

There Was A Great Big Moose

A Satirical Canadian Horror In One Act By Garrett M. Ryan

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There Was A Great Big Moose

A Satirical Canadian Horror In One Act By Garrett M. Ryan

Dramatis Personae

Officer Liam Elliott- A big, friendly police officer

Officer Charlotte Belanger- A former Toronto police officer with trust issues

The Moose- A man who has transformed himself into a moose

Mayor Chucksly- The Mayor of Swords

Roger Field- Local well-spoken, sly reporter

Ava Elliott- Officer Liam's young daughter

Nancy- Local barista

Holden Jackson- Local dumb hockey player

Voices 1 & 2- Two anonymous voices. Can double up actors with Nancy and Holden.

NOTE- Play is intended to be over the top and satirical of Canadian (particularly Northern Ontario) culture. Strong Canadian accents are encouraged.

SCENE ONE

The front of the stage lights up. The location is Swords, Ontario. The year is 1983. MAYOR CHUCKSLY stands at the front of the stage, hands proudly on his hips, with a frighteningly large (almost painful looking) smile.

He holds up a microphone, the Canadian national anthem plays, and he gestures his arms awkwardly around him.

CHUCKSLY: Beautiful, scenic, Swords, Ontario. My childhood home, in our home and native land. People often ask me, Mayor Chucksly, they say my name just like that. Mayor Chucksly, why Swords? *(Pause.)* Why Swords, eh? It's a darn fine question.

As he speaks, MAYOR CHUCKSLY begins to walk around the space.

CHUCKSLY: Why not Toronto? Why not Ottawa? Why not Montreal? Well, if there's one thing I'll never do, that's lie to you. Sure, we don't have the CN tower. We don't have the Rideau Canal. We don't have up-to-the-minute, hip french people. Well, I've been to those places, and I can tell you they're not all they're cracked up to be. No, sir. Do you want to know why I kept coming back here, to lovely Swords? Do you want to know what all those big cities just don't have?

Again, MAYOR CHUCKSLY awkwardly gestures, and the rest of the cast files out, except THE MOOSE. They stand behind CHUCKSLY and wave.

CHUCKSLY: All the friendly faces! Sure, you can have all sorts of fun in Calgary! You can have a ball in Vancouver! But, when you're tired of hostility, and want to live in the friendliest town in Canada, we'll be waiting here, ready to give you a big, old welcome hug! Isn't that right, Officer Liam?

OFFICER LIAM moves beside CHUCKSLY and puts his arm around him.

LIAM: It sure is, Mayor Chucksly! It sure is!

CHUCKSLY and LIAM laugh in unison and shake hands

MAYOR CHUCKSLY moves back and stands with the line of townsfolk. They continue waving.

CHUCKSLY counts his fingers down from three and cues the townsfolk.

ALL: Swords, Ontario.

CHUCKSLY: Population: 3,530, and growing!

ALL: The friendliest city, in the nicest country.

CHUCKSLY smiles even wider, to the point where it is barely even recognizable as a smile.

CHUCKSLY: See you soon!

The stage lights slowly fade out.

SCENE TWO

The stage lights back up in a small coffee shop. NANCY, the local barista and owner, begins brewing a pot of coffee for the morning customers. She puts on an old record from the fifties, and hums along while she works.

A ding is heard. OFFICER LIAM ELLIOTT and OFFICER CHARLOTTE BELANGER enter the scene. They walk up to the counter.

LIAM: Mornin' Nance'.

NANCY: Morning Officer Liam.

CHARLOTTE: Good morning, Nancy.

NANCY: Good morning Officer Charlotte. How are you two doing today?

LIAM: I'll tell you that after my morning coffee.

LIAM and NANCY laugh in unison.

NANCY: So, what can I get you two? The usual?

LIAM: Actually, I think I'll change it up a little bit. Give me a double double.

NANCY: Sure thing, Officer Liam.

CHARLOTTE: Hold on.

NANCY: I'm holding!

CHARLOTTE: A double double?

LIAM: Sure. Is there a problem with that, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE: No problem. None at all. *(Pause.)* It's just, well, you've always taken your coffee black.

LIAM: Not always. Just usually.

CHARLOTTE: I suppose I just... Didn't know that about you.

LIAM: Sometimes I like things a little sweeter, that's all.

CHARLOTTE: Right. *(To NANCY)* Well, black for me.

LIAM: Double double.

NANCY goes to get the coffee.

CHARLOTTE stares at LIAM.

LIAM: Why are you looking at me like that?

CHARLOTTE: A double double... ?

LIAM: Drop it, will you?

CHARLOTTE: I don't mean to give you a hard time. It's just... I don't like not knowing things.

LIAM: What is that supposed to mean?

CHARLOTTE: Means what it means, Liam. I mean, hell, what else are you hiding from me?

LIAM: It's just coffee, Charlotte. Sometimes I like it sweeter.

CHARLOTTE: That's how it starts.

LIAM: That's how what starts?

CHARLOTTE: The suspicion. It takes me awhile to get a read on somebody, and even longer to trust them. I don't like being thrown through a loop like this.

LIAM: Common, Charlotte, how long have we been working together? Four months? You're telling me a little thing like coffee is going to break your trust in me?

CHARLOTTE: I'm not saying that. I'm just telling you it makes me suspicious, is all.

LIAM: I'm sorry for whoever broke your trust and hurt down in Toronto. I really am. I wish I could promise you it won't happen again, but I can't do that. All I can promise is that person won't be me. Alright?

CHARLOTTE: Alright. I'm sorry, Liam.

LIAM: No, I'm sorry. I should've known better. After today, it'll be black coffee again for me.

NANCY returns and hands the coffees to LIAM and CHARLOTTE.

LIAM: Thank you, Nancy. You're a peach.

NANCY: Did I tell you we've got pancakes now?

LIAM: Pancakes, really?

NANCY: Yes, sir! Homemade and everything.

LIAM: What kind of pancakes?

NANCY: Banana.

LIAM: Banana pancakes! Wow! Did you hear that, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE: I heard it, Liam.

LIAM: Would you ever think of having banana pancakes?

CHARLOTTE: I would not.

LIAM: Now hold on, you're telling me that these pancakes taste good with maple syrup? Is that what you're telling me, Nancy?

NANCY: That's what I'm telling you.

LIAM: Maple and banana. Did you hear that, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE: I'm standing right next to you.

LIAM: Well, I would be lying if I didn't say that sounded exquisite. I'll sure take a plate!

NANCY: One plate, coming up! Should I make that two?

CHARLOTTE: I'm fine with the coffee, thanks Nancy.

LIAM and CHARLOTTE move to a table and sit down.

LIAM: What's on the agenda today?

CHARLOTTE: There's a dead raccoon stuck in the vents of the elementary school.

LIAM: Oh boy, not again. How does that keep happening?

CHARLOTTE: Someone had a bonfire last night out in the campsites.

LIAM: It's not fire season!

CHARLOTTE: That would be the issue.

LIAM: Well, that's just reckless behavior. Just reckless. That's all I've got to say on the matter.

CHARLOTTE: Also, we're supposed to wash the patrol car. The front is all muddy.

LIAM: All muddy? Well that's what we get for driving on the back roads, eh?

CHARLOTTE: I suppose you're right.

A ding is heard. HOLDEN JACKSON, decked out in hockey equipment, including skates, enters the scene.

NANCY: Hey now, you can't be wearing skates in here!

HOLDEN: Oh, shoot. Well hang on just a moment, will you?

HOLDEN sits on the ground and spends an awkward amount of time trying to remove his skates.

LIAM and CHARLOTTE watch him the entire time.

Eventually, HOLDEN gives up and stands.

HOLDEN: I'm sorry Nancy, this is real important!

NANCY: You better not scuff up my floors too bad!

HOLDEN moves over to LIAM and CHARLOTTE.

HOLDEN: Officer Liam. Officer Charlotte. How are you two today?

LIAM: I'm doing fine, Holden, just fine. How are you?

HOLDEN: Well, I sort of rolled my ankle rushing over here.

CHARLOTTE: Holden.

HOLDEN: Yes, ma'am?

CHARLOTTE: What's so important?

HOLDEN: Oh, right! Well, you might want to come back to the station for this.

LIAM: Back to the station? I've just ordered banana pancakes!

HOLDEN: Banana? How would that taste with maple syrup?

LIAM: That's what I'm waiting to find out!

CHARLOTTE: Holden, I believe Officer Liam is trying to ask you if you think this is really important enough for us to head back to the station.

HOLDEN: I'm sorry about your pancakes, sir. It really is important. You're going to want to make an official report of this.

LIAM: Hm... I...

HOLDEN: I don't think I've seen anything like it before.

LIAM: Well...

CHARLOTTE: Common Liam, you can get pancakes anytime.

LIAM reluctantly looks back at NANCY, who smiles and waves.

LIAM: Alright, then. Hold the pancakes, Nance'. But I'll be back later for them, that's for sure!

NANCY: I'll hold you to it, Liam!

HOLDEN leads LIAM and CHARLOTTE out of the coffee shop.

The lights fade out.

SCENE THREE

Lights up at the Swords police station, in OFFICER LIAM and CHARLOTTE'S shared office. It's relatively small and a little dingy. There's a medium sized, coffee stained desk with scattered papers and a picture of LIAM'S daughter. The ambient noise of a space heater can be heard throughout the scene.

LIAM stands up near the doorway whistling, CHARLOTTE sits on the side of her desk with a clipboard, and HOLDEN sits on a chair at the desk.

CHARLOTTE: Please state your name.

HOLDEN: Excuse me?

CHARLOTTE: Please state your name.

HOLDEN: Well, why would I need to do that? You know my name, Charlotte. *(Pause)* Don't you?

CHARLOTTE: Of course I know your name. It's just protocol.

HOLDEN: Protocol?

CHARLOTTE: Standard procedure.

LIAM: It's alright, Charlotte. You don't need to put him on the spot like that.

CHARLOTTE: Put him on the spot? I'm just asking for his name.

LIAM: Big, fancy Toronto police officer with her protocol.

LIAM and HOLDEN laugh

CHARLOTTE: Fine. Just humor me, alright?

LIAM: Just humor her, Holden. She likes things done her way.

HOLDEN: Alright. Holden Jackson.

CHARLOTTE: Thank you, Holden. That wasn't so bad, was it?

LIAM: Well, it sure didn't feel so bad to me.

CHARLOTTE: Now, Holden, I would like you to start from the top. Tell Officer Liam and myself what you saw. Alright?

HOLDEN: Sure, Charlotte. Sure, sure.

HOLDEN stands up from his chair and begins to pace around the room. Still trying to think of how he'll put what he witnessed into words.

HOLDEN: Well, uh... I was practicing at the rink.

LIAM: Well, we could sure tell that from the getup.

HOLDEN: That's right. Yeah... Well, I was at the rink working on some drills. You know, I wanted to make sure I wasn't getting rusty.

LIAM: Understandable. We can't have our star player getting rusty.

HOLDEN: Heck, no! *(Pause)* Well, I was on maneuvering quickly around the ice. It's a skill a lot of players forget about, but I'd rather have a figure skater on my team than someone who has a solid slapshot. *(Pause)* Well, do you get what I'm saying?

CHARLOTTE lowers her clipboard and stares at HOLDEN.

LIAM looks at CHARLOTTE and smiles.

LIAM: It makes sense to me.

HOLDEN: Thank you!

CHARLOTTE moves over to HOLDEN with a rush of frustration.

CHARLOTTE: What the hell is with this town? It takes you all far too long to get out what you're trying to say. In Toronto we would have already resolved the issue by now!

LIAM: He's just being friendly. We're a friendly town.

HOLDEN: Friendliest town in the country. Don't you remember the commercial?

CHARLOTTE: Yes, I remember the commercial. I understand and appreciate the friendliness, Holden. Of course I do, that's why I moved down here in the first place. That's why everyone moves down here. That being said, we've got a job to do.

LIAM moves down to CHARLOTTE and puts his hand on her shoulder.

LIAM: Well, I don't know what sort of thing they taught you down in Toronto, but half the job of being a police officer is being a friendly face in the community.

CHARLOTTE looks at LIAM'S and on her shoulder.

LIAM smiles and slowly removes it.

CHARLOTTE: *(Reluctant)* You're right, Officer Liam. *(Pause)* Sorry.

LIAM: Now, that's quite alright, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: *(A forced smile)* Holden, would you like to continue?

HOLDEN: *(Picking up on Charlotte's frustration.)* Well, I'll just get right into it. Does that sound okay?

CHARLOTTE: That sounds wonderful.

HOLDEN: Alright. *(Pause)* I saw a moose.

CHARLOTTE: A moose?

HOLDEN: A moose. Well... yes. Yes, It was... *some sort* of moose.

CHARLOTTE: You saw a moose? That was all you needed to tell us?

HOLDEN: I suppose so.

CHARLOTTE slams her clipboard down on the desk and takes a deep breathe.

LIAM: Oh, heck, Holden. I could have been eating pancakes right now. Why couldn't you have told us that at Nancy's?

HOLDEN: Well... I...

LIAM: Why don't you just get on outta here.

LIAM begins to usher him towards the exit.

HOLDEN: Well, it wasn't like any moose I've ever seen. I'm not an expert, but it looked like he was half man.

LIAM: Half man?

LIAM stops ushering HOLDEN

LIAM: Like... a moose-man?

CHARLOTTE picks up her clipboard

HOLDEN: I suppose you could call it that.

CHARLOTTE: What do you mean, he was "half man"?

HOLDEN: I'm only telling you what I saw. To me, he didn't look all moose. But, he sure as heck didn't look all man.

CHARLOTTE: Uh-huh.

HOLDEN: Well, I had a feeling like someone was following me all day. Like someone's eyes were constantly burrowing into the back of my head. When I was at the rink, I looked out the window and saw a moose. That's what I thought at first, anyway. Looked like a moose from far away.

LIAM: But, it wasn't a moose?

HOLDEN: I don't think so... At first, I couldn't tell, but It stood on two legs. Just like a man.

LIAM: I've never seen a moose on two legs. Seen plenty of men on two legs, though.

HOLDEN: Exactly.

CHARLOTTE: What happened next?

HOLDEN: I moved closer. I wanted to get a better look. The moose-man ran away, but before he did, I noticed something.

CHARLOTTE: What did you notice?

HOLDEN: I don't know if I saw it right, but I nearly lost my lunch. I sure hope I didn't see it right.

HOLDEN sits down on the chair with his head down.

CHARLOTTE: What was it?

HOLDEN: It looked like a man had his skin replaced with a moose's skin. It was all patchy, and haphazardly stitched on. He was covered in dried blood and scars.

LIAM and CHARLOTTE looks at each other.

CHARLOTTE: What else could you see?

HOLDEN: *(Somber)* His eyes were all wild and bloodshot. I can't get those eyes out of my head... *(He smiles)* Well, that's all I wanted to tell you!

CHARLOTTE: Right. Thank you, Holden. We'll look into it.

HOLDEN: Thank you Officer Charlotte. Thank you Officer Liam.

HOLDEN happily exits the room.

LIAM and CHARLOTTE stand still and look at each other

LIAM: How should we even proceed with this?

CHARLOTTE: Odds he's telling the truth?

LIAM: Why would he lie about a thing like that?

CHARLOTTE: Entertainment? I mean, the guy is talking about a man-moose.

LIAM: Moose-man. I think we landed on moose-man, not man-moose.

CHARLOTTE: Whatever. *(Pause)* Maybe he was seeing things.

LIAM: Yeah... Maybe.

CHARLOTTE: We'll keep our eyes open, but he had to be seeing things. A moose-man? That's ridiculous.

LIAM: Ridiculous. *(Pause)* Bet you'd never hear about a moose-man in Toronto.

CHARLOTTE: I would have to agree with you on that, Officer Liam. I would have to agree with you on that.

The lights fade.

SCENE FOUR

Lights up, ROGER FIELD, the local reporter, stands on the road, fiddling with his voice recorder.

MAYOR CHUCKSLY enters the scene and walks past ROGER.

CHUCKSLY: Hello, Roger. It's a cold one, isn't it?

ROGER: Colder than my ex-girlfriend in a snowstorm.

ROGER runs up to CHUCKSLY and stands in his way. He holds his voice recorder out in front of him.

ROGER: Mayor Chucksly, you wouldn't mind if I asked you a few questions, would you?

CHUCKSLY: About your ex-girlfriend?

ROGER: I'm afraid I know more than I need to about her already. *(Pause)* No, Mayor Chucksly, I'd like to ask you a few questions about the rumor going around town.

CHUCKSLY: Oh, for pete's sake! The syrup festival is not being moved! Okay, people? Sorry for the confusion.

CHUCKSLY begins to move away, but ROGER stops him once again.

ROGER: Good to hear. That'll appease some of the syrup festival traditionalists. However, Not what I wished to inquire about.

CHUCKSLY: Oh?

ROGER: Earlier today I spoke with Holden Jackson about a moose-man, spotted lurking around the town.

CHUCKSLY: A moose... man?

OFFICER LIAM enters the scene

ROGER: Officer Liam Elliott. Saving the day, one dead raccoon in the vents at a time.

LIAM: Roger Field, what are you up to, pal?

ROGER: Chasing the story like it's a gulp of coke after a shot of crown royal. You know me.

CHUCKSLY calls him over.

CHUCKSLY: I'm sure Officer Liam could speak on behalf of this more than I could. (*Whispers to LIAM*) He's asking about a goose-man.

ROGER: Moose-man.

CHUCKSLY: (*Still whispering to LIAM*) I think he can hear me.

LIAM: I didn't realise this would reach you so soon.

ROGER: Again, you know me.

LIAM: Roger, you can make note that there's nothing to be afraid of. Earlier today, Holden Jackson did see what he believed to be a "moose-man", however we believe this is simply a case of an overactive imagination on an overworked athlete.

ROGER: So, you would like to tell Swords that there is no moose-man?

LIAM: I would like to tell Swords that there's nothing to be afraid of. Officer Charlotte and myself are looking into the situation.

CHUCKSLY: There's never anything to be scared of here.

LIAM AND CHUCKSLY: (*Singing, it can be sung as atonal, seemingly improvisational, and off key as desired*) OH, SWORDS, ONTARIO. WHERE THE RIVER GOES SHARP. WHERE THE SYRUP ROLLS DOWN THE HILL AND IN MY HAPPY MOUTH. OH SWORDS. THE SAFEST AND NICEST PLACE. TAKE ALL THE MAPLE YOU CAN FIND, AND STUFF IT IN MY FACE.

OFFICER CHARLOTTE enters the scene

ROGER: Brings me back to my childhood. Of course, I moved here in my teenage years. I just couldn't sing very well as a child.

The three laugh in unison.

ROGER: I'm only kidding, it was lovely. It really was. I hope your day turns out as lovely as your song.

ROGER leaves the stage, and walks past CHARLOTTE

ROGER: Cold one, isn't it?

CHARLOTTE: I'm fine.

ROGER laughs and exits

CHUCKSLY: You've got this handled, Liam?

LIAM: Yes, sir. I really do think it's nothing.

CHUCKSLY: Good. We don't want another Peter Roy incident on our hands, do we?

LIAM: *(Pause)* Of course not, sir.

CHUCKSLY: Do what you have to do, but don't tarnish the good name of Swords. Friendliest city, in the nicest country.

CHUCKSLY moves close to LIAM and smiles

CHUCKSLY: Let's keep it that way, eh?

CHUCKSLY laughs and leaves the stage

CHARLOTTE: Who's Peter Roy?

LIAM: *(Startled)* What?! Who?

CHARLOTTE: Peter Roy. What was the Peter Roy incident?

LIAM: Who... Who said that?

CHARLOTTE: Mayor Chucksly, just now. Is everything alright, Liam?

LIAM: Yeah... Why wouldn't it be? *(Pause)* Peter Roy was a man who moved down here a number of years ago.

CHARLOTTE: And what's his significance?

LIAM: *(Liam takes a deep breathe)* He sexually abused and murdered his own daughter. They found her body buried under his house after he reported her missing days prior.

CHARLOTTE: Jesus Christ. How did that not get out?

LIAM: Get out?

CHARLOTTE: Friendliest city, in the nicest country. That's what Swords is built on. You'd think something like that could ruin everything.

LIAM: Why else would people stay here, if not for the friendliness?

CHARLOTTE: Exactly.

LIAM: He was only in Swords for less than a year. He had lived here for a short enough amount of time that we were able to peg him as an outsider. A newcomer. Not one of us.

CHARLOTTE: What happened to him?

LIAM: He's dead now.

CHARLOTTE: Hm. Did you know him well?

LIAM: Where do you think your job opening came from?

CHARLOTTE: He was your-

LIAM: Partner. *(Pause. Smiles.)* You have yourself a good night, Charlotte.

*LIAM walks off whistling the Swords song, leaving CHARLOTTE alone.
The lights fade.*

SCENE FIVE

Lights up. The scene changes to the nighttime. OFFICER LIAM stands outside of his house, messing around with his flashlight, which keeps flickering, and will not remain on. Something representative of a patrol car sits off to the side of the stage. This can be as simple as four chairs, the scene will take place in dim/dark light.

LIAM drops his flashlight while fiddling with it.

LIAM: Gosh darn thing!

AVA ELLIOT, LIAM'S eight year old daughter, enters the scene, wearing pajamas.

AVA: What's wrong, daddy?

LIAM: I can't get this darn flashlight to stay on. *(Pause)* Excuse my language, my little maple leaf.

AVA: Try hitting the bottom.

LIAM: Why would that help?

AVA: Maybe the batteries are loose?

LIAM hits the bottom of the flashlight, and it stops flickering, staying on.

LIAM: Well I'll be darned. *(Pause)* Excuse my language.

LIAM puts the flashlight away, and looks at AVA

LIAM: What are you doing out of bed, anyway?

AVA: I couldn't fall asleep.

LIAM: Well, you certainly won't fall asleep if you don't try.

AVA: Right...

LIAM: Head back up to bed. Do you need to me to tuck you in again?

AVA: No...

AVA turns and starts to exit the stage

LIAM: Hey now, missy. What's wrong?

AVA stops and turns back to LIAM.

AVA: Nothing...

LIAM: What do I always tell you? We don't lie in this family, Ava.

AVA: I know...

LIAM: So, when I ask you what's wrong, I expect you to answer me honestly.

AVA: I'm not lying.

LIAM: Ava...

AVA: Okay, fine.

AVA turns away from LIAM.

AVA: Just, some girls were talking at school, is all.

LIAM: Little girls love to talk. What were they saying?

AVA: They were talking about a monster.

LIAM: A monster?

AVA: Yeah. A monster. Right here in Swords.

LIAM: *(Pause)* What sort of monster?

AVA turns back and moves close to LIAM

AVA: They called him the moose-man.

LIAM: *(Under his breathe)* Gosh darn it, Holden. *(To AVA)* Look, Ava, there's no such thing as a moose-man.

AVA: But the girls-

LIAM: It's make believe, my little maple leaf. It's make believe.

AVA: Are you sure?

LIAM: I'm sure.

AVA: How do you know?

LIAM: Trust your daddy, baby. There's a lot of strange things in Canada. There's plenty of moose. There's plenty of men. There's none of both.

AVA: *(Visibly terrified)* But, what if there is?! What if it comes for me?!

LIAM: If it comes for you, you better believe I'll come for it. I won't let anything bad happen to you.

LIAM embraces AVA.

LIAM: I promise. Now, you go get some sleep. I'll be back after my patrol.

AVA: Okay, daddy.

LIAM: My little maple leaf, the only monster you need to worry about is me.

AVA: You?

LIAM separates his embrace from AVA.

LIAM: Oh.. You don't know?

AVA: Know what?

LIAM: That... I'm... the... tickle monster!

LIAM gets on top of AVA and tickles her. She laughs hysterically.

AVA: STOP IT! HAHAHA! STOP IT DADDY!

LIAM gets off her and stands up.

LIAM: Sweet dreams, baby. I'll see you in the morning.

AVA: Can we have pancakes?

LIAM: Only if you're getting up and making them.

AVA scowls, sticks her tongue out, and walks off.

LIAM moves over to his car, and gets in. He starts it and drives off. Sound effects of a car starting and driving should be played.

He turns on his radio to a very Canadian song and sings along (E.G. "The Hockey Song", "Hallelujah", "Hey Hey My My")

After thirty or so seconds into the song, he hits a large bump in his car and swerves to the side of the road.

The radio cuts out and the car shuts off.

He tries to start the car to no avail. He gets out of the car, it's now almost pitch black. He shines the flashlight onto the side of his car.

LIAM: DARN IT! FIX YOUR ROADS, Swords!

Suddenly, LIAM hears rustling coming from behind him.

He turns around, shining his flashlight around.

LIAM: Hello? Who's there? *(Pause)* It's Officer Liam! *(Pause)* How's it going?!

No response but another rustling noise.

LIAM: Come on out! I've got candies in my car! *(Pause)* They're maple sugar candies.

LIAM pulls out a radio and whispers into it.

LIAM: Charlotte... Charlotte... I need backup. I'm down on Richmond Road. My car won't start and there's something out here... It sounds big...

CHARLOTTE: *(From the radio)* Be there in a minute, Liam.

He places the radio back into his pocket. Another rustling noise, and then, from offstage, THE MOOSE begins to sing. Softly. Slowly.

THE MOOSE: *There was a great big moose...*

LIAM: HELLO?!

THE MOOSE: *There was a great big moose...*

LIAM: Show yourself, I warn you!

THE MOOSE: *He liked to drink a lot of juice...*

LIAM: SHOW YOURSELF!

THE MOOSE: *He liked to drink a lot of juice.*

THE MOOSE stops singing. Silence, except for LIAM'S heavy breathing.

The stage is now in complete darkness, except for the beam of light from LIAM'S flashlight.

Suddenly, THE MOOSE bursts out onto the stage. LIAM shines his flashlight onto his face, his eyes are wide and maniacal.

THE MOOSE: I'LL TAKE A MAPLE SUGAR CANDY!

LIAM: HOLY HECK!

THE MOOSE jumps on top of LIAM, laughing hysterically. The flashlight is knocked from his hand. LIAM and the MOOSE wrestle around on the ground for a moment, but headlights illuminate them, and THE MOOSE runs off. LIAM lays on the ground, motionless.

CHARLOTTE runs onto the stage, gun drawn.

CHARLOTTE: LIAM! LIAM!

She runs down and leans beside LIAM.

LIAM: The... The... The...

CHARLOTTE: What, Liam?! "The" what?

LIAM: *(Pause)* THE MOOSE!

The lights fade out.

SCENE SIX

Lights up as ROGER FIELD, messes around with his news camera on a tripod. OFFICER LIAM stands in front of it, motionless. Off to the side, stand OFFICER CHARLOTTE and MAYOR CHUCKLSY.

ROGER: Sorry about this, our camera guy is at a funeral in Ottawa.

CHUCKSLY: Whose funeral?

ROGER: Beats me, probably finally having a funeral for the city itself. Died of boredom.

ROGER finishes with the camera and moves beside LIAM.

ROGER: Are you ready, pal?

LIAM doesn't respond.

ROGER: Hey, Liam, are you ready?

LIAM: Oh, sorry. Yes... Yes, I'm ready.

ROGER: Calm down, will you? It's just local broadcast television.

LIAM: That's not why I'm on edge.

There's a few moments of awkward silence.

CHUCKSLY: What's the matter?

ROGER: I forgot to start recording.

ROGER runs back over, presses record on the camera, and runs back beside LIAM.

ROGER: Good afternoon to all of you boys and girls of Swords. The sun is shining, the birds are chirping. It's simply a wonderful day. *(Pause)* Officer Liam's here to ruin it!

LIAM: Uh... Thanks, Roger. *(Pause)* Okay... I've never had to make an announcement like this. Come to think of it, I don't know if anyone has, but here it goes. This is a message to the citizens of Swords. Yesterday, at around midnight, I spotted a figure on my routine patrol. This figure could be described as... a moose-man. Now, I was only able to get a quick glimpse, but I believe this is what I saw. I'm here to tell you that Officer Charlotte and myself will be implementing a strict curfew on the town until we are able to figure things out. This means, nobody out after dark. No exceptions. We believe this... thing... to be dangerous. Stay close to others, and be safe. We're going to handle the situation.

ROGER: Well, there you have it folks. The single most Canadian threat possible. Stay safe, kiddies.

CHUCKSLY runs into the shot.

CHUCKSLY: Uh... And a reminder that the syrup festival is coming up! So, be excited for that!

ROGER moves to the camera and shuts it off.

LIAM: *(To CHUCKSLY)* What the heck was that?

CHUCKSLY: You're scaring them. I just wanted to lighten the mood.

LIAM: This is a serious situation.

CHUCKSLY: We're not a serious town, Liam. We're fun. We're fun, nice, and not scary.

CHUCKSLY begins to exits the stage.

CHUCKSLY: How's about we keep it that way?

CHUCKSLY leaves.

ROGER: That was great. Well, I was great. You were a little bland. *(Pause)* Stay safe, eh?

LIAM: Yeah, you too, Roger.

ROGER packs up his equipment and exits the stage.

CHARLOTTE walks over to LIAM.

CHARLOTTE: Are you alright?

LIAM: I'm fine. Just a little shaken up still, is all.

CHARLOTTE: Understandable. In Toronto, I was attacked a few times. It resonates with you for long time.

LIAM: This wasn't some Toronto street thug. Holden was right, Charlotte. I can't get those eyes out of my head.

CHARLOTTE places her arm on LIAM'S back, in a consoling way.

LIAM: Thank you for saving me.

The lights slowly fade.

SCENE SEVEN

Lights up in the living room of OFFICER LIAM. He sits on his couch with OFFICER CHARLOTTE. She is flipping through sheets of paper from a file folder while OFFICER LIAM observes carefully.

CHARLOTTE: What do you know about Gerald Murphy?

LIAM: Owns the gas station. Real nice guy. He always gives me my favourite candy bar for free.

CHARLOTTE: Okay...

LIAM: Mars Bar, if you're wondering.

CHARLOTTE: What about Martin Smith?

LIAM: Martin Smith? No way!

CHARLOTTE: He's a butcher and a hunter. He would have access to moose skin, don't you think? Couldn't he make a suit?

LIAM: It's not a suit, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: Right, it's his skin?

LIAM: Exactly! I know it sounds crazy...

CHARLOTTE places the papers back into the file folder.

CHARLOTTE: I believe you, Liam. It's just... Well, we've gone through half the town and we don't have a single suspect. Unless you want to think this could actually be some sort of moose-man hybrid creature?

LIAM: I don't know... It's Swords... We're not the sort of people who would do something like this.

CHARLOTTE: You can't have so much faith in people, Liam.

AVA ELLIOT, walks into the room in her pajamas.

CHARLOTTE notices her and stands up to leave.

AVA: Hi, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: Hey, sweetheart. How are you doing?

AVA: Good!

CHARLOTTE: That's good. *(To LIAM)* I better go. Have a goodnight. *(To AVA)* Make sure your dad gets some sleep, eh?

AVA: I will!

CHARLOTTE smiles and exits the scene.

AVA sits on the couch beside LIAM.

LIAM opens up a bottle of beer, and looks around for a place to discard the bottle cap.

AVA: Can I keep the cap?

LIAM: The bottle cap?

AVA: Yeah, can I have it?

LIAM: What do you want that for?

AVA: I wanted to make a picture out of a whole bunch of them.

LIAM: Oh yeah, when did you get that idea?

AVA: It wasn't my idea.

LIAM: Oh no? One of those girls from your school, then? Who's the one that always wears those pink shorts?

AVA: Camile.

LIAM: Right, right. Camile She's French, eh?

AVA: I think so.

LIAM: Sweet girl, real sweet. *(Pause.)* Was it Camile's idea?

AVA: No, it was Jane's.

LIAM stops talking and takes a long drink of beer.

AVA: She loved art. Do you remember, daddy? Do you remember how much she loved art?

LIAM: I don't... I'm not sure.

AVA: She wanted to be an artist. Remember?

LIAM: No... I can't say I do.

AVA: You used to help her with her arts and crafts. That's what she told me.

LIAM: Oh... Yeah, that's right. Now that you mention it.

LIAM laughs.

LIAM: Your daddy's getting old. Forgetting things more and more.

LIAM flicks the bottle cap over to AVA, who happily accepts it.

AVA: I miss her.

LIAM puts his arm around AVA

LIAM: I know you do, my little maple leaf. I know you do.

Suddenly, the power begins to flicker on and off.

LIAM: What in the heck?!

AVA: What's going on?

LIAM: Something wrong with the fusebox. We've probably got mice again.

LIAM stands up from the couch, and sets his beer down on the ground.

LIAM: I'll go check it out.

AVA stands up and grabs him

AVA: Wait, it's fine!

LIAM: What do you mean, it's fine?

AVA: I don't mind it like this. You can look at it in the morning.

LIAM: It looks like a Montreal disco in here, I'm not waiting until morning. I'll be right back.

AVA: But...

LIAM: Gosh darn, mice. Chewing up my wires. Messing around with Klondike Kat.

LIAM exits the stage.

AVA sits back down on the couch slowly.

A crash can be heard just off stage.

AVA curls up into a ball and looks around.

THE MOOSE enters from the opposite side of the stage LIAM exited on, the lights still flickering on and off.

THE MOOSE: You don't leave your doors unlocked at night? It's Swords, who's going to break in?

THE MOOSE walks over to AVA, who's still petrified and paralyzed with fear.

THE MOOSE: I mean, I just broke in, but this is an extremely rare circumstance.

THE MOOSE picks up the beer and takes a long drink.

THE MOOSE: Fuck me in my moose ass, that's good. Darling, you wouldn't believe how long it's been since I've had a cold one.

THE MOOSE sits down on the couch beside AVA.

THE MOOSE: Say, where's your daddy?

AVA: He... He... He...

THE MOOSE: Jesus, Ava, I'm not going to bite. *(A laugh)* Not hard anyway.

AVA: H-how do you know my name?

THE MOOSE: What's the matter with you, don't you recognize me?

AVA: N-n-no.

THE MOOSE: Makes sense, I guess. I've had quite the lifestyle change in recent times.

THE MOOSE touches AVA'S arm softly.

THE MOOSE: You're so smooth. So young. So precious.

THE MOOSE slumps down onto AVA and begins to weep loudly.

After a few moments, he stands up, and holds AVA in the air.

THE MOOSE: WHERE THE HELL IS YOUR DADDY?!

Quickly LIAM bursts onto the stage, holding a handgun.

THE MOOSE turns and uses AVA as a shield while slowly backing away.

LIAM: DROP HER!

THE MOOSE: *There was a great big moose. There was a great big moose. He liked to drink a lot of juice. He liked to drink a lot of juice.*

LIAM runs at THE MOOSE, who drops AVA and exits the scene.

LIAM unloads his gun after the moose, but doesn't hit him.

THE MOOSE continues to sing as he runs away.

LIAM: DARN IT!

LIAM quickly turns to AVA, shaking and crying on the ground.

LIAM: Hey, my little maple leaf...

He lays down beside her and holds her in his arms.

LIAM starts to cry as well.

The lights fade to black.

SCENE EIGHT

Lights up. VOICES 1 and 2 stand at two opposite sides of the stage. ROGER stands in the middle. (If VOICES 1 and 2 are played by the same actors as NANCY and HOLDEN, this should be hidden from the audience. These two people are anonymous townsfolk representing the collective opinions of Swords)

VOICES 1 and 2 speak straight ahead. ROGER can move around as he speaks.

ROGER: Now, we're back to talking about everyone's favorite animal-man hybrid: The moose-man of Swords! I can blab my beautiful face about this guy for hours, but let's see what you all have to say!

VOICE 1: I don't understand what all the fuss is about. So, it's a guy who likes to play dress up. Who cares?

ROGER: Dress up. Interesting opinion.

VOICE 2: Well, I heard something happened with Officer Liam again.

ROGER: Something happened with Officer Liam again?!

VOICE 2: I didn't hear too much about it. Maybe he saw the moose-man near his house. Something like that.

ROGER: He saw the moose-man near his house? How awful!

VOICE 1: Well, I have to admit, that's no good. No good at all.

ROGER: The moose-man: No good at all.

VOICE 1: I sure hope nothing bad happens to Officer Liam.

ROGER: Like what?

VOICE 1: Oh, I don't know.

ROGER: Give me a worst case scenario.

VOICE 1: Well... I mean, I hope I don't hear Officer Liam was killed by the moose-man... But, that's ridiculous.

ROGER: Officer Liam was killed by the moose-man!

VOICE 2: Officer Liam was killed?! Oh Gosh! OH GOSH!

ROGER: How do you say we fix this?! What should our next step be?!

VOICE 2: Well, I don't really know... If this turns out to be true, the town is going to panic!

ROGER: The town is going to panic! The town is panicking!

VOICE 1: IT IS?!

ROGER: That's what sources have been saying.

VOICE 1: Oh geez... I'm going to get my gun and hide out until all this blows over!

ROGER: GRAB YOURS GUNS AND HIDE!

VOICE 2: AHHHH!