrate one holiday at a time. And today is Thanksgiving. Now, I'm putting you two in charge of decorations. Go raid the crafts cupboard and see what you can find.

(DANI runs toward stage left.)

DANI: I got dibs on the big blue scissors!

DEREK: Hey! That's not fair! I got stuck with the baby scissors last time!

(DANI and DEREK run off stage left, brushing past MADELINE who strolls into the kitchen, talking on a cell phone. EDEN, with LILY holding her hand, enters right behind MADELINE.)

MADELINE: *(into the phone)* No way! I can't believe you told him that!

EDEN: *(to SANDRA, with a sigh)* Well, I got her. But like I said, I don't know how much good it's going to do.

(EDEN moves away from LILY, who immediately grabs for EDEN'S pant leg. EDEN crosses to the kitchen. She detaches LILY from her leg and places LILY on the countertop. EDEN begins peeling potatoes.)

SANDRA: Madeline! It's Thanksgiving! Who on earth could you be talking to so early?

(DANI pokes her head back into the kitchen through stage left.)

DANI: *(to SANDRA)* Oh, and by the way, Mom, Madeline was up on the phone until one o'clock last night.

MADELINE: Tattle tale!

(DANI sticks her tongue out at MADELINE. The characters freeze.)

MORTIMER: *(voice over)* Here are a couple more Parker kids for you.

The one with the telephone surgically attached to her ear is Madeline. She's sixteen. And the little one is the youngest, Lily. She just turned four. Cute little thing, isn't she?

(The characters unfreeze.)

SANDRA: All right, Madeline. Off the phone.

MADELINE: But, Mom! Allison and I are having a telethon this weekend!

SANDRA: A what?

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MADELINE: (*excited*) A telethon! We're going to see how many hours in a row we can talk to each other on the phone!

SANDRA: Not on *our* cell phone, you're not.

MADELINE: (*with a disappointed huff*) Well then can I use the house phone?

SANDRA: No. Madeline, this is a holiday. I don't want you spending the entire day talking on the phone.

MADELINE: (*whining*) Then what am I supposed to *do* all day?

EDEN: (*wryly*) Here's a novel idea. Maybe you could actually help out around the house for a change.

MADELINE: (*ignoring EDEN; to SANDRA, grabbing her arm*) I know! If I can't talk on the phone, could I at least go to the mall?

SANDRA: Madeline . . .

MADELINE: Please??

SANDRA: Honey. It's a *holiday*. The mall's probably not even open.

MADELINE: (*dropping SANDRA's arm with an exasperated huff*) No telephone. No mall. Who invented this holiday anyway? Adolf Hitler?

(*MADELINE stomps toward stage left exit.*)

SANDRA: (*calling to MADELINE*) You've got five minutes to wrap up your phone call. Then I need you back down in the kitchen pronto.

(*MADELINE exits stage left.*)

EDEN: You'd better translate "pronto" for her. I don't think she knows the meaning of the word. (*holding up a potato*) Do you want me to cut these up as I go?

SANDRA: Oh! Eden, thank you! Yes, go ahead. Cut them up. If you could keep working on the potatoes, that would be great. I've still got to get the pies started, and the sweet potatoes—

LILY: With marshmallows?

SANDRA: Yes, honey. Sweet potatoes with marshmallows. Would you like that?

(*LILY nods and smiles.*)

EDEN: (*to LILY with feigned excitement*) Hey, I have an idea! Would you like to help Mommy put the marshmallows on the sweet potatoes, Lily?

(*LILY frowns and shakes her head, scooting closer to EDEN. EDEN sighs.*)

SANDRA: (*laughing*) Looks like she really likes helping you.

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EDEN: (*unenthusiastically*) Yeah. Great.

(*EDEN awkwardly maneuvers around LILY and begins cutting the potatoes. SANDRA pulls out the ingredients for pumpkin pie.*)

EDEN: (*cont.*) You know, I can't believe Dad has to work on Thanksgiving. Where did he go, anyway?

SANDRA: Oh, somewhere down around Indianapolis, I think.

IAN: (*hidden*) Anderson.

(*SANDRA and EDEN look up in surprise. IAN, who has been hiding under the table the entire time, emerges with a notebook in his hand.*)

SANDRA and EDEN: Ian?!

LILY: Ian!

IAN: (*reading from his notebook*) Dad went down to Anderson. (*looking up at them, smiling proudly*) But he'll be back by four.

SANDRA: Ian, what have I told you about spying on people?

IAN: But Mom, I wasn't spying. I was sharpening my observation skills.

(*The characters freeze.*)

MORTIMER: (*voice over*) And now, may I present to you the last member of the Parker family circus, thirteen-year-old Ian Parker, the family's self-proclaimed Sherlock Holmes. And there you have it. Nine kids. Let the chaos begin.

(*The characters unfreeze.*)

SANDRA: Ian, I've told you. It isn't polite to listen in on your family members' conversations.

(*IAN crosses to the kitchen.*)

IAN: But, Mom! If I can't observe my own family, how am I ever going to become a world-famous detective??

EDEN: You've been reading too many Sherlock Holmes books again.

IAN: (*to EDEN*) Then I suppose you don't want to know what Madeline's been saying about you behind your back . . . ?

EDEN: (*indignant*) What? What has she been saying?

SANDRA: Kids, that's enough. Ian, hand over the notebook.

IAN: Aww, Mom!

SANDRA: Now, please.

IAN: Oh . . . all right.

(*IAN grudgingly hands SANDRA the notebook.*)

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SOUND: The telephone rings.

MADELINE: *(offstage)* I'll get it!

SANDRA: Oh, no you don't!

(SANDRA sets the notebook down on the kitchen counter. As soon as SANDRA turns away, EDEN snatches up the notebook and begins leafing through it. MADELINE runs in stage left just as SANDRA picks up the telephone on the stage right end of the kitchen counter.)

SANDRA: *(cont.)* Hello, Parker house.

MADELINE: Ugh! Mo-om! No fair!

(SANDRA smiles at MADELINE and shoos her away.)

SANDRA: Oh, hi, Dad. Aren't you supposed to be on the road by now?

EDEN: *(looking down in the notebook in shock)* What?! *(turning to MADELINE)* You were the one that told Mark Olsen I had a crush on him??

MADELINE: *(evasively)* What? No! . . . What in the world gave you that crazy idea?

EDEN: It says *here*, and I quote: *(mimicking MADELINE)* "I can't believe Eden actually thinks that Mark Olsen would ever like her. Good thing I warned him. He is so way too cute for her."

(IAN slowly begins backing toward the upstage center door.)

MADELINE: Oh, so now you're, like, listening in on my phone calls??

SANDRA: *(into phone; laughing)* I'm sorry, Dad, you're going to have to speak up. It sounded like you said you were in *jail!* Now *where* are you?

EDEN: *(to MADELINE)* I didn't listen in on anything. It wouldn't be worth the time. It's all right here in Ian's little spy notebook.

(EDEN tosses the notebook onto the kitchen counter in disgust and crosses her arms. MADELINE grabs the notebook and flips through it, open mouthed.)

MADELINE: Why that little— *(turning to IAN)* Ian!

(IAN is standing at the upstage center exit, looking out into the "backyard.")

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IAN: (*forced nonchalance*) Huh. Well, what do you know. Here comes William. And he's got an axe.

SANDRA: (*into phone; concerned*) Dad, that's awful! Was anybody hurt?

(*MADELINE crosses to IAN.*)

MADELINE: Ian Alexander Jonathan Parker the fourth!

IAN: (*confused*) Uh . . . that's not my name.

MADELINE: Well, it won't matter when you're *dead*, will it?!

(*MADELINE lunges for IAN. WILLIAM enters from upstage center, holding an axe. *An axe may easily be constructed by using construction paper and aluminum foil, if so desired.**)

WILLIAM: Whoa! What's going on here?

IAN: (*ducking behind WILLIAM*) William! Hide me!

(*SANDRA covers the mouthpiece of the telephone.*)

SANDRA: (*quiet but intense*) Kids! Please! Quiet down!

(*SANDRA returns to her phone call. EDEN crosses to MADELINE, LILY trailing behind her.*)

EDEN: (*to MADELINE*) I don't know what you're getting so upset about. At least *he* didn't ruin any chance of a relationship you had with a guy.

MADELINE: Like there was *ever* any chance?

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