

A CAT NAMED DOG AND A DOG NAMED CAT

A Comedy in One Act

by

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A Cat Named Dog and A Dog Named Cat

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Cast of Characters

Victoria Townsend.....12, a lovely young lady
Cat.....Victoria's dog (yes, dog)
DogVictoria's cat (yes, cat)
Benjamin Townsend.....40, Victoria's dad
Sergeant Pepper.....30, a state Wildlife Officer
Cougar.....appears in shadow only

Time: The present.

Place: Whidbey Island, WA

Setting: The play is staged on a unit set consisting of a living area that includes the kitchen and living area of a modest home in Langley, Washington. Specifically, a couch, a couple of wingback chairs, a kitchen counter and refrigerator, and a sunny window need to be seen. There needs to be two entrances/exits. One upstage center off the kitchen (going to the "backyard") and one stage left or right. For the exterior scenes, the action takes place in front of a transparent drop-down curtain that hides the interior set. The curtain should depict a wooded area on a nature trail somewhere on the island. Some of the action is performed behind the curtain with the players appearing only as shadows.

Playwright's note: Dog and Cat will speak directly to each other throughout the play. Sometimes they will "think out loud," but the humans are never aware of their discourse. Vicki will talk to the animals, but she cannot hear them nor does she respond to their speech except as an animal lover talking to a pet. Only the suggestion of the animals is necessary for the play to work; however, if the characters are in "full costume" of the animals they depict, that is fine too. The dog character is part Bloodhound and has big floppy ears. The cat character is a Calico cat. "Hey" is used to indicate that the dog is barking.

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SCENE I

SCENE: LIGHTS COME UP ON CAT AND DOG. Cat (a dog) is reclining on a couch with his feet up and is reading the L.L. Bean Catalog. Dog (a cat) is curled up on the floor in a pool of sunshine streaming through a window pane.

CAT

Yo, Dog, listen to this. "We begin with a soft inner spring pressure sensitive mattress, then cover it with a plush thick pile velvet fabric reminiscent of Old World splendor. The cover is attached with easy to open Velcro fasteners for easy removal and laundering. Dog and cat sleeping cushions can be personalized with your pet's name or initials for just \$5.00." Right, like I'm going to sleep in a doggie bed? I don't think so.

DOG

Hey, Cat, I'm trying to get some rest here. I don't get to sleep all day *and* all night like some of the good for nothings around here.

CAT

What the heck do you do out there all night every night anyway?

DOG

Are you not acquainted with the term, "cat around"?

CAT

Yeah, I've heard it. (A beat.) What does it mean, exactly?

DOG

Let's just say . . . it's what we cats do.

CAT

So, so it's like some kind of secret society—for cats only. Is that what you're saying?

DOG

You got it, my constant canine companion.

CAT

Well, you may not be aware of it, but in this country it is not only illegal, but unconstitutional, unethical, unfair, unjust, undignified and underhanded to exclude another from an organization based on age, sex, race, religion, gender identity or *species*.

DOG

Species?

CAT

I added that one myself. But it *is* unfair.

DOG

So, are you saying you'd like to go with me to a cat house?

CAT

Who said anything about a cat house?

DOG

If that's where I go?

CAT

Well, I don't know about a dog in a cat house, even a dog named Cat.

DOG

Then read your catalog and let *moi* catch some zees. I'm completely tapped out and I haven't the time or patience for your silly little canine fantasies.

CAT

Yeah, sure, I can dig it—no pun intended. Don't have to get all puffy about it. I know when I'm not wanted. Go ahead; catch some zees. (To himself.) Dog in a cat house. I don't know about that.

(He starts reading again.)

CAT

Yo, Fluffbudget, listen to this.

DOG

What now?

CAT

Check this out: "Our kitty blanket is reinforced with tough nylon fibers to resist ripping and is machine washable. It is accentuated with multi-colored piping for the suave professional look your cat deserves." What do you think?

DOG

Fine. Now leave me alone.

CAT

Couldn't you use something like that?

DOG

I suppose.

CAT

Okay, I'll dog-ear the page so Vicki will see it.

DOG

Whatever. I really don't care.

CAT

Bet you didn't know that's where the phrase—dog-ear—came from. Dogs. We made it up.

DOG

Didn't know. Don't care.

CAT

I do it all the time. Whenever I find something in the catalog I like, I dog-ear the page and "boom", just like magic, Vicki orders the thing. That's how I got all that neat stuff. I'll do it for you too; just tell me what you want.

DOG

So you have a doggie bed, which you don't sleep in; a silver watering bowl that you slobber all over; a collar you don't need because you never go anywhere and a rawhide chew bone which you *ate*. You are just so materialistic.

CAT

Well, what about you?

DOG

For me, a good night on the town—no strings attached—and I'm good to go.

CAT

To go where?

DOG

Wherever I want.

CAT

No biggie. I got my own territory right here.

DOG

What are you talking about—territory? You don't have jack squat; a fenced in backyard is your *territory*. I have the full run of this entire island.

CAT

Island? We live on an island?

DOG

Whidbey *Island*.

CAT

I didn't know that.

DOG

What did you think the "island" part stood for?

CAT

I knew it was *called* "island"; I just didn't know it *was* an island.

DOG

So now you know. And I can get some sleep. Big night ahead.

CAT

Yeah, yeah, go ahead. Get some shut-eye. I won't bother you again.

DOG

Cross you little doggie heart?

CAT (crossing his heart)

Cross my heart, yeah, okay, but—don't hope to die.

I'll take care of that part for you. DOG

Okay, cross my heart. CAT

And hope to die. DOG

You wish. CAT

(Cat goes back to reading.)

Yo, Dog, just one more thing and I'll leave you alone I promise. CAT

For crying out loud! What is it now? DOG

This little secret between you and Vicki. CAT

What secret? DOG

I heard her talking the other day; she said I should never know. CAT

I don't know anything about any secret. Now leave me be. DOG

I *distinctly* heard the word "secret" in her conversation and then she clammed up when I came in the room. What's up with that? CAT

Look, I'm not supposed to say anything, but . . . don't you have a birthday coming up or something? DOG

I dunno. CAT

DOG

You don't know when you were born?

CAT

No. I ain't no blueblood; I don't have papers or anything. How could I know?

DOG

Well—*she* knows.

CAT

And she's planning a little surprise party?

DOG

You didn't hear it from me. *Now* can I get some sleep?

CAT

All right! Won't hear another peep out of me. Surprise party; how about that?

(Cat goes back to reading his catalog. After a few moments, there is some NOISE OUTSIDE. Cat jumps off the couch, puts the catalog on a coffee table and goes over and sits on his doggie bed in the corner—like a good dog.)

VICKI (off)

Dog, I'm home. You'd better get ready for a big hug.

CAT (irritated)

"Dog, I'm home . . . better get ready for a big hug." Please.

VICKI (off)

Darn, where's that key.

CAT

Yo, Fuzz Ball, our master's home.

DOG

I hear her.

Don't you want to greet her or something?

DOG

She'll find me; she always does. And as for you, you've got to learn to play hard to get.

CAT

But don't you want to greet our master?

DOG

I am master of my own fate, and if by "greet" you mean would I like to lick and smell her, the answer is "no". I'd prefer not to. Her species is *way* too salty for my taste, and as for smell—well you should know. You have a far better sense of smell than I do.

CAT

So people don't smell so good. That's just the way they are; they can't help it. They're people. And just when they get halfway tolerable, they take a bath. What's that all about? Okay, be cool, here she comes.

(VICKI ENTERS. Cat sits up straight, wags his tale, smiles and begins panting. Dog doesn't move. Vicki rushes over to Dog and begins petting her. When Cat can't stand it any longer, he rushes over and begins running around Vicki's feet, licking and smelling her.)

VICKI (goes to the cat)

Oh, my precious Dog, I missed you so much; did you miss me?

DOG

Not really.

VICKI

Cat, stop that! (To Dog.) Have you been a good cat, my precious?

DOG

Define "good."

VICKI

You were out all night again. Where were you? Cat! Stop licking me; I don't want to smell like a dog! (To Dog.) I worry when you stay away so long Sweetheart.

CAT (mocking her)

"I worry when you stay away so long Sweetheart." You're killing me here.

VICKI

Cat, I missed you too.

CAT (hurt)

Just call me—*afterthought*.

VICKI

But you've got to cool it with the licking and smelling thing. Have you been a good, boy?

CAT (panting, smiling)

Hey! Yeah, yeah, I've been great. Been sitting right there in my little doggie bed all this time—more or less. Hey!

VICKI

I bet you need to go out.

(Cat runs to the back door and waits.)

CAT

Hey! Yeah, need to check my territory and all; it's been a while. I could use a little grub too. Hey!

VICKI

When you come in, I'll feed you.

CAT

Cool. I could eat a horse, which I realize might be an all too real possibility.

(Vicki lets Cat out the back door; then she goes back to pet Dog.)

VICKI

Dog, have you been nice to Cat? I want you to always be nice to Cat. He must never know our little secret. I don't know what he would do if he found out. He really is a wonderful companion for you—for both of us really, but he is just a dog after all. I mean he is very faithful, but, let's face it, he doesn't smell particularly good. And he goes around, you know—marking his territory—all over the yard. I mean does it make sense to "mark" a fenced in backyard?"

DOG

That's what I'm saying. But try to tell him that. He thinks it's the Louisiana Purchase out there for crying out loud. What a piece of work!

I think he's happy just to be here—

VICKI

Whether he's really wanted or not, right?

DOG

Cat is a good dog; you can't deny that . . .

VICKI

Oh yes I can.

DOG

. . . but he's not a cat.

VICKI

Never will be. Cat has no class.

DOG

He's not pure breed you know?

VICKI

I could tell.

DOG

Dad got him at the pound; he part hound—Bloodhound, I think.

VICKI

I know. He's nothing but a mutt—part Bloodhound, part—who knows? No breeding, no style, no class. No manners—always sticking his nose in other people's business, and I mean that in a literal sense.

DOG

If he didn't have us . . .

VICKI

He'd be just another stray mutt, right?

DOG

Hey! Hey! Let me in; business all taken care of out here—territory marked and so forth. I need some grub now—if it's not too much trouble. Hey, I know you're in there. Open the door. Hey!

CAT (off)

VICKI (letting him in)
Oh, you're a good boy. Give Mommy a kiss.

CAT
All right! See that, Dog? Who's king of the castle now?

(Vicki gets some treats, dry dog food and a can of salmon out of the cupboard. Cat comes over and sits down at her feet.)

VICKI
Okay Cat, how 'bout a trick. Sit!

CAT
I'm sitting already. Gimme the treat.

VICKI
Cat—Sit!

(Cat gets up.)

VICKI
No, don't stand. Sit!

CAT
Hey! I gotta stand before I can sit for crying out loud. Hey!

(Cat sits.)

VICKI
Gooood boy. Here's a treat. Now, sit up.

DOG
"Sit up."

CAT
Oh, please.

VICKI
Come on, Cat, sit up!

(Cat sits; Vicki gives him another treat.)

VICKI
That's my boy. You're such a good dog.

DOG
Roll over now.

VICKI
Now roll over.

CAT (rolling over)
This is just too much.

VICKI
Good dog! Now speak!

CAT
Hey! Hey!

VICKI
That's my good boy. Oh, you're so smart.

DOG
I don't think so.

VICKI (To Dog)
And for you my precious, you get a treat just for being *so* beautiful. Here.

CAT
What?

VICKI
Okay, let's see what we've got here. Cat, look at this: Bow-Wow Dog Chow—
filled with all kinds of vitamins and minerals and made from beef bone and
other . . . assorted animal by-products. Does that sound good or what?

CAT
I think I'll have to go with the "or what." (He nudges his bowl.) But fill'er up, I'm
used to it.

(Vicki fills Cat's food and water bowls. Cat
gobbles down all the food and gulps the
water, making a huge mess in the
process. He picks up the bowls and
shakes every last bit of food and drop of

water from them. Then he starts licking up the floor.)

DOG

Now that is just disgusting. The fact that they call it "chow" just about says it all.

CAT

Stuff's not that bad I'm telling you. I mean it's not like leftover prime rib, but it's not half bad if you're hungry.

DOG

Which you *always* are.

VICKI

Now, Precious, look what I've got for you. Gourmet Alaskan Sockeye Salmon packed in natural juices. Caught in pure icy Alaskan waters and supplemented with Vitamin A for you coat, Vitamin C for your teeth and bones, and E for your internal organs.

CAT

That would be your cat gut, just in case you end up as strings on a tennis racket. Now there's a pleasant thought. (Gets a look from Dog.) Just kidding.

(Vicki serves the canned salmon and puts it on the floor.)

VICKI (as she EXITS)

I'll be right back.

(Vicki EXITS. Dog gets up, crosses to the salmon, smells it, walks away, looks at it, walks around it again, but doesn't eat.)

CAT

Come on! You going to eat that or what?

DOG

Yes, I'm going to eat it.

CAT

Well, you don't have to stalk it. It's already dead, out of the can, and *in* the

CAT
If you don't eat it all, can I have what's left?

DOG
You had your dinner.

CAT
It wasn't enough; I'm still hungry.

DOG
How much is enough?

CAT
When it's all gone—all of it. Everything in the bowl, in the pantry, in the kitchen.
All of it.

DOG
Have you no self-control? No pride?

CAT
Not when it comes to chow.

DOG
Of course not. How chow bow-wow?

CAT
Is that from what—Shakespeare?

DOG
It doesn't matter.

(Dog starts to nibble on the salmon.)

CAT
So can I have what's left or not?

DOG
Look, Dog, just because I don't "wolf" everything down at once doesn't mean I don't want to come back later to finish it.

CAT
I don't understand "later."

DOG

And I don't understand how you can continue to force feed yourself until you quite literally can't hold another bite.

CAT

I'm a dog; that's what we do—eat ourselves into Bolivia.

DOG

Bolivia?

CAT

Something like that.

DOG

Oblivion not Bolivia. Bolivia is a state in South America.

CAT

Well, maybe that's the state I want to eat myself into.

DOG

Then be my guest.

CAT

Does that mean I can have your leftovers?

DOG

Okay, but don't let Vicki see you. She wouldn't understand.

CAT

Wouldn't understand what?

DOG

Why an intelligent cat would let a—dog eat her gourmet salmon.

CAT

You were going to say "dumb" dog weren't you?

DOG

That's not what I said.

CAT

But you were going to!

DOG

I didn't mean anything.

CAT

Yes, you did! "Dumb dog." You thought it and you meant it.

(Cat is hurt.)

DOG

I've seen dumber.

CAT

And I've see smarter cats than you Dog. I've seen cats that actually stop and look both ways before crossing the street. But not you, not the high priestess of the highway. You don't bother to look either way.

DOG

No automobile would dare do me any harm.

CAT

It's that kind of thinking that will have you pushing daisies in the wrong direction long before your time. You have to understand that when people get behind the wheel of an automobile, you don't dare get in their way.

DOG

Why, Cat, I'm touched. I didn't now you cared.

CAT

About you? I don't. I just can't stand the sight of a dead cat in the middle of the road—*any* cat.

DOG

You're all heart.

(Vicki ENTERS.)

VICKI

Cat, see what good manners Dog has; she doesn't spill her food all over the place. You should try to be a little more tidy.

DOG

"You should try to be a little more tidy."

CAT

I'll show you tidy you fancy feline phony. Hey! Hey!

VICKI

Cat! Stop that right now; bad dog. You leave Dog alone. She didn't do anything.

DOG

She gets on my nerves.

VICKI

Don't let him bother you, Precious. He doesn't mean anything; he's just being territorial.

CAT

Hey! I wasn't being territorial; I was insulted. Your high class furry friend is always putting on airs and putting me down. A dog can only take so much and keep on calling himself a dog.

(BEN, Vicki's dad, ENTERS. He's a contractor and is dressed in work clothes.)

BEN

Hi Honey.

VICKI

Hi Dad.

BEN (to the animals)

You two behavin'?

CAT

Oh yeah.

VICKI

Dog is, but Cat is acting weird.

BEN (petting Cat)

That right, Cat, you acting weird?

CAT

Hey! Dog brings out the weird in me.

BEN

Keep an eye on these two. A cougar was spotted last night on the north end of the island.

VICKI

A mountain lion?

CAT

Whoa! A mountain lion?

BEN

That's right—mountain lion, catamount, puma, cougar.

VICKI

Where did it come from?

BEN

There are plenty of them around, mostly up in the mountains. But this one could have crossed over from Vancouver—maybe rode the ferry. A big cat spoiled high tea at The Empress Hotel in Victoria not so long ago.

VICKI

What should we do?

BEN

Just keep an eye on your pets. This cat most likely will high-tail it back to the mountains when he sees all the people up north.

VICKI

Or come south? A lot fewer people down here.

BEN

Probably not. He's more likely to go back to where he came from.

VICKI

Can I walk the dog?

CAT

Hey! "Walk!" Did somebody say, "walk"?

BEN

Sure. You can walk Cat. But you'd better keep Dog in for a while.

DOG

I can take care of myself, thank you.

VICKI

Why?

BEN

Just as a precaution.

DOG

Not to worry. I have friends in the neighborhood.

VICKI

But the north end of the island is miles and miles from here.

BEN

A cougar can cover a lot of ground in a very short time.

VICKI

But surely somebody would see it.

BEN

They're usually not seen until they want to be seen.

DOG (sneaking up on Cat)

And then it's too LATE!

CAT (jumps)

Hey! Hey! Knock it off you stupid cat.

DOG

You are such an easy mark. You wouldn't last five minutes in the real world.

CAT

Yeah, and you do that again, you won't last five minutes in this one. (To Vicki)
We going to take that walk or what?

VICKI

Get your leash, Cat; we're going on a walk. Dog, you stay in.

DOG

What? "Stay in?" You can't be serious.

VICKI (To Cat)

We don't want that bad ole cougar to get Dog do we?

CAT

We don't?

VICKI

Get your leash, Cat. Let's go.

(Cat gets the leash and brings it to Vicki; she puts it on Cat and they go out the back door. Dog waits a minute and then follows them out. BLACKOUT.)

SCENE II

SCENE: LIGHTS COME UP ON Vicki and Cat a few minutes later. Vicki is walking Cat on a leash back and forth downstage in front of a transparent curtain showing a wooded trail. It is getting dark and eyes can be seen peering out from the woods. The forest is also alive with SOUNDS: an OWL, a COYOTE, DOGS BARKING in the distance, BIRDS TAKING FLIGHT, etc. Also, stalking Vicki and Cat, is Dog, creeping from bush to bush, watching, waiting for an opportunity to jump out and scare Cat. This is a nightly ritual that Dog loves and Cat hates. Cat glances around nervously as he treads the path.

VICKI

Relax Cat. I told Dog to stay home. She won't bother you tonight.

CAT

She always bothers me—whether she's here or not. You can't trust her; she's a cat for crying out loud. Probably out there right now stalking me.

VICKI

I told her to stay home, and she was in the house when we left.

CAT

"Told her to stay home?" That's like telling me not to scratch. She won't stay home. I know she's out there—watching me, getting ready to pounce, but I'm *way* ahead of her this time because I know she's out there. Hey! Hey! Come on Dog, gimme your best shot. Hey!

VICKI

Cat, stop that barking. You don't need to prove anything; it's just annoying. And there's nothing out there to bark at.

CAT

But it's what I do best: I bark. I don't need anything to bark at; I bark because I can.

VICKI

I hope that cougar doesn't show up around here; can you imagine that? A cougar right here on Whidbey Island.

CAT

Nope, can't imagine that, but I *did* know this was an island.

VICKI

If it does show up around here, you'll have to help me keep an eye on Dog.

CAT

Hey! What?

VICKI

Dog won't like it, but we'll have to keep her inside.

CAT

What about moi?

VICKI

You'll be fine. I can keep an eye on you; you can't leave the yard anyway, but I have *no* idea where Dog goes at night. She goes out and comes back with all her —trophies. I think she must hang out at the Ferry Dock to catch some of those awful things.

CAT

Let me get this straight: you want *moi* to look out for Dog?

VICKI

Dog, I think, maybe is too smart for her own good sometimes. We'll need to protect her.

CAT

Hey! Oh, sure, I'll be more than happy to do my part. Here cougar! Here cougar!

VICKI

I'll be depending on you. I know Dog would do the same for you.

CAT

Of course she would. She'd like nothing better than to see me hanging from the jowl of a vicious cougar. Where is the darn cat anyway? Almost forget about her.

(Dog is still stalking them in the shadows,
tracking them back and forth across stage

as they continue their walk. Cat is sniffing the ground as they go along. He suddenly stops, sniffing the ground carefully.)

CAT

Whoa! Hold the phone! What is *that*? I've never smelled anything like that before.

VICKI

What is it, Cat?

CAT (looking around cautiously)

Hey! I dunno—something . . . different. Nobody I know from around here that's for sure.

(It is nearly DARK now. In the darkness, high up in a tree, two bright eyes suddenly appear. Cat shivers and lets out a low growl.)

CAT

Grrr. Hey! Hey!

VICKI

What is it, Cat? You smell something?

CAT (turning for home)

Hey! Something, but I don't know what. Hey! Let's get outta here.

VICKI

It's getting dark; we'd better start for home.

CAT

Good idea. Home is where the chow is.

(Cat has forgotten all about Dog now and is looking out for this new danger he senses as he pulls Vicki along the path. Dog is still stalking them in the shadows.)

VICKI

Cat, slow down! What's the hurry? (She stops Cat and kneels down.) Now listen VICKI (continuing)

to me: you have to promise to watch out for Dog; promise me you won't let her out no matter what she says. I know she can be very persuasive, but just ignore her. This is for her own good.

CAT (looking around nervously)

Hey! Hey! Okay, Okay. I promise. Now let's get home. Something rotten in the State of Washington here, and I don't want to find out what.

VICKI

Okay, I'll hold you to your word—okay? Now don't let me down.

CAT

Hey! Hey!

(They start off again.)

VICKI

Look, we're almost there.

(Just as Cat lets his guard down and starts pulling for home, Dog jumps out of the shadows and scares him out of his wits.)

CAT

Holy Toledo! Dog will you knock that stuff off!

(Dog is laughing uncontrollably.)

DOG

Got you again!

VICKI

Dog, shame on you. You know how Cat hates that.

DOG

Why do you think I do it?

CAT

I'll get you for this, Dog. Mark my words, I'll make you pay. I thought we were friends, but you are just plain—mean sometimes. I'm through with you; no more Mr. Nice Dog. I'm going to give you exactly what you deserve from now on.

DOG

What I deserve? The undying devotion of a hound of questionable breeding; I think I *deserve* a little more than that.

CAT

And you're going to get it!

VICKI

You two stop that bickering and get inside now. Dog, you owe Cat an apology. Now get in the house, both of you.

DOG

Hey, Cat, tell our master I'll see you guys later tonight or in the morning. If I go in now, I know I won't get back out, and I've got my nightly rounds to make. So long, Sucker.

(Dog runs off.)

VICKI

Dog, you come back here right now! I don't want you out tonight. Dog. Dog! (A few beats.) Oh, she is such a bad dog.

CAT

Right. Remember that: bad dog. *Bad* Dog. *Real* bad dog. Wait? What am I saying?

VICKI

Do you think she'll be all right? You don't think that cougar is around here do you?

CAT

Naw, that cougar is probably back in the mountains by now. And yet . . . Hey!

VICKI

Okay, but you listen for her; when she gets home, let her in.

CAT

Yeah, sure. I'll let her in. Stupid cat.

VICKI

You will let her in, won't you?

CAT

Hey! Hey! Whatever you say. You're the boss.

Okay, let's go in. That darn cat!

VICKI

BLACKOUT

SCENE III

SCENE: Later that night. LIGHTS COME UP ON Cat sleeping on the couch in the living area. The back door is open, and a porch LIGHT is shining in through the screen. After a moment, Dog moves into the light on the porch. Dog has a dead rodent of some kind in her mouth. She drops the animal and scratches on the screen.

DOG

Hey, Cat, it's me. I'm back. Open the door.

(Cat opens one eye, listens and smiles.)

DOG

Cat. Hey Cat! I know you're in there. Let me in; I'm beat. Got a little surprise for you too.

CAT

Surprise?

DOG

Yeah, come on over. I'll show you. You'll like it.

CAT

No, I don't trust you. Go away.

DOG

Cat! Come on; I'm sorry about the stalking thing. I can't help it anymore than you can help sniffing everybody up all the time. It's what I do; I'm a cat. I've got to hunt; it's fun.

CAT

You don't have to jump out and scare me!

DOG

You're right, I don't. And I won't do it again. Let's call it even.

CAT

Even? How is it even? I can't take a walk in peace because I know you're stalking me. If I wasn't bigger and stronger and better lookin' than you . . .

DOG

Whoa. Whoa! Hold it right there. Better lookin'?

CAT

That's right.

DOG

Says who?

CAT

I can't say; I'm sworn to secrecy.

DOG

You are such a lousy liar. Now just let me in. I'm beat.

CAT

Okay, but I don't want the surprise—whatever it is.

DOG

What? No surprise; I got it just for you. A nice big fat juicy wharf rat.

(Cat crosses and opens the door.)

CAT

Leave it on the porch. It *is* dead, isn't it?

DOG (entering)

Oh yeah, guts are hanging out all over the place . . .

CAT

I get the picture.

(Ben ENTERS in his PJs; he's half asleep.)

BEN

What is all the racket down here? Is Dog back?

(Ben goes to the back door and steps out on the porch. He steps on the slippery guts of the rat and slides across the porch.)

BEN

Oh, no! What in the world is that . . . oh for crying out loud! Dog! Dog, I've warned you about this.

CAT

That is so disgusting!

(Vicki ENTERS.)

VICKI

What is all the commotion?

BEN

That darn cat just left a rat on the back porch, and I stepped on it—slid halfway to China on wharf rat guts.

VICKI

Oh, Dog, my precious, you're back. I was so worried.

DOG

I'm fine. It's the rat population you should be worrying about?

BEN

I want that cat kept in at night! Understand? (Exiting.) I don't know why your mother ever got that animal.

VICKI

You've done it now, Dog. He's mad. He means it too. Like it or not, you are going to become a house cat, and that is final!

DOG

A house cat! How humiliating is that? What about my friends, my feline friends in the field?

CAT

Hey! Maybe they'll let you out on a leash in the back yard. Hey!

VICKI

Don't make fun, Cat. This is going to be hard for Dog.

DOG

A cat on a leash. I'll be a prisoner in my own home.

CAT

It's not that bad; one square meal a day, treats, early to bed, no chores, really, the life of Riley.

DOG

Who's Riley?

CAT

I—don't have the slightest idea. It's just an expression; I saw it on cable.

DOG

Well, I don't like it one bit. *They'll never take me alive!*

CAT

You're being overly dramatic, Dog.

DOG

I saw that on cable too. What I mean is: they'll never keep me hemmed up in this place. I'm a cat of the world.

CAT

Was a cat of the world.

DOG

We'll see about that!

VICKI

All right you two, back to bed. We'll talk more about this tomorrow.

BLACKOUT

SCENE IV

SCENE: The next day, late. LIGHTS
COME UP ON Dog and Cat in the living
area. Cat is relaxing on the couch, leafing
through another catalog. Dog is pacing
nervously back and forth across the
upstage screen door.

DOG

I'm gonna get outta this place if it's the last thing I ever do.

CAT

Cable?

DOG

MTV.

CAT

I thought so. Relax. Kick back. You're not going anywhere and you know it. I'll
get the cards; we'll play some poker.

DOG

I don't want to play poker.

CAT

Why not?

DOG

You mean aside from the fact that you cheat?

CAT

I don't cheat!

DOG

Then explain to me how you ended up with *five* aces in a hand last time we
played.

CAT

Because that's what it took to beat the four you were holding.

DOG

Okay, so we both bend the rules a little. No big deal.

CAT

So, you wanna play or what?

DOG

No. No. I'm nervous as a—

CAT

Cat in a room full of rockin' chairs?

DOG

No, no, not that.

CAT

As a cat on a hot tin roof?

DOG

Worse than that. I'm going crazy in here. I've got to get out.

CAT

You on that catnip again?

DOG

No! No, I swear it. I'm clean, haven't touched the stuff for weeks.

CAT

Well, you're acting mighty peculiar—even for a cat.

DOG

Look, Cat, you've got to help me. I'm going nuts cooped up like this; I've got to get out. I want to live!

CAT

You're livin', Dog. You're just not running around the neighborhood like—like an alley cat.

DOG

Don't start knocking alley cats; they have their place.

CAT

And *you* want to be out there in it.

DOG

Is that so wrong—to want to take my rightful place on The Great Chain of Being?

CAT

The great what?

DOG

Never mind. Just help me get out of here, okay?

CAT

No. I can't! I promised Vicki.

DOG

Promised Vicki? You're a dog.

CAT

Dog or not, I still have my honor.

DOG

Honor? You poop in the back yard and lick your own—never mind what you lick. You call that honor?

CAT

I just do what I have to do to keep on calling myself a dog.

DOG

Will you stop it; you're beginning to sound like Clint Eastwood for crying out loud.

CAT

My hands are tied. Mum's the word. I will not break my promise.

DOG

Look, how about if—I—let you in on a little secret.

CAT

What secret?

DOG

What Vicki and I were talking about that day you overheard us.

CAT

You already told me.

DOG

No, I didn't; I made up the birthday thing. I—no, no. I shouldn't have brought this up. Bad idea. Forget it.

CAT

Forget what?

DOG

What I didn't tell you.

CAT

How can I forget something you didn't tell me.

DOG

Just skip it, okay? I never should have said anything. I'm sorry I brought it up.

CAT

Well, if it's not a surprise party, what is it?

DOG

Forget it! Okay?

CAT

Okay. You don't have to get sore. (A few beats.) Look, you just need to adjust your mindset. This is not a bad place to be. If you'd promise not to run off, I know Vicki would take you on a walk with us. Maybe she would let us out in back yard to play—if you wouldn't run off. What'd you think?

(Vicki ENTERS and goes to Dog, kneels down and strokes her.)

VICKI

There you are my precious kitty. Now staying inside isn't so bad is it?

DOG

It's awful. I'm dying in here.

VICKI

You'll get used to it. And you have Cat for a companion. You couldn't find a better friend anywhere.

Hey! Hey! Hear that?
CAT

I heard.
DOG

Now, Dog, I got Dad to settle down, but you're still not going out at night. If mom had been here and slipped on that rat, well—we'd both be in the dog house.
VICKI

Hey! Watch it.
CAT

So consider yourself lucky.
VICKI

(There's a KNOCK at the side door. Vicki opens it; Dog follows her and tries to sneak out; Vicki grabs her.)

Dog, stop that! (A beat.) Yes.
VICKI

Who is it, Honey?
BEN (off)

It's Sergeant Pepper with the Wildlife Service, Ben.
PEPPER

Come in, please. (To Dog.) Dog, stop that! You're not getting out.
VICKI

That's a cat, Missy.
PEPPER (entering)

(Pepper's dressed in the uniform of a Wildlife Officer and he's carrying a rifle.)

VICKI

Are you sure?

PEPPER

Yes, Miss. I've been in this business for quite a few years, and that is definitely *and* defiantly, a cat.

VICKI

Hear that Dog, you're a cat.

PEPPER (pointing to Cat)

That's a dog over there—that critter with the floppy ears.

CAT

Hey! Hey!

(Ben ENTERS.)

BEN

What's going on, Sergeant? Why the heavy artillery?

PEPPER

Don't want to alarm you folks, Ben, but we're thinking that cougar has found its way down here, and I'm just carrying some tranquilizing darts in this thing—just in case.

CAT

That's what that smell was—a cougar. Whoa! Hey!

BEN

Did someone see it?

PEPPER

No, no sighting. But Hack Brown found what was left of a doe on his place off Langley Road. And some domestic animals are missing: Frank Pierce and Justin Forest are both missing cats.

DOG

Justin Forest? That's where Tabby lives. Tabby! Tabby is missing?

PEPPER

Both *cats* went out last night, and didn't come back this morning. We're just considering them—missing for now.

VICKI

You hear that, Dog. Two cats are missing! Probably killed by that cougar.

PEPPER

We don't know that for a fact.

VICKI

What else could it be?

DOG

Not Tabby. Tabby is my running mate, my best friend.

PEPPER

It could be any number of things: hit by a car, stuck somewhere in a tree, maybe they just ran off. *Cats* are like that.

VICKI

But you said that a deer was eaten?

PEPPER

More of less.

VICKI

What should we do?

PEPPER

Just keep your—pets inside until this blows over, especially at night. Just as a precaution.

BEN

We will, Sergeant. Thanks for stopping by.

PEPPER

No problem. Now, I've got to go—lot of ground to cover. Getting the word out.

BEN

Could you use a hand? Vicki and I would be glad to help.

PEPPER

Sure, if it's not inconvenient. There are a lot of people with domestic animals that need to know what's going on.

BEN

Sure, let's go Vicki.

(Dog bolts, but Vicki catches her.)

VICKI

Oh no you don't, Dog. You're not going anywhere.

DOG

But Tabby might be in trouble. I know where he hangs out; I have to warn him!

VICKI

Cat, you keep Dog in. You hear me? I don't want either of you to take one step outside this house without me. Understand?

CAT

Hey! Hey! You couldn't pull me out there with a chain, not with a cougar on the prowl.

BEN

Let's go! We've got a lot of ground to cover.

(The three EXIT.)

DOG

Cat—

CAT

Don't *even* start on me. I'm not letting you out.

DOG

Yes, you are.

CAT

I can't open the door anyway.

DOG

You can too; the back door. All you have to do is stand on your hind legs and flip the latch on the screen with your nose. You do it all the time.

CAT

Then I *won't* do it! I promised Vicki, and I'm a dog of my word.

DOG

Cat, you don't understand! Tabby is my best friend; I have to find out what's happening. Maybe I can help.

Not by getting eaten. Sorry. CAT

I'd do it for you. DOG

You would not. You wouldn't give me the time of day. CAT

Yes, I would. After Tabby, you're my best friend. Honest. DOG

Don't try to flatter me. Cats don't have best friends. CAT

This one does. I mean it, Cat; I'll do anything for you. (A beat.) Want some salmon? And, okay, I *do* have a little stash of catnip. Want some? Make you feel real—peppy. DOG

Stop it! CAT

Cat, please, let me out. Tabby needs me. DOG

You don't know that. For all we know, Tabby might already be— CAT

Don't say it. It's not true. He just needs help, and I'm the only one who knows where he hangs out. Poor guy's probably scared half to death. Please, let me go. DOG

Dog, I can't. What if something happened to you. Vicki would never forgive me. CAT

She'll never forgive you anyway. DOG

For what? What are you talking about? CAT

I can't say. DOG

Can't or won't. CAT

Won't. DOG

Why not? CAT

It's a secret—*the* secret. DOG

About my surprise party? CAT

No, that's not it; there's no party. I already told you. I made that up. DOG

Why? Why would you make something like that up? CAT

Personal reasons. And I promised Vicki I wouldn't tell. DOG

Okay, I can respect that. CAT

On the other hand . . . DOG

On the other hand what? CAT

On the other hand, you *really* want to know this secret and I *really* want out. DOG

Yeah, that's true. CAT

Look, if I tell you the secret will you let me out? DOG

The *real* secret? CAT

DOG

Yeah, yeah, the real one. I tell you the real secret and you unlatch the door.

CAT

I dunno.

DOG

Look at it like this: You're *not* letting me out. You're simply unlatching the door. I'm going out on my own.

CAT

That's putting a pretty fine line on it.

DOG

But a valid one, nonetheless. Your promise was "not to let me out", which you're not breaking. I'll let myself out.

CAT

Once I unlatch the door.

DOG

Do you want to know the secret or not?

CAT

I thought curiosity was supposed to kill the *cat*, not the dog.

DOG

Works both ways. I suppose it depends on the cat.

CAT

And the dog. (A few beats.) Okay, tell me.

DOG

Unlatch the door first.

CAT

No way!

DOG

You don't trust me?

CAT

Why should I?

DOG

Good point. (A beat.) Okay. Now listen, don't take this personal. It doesn't apply to you personally; it would be the same for *any* dog.

CAT

Is it that bad?

DOG

Look, maybe we shouldn't do this. Maybe I can find a way out on my own. I'll check the upstairs windows.

CAT

No. No! A deal's a deal. You can't back out now.

DOG

Cat, you don't want to know this secret.

CAT

I do now!

DOG

Okay, but don't blame Vicki. She's just a kid; kids don't know what they want.

CAT

Just tell me!

DOG

Okay. Vicki—never wanted a dog. She wanted a cat; she wanted me. She saw me in the window at the pet shop.

CAT

That's a lie! This is another one of your fantastic feline fabrications.

DOG

No it's not; I wish it was.

CAT

Then why am I here?

DOG

Because Ben didn't think a cat would make a very good pet; you know, "father knows best." So, he got Vicki a dog—you— at the pound, instead of a me.

CAT

What?

DOG

Let me finish. Vicki was so upset about not getting me that she named you, "Cat." When her mom saw how upset Vicki was, she went to the pet shop and got me a couple of days later. And for whatever reason, Vicki named me, "Dog."

CAT (stunned)

Vicki never wanted me?

DOG

She does *now*.

CAT

Yeah, now that she can't get rid of me. But she never really wanted *me!*

DOG

That's the whole sordid tale. Now don't be getting yourself into some kind of canine funk, because Vicki wants you. She likes you. She walks you every day; she feeds you, pets you, washes you, and gets all that stuff from the catalog for you. She's a devoted master; a dog's best friend.

CAT

She didn't *want* me?

DOG

Will you knock it off with the "she didn't want me" routine? It's getting really tiresome, and it's not true. Like I said: kids don't know what they want from one day to the next. In another week, she might not have wanted me. The week after that—maybe she wants a penguin. Who knows?

(Cat goes over to the doggie bed, lies down and starts whimpering.)

DOG

Hey, Cat, before you drown in your tears, can you get that latch for me? Like you said: "A deal's a deal." So start dealing.

(Cat gets up trips the latch. Then he goes back to his doggie bed whimpers.)

DOG

Thanks, Cat. I won't forget this.

CAT

I won't either—no matter how hard I try. (Dog EXITS.) Don't let the cougar get you; yeah, like I should care. Stupid cat. Go on Mr. Cougar; you can eat every darn cat on this island for all I care.

BLACKOUT

SCENE V

SCENE: An hour later. LIGHTS COME UP ON Cat curled up in his doggie bed; he is sleeping and whimpering as if having a nightmare. After a moment, Ben, Sergeant Pepper and Vicki ENTER.

PEPPER

Thanks guys for all the help; I couldn't have done it without you.

(Pepper and Ben step back out on the front porch, just off stage.)

VICKI

Hey, Cat, get up; what's wrong with you? Aren't you going to greet me?

(Cat doesn't move.)

VICKI

Cat, what's wrong?

(Cat whimpers and buries his head under his paws.)

VICKI

Cat! What in the world—oh, has dog been talking to you?

(Cat whimpers and Vicki looks around.)

Dog? Dog, did you tell Cat something that was just between us? Did you let the cat out of the bag? Dog, where are you? Here doggie. Here doggie.

(She checks the usual hiding places.)

VICKI

Oh no! Cat, you didn't let Dog out?

CAT

Hey! I just unlatched the door—she went out on her own.

VICKI

Knowing there's a cougar out there, you let her out?

CAT

Hey! No, no. Lemme explain.

VICKI

Oh, Cat, how could you? Dad. Dad! Dog is missing!

(Ben and Pepper ENTER.)

BEN

What?

VICKI

It's Dog. Cat let her out.

PEPPER

It's okay, Missy, we'll find him.

VICKI

Her?

PEPPER

Fine. What does this—dog?—look like?

VICKI

Like a Calico cat because Dog *is* a cat—a cat named Dog.

BEN (To Pepper)

Don't ask.

PEPPER

Okay. So, we've got a Calico . . .

VICKI

Cat!

Named "Dog."

BEN

Lost in the neighborhood.

PEPPER

VICKI
With a cougar on the loose. And Dog isn't lost; she's knows this island like the back of her paw. She's just—hiding. We'll never find her.

PEPPER
Yes, we will, Missy.

VICKI
How?

PEPPER (nodding to Cat)
We'll use that—critter there with the big feet and floppy ears to track him—her down.

VICKI
"Cat?"

PEPPER
If you say so.

VICKI
He's a *dog*, but his name is "Cat."

CAT
Don't ask. It will break my heart to hear that story again.

BEN (to Pepper)
You think Cat can find Dog?

PEPPER (thinks, then)
I think that's what I think. Should be able to; lives in the same house with the darn—thing. Should know her scent better than anything.

VICKI
Hear that, Cat? We need you to track down Dog for us.

(Cat doesn't move.)

VICKI

Come on, Cat. You've got to do this for me.

DOG (yawning, to himself)

Hey! Why should I?

VICKI

Oh, Cat, I know what Dog told you, and I'm sorry you had to find out that way. But I don't feel like that now; you're the best! You never complain; you never misbehave. You're as faithful as—well, a bloodhound. And in spite of everything, Dog is your best friend and you know it. Of course she's aloof and spoiled, but she's a cat. And she's out there alone with a cougar on the loose. Now help us, please!

CAT (getting up)

Hey! Oh, all right. I wasn't doing anything important just now anyway. Follow me. Hey! Hey! This might be some fun.

(They all EXIT upstage.)

BLACKOUT

SCENE VI

SCENE: A few minutes later. LIGHTS COME UP ON Cat, Vicki, Ben and Pepper as they race back and forth across the stage in front of the transparent curtain several times. After the initial crossings, the rest of the scene will be played as SHADOWS behind the curtain.

BEN

That's it Cat. Find that old Dog.

PEPPER

Go Cat go!

CAT

Hey! Hey! I'm going; I'm going. I'm on that smelly cat's scent right now. I'm into it. Nothin' smells better than a cat to a dog, or a dog to a cat. Whatever!

VICKI

Hurry, Cat. Find Dog.

(Cat suddenly stops abruptly.)

CAT

Whoa! There it is—that smell again. The smell from last night and right on Dog's trail. The smell of the cougar; the roar of the cowed. Let's go! Hey! Hey!

(Everybody rushes off stage left or right following Cat. Now, behind the curtain in shadow, Dog ENTERS, sniffing the ground and looking around.)

DOG

Tabby! Tabby! Where are you, Buddy. You out here? Come on out; that cougar's nowhere in sight. Tabby?

(The large shadow of the cougar now ENTERS behind Dog, stalking her. They both cross and EXIT and then ENTER again going in the opposite direction. The cougar stalks dog in a zigzag fashion, getting closer and closer. Just as the cougar is about to pounce, Cat ENTERS opposite them, running to beat the band. He jumps right into the middle of the cougar and a terrible fight ensues. Ben, Pepper and Vicki ENTER. Vicki tries to grab Dog, but she jumps into the fray which continues with Dog and Cat alternately getting tossed out by the cougar and then running back in to help the other. Pepper raises his rifle and fires a tranquilizing dart into the pile of animals. The cougar, frightened by the shot, runs off and disappears.

DOG

That's it! Run off you cowardly cougar! Pick on someone your own size next time. You okay, Cat?

(Cat gets up. You can clearly see the tranquilizing dart embedded in his rear end.)

CAT

Yeah, I'm fine. My butt hurts little, and I just . . . feel like I could use a little nap. That's all. Yeah, I could use a little nappy on my soft inner spring pressure sensitive . . .

(Cat collapses into Vicki's arms.)

BLACKOUT

SCENE VII

SCENE: A couple of days later. LIGHTS COME UP on Vicki, Dog, and Cat. All three are on the couch. Cat has on several bandages; he and Dog are resting their heads on Vicki's lap as she reads to them from a catalog.

VICKI

How about this, Cat? "Our finest cashmere bow-wow cardigan with 100 percent genuine imported Spanish leather buttons and a large pocket with Velcro closure for carrying treats. Would you like one of those?"

CAT

Hey! Sounds nice. I'll take two. Hey!

VICKI

I'll get you two—one in beige and this one in hunter green will go nice with your eyes.

CAT

Whatever. I can't see colors anyway.

DOG

Hey, Cat, want some Alaskan salmon?

CAT

Hey! Hey! Now you're talking—maybe with some of those natural juices. And smoked, if you've got it. And turn on *Animal Planet* while you're up. (A beat.) Yeah, now *this* is more like it.

(LIGHTS COME DOWN SLOWLY with Vicki stroking Cat while Dog goes to get a bowl of salmon for her best friend.)

CURTAIN