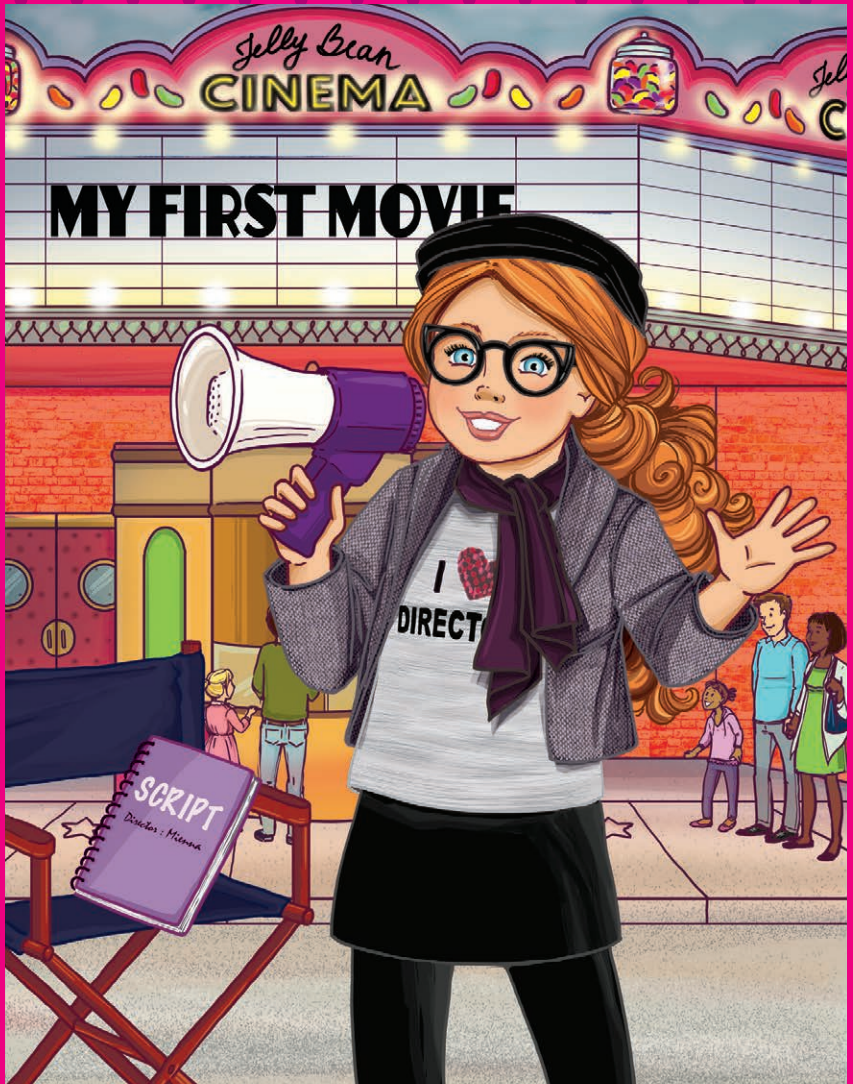


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The Jelly Bean Cinema

FEATURING MIENNA™

BY LAURA LEIGH MOTTE

ILLUSTRATED BY GÉRALDINE CHARETTE





our
generation.

This is Mienna's story.



MIENNA™

THE JELLY BEAN
CINEMA

BY

LAURA LEIGH MOTTE

ILLUSTRATED BY GÉRALDINE CHARETTE

An Our Generation® book

MAISON BATTAT INC. *Publisher*

I would like to thank Karen Erlichman and Joseph Battat for giving me the best writing gig ever. I would also like to offer a big admiring thank you to Loredana Ramacieri and the Battat Design Team for creating such a beautiful doll for this story. Mienna rocks! I also want to thank my editors Joanne Burke Casey, for being so “on-it” in every way, and Miki Laval, for helping me see the true heart of this story.

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who make every day an action
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(especially at homework time),
and heartwarming love story*

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EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

*In this story, our characters will use many words related to movies and the magical process of movie-making. What do they all mean? They are marked with this symbol *. Look them up in the Movie Word Glossary at the end of this book.*



Chapter One

HOW IT BEGAN

The first thing you need to know is that I love movies and always have. Funny movies. Sad movies. Movies with talking animals. Movies with spies. Movies with songs. Even movies with zombies. I love going to the movies, too. The cozy darkness, the seats that snap up and down, the buttery popcorn, and the candy. I would see a movie every day of the week if I could.

The second thing you need to know is that my mom didn't always agree with that plan.



It all started two years ago. I was seven years old and it was Saturday. It wasn't one of those snappy Saturdays where you wake up singing. It was a sad, gloomy Saturday where the raindrops



fall with the same slow *plock plock* of the school clock just before recess.

“Can we go to the movies?” I asked my mom. I had already done three puzzles, finished my library book, and made new hairstyles for all my dollies.

“Movies are a special treat, Mienna, and besides, going to the cinema* is expensive,” she explained. At the time, Mom was raising me on her own and was extra careful with money, which wasn’t always fun.

“*Please...*” I begged her. Mom shook her head. She was on her knees in front of the fridge, wearing a pair of pink rubber gloves, with a bucket of sudsy water beside her.

“You can watch some television if you want,” she said.

Sometimes my mom let me watch kids’ shows on her computer when she had stuff to do around the house. That day was “Clean the Fridge Day.”

I shook my head. I wasn’t satisfied. Watching



television on a computer wasn't the same. I wanted to watch *with her*. I wanted to feel that comfy specialness that I always felt when we were at the movies together. Laughing. Sharing popcorn. Fighting over the last jelly bean in the bag. Even hiding my face in her shoulder during a scary bit. Going to the movies was our time.

Instead of heading over to Mom's computer, I went straight to my bedroom. I had a better idea. And it was really simple, too. All I needed were a pair of scissors, construction paper, some markers, and jelly beans. Swishy, my very curious betta fish, watched me as I drew, snipped, and colored.

When I finished, I marched over to my mother and announced, "We're going to the movies tonight!" To prove my point, I slapped down two tickets on the kitchen table.

My mother looked at them curiously.

JELLY BEAN CINEMA One Regular Kid Admission*

and

JELLY BEAN CINEMA One Regular Adult Admission





I had copied the words from real ticket stubs that I'd saved in my scrapbook from the last time we went to the movies. They looked very official, even if they were handmade and the lines weren't perfectly straight.

Mom seemed impressed. "Where is this Jelly Bean Cinema?" she asked. "Is it close by?"

"It's right there," I said, pointing to our living room. Mom peeled off her gloves and followed me into the "cinema." I had turned out all the lights and closed the drapes, so it was extra dark, just like a real theater.

From my bedroom shelf, I had taken down the giant jelly bean jar I won at a birthday party by guessing the number of jelly beans inside. (The total was 434. I guessed 426.) I shook some jelly beans into two yellow paper cups and then wrote "Movie Snacks" in red pen on the outside. I gave one to my mom and kept one for me.

That night, we watched a movie called *Little Miss Broadway*. It's a really old movie (even older than my mom) and stars an actress called Shirley



Temple*. My Uncle Jack had loaned the DVD to us during his last visit. He worked in the movies and is a total movie buff*. He's another reason I love movies so much.

Mom and I didn't budge from our seats once during the whole movie. Not even to go to the bathroom. When we got chilly, we snuggled under a blanket. At the end of the movie, both of us cried.

And that was the first-ever screening* at the Jelly Bean Cinema.



Chapter Two

WE SERVE POPCORN NOW

I live in Seattle, Washington, which is one of the rainiest cities in the United States. Since that first drizzly Saturday, the Jelly Bean Cinema has been a regular thing for my mom and me. But in the last two years, there have been a few changes.

First change: I now serve jelly beans *and* popcorn. Sometimes I even mix them together. I call it “The JBC Combo.” I had to refill my jelly bean jar, though. Even 434 jelly beans don’t last forever.

Second change: It’s no longer just Mom, me, and Swishy living in the same house. Now I have a stepdad. His name is Dan. Mom married him last year. Dan makes my mom laugh until she snorts, which makes me laugh, too. But he doesn’t join us for Jelly Bean Cinema Night. That’s our special time.



Tonight, the Jelly Bean Cinema was screening *Unicorn Riders*. It's a fantasy film*. I saw it at the movies last year and loved it. I borrowed the DVD from the library. (I was so happy when I found out libraries loan movies, not just books. Now I go to the library way more often.)

"Is the popcorn ready?" my mom asked. She was sitting on the sofa in the living room with her feet up.

"Almost," I replied from the kitchen. "Do you want the JBC Combo or just plain?" I had to raise my voice to be heard over the buzzing air popper, which was still popping out puffy clouds of popcorn into a metal bowl. Now that I'm nine years old, Mom lets me make the popcorn all by myself.

"You decide, just hurry up so we can get started," said my mom. "We don't want to be up too late. It's a school night."

As I put the DVD into the player, Franco walked by. He's my stepbrother and he's a year and a half older than me. He lives with us every



other week. The rest of the time he's with his mother.

When Franco is here, he barely talks to me. Most of the time I just see the back of his baseball cap as he's walking upstairs to his room. I'm pretty sure he doesn't like me so I decided not to like him either. Mom thinks Franco is just shy but I know she's wrong. I've seen him at school chatting with his friends plenty of times. He's just being cool.

"Franco! Would you like to watch, too? I'm sure Mienna wouldn't mind. Right Mienna?" my mom said, winking at me. Dan was at his soccer practice so Felix was by himself.

I shrugged and took a mouthful of popcorn. Mom is always trying to find ways to get Franco and me to do stuff together. But this was going too far.

Franco mumbled, "No thanks. I have homework to do anyway." He slipped on his headphones and walked up to his room.

I was relieved. But my mom gave me a disappointed look.





“You could have been more encouraging,” she said.

“He probably wouldn’t like the movie anyway,” I said. “It’s got unicorns.”

Mom and I both loved *Unicorn Riders*. It’s about a group of brave girls who rescue wild unicorns that have been captured by The Evil Wizard. I gave it five out of five jelly beans, which is the highest rating* a movie can get at the Jelly Bean Cinema.

“OK, Sweetie, bedtime.” My mom yanked the blanket off the sofa.

“Hey, I was cozy under there!” Ripping the blanket off me was her special technique for getting me to go up to bed.

“Don’t you want to talk about the ending?” I asked. “Do you think Esmerella will be stuck in the Cave of Tears forever? I heard there’s going to be a *Unicorn Riders Two*, so I bet she escapes.”

“I wish you had the same enthusiasm for your homework,” Mom said. “You still have that spelling test to prepare for. Remember? A quick



review and then bed.”

I sighed and headed up the stairs to my room.

After I brushed my teeth and reviewed my spelling words, I got into my PJs and climbed into bed. But I couldn't sleep. I kept thinking about the movie.

Maybe I could just re-watch the first five minutes, I thought. I love the part where the new unicorn rider dazzles everyone with her cloud jumping.

I got out of bed and crept quietly into the living room. The DVD was still in the player. When I picked up the remote, I accidentally clicked on “Unicorn Riders: Behind the Scenes.”

The director* of the movie explained how they made the unicorns look so real. She also talked to the actors, helping them say their lines*. Everyone listened to the director and took her comments very seriously.

Being a movie director seemed like a cool job.



By the time I finished watching it was almost eleven (*gasp!*) and way past my bedtime. I crept back upstairs and plopped into bed.

This time, I fell asleep right away.



Chapter Three

BORING, BORING AND BORING!

“Mienna? Earth to Sleepyhead. It’s time to wake up.”

It was a woman’s voice speaking.

My eyelids fluttered and a tall lady with a bun on her head came into focus. It was my fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Pinto. She was staring at me, her eyebrows raised like two angry caterpillars ready to do battle.

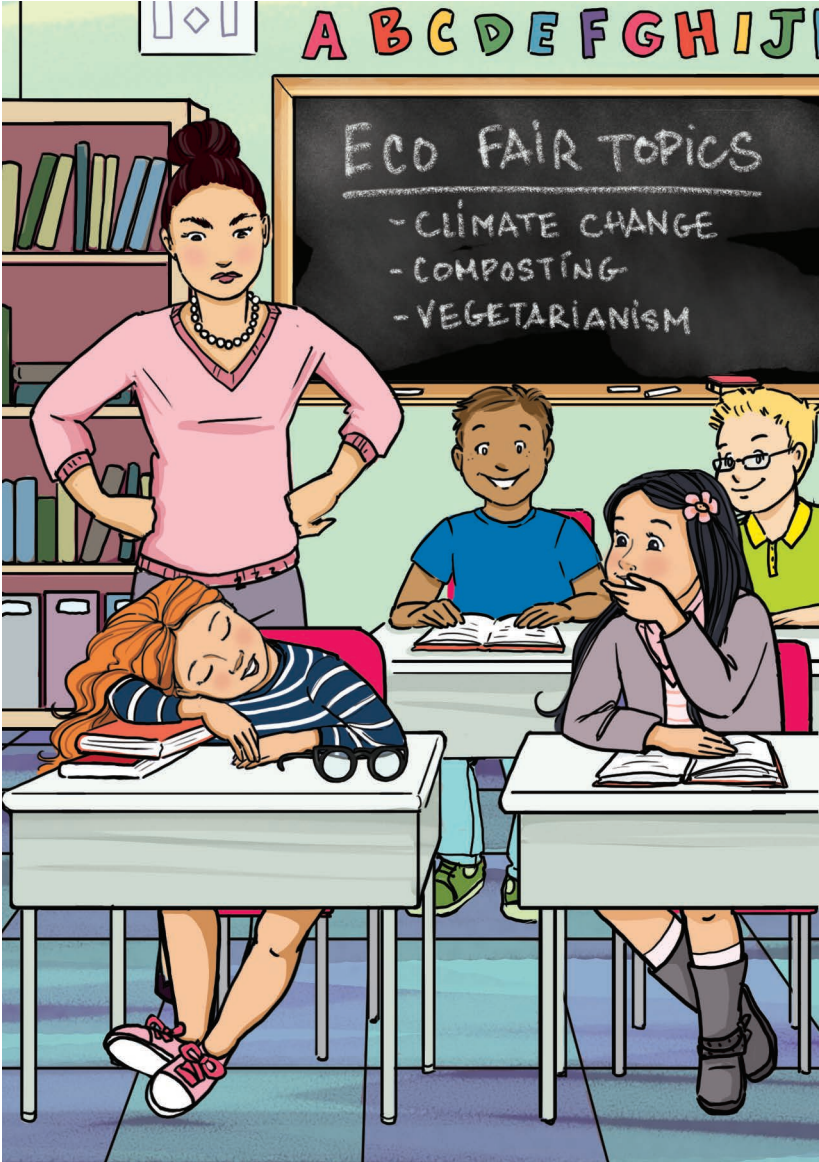
I was groggy and confused. And why did her eyebrows look so scary?

That’s when I noticed other students were staring at me, too.

My friend Aiko leaned over and whispered in my ear.

“You fell asleep in class,” she explained, and handed me a handkerchief with a pineapple pattern on it. Aiko loves pretty printed handkerchiefs. Her





grandmother sent this one to her from Japan.

I was now wide-awake. Snatching the hankie, I quickly wiped the drool from my cheek—how embarrassing. I hoped I didn't snore.

“OK,” said Mrs. Pinto, as she glared in my direction. “I'll repeat for anyone who wasn't paying attention. The Eco Fair is in two weeks. I'd like you to form groups of two or three. Each group will be doing a presentation on something related to the conservation of the eco system.”

It's no wonder I fell asleep, I thought. Why couldn't school be as interesting as a five-jelly bean movie?

Mrs. Pinto let us choose our own groups for the Eco Fair. Aiko, our friend Zahra, and I chose each other, like we always do. Too bad we couldn't choose our own topic.

“Compost? Is she serious?” I groaned. “That's the most boring topic ever.”

“That's what it says.” Aiko showed me the piece of paper Mrs. Pinto had handed to our group.



I really didn't know how the icky and squishy food bits we tossed out every week in those beige plastic bins could be an interesting project for the Eco Fair. I wondered if it was punishment for me falling asleep in class.

“Why didn't we get ‘Tsunamis and Other Effects of Climate Change’ like Lerton Vandercroom's group?” I grumbled.

They were already talking about making a model of a giant wave in the ocean.

“I think ‘Ten Cool Things to Make From Recycled Materials’ looks fun,” Aiko said. She is really into crafts.

As Aiko and I wondered if we could swap our topic, Zahra put an arm around each of us and squeezed.

“Come on girls, composting is great!” she said. “It's nature's way of recycling. You throw a bunch of fruit and veggie scraps and dry leaves in a bin and, in no time at all—ping, pang, poof—it's dirt. I know all about it. Trust me, this will be easy-peasy.”



Zahra is the smartest person I know. She thinks math is cool and science is awesome. She is also into helping the environment. She always has garbage-free lunches and even checks my lunch and Aiko's to see if they are garbage-free, too. No wrappers, no throwaway pudding cups. We call her "the plastic police." It's sometimes annoying, even if we know she's right. We want to make the world a cleaner place, too. Right?

Zahra is usually the leader in our group projects. Aiko and I tag along for two reasons:

1. We're friends and we like each other. Working together on a project means we get to spend more time together.

2. Doing whatever Zahra wants usually means we get a good grade, too. It's win-win-win.

"That's the spirit!" said Mrs. Pinto, overhearing Zahra's excitement about compost. "I knew I picked the right group for this one."

As Zahra scribbled notes on what Mrs. Pinto



was expecting us to cover in the presentation, and whether or not to discuss cold composts or hot, I yawned and put my head on my desk.

“Can I nap while you geniuses sort this out?” I asked. I really was tired.

“What is up with you today, Mienna?” Aiko asked.

I told them how I’d stayed up late to watch “Behind the Scenes” of *Unicorn Riders*.

“On a school night?” Aiko was shocked.

“I was learning what a movie director does,” I explained. “I think I might want to be one when I grow up.”

Saying this out loud, I felt suddenly excited. Aiko always talks about how she wants to be a chef or a fashion designer. And Zahra has wanted to be a vet since she was three. But me, I never had a clue. Until now.

“What does a movie director do anyway?” Aiko asked.

“She’s the boss of the movie,” I said. “She tells the actors and other people working on the



movie what to do.” It was still a new idea to me, but that sounded about right.

“That’s pretty fancy, Mienna,” Zahra said. “But for now, you’re a student at Tall Tree Elementary School and we have a project to do. On *composting*.”

That’s when I realized something.

“I know exactly what we should do for the Eco Fair,” I said. “And it’s totally not boring.”

All eyes went straight to me.

“Let’s make a movie.”



Chapter Four

LIGHTS, CAMERA...COMPOST?

“Let me get this straight,” Zahra said, flopping down beside Aiko on my bed. “You want to make a movie about compost?” She looked at me as if I were crazy.

Since the Eco Fair was in two weeks, we wanted to get started right away. After school, we all got together at my house. I was sitting in my special reading chair. Mom calls it my “magic throne.” I was hoping it would give me the powers to convince my friends that my movie idea was a good one.

“Everybody loves movies,” I pointed out.

“I love *watching* them,” Aiko said.

“This is for school. It’s serious,” said Zahra. “We need charts and diagrams showing how the composting process works.”



Zahra was famous for her snazzy charts and diagrams.

“ZZZZZ...” I made loud snoring noises. Aiko laughed and even Zahra grinned.

“Seriously. A movie will stand out. It will make Lerton’s tsunami seem like a silly kid project.” If it meant beating her rival in braininess, I knew Zahra would be more interested.

“Alright,” she said. “But don’t forget, we’re being graded on this.”

Zahra has never gotten anything lower than an A in her life. My good grades are mostly in English. I like reading stories. Maybe because they feel more like movies, except the pictures are inside your head.

I looked at Aiko, who was now combing my mermaid doll’s hair with the sparkling shell comb. She still looked unsure.

“If Zahra is the compost expert and you’re this director-person, what am I doing?” she asked.

“Costumes,” I blurted out. Aiko loves creating new outfits and has her own special style. “And hair,” I added, seeing the pretty French braid she was making





for my mermaid doll.

I leapt to my feet. “So are we doing this or not?”

Aiko raised her hand. “I’m in.”

“Me too,” said Zahra.

The Compost Movie was a go. I was already starting to feel like a director.

I pulled out a fresh notebook from my desk drawer. I love notebooks. I write ideas in them, make lists of movies I want to see, and even glue in movie ads and movie stubs. Opening up a fresh notebook is always exciting.

Here’s what I wrote down in my brand-new Movie Director Journal:



COMPOST MOVIE SUPPLIES

1. Compost

This was easy. Zahra already has a compost pile in her garden. I decided that would be our main location*.

2. Words!

In the DVD, they called this the script*. Being a total brainiac, Zahra would know what to say. I wasn't worried about this at all. She could talk for hours, no script needed.

3. Camera

I took a deep breath.

“What’s wrong?” asked Aiko. She could see I was worried.

“We don’t have a movie camera,” I replied.



“What about using a phone? They film stuff,” said Zahra.

But I don’t have one. Neither does Zahra or Aiko. Our parents don’t want us to have phones until we are older. They aren’t allowed at school, either. We can’t even use them for calculations or looking up stuff. I did not think Mrs. Pinto would approve.

This was a serious problem.



Chapter Five

JUST DON'T BREAK IT

When it's my stepbrother's week to live with us, things are always a bit different in the house.

My mom makes us eat in the dining room instead of the kitchen. She usually makes a special meal too, like lasagna or homemade pizza. I know she wants Franco to like her, which isn't easy because he already has a mom.

It's different for me. My dad passed away when I was two. I don't remember him at all. I have pictures hanging up in my room, though. I look at them every day. When I see my dad holding me as a baby, I know he loved me a lot. And I loved him, too.

I also like Dan. But I'm still getting used to having other people in my house. I'm not sure I like it.



Franco calls my mother Kate. Tonight “Kate” made burgers and her famous sweet potato fries.

“Did everyone enjoy the meal?” Mom asked.

Franco stayed quiet, though his empty plate spoke for itself. He loves food and always gobbles up my mother’s cooking.

“Delish!” I said. “What’s for dessert?”

During Non-Stepbrother Weeks, dessert is mostly fresh fruit and sometimes yogurt. Tonight, it was chocolate pudding—with colored sprinkles topping each bowl.

“Sprinkles, too?” I asked. “Is it someone’s birthday?”

Mom ignored the question and smiled sweetly.

“So, what’s new at school, kids?” she asked. Mom is always trying to make conversation at the dinner table.

Instead of answering, Franco plunged his spoon into his dessert.

“I’m making a movie!” I announced.

“How exciting,” my mom said.



“Sounds like just your thing,” said Dan.

Franco said nothing. He was too busy licking his dessert bowl.

“There’s only one problem,” I said. “We don’t have a movie camera. Zahra is going to see if we can rent one from the library, and I’m going to ask Uncle Jack when I see him.”

“Uncle Jack works in movies, darling, but he doesn’t actually shoot them. I don’t think he has a camera.”

Dan jumped in right away. “Franco has a movie camera you can use! You wouldn’t mind loaning it to Mienna, would you, Franco?” he said. “Last I remember it was just collecting dust under your bed.”

I looked down and took another spoonful of pudding. It was embarrassing when our parents forced us to be nice to each other.

“I guess not,” said Franco. He didn’t sound very enthusiastic. I couldn’t blame him. Why couldn’t our parents just leave us alone?

“No, that’s OK,” I said. “I need something



right away. Thanks anyway.”

I was glad to have a reason to refuse. Besides, it was true. We really did need something right away.

“No worries,” Dan insisted. “We can pick the camera up tonight after dinner. We have to stop by his mom’s anyway. Franco forgot his math binder.”

I looked again at Franco, who was helping himself to more pudding. He didn’t even look at me.

I wanted to say, “No, it’s fine. I don’t need it.” But I stopped myself.

After all, directors must do everything in their power, even if that means borrowing a camera from a not-so-enthusiastic stepbrother, to get the job done.

“Alright,” I said. “That would be great.”

I was in the bathroom, just about to brush my teeth, when Franco showed up. The door was open.

“Just don’t break it,” he said, placing the



camera on the counter by the sink. It was in a black case with a long strap. It looked serious and very professional.

Before I could say thanks, Franco had already spun around and was walking back to his room.

That night, sitting on my bed, I fiddled with the camera to see how it worked. I tested the angles* and the close-ups*. It was pretty cool, and I was getting excited again.

But there was stuff I couldn't figure out, too. Like how to pause during playback mode and if you could edit* without using a computer.

I would have liked to ask for the manual, but I didn't want to bother Franco again.





Chapter Six

RAINY WITH A CHANCE OF WORMS

On the first day filming our Compost Movie, there was a total downpour. The grass in Zahra’s backyard was a muddy mess from all the rain. My rubber boots made a *squelch, squelch* sound whenever I walked.

Aiko was holding an umbrella over me as I filmed so the camera wouldn’t get wet. Since Franco had loaned the camera to me, I was responsible for keeping it safe. I had to be extra careful.

“I thought I was supposed to make costumes and do hair,” Aiko complained. “So far, all I am is...*The Umbrella Holder.*”

Aiko was wearing her pink raincoat and hat. She looked like a sad, pink, wet kitten.

But Zahra wasn’t sad. She likes rain. She even dances in the rain. But today, she wasn’t



dancing. She was talking about composts.

“Remember. You can’t throw just anything in your compost,” said Zahra.

She was standing in front of the compost pile, which was in a big wooden box in the far corner of her yard. Near the compost box, on the ground, there were three little garden gnomes called “Silly,” “Milly,” and “Floop.”

Aiko, Zahra, and I had made them from a “Paint Your Own Gnome” ceramic kit at Zahra’s last birthday party. We put them in the corner of the yard because it’s overgrown and wild, and gnomes like that.

So far, Silly, Milly, and Floop were the best part of the movie.

“In this compost,” Zahra continued, “we only put in raw things, like vegetable peels, apple cores, eggshells, and coffee grounds. No meat or oils. Microorganisms help break it all down. In the end, it turns into something that looks like regular dirt, which is used as fertilizer for growing stuff, like flowers.”



Zahra knelt down and took some dirt out from an opening in the bottom of the wooden compost. “This fertilizer is called humus.”

That’s when I called, “Cut*!” and turned the camera off.

“Humus?” I asked. “Are you sure? I mean, isn’t that the stuff I dip my pita chips in?”

“No,” said Zahra. “It’s spelled h-u-m-u-s, and is definitely *not* the same stuff you put on your pita chips.”

“Can you say that in the movie?” I asked her. “That would be funny. Plus, it’s less confusing.”

“Sounds silly to me,” Zahra said, crossing her arms. “I should really get into the three stages of decomposition and the importance of oxygen in the whole process. Remember, composting is science.”

I sighed. *How could I forget?* I wasn’t sure how the movie was going to be any better than listening to Mrs. Pinto giving a lecture in class. I wanted my movie to be exciting and fun.

“How about you show us how to stir the



compost?” I suggested.

The movie needed a bit of action, and turning or stirring the compost was important for reasons I did not totally understand, because when Zahra talked (and talked and talked) sometimes I stopped listening. As the director of the movie, I knew this was a bad sign.

Since the rain seemed to be letting up, I told Aiko to forget the umbrella-holding and look around for a long stick.

“Now I’m The Stick-Finder?” she said with a groan. “Fine.”

A few moments later, I heard her shriek.

“Worms!”

While looking for a stick, she had spotted a big, fat worm peeking out of the dirt. She was now running around in circles, squealing “Ick, gross!”

I quickly turned on the camera and started filming. Finally, something funny was going on.

Aiko hid behind Zahra’s back as if the worm was going to attack her. She is such a scaredy-cat. But Zahra didn’t seem frightened at all.



“Worms are a good thing,” she told Aiko. “They are an important part of the compost process.”

Meanwhile, I tried to get a closer angle on the worm but it refused to come up for a cameo*.

Suddenly, the rain started falling harder again.

“It’s a wrap*, girls!” I shouted. “We can pick up where we left off tomorrow.”

I was glad. My arm was tired from holding the camera and I was ready for a break.

“I hope this movie wasn’t a silly idea,” Aiko confided in me as we started packing up.

“Not silly at all,” I said, trying to sound convincing.

I zipped the camera back into the black bag and Zahra’s dad drove Aiko and me home.

I couldn’t get there fast enough.

As soon as I got in the front door, I went straight to my room. I needed total privacy.

I took the movie camera out of the bag, flicked it on, and watched what we’d done so far.





When I finished, I put the camera down beside me on the bed and let out a big sigh. It was worse than I thought.

“I wouldn’t even give it one jelly bean,” I told Swishy, who seemed to agree with me.

For one, my camera was always wobbling. It was hard to keep still, especially when Zahra was talking for so long. My arm was still sore.

The second problem was more serious. It was Zahra.

All she did was talk. Sometimes it was just too much information without anything to look at (except the garden gnomes).

How I could tell one of my best friends she was the Worst Actor Ever?

Being a movie director was harder than I thought.



Chapter Seven

FLYING UNICORNS

The Eco Fair was packed with students and teachers, all sitting in front of a giant movie screen. The bleachers were gone, replaced by red velvet seats.

There was a movie playing. My movie. *The Compost Movie*. It was right at the part where Zahra starts talking about *microorganisms*.

“Boo!” shouted Lerton in the front row. “This is the most boring movie ever.”

“Boring *and* wobbly!” Mrs. Pinto hollered.

“Turn it off. Turn it off. Turn it off,” everyone chanted. Then they started throwing popcorn at the screen.

“Wasting food is not very ecological!” I heard Zahra’s voice shouting.

I whipped around to see Zahra, standing





right beside me. Aiko was with her. She was wearing purple sunglasses and a floppy sun hat.

“Come on Zahra. We better get out of here before somebody recognizes us.”

Aiko whistled, and two unicorns appeared. Aiko and Zahra climbed on their backs and flew over the crowd, up to the ceiling, and out through a big hole. You could see the blue sky and white clouds ahead of them.

Then, as if all this wasn't weird enough, suddenly, it started raining jelly beans. As the jelly beans hit the gym floor, they made loud clacking sounds.

When I woke up, rain was pelting against my window. I tried to fall back asleep, but it wasn't easy. My bad dream was stuck in my head like chewing gum on a sneaker. I had to fix my movie, and fast.



Chapter Eight

UNCLE JACK AND A HOOK

Mom says having a passion for movies runs in the family, and that's mostly because of Uncle Jack.

Uncle Jack works in the movies as a “gaffer,” which sounds like a circus clown, but he's actually more like an electrician. Uncle Jack sets up the lights. Movies use lots of special lights, including really big ones that can make night look like day and day look like moonlight.

When I told Mom I needed Uncle Jack's help for my movie, she drove me to his place. He lives in a cool apartment above a coffee shop. Next to movies, Uncle Jack's second love is good coffee, so he's happy.

Even though Uncle Jack is Mom's older brother, Mom says he's still a kid. He collects board



games and sneakers, and even has a basketball net in his living room. Sometimes he makes popcorn for lunch. Just. Popcorn. Being at his house is always fun. On the walls, there are photographs of Uncle Jack hanging out with famous actors from movies he worked on.

When we arrived, Mom made up the excuse of “seeing if there was anything healthy inside his fridge for lunch” to give us time alone to chat. As soon as she left, I told him about my bad dream.

“That’s some wacky nightmare kid,” he said. “You should put *that* in a movie.”

I smiled. Uncle Jack always says things that surprise me.

“OK,” I replied. “But first I have to get this one done.” I pulled out Franco’s camera and showed him what I had filmed so far.

“It’s not so bad,” Uncle Jack said. “It’s just a bit too wobbly.”

“I know,” I replied. “It’s hard to keep steady. My arm gets tired.”

“That’s normal,” Uncle Jack announced.



“In the big Hollywood* movies, nobody holds the camera themselves. It’s always on a fancy platform with wheels, called a “dolly.” This one time I saw the camera attached to a helicopter. That was totally awesome.”

Uncle Jack talks like a kid sometimes, too.

Uncle Jack opened a closet and pulled out something that looked like a small stand.

“This is a tripod,” Uncle Jack said. “It will hold your camera steady and at a good height.”

We fiddled around and it totally worked with Franco’s camera.

I gave Uncle Jack a hug. He really is the best uncle ever.

“Now can you help me make compost less boring?”

Uncle Jack laughed loudly.

“Well, to be honest, I found that stuff pretty interesting.” He picked up a basketball that was on the floor and started tossing it up and down. He never sits still for very long.

“You did?”



“Yes,” he replied. “You just need to give all that science stuff a hook.”

“What’s a hook?” I asked.

“A hook is what gets people excited about your story. It’s something fun or strange or unexpected that draws people in. Like catching a fish with a worm on a hook, except nobody gets hurt, or eaten.”

“OK,” I said, “but even if I do find this ‘hook’ thing, I have to tell Zahra to say what I want. She’s the compost expert and Chief Bossy Pants of group homework assignments.”

“But you’re the one who loves movies and wants to make one.”

“Yeah that’s true,” I nodded. But I still wasn’t sure.

“Sounds like you could use a little more confidence,” Uncle Jack said, handing me the basketball. “Remember, you’re the director,” he said. “That’s the boss. That’s you.”

“Right. I am the boss.” I shot the basketball towards the net and missed. *Was I really up for the job?*







I like doing homework at the dining room table because there's room to spread out and think. That's where I decided to work on my movie project. I opened my journal and scribbled some notes:

IDEAS FOR FIXING COMPOST MOVIE

1. Charts and Diagrams

I was starting to think that Zahra's idea wasn't so bad. Having flowcharts and diagrams to look at would help people understand what she was saying better.

I remembered that Zahra has a chalkboard in her basement playroom. We could make it look like a classroom. A change of scene* would also be nice. So far, we were always outside by the compost.

But would that really fix my movie? I



wondered.

One problem was that Zahra sounded too much like a teacher. Putting her in a classroom might only make that problem worse. How could I fix what she was saying?

I scribbled another note:

2. Script

In movie-speak, the words the actors say are called “dialogue.” The dialogue is in the script. I didn’t even really have a script, but maybe I should.

So far, Zahra was telling us everything she knows about composting. If I could make what she says more interesting and fun to ordinary kids, like me, who didn’t much care for boring lectures, that would help.

I jotted down something I thought might work.

ZAHRA

Hi, I’m Zahra and welcome to the amazing world of compost!



I paused and re-read it out loud a few times. It had more energy at least. But was it a hook?

That's when Franco walked into the kitchen. He opened the fridge and made himself a bowl of cereal. He ate it at the kitchen island, his nose buried in a comic book.

Usually I ignore him, but this time, the cover of his comic book caught my eye. The title was "The Adventures of Lizard Man." On the cover, there was a muscle-y guy with lizard skin, wearing a cape. I knew the character well, thanks to the movie, which I saw last summer. I gave it four jelly beans. It was pretty good.

Suddenly, it came to me in a flash. I could see Zahra wearing a superhero cape.

I crossed out my first line and wrote again.

ZAHRA

~~Hi, I'm Zahra and welcome to the amazing world of compost!~~



***Hi, I'm Zahra. Otherwise known as...
Compost Girl!***

I was so excited I started humming, which is something I do when I'm happy. I don't even know I'm doing it sometimes. Franco got up and left. *Did I annoy him?*

I didn't care. I kept writing, and writing, and writing. An hour later, I had something that definitely looked like a script.

I couldn't wait to share it with Zahra and Aiko.



Chapter Nine

THE AWFUL STINK

“Then, when someone is about to put something wrong in their compost, like a piece of plastic or a bottle cap, Compost Girl swoops in to save the day. She also helps people learn how composting can help make the world a ‘cleaner and happier’ place.”

I was standing in front of the chalkboard in Zahra’s basement playroom explaining my new idea.

I stopped talking and looked at Aiko and Zahra.

“What do you think, girls? Do you like it?”

Aiko seemed excited, especially about the costume. While I was talking, she’d grabbed a piece of paper and a pencil from her backpack and started drawing up a sketch.



“Compost Girl’s cape should be green because it’s the color of trees and grass,” said Aiko.

“That’s awesome, Aiko,” I said. I could tell she was glad to finally be doing something she liked.

Zahra, sitting in her favorite purple beanbag chair, hadn’t said anything yet. Her chin was resting on her hand and she was frowning.

Uh oh. Did she not like it? I was worried.

Finally, her eyes widened. “I get it,” she said, and jumped out of her seat.

“I’m an ecological superhero. Saving the Earth, one rotten banana peel at a time!”

“Exactly,” I replied, laughing. “Write that down. It’s funny. We can add it to the script.”

Zahra nodded. “I also like your idea of drawing the flowchart on the blackboard,” she said. “It’s the science part, which is important. Plus, Mrs. Pinto loves charts. It will boost our grade.”

“Totally,” I said. I was feeling good about the movie again. Mienna, The Director, was back





and her friends were listening. Even Zahra.

“One big problem,” said Zahra, suddenly looking frown-y again.

My heart froze.

“Maybe we should move the chalkboard upstairs,” she suggested. “It’s kind of dark and messy down here. It’s not like a real classroom.”

I looked around. She was right. There were lots of boxes, old toys, dusty shelves and even a few cobwebs. The windows were small and it was a bit dark. But the more I thought about it, it was *even more perfect*.

“Because it’s not a classroom,” I explained, getting even more inspired. “It’s Compost Girl’s secret hideaway. All superheroes have top-secret places where they hang out and figure out how they’re going to conquer the terrible villain doing bad and evil stuff all over town.”

“So who is this terrible villain?” Zahra asked.

“Yeah,” said Aiko. “A terrible villain sounds exciting.”



My mind went blank. It was a really good question.

Lizard Man has Scowl Face. The Unicorn Riders have The Evil Wizard. Who is Compost Girl's archenemy?

"I don't know," I admitted.

I turned to Zahra, since she is the compost expert.

"What 'bad and evil stuff' can happen in a compost pile?"

"You can forget to turn it," replied Zahra. "And not add enough dry leaves and nitrates so it's too wet. Then the compost will start to smell really bad, like rotten eggs."

"Her enemy is a rotten egg?" Aiko asked. She wasn't convinced.

"No, it's The Awful Stink," I blurted out. "An enemy to home composters across the world!"

Zahra and Aiko both laughed. They liked it. My movie "hook" was getting better and better.

"But we'll need someone to play The Awful



Stink,” I suddenly realized. I looked at Aiko. “Can you act super scary and smelly?”

“Just ask my mom at bath time,” Aiko answered with a grin. “It’s also another costume. I’m going to be busy! If I were a scary rotten egg smell, what I would I look like?”

“I’m sure you’ll figure it out,” I said.

The movie was back on track.



Chapter Ten

THE BIG ACTION SEQUENCE

“Action*!” I shouted.

It was the last day of shooting the compost movie, now officially called, “The Sometimes Smelly Adventures of Compost Girl.”

The scene was Zahra’s backyard. Uncle Jack’s tripod worked perfectly. Having my arm free, I could really pay attention to what was going on.

Zahra looked adorable in her superhero costume. Along with her green cape, she was wearing a brown skirt and yellow tights. Aiko said she wanted Compost Girl to look like all the food you put in your compost. Banana peels, brown leaves, and green cucumber skins. It looked much cuter than it sounded. And that wasn’t even the best part.



Using fabric markers, Aiko had drawn a worm in the shape of a “C” on Compost Girl’s T-shirt.

Holding a yellow watering can, Compost Girl showed us the importance of watering the compost from time to time. Zahra followed my new script perfectly: “Some people water their flowers; I water my compost!” It was a really sweet scene.

“Cut!” I shouted. “Good stuff Zahra.”

I felt in charge, in control, and like a real movie director. That was the confidence Uncle Jack must have been talking about. It was a great feeling.

The last part of the movie was trickier. It was the big action sequence* where The Awful Stink appears.

As I put the watering can beside a big sycamore tree, Aiko came out of the house.

“Do I look smelly and scary enough?” she asked.

Aiko was dressed like a fried egg and wearing



a zombie mask she'd borrowed from her brother. I don't know how she put it all together, but it worked.

“Super disgusting and brilliant!” I told her.

“Thanks!” Aiko beamed.

Zahra's Mom was playing “The Lady Who Doesn't Stir Her Compost.”

“I hope I have my lines right,” she said, looking concerned.

Zahra's Mom had been practicing the part all morning. She was very excited about getting a role in our movie. “I've always dreamed of being a movie star,” she told us.

Everybody got into their places.

“Action!” I shouted.

“Oh dear, what's wrong with my compost?” said The Lady Who Doesn't Stir Her Compost. “It's so stinky I'm afraid to go out there.”

That's when Aiko, in her fried egg-zombie costume, jumped out from behind the compost.

“Bwahaha!” she cackled with her very best super-villain laugh. “Your silly compost is finished.





Take a whiff of *this!*” Aiko shouted, charging at Zahra’s mom.

“Putrid!” cried The Lady Who Doesn’t Stir Her Compost.

As The Awful Stink chased her around the garden, Zahra’s mom took a clothespin from the clothesline and put it on her nose. This wasn’t in the script. She was improvising*.

I laughed so hard, I fell on the ground holding my stomach.

Zahra laughed, too. She couldn’t even say her lines, “Don’t be afraid dear lady. Your compost isn’t ruined. I know just how to conquer this Nose-Offending Nastiness! You just have to add some brown stuff and stir,” without cracking up.

But poor Aiko couldn’t see anything with her Awful Stink mask on.

“What are you guys laughing at?” she asked.

That made Zahra and me laugh even harder.

After a few takes*, we took a break and sat down on the grass to look at what we’d done. We all hunched over the camera as I rewound, and



then pressed, “PLAY.”

“I can’t see my mom’s head,” said Zahra, suddenly serious.

“Me neither,” said Aiko. “It’s cut off or something.”

They were right. Zahra’s mom is tall and Uncle Jack’s tripod obviously wasn’t high enough. It was a big problem.

I thought for a bit and looked around the yard. Then I realized we were sitting right under the solution.

The sycamore tree in Zahra’s yard is one of those thick, old trees that look like they came out of a fairy tale. It has a low, wide branch that’s the perfect height. I decided it could be my new tripod. I carefully set the camera down on the branch.

“OK people,” I said, picking up my clapper board*. (Uncle Jack had one in his apartment and thought I’d enjoy using it.) “The Awful Stink Attacks: Take Two!”

This time, the scene was even better because everyone knew what was supposed to happen and



nobody laughed when they weren't supposed to.

“Great work everyone!” I said. But when I reached to take the camera down from the tree, it slipped out of my hand. After that, everything kind of happened in slow motion, except this wasn't a movie. It was really happening.

In shock, I watched as the camera fell towards the ground. I fumbled to catch it, but I was too slow.

Ker-plunk! The camera landed right in the watering can. And there was still water in it!

I fished the camera out as fast as I could. It was only in there for a few seconds. I hoped I had gotten to it in time. I quickly dried it off with my jacket.

“Is it going to be OK?” Zahra asked.

“I'm sure it's fine,” I said. “That's a wrap. We've finished our movie.”

I acted totally calm, but the truth is, *I was freaking out.*

Had I broken Franco's camera?



Chapter Eleven

RICE TO THE RESCUE

“Is it going to be OK? Please tell me it’s going to be OK!” I said, rushing into the kitchen where my mother was unloading the dishwasher.

I handed her the camera and told her exactly what happened.

“Who puts a fancy video camera in a tree?” she asked me. She seemed a bit shocked.

It really did sound like the dumbest idea ever.

“It would have been OK, though, if it hadn’t been for the watering can,” I added. “That was just bad luck.”

Mom called Dan into the kitchen and told him what happened.

“You put the camera in a tree?” Dan repeated, also confused.



I nodded. I just felt so bad. All that Movie-Director confidence I had felt melted away and I started to cry.

“Don’t panic, Mienna,” said Dan. “I have an idea.” He pulled a bag of rice out of the cupboard. He poured some rice into another bag and placed the camera inside.

“Are you sure that’s a good idea?” my mom asked him.

“It’s supposed to absorb the water,” Dan explained.

I couldn’t believe how nice Dan was being about this. It was his son’s very own camera and I’d broken it.

“I once dropped my cell phone in the lake on a canoe trip and I managed to get it working again. That was a year ago. It’s still working.”

That gave me hope. I sat down at the table and stared at the bag of rice with the movie camera buried inside.

“Watching it isn’t going to make it dry it out any faster,” my mom said.





After that, Dan made Mom and me dinner. Franco was at a friend's house, doing homework, thank goodness. Mom offered to watch a movie with me, but I was too tired. I also didn't want to run into Franco when he finally got home.



The next morning when I woke up, the sun was shining outside my window. It looked like it was going to be a nice day. Swishy was awake too, swishing around his miniature sea castle. Then, with a gasp, I remembered the camera. I raced downstairs to the kitchen.

In the kitchen, Dan gently took the camera out of the rice and tried to turn it on. It was still not working

Tears welled in my eyes as Franco came downstairs for breakfast.

“You broke my camera?” He looked at me, totally stunned. Dan obviously hadn't told him.

“It was an accident,” I explained. “I will buy you a new one. I promise.”



I wasn't sure how many years of raking leaves and taking out the garbage for our neighbor Mrs. Milliken it would take to earn enough for a new movie camera, but I would try.

Franco didn't say a word. He just frowned, picked up the camera and walked out of the kitchen. A few seconds later, I heard his door shut upstairs.

Then the doorbell rang. Zahra was at the door. We had planned to meet in the morning to start editing the movie.

"The movie's gone?" she said, when I told her what happened. "All of it?"

Taking a seat at the kitchen table, Zahra looked concerned.

"But the Eco Fair is in two days," she said.

"I know," I replied. "I'm sorry. This is all my fault."

But, instead of being mad, Zahra took a deep breath. "We still have all our research," she said. "We can write everything up on poster boards. We'll redo the flowchart, too. It can be



more fancy than the one we did for the movie. It will be a Compost Information Booth, sort of like ‘The Problem With Plastic’ booth I did for the Science Fair back in the fall.”

“That can work,” I replied, feeling reassured. Zahra really was Compost Girl, a brave hero saving the Eco Fair Project from her other archenemy, The Careless Camera-Breaker.

“Do you have any colored markers?” Zahra asked. She wanted to get started on the new flowchart.

I went up to my room to get the markers. That’s when Franco came out of his room and into the hallway. He looked serious.

I took a breath. Was he going to yell at me?

“It’s fixed,” Franco said.

“Fixed?” I repeated. I couldn’t believe what I was hearing.

“Actually, not really,” he said. “Because it was never broken. It just needed a new battery.”

In the kitchen, everyone gathered round while Franco turned on the movie camera. This



time, the green light came on right away. It was back up and running!

Dan looked at my mom, sheepishly. “Hmmm. New battery.... Why didn’t I think of that?”

My Mom snorted and even Franco laughed.

“I also watched the movie,” said Franco, turning to face me and Zahra. “It’s pretty good. Funny, too.”

“It is?” I said. I was amazed. My stepbrother was complimenting me.

“I like stories with superheroes,” he said.

“I know. Your comic book inspired me,” I told him.

“Really?” Franco seemed surprised. “I thought you wanted me to get out of the kitchen the other day because I was annoying you.”

“No!” I replied. But I could see why he felt that way. I hadn’t been very welcoming to him. When I thought about the way I treated him on Jelly Bean Cinema Night, I cringed. He wasn’t the unfriendly one. *I was.*



“Does that mean we don’t need the extra flowcharts?” Zahra asked me.

I shook my head and Zahra put her markers away.

“That’s a relief,” she said.

“I also thought you guys might need this,” Franco said. He handed me a small white booklet. It was the manual for the camera.

“My mom finally found it in the back of a drawer. I figured you could use it to finish the movie.”

“Yes, we could,” I said. “Thank you.” I felt silly for not asking him in the first place.

When Franco went back up to his room, Zahra turned to me and said, “Your stepbrother is really nice.”



Chapter Twelve

A FIVE-JELLY BEAN MOVIE

There was no booing and no popcorn throwing at the Eco Fair.

The school gym was filled with booths featuring lots of fun ideas about how to make the world more environmentally friendly.

There was Yoga in the Gazebo, organic smoothie-making, and even how to build your own chicken coop. Nora, Billy, and Clive brought in a live chicken!

There were also booths on Climate Change and I have to say that Lerton Vandercroom's "Tsunami Simulator" was pretty impressive.

Then there was our booth. Our movie was playing on a big-screen TV that we had borrowed from the school audio-visual department.

Several kids and even a few teachers were



already watching. They were laughing and smiling.

“Great job Zahra!” said Lerton, whose team had dropped by to check out our booth. We had all agreed that Zahra should wear her Compost Girl costume and answer people’s questions.

“Thanks,” she replied. “Mienna was the director. The Compost Girl movie was her idea.”

“Well, I need a Compost Girl in *my* life,” said Mr. Fines, our principal. “I always get mixed up about what goes in the compost and what doesn’t. Compost Girl made it much easier to understand.”

Mrs. Pinto agreed. “Congratulations girls,” she said. “This is the very first movie ever screened at the Tall Tree Elementary Eco Fair.”

Despite all the ups and downs, our project was a big success.



The evening after The Eco Fair was a Jelly Bean Cinema Night.

I was pouring some jelly beans into a bowl on the coffee table when my mom came in.



“Should we invite Franco tonight? It could be a nice thing to do, after all he did for your mov——”

“Already done,” I said.

Franco bounded into the living room, holding a bowl of the JBC Combo.

“I hope I got it right,” he said.

“It’s impossible to mess up,” I said, diving my hand into the bowl before he could set it down on the coffee table. That’s when Dan rushed in.

“Sorry I got stuck in traffic,” he said. “Did I miss anything?”

“Don’t worry,” I told him. “We haven’t even started the movie.”

As Dan plunked himself down on the sofa, Mom gave me a sidelong glance, her eyebrows raised. She couldn’t believe what was happening.

I shrugged. “The more the merrier.”

Families can change. And family traditions can change with them. Like the Jelly Bean Cinema.

I picked up the remote and pressed “PLAY.” I was sure it was going to be a five-jelly bean film.



Epilogue

COMING SOON TO A THEATER NEAR YOU

It's ambitious, it's big, it's got more than three actors! It's my new movie. It's for a geology project.

Even my stepbrother, Franco, is going to play a role. That was part of our deal when he gave me his camera forever. Turns out lots of people want to be in the movies.

Aiko has already started on the movie poster.

What do you think?



THE JELLY BEAN CINEMA PRESENTS

TEMPLE

OF THE TOPAZ

Sometimes Rock Collecting Can Be A Dangerous Hobby...

Directed by MIENNA



Coming Soon

Featuring ZAHRA as the brilliant geologist, Dr. Ignacia Stone
Co-Starring AIKO, as Dr. Stone's gem-loving, rope-slinging
sidekick, Semi-Precious
And introducing FRANCO as The Evil Rock Stealer

Movie Word Glossary

*Mienna uses many words in this story about the magic of movies and movie-making. They are marked with this symbol * (an asterisk). Here are their meanings.*

action: *a command from the director which tells the actors to begin acting*

action sequence: *a series of exciting, very physical events in a movie*

admission: *being allowed to enter into a place (like a movie theater)*

angles: *the particular view of a person, scene, or object being filmed (for example: from above, below, sideways), as seen through the camera*

cameo: *a special appearance by someone in a movie for a short time*

cinema: *a theater where movies are shown*

clapper board: *a pair of boards, with a hinge that lets them open and close, on which a scene and “take” number is written; when closed, they make a “clap” sound that marks the start of filming each scene, for as many times (lots!) as it takes to get it right*



close-up: *a very close view of a person or object being filmed, as seen through the camera*

cut: *a command from the director to stop the filming of the movie*

director: *the person in charge of making a movie*

edit: *the cutting and pasting of scenes from a movie so it makes sense*

fantasy film: *a movie featuring improbable or impossible things (like unicorns)*

Hollywood: *a city in California that is famous for making movies*

improvising: *when an actor is not following the script but is making things up on the spot*

lines: *the words that an actor speaks, as written in the movie script*

location: *a place, other than the studio, where a movie scene is filmed (often called being “on location”)*

movie buff: *someone who loves watching movies*

rating: *a score of how good a movie is or how much someone has liked it*

scene: *one part of many in a movie, each happening in a different place. Together, they make up the entire story (similar to chapters in a book)*



screening: *the showing of a movie, TV show, or video*

script: *the story of the movie, written in a specific way, with descriptions of scenes and lines that the actors speak*

Shirley Temple: *a child actress who starred in movies from the 1930s (check out her movies—she’s adorable)*

wrap: *when a scene or the entire movie is finished shooting*

take: *filming a single scene in a movie. The same scene may be filmed many times until the director says there are enough “takes”*



Mienna keeps a journal of all the movies she has seen, along with her own jelly bean-rating system. Why not create your own Movie List and rating system? It could be Jelly Beans, Stars, Hearts, or something else that is special to you. You can choose Flowers, Unicorns...even Carrot Sticks! It's up to you.

these are **my** favorite movies:



these are **my** favorite movies:





The Power of a Girl

For every *Our Generation*[®] product you buy, a portion of sales goes to WE Charity's Power of a Girl Initiative to help provide girls in developing countries an education—the most powerful tool in the world for escaping poverty.

Did you know that out of the millions of children who aren't in school, 70% of them are girls? In developing communities around the world, many girls can't go to school. Usually it's because there's no school available or because their responsibilities to family (farming, earning an income, walking hours each day for water) prevent it.

WE Charity has had incredible success in its first 20 years. Together, we've built more than 1,000 school rooms, empowering more than 200,000 children with an education. As WE Charity continues to deepen its programming, it's focusing on creating sustainable communities through its holistic development model built on the five Pillars of Impact: Education, Water, Health, Food and Opportunity.

The most incredible part about this model is that roughly a quarter of WE Charity's funding comes from kids just like you, who have lemonade stands, bake sales, penny drives, walkathons and more.

Just by buying an *Our Generation* product you have helped change the world, and you are powerful (beyond belief!) to help even more.



Together we change the world.

WE Charity provided the factual information pertaining to their organization.
WE Charity is a 501c3 organization.



this is **OUR** story®



We are an extraordinary generation of girls.
And have we got a story to tell.

Our Generation® is unlike any that has come before. We're helping our families learn to recycle, holding bake sales to support charities, and holding penny drives to build homes for orphaned children in Haiti. We're helping our little sisters learn to read and even making sure the new kid at school has a place to sit in the cafeteria.

All that and we still find time to play hopscotch and hockey. To climb trees, do cartwheels all the way down the block and laugh with our friends until milk comes out of our noses. You know, to be kids.

Will we have a big impact on the world? We already have. What's ahead for us? What's ahead for the world? We have no idea. We're too busy grabbing and holding on to the joy that is today.

Yep. This is our time. This is our story.

www.ogdolls.com

About the Author

Laura Leigh Motte is a Montreal-based screenwriter and novelist. She recently won a jar of 143 jelly beans at a birthday party which she shared with her seven-year-old son Benjamin (which was only fair, since it was his birthday). There are none left. The Jelly Bean Cinema is her second Our Generation® book.

About the Illustrator

Passionate about drawing from an early age, Géraldine Charette decided to pursue her studies in computer multimedia in order to further develop her style and technique. Her favorite themes to explore in her illustrations are fashion and urban life. In her free time, Géraldine loves to paint and travel. She is passionate about horses and loves spending time at the stable. It's where she feels most at peace and gives her time to think and fuel her creativity.



The Jelly Bean Cinema became the book that you are holding in your hands with the assistance of the talented people at Maison Battat Inc., including Joe Battat, Dany Battat, Loredana Ramacieri, Sandy Jacinto, Laurie Gaudreau-Lévesque, Ananda Guarany, Cynthia Lopez, Véronique Casavant, Jenny Gambino, Natalie Cohen, Arlee Stewart, Karen Erlichman, Zeynep Yasar, and Pamela Shrimpton.





this is OUR story®

The Jelly Bean Cinema

Mienna™ loves movies. She loves going to the movie theater, too. In fact, she would see a movie every day of the week if she could. It certainly beats doing a boring homework assignment. Then she gets an idea; why not turn that boring assignment into a blockbuster movie?

But being a movie director (and working with your two best friends) is harder than Mienna thought. Her camera is wobbly. Her script needs more action. And how do you tell the star of your movie that she's The Worst Actor Ever?

Just when Mienna begins to find the creativity and confidence to tackle her Movie Director challenges, a problem comes up that could ruin everything....

It's impossible to separate **Our Generation**® characters from the generation of girls who read about and play with them, for they are one and the same.

They're changing the world by making their households greener. They're baking cupcakes to help charities. They're writing in their journals, practicing for recitals, doing cartwheels down the block and giggling with their friends until they can hardly breathe. **Our Generation** is about girls growing up together. "This is our story" reflects the community of these amazing girls as they laugh, learn and create the narrative of their own generation.

Ages 7 and up

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