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Dramatic Publishing

Farmageddon and the Undercover Crop



Comedy by Victoria Sayeg

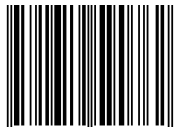


Farmageddon and the Undercover Crop

Comedy. By Victoria Sayeg. *Cast: 1m., 1w., 20 to 24 either gender.* Everyone loves a good crop circle—that is, everyone but world-renowned peanut planter Farmer Carter. This fine farmer is devastated to learn his entire year's yield of peanuts has been damaged by someone—or something—just a day before the circus comes to town! He hires a private investigator to get to the bottom of this puzzle. Was it, perhaps, the protest group CIABATTA, Circus Is Always Bad and Torturous Toward Animals, or even NAAN, Nomads Against Animal Neglect, fighting to eliminate the circus? Or could this be the work of something a little more ... supernatural? The detective pairs up with her voice-over double—her own conscience!—to explore the possibilities and turns up a jar of peanut butter, a clown performing dentistry, the world's worst juggler, a beautiful bearded lady and a mad scientist, but no real leads. The clown suddenly breaks a lifetime of silence to reveal the source of the crop circle and save the future of food everywhere! *Simple set. Approximate running time: 45 minutes. Code: FF6.*

Cover photos: Young Artists Ensemble, Thousand Oaks, Calif., featuring (l-r) (above) Ariela Behar, Melissa McLean and Jenna Lay and (front) Ariela Behar, Molly Gillmore, Kieran Moore, Emma Patterson and Melissa McLean. Photos: Paul Cranmer. Cover design: Molly Germanotta.

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Farmageddon and the Undercover Crop

By

VICTORIA SAYEG



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VICTORIA SAYEG

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Farmageddon and the Undercover Crop was premiered by Young Artists Ensemble at Hillcrest Center for the Arts on Oct. 11, 2014.

Cast:

Tin Hat Protestor/Ensemble Ava Ahlberg
Twin 2 Ariela R. Behar
Detective Lotte Bezemer
Hipster Protestor Annaliese Cancilla
Protester Organizer Will Frillici
Tin Hat Protestor/Lion Chloe Skye Garcia
Eleanor/Bertha Molly Gillmore
Beatrice the Beautiful Bearded Lady Samantha J. Green
Protester/Ensemble Kylah Kennedy
Scientist..... Jenna Lay
Poof the Juggler Tyler Luff
Randy Andrew Maga
Ringmaster Connor Martin
Twin 1 Melissa Mclean
Tin Hat Protestor/Ensemble Sofia Montalvo
Bartholomew the Clown Kai Moore
Lionel the Lion Tamer..... Kaige Moore
Farmer Carter/Sampson Kieran Wynn Moore
Protester/Ensemble Macy Obringer
Jan Emma Patterson
Voice-Over Detective Michelle Rothman
CIABATTA Receptionist Ruby E. Wasserman

Crew:

Director/Properties Coordinator..... Victoria Sayeg
Assistant Director/Properties Coordinator..... Amy Wynn Moore
Costume Designer/Properties Coordinator Kayla Sayeg
Choreographer..... Marissa Crisafulli
Stage Manager Lauren T. Alexander
Lighting Designer Ian Kelley
Sound Designer..... Mark Andrew Reyes

Farmageddon and the Undercover Crop

CHARACTERS

FARMER CARTER*: World-renowned peanut farmer, devastated to stumble upon a terrible crop circle tragedy.

ELEANOR**: Farmer Carter's wife, just as gracious as can be!

JAN: Oldest of Carter and Eleanor's children; keeps the twins in line.

TWIN 1: Needs to be kept in line.

TWIN 2: (Stop copying me).

SCIENTIST: Crazy, peculiar and nerdy and on a very important mission.

RANDY: Juice stand owner; on a constant sugar rush!
WOOO! YEA!

DETECTIVE: 1940s-style private investigator on his/her very first case ever.

V.O. DETECTIVE: Voice double to the Detective, carries us all through this twisted tale; essentially, the Detective's inner monologue, who can only be seen and heard by the Detective.

SAMPSON*: Neighbor; had crop circles last year. Is he in on it?!

BERTHA**: Sampson's wife. She's not in on it ... or is she?!

PROTESTOR ORGANIZER: Wants peace. Sneezes a lot.

HIPSTER PROTESTOR: Like, bless you, brah.

PROTESTORS 1, 2 and 3: Fight the power, man!

TIN HAT PEOPLE 1, 2 and 3: Believers in aliens and all things paranormal.

RINGMASTER: Ladies and gentlemen! Grandiose and fabulous!

CLOWN: Cute and silent; travels through time and space to reveal a big secret.

BEATRICE: A beautiful bearded lady.

JUGGLER: Can't catch a break.

JUICE BAR/CIRCUS PATRONS: Full of energy!

LION TAMER: Terrified of lions.

LION: A LION!

PHONE OPERATOR

*Farmer Carter and Sampson are to be played by the same actor. The two characters are dressed the same throughout, with a hat or mustache differentiating the two.

**Eleanor and Bertha are to be played by the same actress. The two characters are dressed the same throughout, with a scarf or hat differentiating the two.

Farmageddon and the Undercover Crop

SCENE 1

AT RISE: *We see SCIENTIST, dressed in lab coat, kneeling in the midst of a newly formed crop circle in FARMER CARTER's now destroyed peanut crop. SCIENTIST hears FARMER CARTER approach, grabs a few peanuts and scurries to hide. We have no choice but to think that the SCIENTIST is up to no good.*

(FARMER CARTER, a farmer clad in overalls and a straw hat, enters, followed by his wife, ELEANOR, and kids, TWIN 1, TWIN 2 and JAN. He is totally distraught and just as crushed as his peanuts.)

FARMER CARTER *(singing)* “All good farmers sing this song, doo da doo da. Gonna check my peanut pl— *(Sees crop circle.)* WHAAAAAAT!?! *(Beat.)* All the doo-dah-day. *(Beat.)* What in the name of topsoil tarnation! I mean seriously, holy hay bales, my peanuts! *(Beat. Calling out.)* WHO DONE THIS?! SHOW YOUR FACE. WHO A-SALTED MY PEANUTS?! I have been raising these little legumes since they weren't nothin but youngins and now, they're nothin but—*(Cries.)* But, peanut butter! Oh, whyyy! Oh, the humanity! *(Slumps down and starts weeping.)*

TWIN 1. Whoa! What is it?

TWIN 2. It's dad. Crying!

TWIN 1. No, no. What is *that*?

TWIN 2. That! That is a crop circle!

TWIN 1. Mhmmm, a tasty crop circle!

TWIN 2. Hey! I've been lookin' for one of these!

TWIN 1. Hey! Yeah, me too!

TWIN 2. You've been looking for a crop circle? Why do you need a crop circle?

TWIN 1. I guess I wasn't looking for a crop circle ... I was looking for my shoes. Seen 'em?

TWIN 2. No, I haven't seen your shoes. I, on the other hand, have been searching high and low for one of these trampled treasures.

JAN. Really? What do you possibly need a crop circle for!?

TWIN 2. For sandwiches!

TWIN 1. For sandwiches!

JAN. Oh, for the love of Betsy, just stop.

(TWIN 1 and TWIN 2 make a sandwich.)

ELEANOR *(takes the sandwich out of TWIN 1's hands)*. Your sister is right. How can you eat at a time like this!? Can't you see your father is upset!?

(FARMER CARTER wails.)

TWIN 1. He seems fine.

(FARMER CARTER wails again.)

ELEANOR. Muffin, I can't understand you, try using your words ...

(FARMER CARTER wails again.)

ELEANOR. Jan, would you please interpret?

JAN. Mom, I told you. I went to school for sign language interpreting. I don't really understand unintelligible moaning, nor do I have a degree in it, nor do I wish to acquire one.

FARMER CARTER. UAHHHHHH!

(Beat.)

JAN *(sigh)*. He says our year's work of peanut farming is crushed.

FARMER CARTER. UAHHHHHH!

JAN. Gone! And, with the circus coming into town tomorrow—

FARMER CARTER. AHHHhhahhaaaawaaaaa!

ELEANOR. How did this happen?! *(Beat.)* Go ahead, ask him how it happened!

JAN. Mom, he's not deaf. He can still hear you. He's just crying. You can just ask—

(JAN sighs, then wails unintelligibly toward her father, who wails back, making grandiose gestures.)

JAN *(cont'd)*. He says he doesn't know how it happened. It was just like this when he came out this morning.

(FARMER CARTER nods, crying still.)

JAN *(cont'd)*. He says since we'll never be able to sell these dumb old pulverized peanuts to the circus tomorrow, we'll have to cancel our trip to Disneyla— *(Beat.)* Nevermind. That's actually all he said.

ELEANOR. Honey? Did you remember to take out that Safe Farm Peanut Farmer policy like we talked about?

FARMER CARTER *(composing himself)* I reckon so! I think I even gots the paperwork right here!

(FARMER CARTER pulls out a brochure on the peanut farmer policy.)

TWIN 1. Well?

TWIN 2. Yeah, well?!

FARMER CARTER *(reading)*. Well let's see here ... crop squares, crop triangles, crop rectangles ...

ELEANOR *(reading)*. Crop parallelograms, crop rhombuses ...

JAN *(reading)*. Crop octagons, crop pentagons ...

FARMER CARTER. Crop ovals ... circles! Ah! Crop CIRCLES!

(Everyone is relieved.)

ELEANOR. Call and hire an investigator honey. I think it's part of the insurance plan.

FARMER CARTER. Well now, I don't know about that ...

TWIN 1. Here, Dad. You can use my phone.

TWIN 2. You don't have a phone.

(FARMER CARTER weeps.)

TWIN 1. Here, Dad. You can use my sandwich.

TWIN 2. Make that call, Dad. Make. That. Call.

(FARMER CARTER uses the sandwich to dry his tears.)

BLACKOUT.)

SCENE 2

(Lights up. FARMER CARTER's family sits in the living room. TWIN 1 and TWIN 2 eat giant candy bars that are clearly infused with sugar and preservatives.)

ELEANOR. Now kids, the detective your father hired will be by any minute. It's important that we are totally honest with her and help her out in whatever way we can.

TWIN 2. In whatever way we can?! I can do her laundry!

TWIN 1. I can wash her car!

TWIN 2. I can blow out the candles on her birthday cake! And then eat the whole thing! Just like these new power protein gummy tummy bars! Aren't they so good?!

TWIN 1. YEA! I'm never eating a vegetable again!

ELEANOR. No, I mean, we need to really rack our brains and tell her everything we remember about the past couple days in relation to the peanut crop. Think of anything suspicious you may have seen or heard. Get it?

TWIN 1 & TWIN 2. Got it!

ELEANOR. Good.

JAN. Look—I think that's the detective walking up now.

(DETECTIVE and V.O. DETECTIVE enter together, dressed the same. DETECTIVE is very punctuated with movement, while V.O. DETECTIVE narrates.)

V.O. DETECTIVE. It was a small town ... too small. I hadn't seen anyone but for a man in a lab coat watching flowers grow near the road. I tried twice to greet him, but to no avail. So I moved on. I came across the farmer's shabby green house. Dingy fence paint, unkempt yard. The old farmer had hired me over the phone, which wasn't my usual style, but I figured what the hay, I hadn't had a call in weeks. I was jonesin' for work, and who was I to turn it down?

(DETECTIVE knocks on the door. ELEANOR answers.)

DETECTIVE. Hello there, spring chicken. You must be Eleanor.

ELEANOR. I am! And you must be—

DETECTIVE. Detective.

ELEANOR. Detective?

V.O. DETECTIVE (*salutes*). Detective.

ELEANOR. Well! Hello there, Detective. Are ya any good?

DETECTIVE (*to ELEANOR*). Am I any good? (*To herself*.)

Am I any good ... ?

V.O. DETECTIVE. No. I was not any good, not yet, at least.

It was my first case ever, if I'm speakin' honestly. I was nervous as a blind pilot and green as fresh cucumber.

DETECTIVE. I am the best of the best, little lady. Creme of the smashed and circled crop, if I do say it myself.

(FARMER CARTER hears this and cries.)

V.O. DETECTIVE. Too soon, bud. I needed to reel it in a bit, but self-awareness was never my strong suit.

DETECTIVE. Now, Eleanor—Elle, if you will—how about we go right on inside and square away this little crop circle conundrum.

ELEANOR. Oh, Detective! I have all the faith in the world in you! Please, come on inside.

(They walk the rest of the way inside, where the rest of the family resides.)

DETECTIVE. Their house was messy and small and I wanted to make this snappy.

(The family looks at DETECTIVE, offended. DETECTIVE smiles nervously.)

V.O. DETECTIVE (*clears throat in panic*). Their house was messy and small and I wanted to make this snappy, so I formulated a plan. I'd continue with grace and tact, solve the peanut puzzle in a jif, and then bolt. I'd be home in time for *The Voice*. That show is simply to die for.

ELEANOR. Detective, I'd like to introduce you to my husband, Farmer Carter.

FARMER CARTER. Hello, Detective. I am so pleased to meet you.

DETECTIVE. And you as well—Sorry under such circumstances.

TWIN 1. Hi!

TWIN 2. Howdy!

TWIN 1. Can I be a detective when I grow up?

(TWIN 1 mocks DETECTIVE by standing upright with arms crossed, pacing about slowly.)

TWIN 2 (*in mocked DETECTIVE tone, using invisible magnifying glass*). It was a small town ... too small.

DETECTIVE (*to FARMER CARTER*). Is there any way that they can go play elsewhere? Time is of the essence.

JAN. Forgive us. They've been riled up since 2003. Gotta be those power protein gummy tummy bars. Good luck, Detective.

(TWIN 1, TWIN 2 and JAN exit. DETECTIVE joins ELEANOR and FARMER CARTER at the table.)

DETECTIVE. Now, please, tell me everything you know about the events leading up to this crop circle of yours.

FARMER CARTER. I know nothin', Detective. All I know is I woke up bright and early like I always do to water and trim the crop and bag it up to send off to the circus that's in town. You see, we sell off our crop every year. This single cull is our only profit annually. But when I went out this morning, I seen a crop circle ...

V.O. DETECTIVE. A crop circle. I knew it. I asked all the pertinent questions and took detailed notes.

FARMER CARTER. ... I don't know *why* they're called hashtags, man, cuz it *is* just a pound sign.

DETECTIVE. Right?

ELEANOR. I'll tell you what happened. You see, I was just waking up for the day when—

(Conversation continues silently but animated exaggeratedly, flapping like a chicken, etc, while V.O. DETECTIVE narrates.)

V.O. DETECTIVE. I listened, not because I wanted to, but because this was a job, and because that's what you do. Eleanor was animated—too animated—changing subjects like radio stations in the desert. She rambled on and on, and finally she appeared to have gotten to some sort of close—

(Beat. ELEANOR takes a breath and almost sits down but starts the animation again, this time bigger.)

V.O. DETECTIVE *(cont'd)*. I guess not. She did mention some neighbors, Sampson and Bertha, who had similar problems with crop circles and damaged plants in years past. So I politely thanked them for their information *(Stage slaps FARMER CARTER and ELEANOR.)* and quietly excused myself.

(DETECTIVE causes a small to moderate scene while storming off.

BLACKOUT.)