



Bradley Walton

Norman Maine Publishing

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Norman Maine Publishing
P.O. Box 1400
Tallevast, FL 34270

PORRIDGE EATERS FROM PLANET PUGGELGORE

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*This play was written
for Rachel Walton.
Her daddy loves her.*

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PORRIDGE EATERS FROM PLANET PUGGELGORE

premiered May 4, 2010, at Madison Academy in Huntsville, AL: Max Dashner, director; Reagan Waldron, student director.

CAPTAIN PLATO PORRIDGEPOWER: Andrew McCaul

DUFFIN PORRIDGEPANTS: Ethan Hunt

CARB PORRIDGEPLANK: Reagan Waldron

MAX PORRIDGEPUMPKIN: Trammell Shepherd

KID 1: Kei Jeong

KID 2: Julianne Cox

KID 3: Madyson Edwards

KID 4: Roger Cardenas

KID 5: Evan Fausz

KID 6: Christina Kang

KID 7: Kelsey Floyd

KID 8: Mary Katheryn Lawrence

KID 9: Brooks Harwell

KID 10: Sky Whitfield

MRS. SMITH: Claire Munster

PUSILLANIMOUS PORRIDGE PEST: Noah Harrison

PORRIDGE EATERS FROM PLANET PUGGELGORF

CHILDREN'S COMEDY. Four aliens from Planet Puggelgorf have devoted their lives to traveling through the universe in search of "porridge," a mysterious substance they've heard of only in stories. The only clue the aliens have is from an ancient Puggelgorf fairy tale resembling "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" in which "porridge" appears to be a type of food that is often eaten out of a bowl. The aliens land on Earth, where they encounter a group of kids who help them locate a grocery store. There, the aliens' quest for porridge appears to finally be at an end...until the sudden arrival of their arch-enemy, the Pusillanimous Porridge Pest!

Performance Time: Approximately 25 minutes.

HISTORICAL FOOTNOTE

For thousands of solar cycles, porridge has baffled Puggelgorf scholars, who theorize that "porridge" could be an ancient word meaning "bean soup." With automated labor, no wars, and plenty of food, the residents of Planet Puggelgorf have plenty of time on their hands to solve this and other great mysteries of the universe like what in the heck are "curds and whey"?

CHARACTERS

(16 flexible, opt. extras)
(With doubling: 10 flexible)

CAPTAIN PLATO PORRIDGEPOWER: Alien from Planet Puggelgorf and Captain of the Porridge Eaters crew; obsessed with finding porridge; flexible.

DUFFIN PORRIDGEPANTS: Sarcastic alien from Planet Puggelgorf who thinks it is a good idea to conduct research and make plans before landing on alien planets in search of porridge; flexible.

CARB PORRIDGEPLANK: Alien from Planet Puggelgorf in search of porridge; flexible.

MAX/MAXINE PORRIDGEPUMPKIN: Alien from Planet Puggelgorf in search of porridge; flexible.

PUSILLANIMOUS PORRIDGE PEST: Alien from Planet Puggelgorf and the Porridge Eaters' arch-enemy; flexible.

KID 1-10: Human kids; flexible.

MR./MRS. SMITH: Human grocery store clerk; wears a store apron or work attire with a name badge; flexible.

EXTRAS (Opt.): As Kids.

Doubling Options:

Kid 1/Kid 2

Kid 3/Kid 4

Kid 5/Kid 6

Kid 7/Kid 8

Kid 9/Kid 10

Mr. Smith/Pusillanimous Porridge Pest (requires a very quick costume change)

Costuming: Porridge Eaters and Pusillanimous Porridge Pest may appear as outlandish-looking aliens or may look like humans; however, they should not resemble bears. Kids wear everyday clothing.

SETTING

A spaceship from Planet Puggelgorf. A park and grocery store on Earth.

(Directions to Planet Puggelgorf from Earth: Planet Puggelgorf is at the far end of the Milky Way galaxy, hang a left, and it's a few million light-years straight ahead on the right.)

SET

The sets may be as simple or as elaborate as your budget allows.

Interior of the Porridge Eaters' spaceship. There is a captain's chair and two computer consoles.

Park on Earth. A backdrop of a park setting, or the stage can be bare.

Interior of a Grocery Store. Among the shelves of groceries are several boxes of oatmeal.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: Somewhere in space, the control room of the Porridge Eaters' spaceship.

Scene 2: A park on Earth.

Scene 3: A grocery store on Earth.

PROPS

Captain's chair

2 Computer consoles

Detachable dog ears

Detachable dog tail

Boxes of instant oatmeal

Other types of oatmeal

Small handheld electronic device "CARB"

**"THINK ABOUT
THE PORRIDGE.**

**FOCUS ON
THE PORRIDGE.**

**LIVE FOR
THE PORRIDGE."**

-PLATO

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: Somewhere in space, the control room of the Porridge Eaters' spaceship. Captain Plato PorridgePower is seated in a captain's chair. Carb PorridgePlank and Duffin PorridgePants are seated or standing at computer consoles. Max PorridgePumpkin is dressed in a dog costume.)

PLATO: Why is it so hard to find porridge in outer space?

MAX: Arf!

DUFFIN: (*Sarcastic.*) Gee, I don't know. It's not like space is mostly billions and billions of miles of nothing.

PLATO: What's a mile?

DUFFIN: It's a unit of measurement used by some cultures on Earth, which is the name of the next planet we're stopping at.

PLATO: So it's an alien culture thing.

DUFFIN: Yeah, I guess you could call it that.

PLATO: I hate alien culture things.

DUFFIN: How can you say that, Captain? Our goal is to travel through the universe and visit alien worlds.

PLATO: Our goal is to visit alien worlds in search of porridge. There's a difference.

DUFFIN: But, I mean, as long as we're going to visit alien worlds, it seems like we should learn something about them.

PLATO: You're right. We do need to learn something about them: Do they have any porridge? That's it. That's all we need to know.

DUFFIN: That seems so narrow-minded.

MAX: Arf!

PLATO: It is narrow-minded. It's efficient. It's focused. Porridge. Porridge. Porridge. Porridge. Porridge. That's all. That's the goal. Think about the porridge. Focus on the porridge. Live for the porridge. You land someplace and start studying their history and art and government, before you know it, you've wasted all kinds of perfectly good time

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that you could've spent searching three or four other planets for porridge.

DUFFIN: What happens when we find a world that does have porridge?

PLATO: We'll figure that out when it happens.

CARB: Does it bother anybody here that we've spent years hunting for this porridge stuff and none of us actually knows what it is?

PLATO: Of course we know what it is. It's food.

CARB: But what kind of food is it?

PLATO: It's food you eat out of a bowl.

CARB: Okay. Right. I know that. But what does it taste like?

PLATO: I have no idea what it tastes like. When we find some, we'll eat it and find out. *(Pause.)* Duffin?

DUFFIN: Yes, Captain?

PLATO: If you know that this next planet has something called "miles," then that means you've tapped into their global communications network, doesn't it?

DUFFIN: Yes, it does.

PLATO: Oh, good. I love it when planets are advanced enough that we can search their computer networks to see if they have porridge without having to actually land.

CARB: I was really hoping to get out and stretch my legs.

MAX: Arf!

PLATO: We're not on a journey through the universe to stretch our legs. If we wanted to stretch our legs, we would have stayed home. Porridge comes first. Legs come second.

DUFFIN: Our computer is working on translating their languages so we can understand Earth words. The thing about the miles was one of the first items to come through. It's almost finished now.

PLATO: Do they have porridge?

DUFFIN: *(Sarcastic.)* Gee, I hadn't thought to check.

PLATO: Don't be sarcastic.

DUFFIN: Then give me credit to have enough of a brain to look for the thing that we're looking for. Just be patient.

PLATO: I don't have time for patience. I only have time for porridge.

DUFFIN: Do tell.

MAX: (*Looks at the computer screen and barks excitedly.*) Arf!
Arf!

DUFFIN: What is it, Max?

MAX: Arf!

DUFFIN: (*Looks at the computer screen.*) Oh my.

PLATO: What?

DUFFIN: Um...I think they've got porridge.

MAX: Arf!

CARB: What?

DUFFIN: Porridge. I think they've got it.

PLATO: Are you sure?

DUFFIN: Well, given that we don't actually know what porridge is, no, I'm not sure. But porridge is a word in one of their languages. And they have a story that matches up with our myth about the vertically challenged female and the three strangely domesticated wild animals. They call it "Goldilocks and the Three Bears."

CARB: What's a "Goldilocks"?

DUFFIN: Apparently, it's the name of a child.

PLATO: What's a "bear"?

DUFFIN: It's a large wild animal...lives in the woods.

PLATO: Not in a house?

DUFFIN: Nope.

PLATO: Does it sleep in a bed?

DUFFIN: Nope.

PLATO: Does it sit in a chair?

DUFFIN: Nope. Only in the story.

PLATO: So their version makes about as much sense as ours does.

CARB: (*Excited.*) Captain, this is amazing...two planets in two completely different galaxies sharing a folk tale in common. What does this mean? Could we be related? Did we have ancient ancestors who traveled through space?

PLATO: Never mind that. Remember what's important here.

CARB: (*Deflated.*) Right. The porridge.

PLATO: Focus on the porridge.

CARB: Porridge.

MAX: Arf!

PLATO: (*To Duffin.*) What does their story say about porridge?

DUFFIN: Three bowls of it. One was too hot. One was too cold. But the smallest bowl was just right. So Goldilocks ate it all up.

PLATO: Just like our version of the story.

CARB: Weird. If the porridge had all been the same temperature to start, shouldn't the smallest bowl have been the coldest?

PLATO: Perhaps porridge is magical.

CARB: Perhaps.

MAX: Arf!

PLATO: (*To Duffin.*) Is there anything else? Does the story actually explain what porridge is?

DUFFIN: No. But I'm sure I can look it up somewhere else. They have a huge amount of information available on their computer networks.

PLATO: No.

CARB: No?

PLATO: No.

MAX: Arf?

DUFFIN: (*To Plato.*) What do you mean no? Isn't this what we've been searching for all this time?

PLATO: Yes, it is. And now that it's within reach, I want my first porridge experience to be as pure as it can be. I don't want it described to me. I mean, how do you describe a food so anyone knows what it really tastes like?

CARB: Usually, you compare it to chicken.

PLATO: We're talking about porridge here, not chicken.

CARB: How do we know that porridge doesn't taste like chicken?

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PLATO: Because porridge isn't chicken.

CARB: You don't know that.

PLATO: If porridge was chicken, they would call it "chicken."

CARB: *(To Duffin.)* Do they even have chickens on this planet?

DUFFIN: As a matter of fact, they do.

CARB: Captain, as much as I hate to break it to you, you need to face up to the reality that there's at least possibility porridge could taste like chicken.

PLATO: I refuse to believe that I have traveled across the universe for something that tastes like chicken!

MAX: Arf!

PLATO: That's right, Max. So don't read to me from the computer what porridge is. Let me find out for myself. Engage the cloaking devices so no one can see our ship. Find a place to land. Upload their language into our translation implants so we can talk to them. And then let's go out and find some porridge!

(Blackout.)

SCENE 2

(AT RISE: *Earth, a park, a short time later. Kids 1-10 are playing. The Porridge Eaters enter.*)

PLATO: *(To Kids.)* Take me to your porridge.

KID 1: Um, what?

PLATO: Take me to your porridge. *(Gesturing to Duffin, Carb, and Max.)* Them, too. All of us.

KID 3: Porridge?

PLATO: Yes.

KID 7: Did you say...“porridge”?

PLATO: I’m fairly certain that I did, yes. *(Taps his ear.)* Our translation devices are working correctly, and the word exists in both our languages. So. Porridge. Yes. Take me to your porridge. *(Pause.)* Please.

KID 9: What are you?

PLATO: We are... *(Dramatically.)* ...Porridge Eaters...from Planet Puggelgorf!

(Pause. Kids start laughing.)

PLATO: *(To Duffin.)* Am I missing something here?

DUFFIN: I don’t know. If you’d given me some time to research their culture before we landed, this might be going better.

PLATO: Focus on the—

DUFFIN: Focus on the porridge. Yeah. I know. It’s all about the porridge. But would you be willing to consider the possibility that if we spent a little time trying to figure out a plan, it would save us time and frustration in the long run?

PLATO: I would be willing to focus on the porridge.

DUFFIN: Of course you would.

CARB: *(To Plato.)* You really drive me nuts sometimes, you know that?

MAX: *(To Plato.)* Arf!

CARB: *(To Plato.)* Let's not argue in front of the Earthlings, okay?

PLATO: Right. Whatever.

KID 2: *(To Porridge Eaters.)* You guys...you're kidding, right?

PLATO: Why would we be kidding?

KID 4: Porridge Eaters from Planet Puggelgorf. It just sounds kind of...silly.

PLATO: Well, we do come from the Planet Puggelgorf.

KID 8: Never heard of it.

KID 6: Where is it?

PLATO: If you go the far end of the Milky Way galaxy and hang a left, it's a few million light-years straight ahead on the right.

KID 8: Um...yeah.

KID 10: *(To other Kids.)* Y'know, I kinda think he's serious.

KID 1: He acts like he's serious.

KID 3: He doesn't look serious.

KID 5: He looks kinda dumb.

KID 7: They all look kinda dumb.

KID 9: Dumb in a maybe-they-really-could-be-from-another-planet kinda way.

KID 2: So you think we're actually talking to aliens?

KID 10: Maybe.

KID 1: Wow. Aliens. From outer space. Right here. Talking to us. This is amazing. This could be really important.

KID 4: The aliens are talking about porridge. Whatever this is, it isn't important.

KID 1: Hmm...guess not.

KID 9: *(To Plato.)* Okay, we're willing to take your word on the other planet thing...that you're, y'know, aliens.

PLATO: I guess to you we would be aliens, yes.

KID 2: *(To Porridge Eaters.)* And you guys...you eat porridge?

PLATO: Yes, we do.

KID 7: *(To Kid 6.)* [Tina], these are, like, the lamest aliens in the universe. [*Or insert another name.*]

KID 6: I'm not arguing with you.

KID 3: Why'd they have to land right here of all places?

KID 7: Nobody said life was fair.

KID 10: *(To Plato.)* Do you guys have names?

PLATO: I am Captain Plato PorridgePower. My associates are Carb PorridgePlank, Duffin PorridgePants—

KID 3: *(To Duffin.)* PorridgePants?

PLATO: And our dog Max PorridgePumpkin.

KID 5: He's a really big dog.

MAX: Arf!

KID 8: *(To Porridge Eaters.)* You all, like, have the word "porridge" as part of your names.

PLATO: Indeed, we do.

KID 3: *(To Duffin.)* PorridgePants?

KID 1: Are you all related?

PLATO: Other than being from the same planet, no.

KID 6: Does everyone on your planet have "porridge" as part of their name?

PLATO: Oh, good heavens, no!

KID 7: Are those the names you were born with?

PLATO: No, we chose them. Why do you ask?

KID 7: They're kind of...unusual.

KID 3: *(To Duffin.)* PorridgePants?

KID 8: *(To Porridge Eaters.)* You guys are really into porridge, aren't you?

CARB: You have no idea...

PLATO: *(To Kids.)* We chose our names to reflect our dedication to our cause.

KID 3: PorridgePants?!

DUFFIN: They were running out of names, okay?

KID 3: There are only four of you.

DUFFIN: Four of us *here*. But there are a thousand other groups like ours searching the universe for porridge.

KID 9: A thousand?

DUFFIN: Nine hundred ninety-nine others, to be exact.

KID 5: Flying through space...exploring strange alien worlds...looking for porridge?

PLATO: Exactly.

KID 6: You all have got way too much free time on your hands.

PLATO: Well, we don't have wars anymore. We've developed sufficient resources to feed the entire planet. All labor is automated. So, yes, we do have a lot of time on our hands. And, thus, we go forth seeking the answers to the great mysteries of the universe.

KID 1: And porridge is one of those mysteries?

PLATO: Oh, yes. We have an ancient story very similar to that of your "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." But the part about the porridge has baffled us all for thousands of solar cycles. No one knows what it is. Some scholars have suggested that it was a spelling error for an ancient word meaning "bean soup" but no one really believes that. Since no one has found the answer to the mystery in our world, we began searching other worlds as well.

CARB: *(To Kids.)* There are another thousand teams searching the universe trying to find something called "curds and whey."

KID 3: That's kind of like cottage cheese.

DUFFIN: You know what curds and whey are?

KID 3: I just said...kind of like cottage cheese.

CARB: And you have that on this planet?

KID 3: Um, yeah.

DUFFIN: *(Excited.)* Captain, we may have found the answer to the other great mystery!

PLATO: Focus on the porridge.

DUFFIN: *(Excited.)* But—

PLATO: We're part of the porridge team, not the curds-and-whey team.

DUFFIN: *(Excited.)* But—

PLATO: I don't expect the curds-and-whey team to do my job for me, and I'm not going to do theirs for them. Let it go. Focus on the porridge.

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KID 10: Okay, hold on a minute here. You're saying you've never actually eaten porridge?

PLATO: Well, not strictly speaking.

KID 2: What do you mean, "not strictly speaking"?

CARB: He means no. We've never actually eaten porridge. We don't even know what it's supposed to taste like.

PLATO: Although we're sure we'll love it.

KID 3: You're porridge eaters from another planet...but you've never eaten porridge? None of you?

PLATO: Afraid not.

KID 5: *(To Porridge Eaters.)* Y'know, all my life I've dreamed about how cool it would be to meet aliens, and you guys are shattering that dream.

KID 7: *(To Porridge Eaters.)* If you've never eaten porridge, and you don't know what it tastes like, why do you call yourselves "Porridge Eaters"?

PLATO: Well, it's our mission to find out what porridge is.

KID 4: *(To Porridge Eaters.)* Shouldn't you be calling yourselves "Porridge Hunters from Planet Puggelgorf" or "Porridge Seekers" or "Porridge Searchers"?

KID 5: *(To Porridge Eaters.)* Or "Clueless Space Dudes Trying to Figure Out What Porridge Is"?

PLATO: I suppose those would all be more accurate, but...I just like the sound of... *(Dramatically.)* ..."Porridge Eaters...from Planet Puggelgorf."

KID 1: So if you find it, you'll eat it?

PLATO: Correct.

KID 9: What if you don't like it?

PLATO: I have travelled millions of light-years to eat porridge. I will eat it, and I will love it.

DUFFIN: *(To Kids.)* Regardless of what it tastes like.

MAX: *(To Kids.)* Arf!

CARB: *(To Kids.)* Even if it tastes like chicken.

PLATO: Which it won't. *(To Kid 2.)* It won't, will it?

KID 2: I don't think so. I've never actually eaten it.

PLATO: Do you know where we can find it?

KID 2: I'd try a grocery store.

PLATO: Where can I find one of those?

KID 3: There's one about a mile down the road... (*Points.*)
...that way.

PLATO: A *mile*, yes, I've heard of those before. Thank you.

DUFFIN: (*To Kids.*) Would you mind coming with us? We're not terribly familiar with your customs, and it might make things easier if we had help.

KID 10: Sure, why not? We weren't doing much of anything this afternoon anyway.

(*Max stands upright, groans, and stretches.*)

KID 6: (*To Porridge Eaters.*) Um...why is your dog standing up?

MAX: Oh, man...that is so hard on my back. Okay, Duffin. It's been two days Puggelgorf time. It's your turn to be the dog now.

DUFFIN: What? No. It's Carb's turn.

CARB: Oh, no, no, no. I was the dog before Max. It's definitely your turn, Duffin.

DUFFIN: I hate being the dog.

CARB: It was your idea.

DUFFIN: It was my idea that we get a dog, not that we take turns pretending to be one. Max gets the blame for that.

MAX: I was kidding.

KID 8: (*To Porridge Eaters.*) You take turns being a dog?

DUFFIN: We wanted to have one onboard our ship, but the animal rights people back home said it would be inhumane to keep a dog cooped up on a spaceship.

MAX: (*To Kids.*) So I made a joke that we should take turns pretending to be the dog.

CARB: (*To Kids.*) Which Captain PorridgePower thought was a good idea.

PLATO: It was a brilliant idea.

MAX: It wasn't an actual suggestion.

PLATO: It was still a brilliant idea. We all wanted that dog, and we were all disappointed when we were told we couldn't have one. This way, we get to have a dog and the animal rights people stay off our backs. You all take equal turns, so it stays fair.

KID 7: So you never take a turn being the dog yourself?

PLATO: Oh, good heavens, no! I'm the Captain! As leader, I'm too important to be the dog! And, besides, the three of them do such a good job!

KID 7: *(To Duffin, Max, and Carb. Sarcastic.)* Lucky you.

CARB: *(Deflated.)* Lucky us.

(Max pulls off his dog ears and tail and hands them to Duffin.)

MAX: Here you go, Duffin.

DUFFIN: *(Sarcastic.)* Oh, joy. *(Duffin puts on the ears and tail and then crouches down into a dog position.)* Arf!

PLATO: *(Scratching Duffin's head.)* Good boy, Duffin!

DUFFIN: Arf! Arf!

[END OF FREEVIEW]