

# CATS VS. DOGS

By Megan Orr

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# CATS VS. DOGS

*A Full Length Comedy*

**By Megan Orr**

**SYNOPSIS:** The alley between Park and Second has been a neutral zone for cats and dogs for decades. That is, until Charlie, a tough-talking orange tabby cat, arrives on the scene. This alley cat has a plan to take back their rightful territory: Cats vs. Dogs, a series of competitions to prove once and for all which pet is truly better. The prize? The winners control the alley for good. The dogs jump at the chance to create a cat-free alley and the competition is on. Birds even volunteer to serve as neutral, third-party judges. But are they really as objective as they seem? In the end, the cats and the dogs must learn to work together to take down the evil birds in their plan for total neighborhood domination.

**DURATION:** 75 minutes.

**TIME:** Modern-day.

**SETTING:** An alley in a city neighborhood.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(6-7 females, 8 either)*

- SOPHIE (f).....A cat; all-white American shorthair; prissy; believes she is the queen of the neighborhood; hypoallergenic. *(62 lines)*
- CUSTARD (m/f).....A cat; big brown fluff ball; speaks in a slow, Eeyore voice; loves to eat; gets renamed Meatball by CHARLIE. *(47 lines)*
- JELLYBEAN (m/f).....A kitten; gray striped; extremely hyper; easily distracted and chases everything; SABRINA calls him/her Kid. *(51 lines)*
- SABRINA (f).....A cat; all black Bombay; quiet, moves like a ninja; a little sullen and sarcastic; tired of always being treated like she's bad luck. *(66 lines)*

- CHARLIE (m/f) ..... An orange tabby cat; an alley cat; a vocal, charismatic salesperson, who has spent most of his/her life on the streets; tough-talking at times; doesn't let anyone push him/her around. *(97 lines)*
- ALEXA (f) ..... A calico cat; moves and speaks like an AI assistant (Alexa, Siri) and therefore often gets bossed around by the other cats. Is she an actual robot? No one knows. *(34 lines)*
- ROCKY (m/f) ..... A mostly white American bulldog; ambitious, a dreamer; envisions a world without cats; highly allergic to cats. *(60 lines)*
- PEPPER (m/f) ..... A dog; a beagle; happy and energetic; eager to please; extremely obedient. *(65 lines)*
- ANNIE (f) ..... A dog; a bloodhound; a feisty old girl; leader of the other dogs. *(104 lines)*
- SHADOW (m/f) ..... A dog; a black lab; dramatic and adventurous; wants to become an undercover spy, but is incredibly awkward and bumbling. *(50 lines)*
- KAREN (f) ..... A bird; the diabolical mastermind whose end goal is total animal world domination; bossy with a short fuse. *(111 lines)*
- KARLI (f) ..... A bird; flighty bird brain; talks like a valley girl but does everything Karen orders with a touch of sass. *(46 lines)*
- MOCO (m/f) ..... A bird; the muscle of the group; the strong, silent type... unless you push him/her too far. *(11 lines)*
- HUMAN (m/f) ..... A random passerby who loves animals and his/her cell phone. *(6 lines)*
- SIRI (f) ..... Offstage voice. *(1 line)*

**COSTUMES**

CUSTARD – light brown sweats; long-sleeved brown t-shirt; brown socks; light brown cat ears; brown cat tail; eyeliner whiskers

SOPHIE – white sweats, leggings, or yoga pants; long-sleeved white t-shirt; white socks; sparkly collar; white cat ears; white cat tail; eyeliner whiskers

JELLYBEAN – gray striped sweats, leggings, or yoga pants; long-sleeved gray t-shirt (may also be striped); gray socks; gray cat ears; gray cat tail; eyeliner whiskers

SABRINA – black sweats, leggings, or yoga pants; long-sleeved black t-shirt; black socks; black ears; black cat tail; eyeliner whiskers

ALEXA – patchy orange, black, and white sweats, leggings, or yoga pants; long-sleeved white t-shirt; white socks; orange, black, and white cat ears; orange, black, and white cat tail; eyeliner whiskers

CHARLIE – orange sweats, leggings, or yoga pants (with optional darker orange stripes); long-sleeved orange t-shirt (with optional darker orange stripes); orange socks; orange cat ears; orange tail; eyeliner whiskers; fedora, optional

KAREN – blue bird costume with wings and feathers; yellow socks

KARLI – yellow or pink bird costume with wings and feathers; yellow socks; white T-shirt that says “I Am Not a Nugget!” for later in the play

MOCO – black bird costume with wings and feathers (can be padded for extra weight); yellow socks

ROCKY – brown and white sweats; short floppy bulldog ears, stubby bulldog tail; thick blue collar, optional; black eyeliner nose

PEPPER – brown and white sweats or dog costume; medium-length floppy beagle ears; white-tipped beagle tail; black collar with medallion, optional; black eyeliner nose

ANNIE – brown sweats or brown dog costume; long floppy brown bloodhound ears; long brown tail; green collar, optional; black eyeliner nose

SHADOW – black sweats or black dog costume; medium-length floppy black lab ears; long black tail; red collar with large medallion; black eyeliner nose

HUMAN – street clothes: jeans, t-shirt, tennis shoes

## SET

All scenes can occur with or without sets. In the script, a few key props are used to suggest the set. Suggestions have been included below:

**SCENES 1-4:** Alley, trash can(s) at downstage left. A low, graffiti-covered brick wall at upstage center, optional.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

For rehearsal purposes, we divided Scene 3 into two different practices, with Scene 3, Part 1 pp. 27-39 and Scene 3, Part 2 pp. 40-55.

You can divide the playhouse into cats vs. dogs by placing a cat or dog cutout on each entrance. Audience members seat themselves on the side of the auditorium of the animal of their choice. Audience members that like cats and dogs (or neither) sit in the middle.

## PROPS

### SCENE 1:

- Trash can(s) with lid(s)
- Almost empty bag of chips
- Oversized architectural plans rolled up

### SCENE 3:

- Two free-standing flip scoreboards with negative and positive numbers
- Clipboard for KAREN
- Stopwatch for KAREN
- Megaphone for KARLIE
- Two buzzers
- Three red laser pointers for the BIRDS
- Cellphone for HUMAN
- Handkerchief for MOCO
- Colorful cuteness factor scale with the following ratings from bottom to top: “Live Animal or Roadkill?” “Get It Away from Me!” “Overgrown Rat,” “Hairball,” “Eh,” “Tolerable,” “Kinda Cute,” “Adorbs!,” “So Cute I Might Die!”

**SCENE 4:**

- Laptop for ANNIE
- Building supplies for CHARLIE
- Takeout pizza box for CUSTARD
- Trash can(s) with lid(s)

**CURTAIN CALL:**

- Crutches for HUMAN

DO NOT COPY

**SCENE 1****ALLEY; NIGHT**

**AT START:** *Trash can(s) at downstage left. A low, graffiti-covered brick wall at upstage center, optional. Lights rise dimly.*

*CUSTARD, a large fluffy brown cat, has taken the top off a trash can and is rooting around inside when SOPHIE, an all-white American shorthair cat, enters from downstage right. Seeing CUSTARD digging through the trash, she stops short, disgusted.*

**SOPHIE:** Custard!

*CUSTARD jumps guiltily, hiding the trash can lid behind his/her back.*

**SOPHIE:** Garbage? Again?? Really??

**CUSTARD:** But I'm hungry! And you know those humans always throw at least some of their food away. Apple cores, ends of sandwiches, crusts of pizza, the crumbs at the bottom of a bag of chips...

**SOPHIE:** *(Turning away in disgust.)* I can't believe I actually pretend to associate with you.

**CUSTARD:** *(Shrugging.)* Sorry, Sophie.

*CUSTARD resumes digging through the trash can. Suddenly, CUSTARD holds up a nearly empty bag of chips.*

**CUSTARD:** Ah ha! A tasty morsel!

*JELLYBEAN, a small gray-striped kitten, races in from upstage right, making a crazy loop around SOPHIE and nearly knocking her over on his/her way to CUSTARD at downstage left. JELLYBEAN bounces up and down in a frenetic circle around CUSTARD.*

**JELLYBEAN:** FOOD! Can I have it? Huh? Can I have it? Huh? Can I? Can I? Can I? Can I? Can I? Can I?

**CUSTARD:** But I'm hungry!

**JELLYBEAN:** No, you're not. You're Custard!

*CUSTARD smiles and nods tolerantly.*

**CUSTARD:** That's right. I'm Custard. And you're Jellybean. But not the kind of jellybean I can eat. *(To himself/herself.)* I must not eat Jellybean. *(Suddenly; aloud.)* I will eat these trash can chips instead!

*CUSTARD opens the bag of chips and begins eating the leftovers.*

**SOPHIE:** *(To CUSTARD.)* You're a disgrace to felines everywhere.

*While SOPHIE is speaking, SABRINA, a sleek black cat, enters from downstage right. She moves so quietly that no one ever seems to notice her arrival. SABRINA moves to stand directly behind SOPHIE.*

**SABRINA:** Who's a disgrace to felines everywhere?

*SOPHIE jumps in surprise.*

**SOPHIE:** Sabrina! I told you! Don't sneak up on me like that! *(Smoothing down her arms.)* I just had my fur done.

**SABRINA:** Really? Couldn't tell.

*SOPHIE crosses to downstage center, gesturing out toward the audience.*

**SOPHIE:** Well, that's no thanks to this disgusting alley. Why do we always have to meet here of all places? Isn't there anywhere else cleaner we could go?

**JELLYBEAN:** I don't know. I kind of like it here. It feels like home.

*SABRINA crosses to SOPHIE at downstage center, standing stage right of SOPHIE.*

**SABRINA:** That's because we're alley cats. It is home.

**SOPHIE:** Speak for yourself. I'm not an alley cat. My owner has an eighth floor apartment on Park.

**SABRINA:** Great. Why don't we all meet up at your place then?

**SOPHIE:** Uh, no. We can't do that.

**CUSTARD:** Is there food??

**SOPHIE:** Of course, there's food, but—

**CUSTARD:** There's food! Let's go!

**SOPHIE:** (*Worried.*) No! My owner will never allow it!

**JELLYBEAN:** Why not?

**SOPHIE:** Because! (*Crossing toward JELLYBEAN.*) You, you're a little spaz ball who would run into everything and break it. And we have a lot of very valuable belongings.

*SOPHIE turns away from JELLYBEAN, examining her claws or the fur on her arms.*

**JELLYBEAN:** (*To CUSTARD.*) What's a spaz ball?

**CUSTARD:** I don't know, but it sounds yummy. Kind of like a meatball or a cheese ball or a matzah ball. (*Stares at JELLYBEAN, hungrily.*) Mmmmmmm. (*To himself as a reminder.*) No. I must not eat Jellybean.

**SOPHIE:** (*Whirling around toward CUSTARD.*) And you! My owner would never allow you into her apartment because... well, look at you! You're a disgusting, shedding fluff ball!

**CUSTARD:** Thank you.

**SOPHIE:** That wasn't a compliment.

**SABRINA:** What about me? Is there any reason I can't come over?

*SOPHIE eyes SABRINA hesitantly as she crosses back toward SABRINA.*

**SOPHIE:** Well... how do I put this politely?

**SABRINA:** Now you want to be polite??

**SOPHIE:** You're a black cat.

**SABRINA:** Yeah? So?

**SOPHIE:** I don't know how to tell you this, but... you're bad luck. All the humans say so.

**SABRINA:** (*Frustrated.*) Come on! Why does everyone keep saying that??

**SOPHIE:** (*Stepping back, her hands up defensively.*) Now don't scratch the messenger. I'm just telling you what I've heard.

**SABRINA:** Bad luck. That's ridiculous. (*Turning to CUSTARD and JELLYBEAN.*) Well, it sounds like Sophie's prissy owner's apartment is out.

**SOPHIE:** Hey!

**SABRINA:** So, I guess we're stuck with the dirty alley.

**JELLYBEAN:** Hooray! Let's celebrate!

**CUSTARD:** Let's look for more food!

*JELLYBEAN runs over to SABRINA'S side as ALEXA, a calico cat, walks in robotically from upstage right to center stage, followed by CHARLIE, an orange tabby, who walks with a confident strut, checking out the alley with interest.*

**ALEXA:** Look! It is all of my friends! Hello! Hello, friends!

**JELLYBEAN:** Hey, look! It's Robocat! Hi, Robocat!

**SABRINA:** Jellybean! Be nice! (*Turning to ALEXA.*) Hi, Alexa.

**ALEXA:** (*Gesturing to CHARLIE.*) Friends! Look what I have found!

**SOPHIE:** (*Turning away from CHARLIE, unimpressed.*) Another cat.

Great. Don't have enough of those around here already.

**CHARLIE:** Ah, but I am not just any cat! I will be the single best thing that's ever happened to you, and don't you forget it!

**CUSTARD:** Why? Do you have food??

**CHARLIE:** Food? What do I look like? A vending machine?

**CUSTARD:** Ummmmm...

**CHARLIE:** No! I don't have food.

**ALEXA:** Everybody, this is Charlie! Charlie, this is everybody!

*SABRINA, SOPHIE, CUSTARD and JELLYBEAN murmur hello as CHARLIE walks around downstage, looking at the alley, impressed.*

**CHARLIE:** Nice alley.

**SOPHIE:** You're kidding, right??

**CHARLIE:** Not at all. There's enough space, sufficient light, good view of the street, trash cans for foraging—

**SOPHIE:** Ew. Not another one!

*CHARLIE comes to a stop at downstage center, hands on hips.*

**CHARLIE:** Yeah. I'd say you have a pretty sweet setup here. There's only one problem.

**SABRINA:** What's that?

**CHARLIE:** You share this space with dogs, don't you?

**ALEXA:** Yes! How did you know?

**CHARLIE:** Easy. It's got that certain... smell.

**SOPHIE:** (*Turning toward CHARLIE.*) Ugh, I know! Those disgusting dogs pee on everything. Everything! No self-control.

**CUSTARD:** They're loud too. They bark at almost anything.

**JELLYBEAN:** Yeah! Cars, bikes, motorcycles, pigeons—

*JELLYBEAN races from the stage right side of the group to break through the middle of the group at downstage center on his/her next line.*

**SABRINA:** Okay, Jellybean. We get it.

**JELLYBEAN:** Police cars, ambulances, taxis, Ubers—

*JELLYBEAN races from downstage center to break through the middle of the group at downstage left on his/her next line.*

**SOPHIE:** Jellybean! You can stop now.

**JELLYBEAN:** Car crashes! Muggings! Robberies! FIRES!!

**SABRINA:** JELLYBEAN!

**JELLYBEAN:** Ya huh?

**SABRINA:** Go take a lap.

**JELLYBEAN:** Oh. Okay!

*JELLYBEAN starts running laps around either the brick wall upstage or the audience.*

**CHARLIE:** Boy. That kid just doesn't know when to quit, huh?

**SABRINA:** He's/she's just got a lot of energy.

**CHARLIE:** Purrfect! Then he's/she's going to love what I have planned for this alley.

**SOPHIE:** Planned?

**CHARLIE:** Alexa! Bring me the plans.

**ALEXA:** Oh. Sure thing, Charlie!

*ALEXA robotically walks off upstage right. CHARLIE turns on the salesmanship to SOPHIE, SABRINA and CUSTARD.*

**CHARLIE:** I'm sure you're all tired of the smell, the incessant barking, the extra dog hair. Now, imagine an alley with none of that. An alley that could become the perfect cat paradise.

*ALEXA reenters with an oversized architectural paper roll, crosses to downstage center, kneels down, unrolls the paper scroll, and begins spreading it on the floor.*

**CUSTARD:** Would there be food??

**CHARLIE:** *(Putting an arm around CUSTARD.)* Much more food than you have now, once you don't have to share those trash cans with any pesky dogs!

*Seeing ALEXA struggling to keep the paper unfurled, CHARLIE moves CUSTARD to stand on an upstage corner of the paper.*

**CHARLIE:** Hey there, Meatball. Why don't you stand right over here?

**CUSTARD:** My name is Custard.

**CHARLIE:** *(A beat.)* Yeah. I'm gonna call you Meatball.

*SABRINA and SOPHIE cross to downstage center to look over the plans.*

**SABRINA:** What is all this?

**CHARLIE:** I told you. Cat paradise! The way I figure, the dogs already have their dog parks. Why not create cat corners?

**SOPHIE:** Wait a minute. These are the exact measurements of our alley! When did you get these?

**CHARLIE:** You must have been sleeping on the job, sister. I've been scoping out this place for weeks.

**SOPHIE:** My name is Sophie. So-Fee. Not Sister.

*CHARLIE studies the plans, unconcerned.*

**CHARLIE:** Whatever you say, sister.

**SOPHIE:** (*Turning to SABRINA.*) I do not like him/her.

*JELLYBEAN finishes his/her laps and bounds back to the group, standing stage right of SABRINA.*

**JELLYBEAN:** I'm back! And I took eighty billion laps! Hey! What are we looking at? Huh? Huh?

*JELLYBEAN races from the stage right side of the group to break through the middle of the group at downstage center on his/her next line.*

**JELLYBEAN:** Is that our new home? Huh? Is that where we're all going to live?

*JELLYBEAN races from downstage center to break through the middle of the group at downstage left on his/her next line, stage left of CHARLIE.*

**JELLYBEAN:** Huh? Huh? Is that—?

*CHARLIE places a hand over JELLYBEAN'S mouth.*

**CHARLIE:** Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Cat Alley! Alexa? Show them.

**ALEXA:** Oh! Right.

*SOPHIE kneels down to hold the paper scroll open for ALEXA as ALEXA stands, gesturing to the architectural plans.*

**ALEXA:** Well, over here you can see the outdoor playground with a patio for all those afternoon catnaps or late-night karaoke sessions. And then there's one, two, no, *three* catwalk tunnels crossing between the two buildings. On this corner is a fifteen-foot climbing tree and on *this* corner—

**SABRINA:** Hold it, hold it. You know the dogs will never go for this.

**CHARLIE:** What dogs?

**SABRINA:** What do you mean, what dogs? The dogs that hang out in this alley during the day! (*Turning to ALEXA.*) Alexa, tell him/her.

**ALEXA:** There are four dogs that regularly make use of this alley during the day. Three that live very close to here.

**CHARLIE:** So?

**SOPHIE:** So! Don't you think those dogs might have something to say about your little cat patio—

**CHARLIE:** (*Enunciating.*) Catio.

**SOPHIE:** Whatever. They're never going to go for it.

**CHARLIE:** Fine. (*Facing the audience with bravado.*) Then we'll just have to get rid of them.

**JELLYBEAN:** Get rid of the dogs?? Hot dog!

**CUSTARD:** (*Hungrily.*) Hot dog?! Where??

**SABRINA:** (*To CHARLIE; suspiciously.*) Just how do you plan on getting rid of four dogs?

**CHARLIE:** (*To CUSTARD.*) Step aside, Meatball.

*CHARLIE moves CUSTARD off the edge of the paper, picks up the plans, and rolls them up.*

**CHARLIE:** Leave that to me. I've got a plan.

**CUSTARD:** Another one?

**CHARLIE:** That's right, my furry Italian treat. Everyone, meet me back here tomorrow at high noon.

**ALEXA:** High noon? What are we going to do? Have some kind of western showdown?

**CHARLIE:** Oh, it'll be a showdown all right. We're going to show those dogs whose alley this is once and for all!

**SOPHIE:** What?? Are you crazy? We don't stand a chance! Those dogs will stomp us into little pancakes!

**CUSTARD:** Mmmmm. Pancakes! I love—

**SOPHIE:** If you say, "I love pancakes," so help me—

**CUSTARD:** I... love... waffles?

**JELLYBEAN:** Hey! Me too! Because it's so much fun to say! Waffles!

*JELLYBEAN continues chanting "Waffles!" quietly to himself/herself while bouncing around in place.*

**CUSTARD:** That's just great. Now I'm hungry for breakfast. Nuts! (A *pause*.) And now I'm hungry for nuts too!

**CHARLIE:** Okay then, everybody. Noon tomorrow. Don't be late. Alexa? Let's go.

**ALEXA:** Oh! Right.

*CHARLIE and ALEXA cross toward stage left exit.*

**CHARLIE:** You didn't tell me your friends were so weird.

**ALEXA:** They're my friends! I guess I never really noticed.

*CHARLIE and ALEXA exit stage left.*

**SOPHIE:** We're not actually going through with this, right?

**SABRINA:** (*Slowly*.) Yes. I believe we are.

**SOPHIE:** What?! Why??

**SABRINA:** Because Charlie's right. This is our alley. It's time to take a stand against those dogs.

*CUSTARD plops down, groaning and clutching his/her stomach.*

**CUSTARD:** Is it possible to take a stand sitting down? I'm not feeling so good.

**SOPHIE:** See? I told you. It's because you keep eating out of the garbage!

*SABRINA crosses to CUSTARD and pulls CUSTARD to his/her feet.*

**SABRINA:** Come on, Custard. Get up, go home, and rest. Tomorrow, we face off with the dogs.

**SOPHIE:** (*Studying her claws*.) Yeah... I don't think I can be here tomorrow. It sounds like it might get messy. Besides, I'm pretty sure my owner has an appointment for us to get our claws done.

*SABRINA approaches SOPHIE threateningly.*

**SABRINA:** Oh, you'll be here. Or I'll tell Custard here to start using your welcome mat as a litter box.

**SOPHIE:** You wouldn't!

**SABRINA:** Do you really want to find out?

**SOPHIE:** No. I've seen how much that cat eats!

**SABRINA:** Come on, Jellybean! Time for bed.

*JELLYBEAN crosses downstage to SABRINA.*

**JELLYBEAN:** Bed? What happened to waffles??

**SABRINA:** We're leaving.

**JELLYBEAN:** But we just got here!

**SABRINA:** Good night!

*SABRINA, CUSTARD and SOPHIE exit stage left. JELLYBEAN, now alone at downstage center, looks around nervously.*

**JELLYBEAN:** Okay, guys. That's fine. Just leave me here. That's cool.  
I love this alley after dark. I'm not afraid of the dark.

*SOUND FX: Twig snapping*

**JELLYBEAN:** Never mind! I'm afraid of the dark! Hey, guys! Wait for me!!

*JELLYBEAN runs off stage left. A moment later, KAREN, a bird, enters from behind the brick wall at upstage center or from upstage right and flaps to center stage, looking off toward stage left. KAREN turns back and gestures for someone to follow. KARLI, another bird, skitters out after KAREN followed by MOCO, a huge bird, who moves slowly with heavy steps. KAREN, KARLI, and MOCO exit stage left. Lights fade.*

**SCENE 2***ALLEY; THE NEXT DAY*

**AT START:** *Trash can(s) at downstage left. A low, graffiti-covered brick wall at upstage center, optional. Lights rise, brighter than Scene 1.*

*ROCKY, a bulldog, stands at center stage giving commands to PEPPER, a beagle.*

**ROCKY:** All right, Pepper. Now sit!

*PEPPER immediately sits at center stage.*

**ROCKY:** Good, good. Now, lay down.

**PEPPER:** Like this, Rocky?

*PEPPER dramatically sprawls out on his/her belly, head facing the audience.*

**ROCKY:** Yeah, yeah. Just like that. Now roll over!

*PEPPER begins rolling toward stage left. ROCKY calls out before PEPPER rolls offstage left.*

**ROCKY:** Okay, okay! You can stop rolling now!

*PEPPER jumps up and eagerly runs back to ROCKY at center stage.*

**PEPPER:** How was that, Rocky??

**ROCKY:** Well, at least now you know what to do if you set yourself on fire again.

**PEPPER:** Yeah! Stop, drop, and roll! Got it! What next, Rocky??

**ROCKY:** *(With a sigh.)* More tricks? Haven't you learned enough tricks for one day?

**PEPPER:** No! New tricks, new tricks! I have to learn as many as I can now!

**ROCKY:** Why?

**PEPPER:** Because I'm still young! I want to learn all the tricks I can before I get old.

*ANNIE, an old bloodhound, enters from downstage left.*

**ROCKY:** Because you can't teach an old dog new tricks?

**PEPPER:** Exactly!

**ANNIE:** Hey! Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks??

**ROCKY:** *(Suddenly noticing ANNIE.)* Oh. Hi, Annie.

**ANNIE:** *(Hands on hips.)* What nonsense are you telling this young pup??

**ROCKY:** Oh, it's nothing, Annie. Pepper just wants to learn some new tricks to impress his/her human.

**ANNIE:** New tricks? *(Placing a paw on PEPPER'S shoulder.)* Peppercorn here doesn't need any new tricks to impress his/her human.

**PEPPER:** Actually, it's Pepper, not Peppercorn.

**ANNIE:** He's/She's a puppy! All he/she has to do is roll over, show them his/her belly, and give 'em the old wide-eyed doggy grin.

*PEPPER lies down on his/her back at center stage, head facing the audience. He/She has an enormous, goofy grin on his/her face.*

**PEPPER:** Like this?

**ANNIE:** Beautiful. That's just beautiful. You'll have them eating out of the palm of your paw.

**ROCKY:** That's funny. I was just about to teach him/her how to play dead. Looks about the same.

**ANNIE:** No offense, Rocky. But why are you training Pepperjack here?

*PEPPER sits up, spinning to face ANNIE.*

**PEPPER:** It's Pepper. Just Pepper.

*ANNIE ignores PEPPER, crossing behind PEPPER to ROCKY'S right.*

**ANNIE:** I should be the one teaching him/her tricks. I mean, come on. Who's gonna know more? Someone who's been around the fire hydrant a few thousand times or (*Loudly whispering to ROCKY.*) an obedience school dropout?

**ROCKY:** (*Whispering indignantly.*) Hey! I thought we promised never to talk about that!

**ANNIE:** (*Turning away from ROCKY.*) I said no offense.

**PEPPER:** Can I get up now?

**ANNIE:** No. The grownups are talking. Play dead.

*Still lying on the ground, PEPPER dramatically grabs at his/her throat and pretends to die.*

**ANNIE:** (*To PEPPER.*) Eh. Close enough.

**ROCKY:** Look, Annie, I know everyone around here makes a big deal about getting an obedience school diploma, but really, it's just a piece of paper.

*ROCKY turns toward PEPPER, sees he/she is sprawled across the path, and takes an exaggerated step over PEPPER, putting space between ROCKY and ANNIE.*

**ROCKY:** I want to chase bigger dreams than just how to sit or shake or bark on command.

**ANNIE:** (*Skeptically.*) Bigger dreams? Like what?

*PEPPER jumps up.*

**PEPPER:** Bigger dreams? Ooh! I know! We can chase after a city bus! Let's go!

*ANNIE reaches out an arm to grab PEPPER, stopping him/her from running off downstage right.*

**ANNIE:** Hold on there a minute, Dr. Pepper—

**PEPPER:** (*Turning back to ANNIE.*) It's Pepper! Just Pepper!

**ANNIE:** Didn't I hear something around the neighborhood about you recently setting yourself on fire??

**PEPPER:** Well... yeah. But I didn't know those candle things could get so hot! Someone should really put a warning label on those.

**ROCKY:** Pepper... you can't read.

**PEPPER:** Oh. Right. Now that's a trick I should learn! Right after we chase that bus!

*ANNIE again reaches out an arm to grab PEPPER, stopping him/her from running off downstage right.*

**ANNIE:** Yeah, if you've already set yourself on fire, let's not add getting run over by a bus to the list. Stay.

**PEPPER:** Awwww. But I'm just trying to help Rocky chase his/her dreams!

**ROCKY:** Getting run over by a bus is definitely not on my bucket list.

**ANNIE:** If it were, it'd be a really short list.

*ROCKY moves to downstage center.*

**ROCKY:** What I hope to accomplish is even bigger!

**PEPPER:** Bigger than a bus??

**ROCKY:** Yes. (*Dramatically.*) Picture this: a world without cats!

*There is a pause as ANNIE and PEPPER exchange incredulous glances behind ROCKY'S back.*

**ANNIE:** Nope. Can't be done.

**ROCKY:** (*Crossing his/her arms.*) Hmph. I guess you can't teach an old dog new tricks.

*ANNIE joins ROCKY at downstage center.*

**ANNIE:** Hey! I'm just being practical here. There is no way you can get rid of all the cats in the world.

**ROCKY:** Why not?

**ANNIE:** Because! There are between 300 and 600 million cats in the world!

*PEPPER joins ROCKY and ANNIE at downstage center.*

**PEPPER:** (To ANNIE.) Whoa! How did you know that??

**ANNIE:** Google, Kid. I'll teach you how to use it once you learn how to read.

**PEPPER:** Cool!

*ROCKY walks toward downstage left.*

**ROCKY:** So I'll start small. What if we just get rid of all the cats in this neighborhood? (*Facing the audience.*) In this alley!

**ANNIE:** Oh yeah? And how do you propose to do that?

**PEPPER:** Yeah, Rocky! How are you going to get rid of all the cats in the alley??

**ROCKY:** I'm not sure just yet.

**ANNIE:** (To PEPPER.) Don't get your hopes up. It'll never happen.

**ROCKY:** It will too! Just wait and see.

*SOUND FX: Brief clip of Mission Impossible secret agent music.*

*ANNIE, ROCKY and PEPPER turn in SHADOW'S direction, ROCKY backing up toward ANNIE and PEPPER'S left. SHADOW, a black lab with a dramatic flair, makes an elaborately furtive entrance from stage left that includes somersaulting out onto the stage, hiding behind the wall at upstage center, and sneaking up behind the trash can(s).*

**SHADOW:** (*In a husky superhero voice.*) The Black Shadow has arrived!

*SHADOW flings his/her arms out in a dramatic gesture, knocking the lid off a trash can at downstage left.*

**SHADOW:** Oops.

**PEPPER:** Hi, Shadow!

**SHADOW:** (*Correcting PEPPER.*) The Black Shadow!

**ROCKY:** What are you doing?

**SHADOW:** Making my super secret entrance!

**ROCKY:** But... we all saw you.

**SHADOW:** No you didn't.

**PEPPER:** And we all heard you.

**SHADOW:** *(In disbelief.)* No...

**ANNIE:** And am I hearing things or was that... music?

**SHADOW:** *(Voice returning to normal.)* Oh yeah! My human programmed it into my collar! Cool, right? We're really into James Bond and secret agent stuff right now.

*SHADOW stoops to pick up the trash can lid and replace it on the can.*

**ANNIE:** You have your own theme music??

**SHADOW:** Sure! Don't you?

**PEPPER:** *(Hurrying over to SHADOW.)* Guess what, Shadow? Rocky is going to get rid of all the cats in the alley!

**ROCKY:** I am?

**SHADOW:** *(To ROCKY.)* You are?? That's great! It's about time too. Have you seen the claws on those cats? They scare me.

**ANNIE:** *(Turning away from SHADOW in disgust.)* Hmph. Some secret agent. But you know, now that you mention it, I wouldn't mind seeing them go either. Those cats are up out here yowling at all hours of the night. I can't get a good night's sleep.

**PEPPER:** I heard that they pee inside too! Who does that??

**ANNIE:** Humans?

**PEPPER:** Oh. Right. Still, it's gross!

**SHADOW:** Yep. Those cats have got to go.

*CHARLIE enters from upstage right, followed by ALEXA, SABRINA, CUSTARD, and JELLYBEAN.*

**CHARLIE:** Good afternoon, canines!

**PEPPER:** Rocky, look! Cats!

*SHADOW jumps and yelps in surprise, knocking into the trash cans at downstage left. SHADOW cowers behind the cans. ROCKY slides as far away from ALEXA, SABRINA, CUSTARD and JELLYBEAN upstage left as he/she can.*

**SHADOW:** Cats?? Rocky, do it! Do it now! Get rid of the cats!

**ANNIE:** Hmph! Some secret agent.

**CHARLIE:** Meow, meow. Let's all just calm down for a minute and we'll be out of your fur.

**PEPPER:** (*Hands on hips.*) You're not in our fur; you're in our alley!

**JELLYBEAN:** Your alley?! This is our alley!

**CUSTARD:** And those are my trash cans! You ruined them!

*SHADOW pets the top of the trash can lid soothingly.*

**CHARLIE:** Let's stay focused here. (*To ROCKY, PEPPER, ANNIE and SHADOW.*) Might I inquire as to which one of you is in charge?

**PEPPER:** Huh?

**SHADOW:** (*To PEPPER.*) What's he/she saying?

**CHARLIE:** Alexa, translate.

*CHARLIE steps aside for ALEXA.*

**ALEXA:** Oh! Right. (*Robotically crossing to center; speaking with exaggerated slowness.*) Which one of you is the boss?

**PEPPER:** Oh! That's easy. Rocky's our boss!

**ANNIE:** (*Whirling to face PEPPER.*) What?! Since when??

**PEPPER:** Hey, Rocky?

*PEPPER turns back to where ROCKY had been standing. ROCKY is gone. PEPPER looks around and sees ROCKY hiding out upstage.*

**PEPPER:** What are you doing all the way up there??

*ROCKY sneezes.*

**CUSTARD:** (*Politely.*) Gesundheit.

*ROCKY hangs his/her head in embarrassment.*

**ROCKY:** I'm allergic to cats.

**ANNIE:** (*To ROCKY, sarcastically.*) And you want to rid the alley of cats. Great. That's just great.

**CHARLIE:** (*To ANNIE.*) I suppose that makes you the de facto leader.

**ANNIE:** What did you just call me??

**CHARLIE:** I'll have to address my proposition to you.

**ANNIE:** Proposition? What proposition?

**CHARLIE:** Clearly, neither side is very happy sharing this alley with the other. What would you say to a little friendly competition?

**SHADOW:** Friendly competition? We're not friends.

**ANNIE:** What makes you think us dogs would have anything to do with you cats?

**CHARLIE:** There will be a prize, naturally.

**PEPPER:** A prize?

*CUSTARD pushes through SABRINA and JELLYBEAN toward downstage right.*

**CUSTARD:** (To CHARLIE.) A prize! Is it food??

**CHARLIE:** (Turning to CUSTARD, impatiently.) No, it's not food!

*CUSTARD hands his/her head in disappointment and trudges back upstage.*

**CHARLIE:** (Turning back to ANNIE, regaining control.) The prize will be this alley. The winners take total control of the alley for the rest of time.

**ROCKY:** Yes! Absolutely yes! We accept!

*ROCKY, who has been inching forward in interest, suddenly sneezes. ANNIE puts out a hand to stop ROCKY.*

**ANNIE:** (To CHARLIE.) Not so fast. What my highly allergic friend meant to have asked is, what sort of competition did you have in mind? We have to make sure that it's something fair. Wouldn't want you cats pulling a fast one.

**CHARLIE:** Awww, come on, meow. We'll make sure the competition is completely fair. In fact, I'll even make sure to find a neutral third party to judge. Meow... Do we have a deal?

*CHARLIE extends a paw to ANNIE, who studies it suspiciously for a moment before turning away from CHARLIE to consider.*

**ANNIE:** Well... it would be nice to get my beauty sleep back when we win.

**SABRINA:** IF you win.

**ANNIE:** (*Whirling to face SABRINA.*) Listen here, Lucky. I said when we win and I meant when we win! (*To CHARLIE.*) You're on!

*ANNIE reaches out and firmly shakes CHARLIE'S paw. CHARLIE cringes in pain.*

**CHARLIE:** Meow, you're talking! The competition begins right here in one hour!

**ROCKY:** An hour? Why? You lazy cats need that long to warm up?

*SOPHIE saunters in from upstage right, blowing on her claws.*

**CHARLIE:** Of course not. Somebody's got to find the neutral third-party judges. I was thinking about asking these rats I met down the road—

**SHADOW:** (*Yelping fearfully.*) Rats?!?

**ANNIE:** Uh uh. No way. Everybody knows that rats are basically cats.

*SOPHIE bursts through SABRINA, CUSTARD, JELLYBEAN, ALEXA, and CHARLIE toward downstage.*

**SOPHIE:** (*To ANNIE; deeply offended.*) EX-CUSE ME?!?

*SABRINA, ALEXA, CUSTARD, JELLYBEAN, CHARLIE, ANNIE, ROCKY, PEPPER and SHADOW turn to SOPHIE, finally noticing her.*

**SABRINA:** Sophie. How kind of you to join us. Finally. (*A beat.*) Nice claws.

**SOPHIE:** (*To SABRINA.*) Thank you for noticing. (*Crossing toward ANNIE; abrupt tone change.*) How dare you say that rats are basically cats?! We have nothing in common with those disgusting rodents! They live in the sewer!

**ANNIE:** Well, they both hate dogs. And that's not what I would call neutral, third-party judges. But I wouldn't expect a cat to care. I don't trust any of you as far as I can throw you.

*ANNIE points at CUSTARD.*

**ANNIE:** Especially you.

**CUSTARD:** Hey!

**ANNIE:** I'll help you find some real judges.

*ANNIE pushes past CHARLIE, ALEXA, and SOPHIE and exits upstage right.*

**CHARLIE:** *(To ALEXA.)* You know, I like the old girl. She's got cattitude. *(A beat.)* Too bad she's a dog.

**ALEXA:** More specifically, Charlie, I think that she is called a bloodhound.

**CHARLIE:** Yeah, yeah. No one asked you, Alexa. Let's go.

*CHARLIE and ALEXA turn toward stage right to exit. ROCKY inches downstage to call out to them from afar.*

**ROCKY:** Hey, wait a minute. What are the rest of us supposed to do??

**CHARLIE:** Do?

*CHARLIE slowly turns and crosses toward ROCKY, who backs up fearfully.*

**CHARLIE:** Do? *(Smirking.)* If I were you, I'd spend the next hour rounding up all your little dog friends so you can break the news to them gently. *(Growing coldly serious as HE/SHE closes in on ROCKY.)* Because after today, this alley will be ours!

*ROCKY sneezes violently several times in a row, flying backward and off stage left on the last sneeze.*

**PEPPER:** *(Calling out after ROCKY.)* Hey, Rocky! Maybe you should try the stop, drop, and roll?

**SHADOW:** I think we might be in trouble. *(Gulping.)* Big trouble.

*CHARLIE spins around and heads back toward stage right.*

**CHARLIE:** Let's go, Alexa.

**ALEXA:** Charlie, if you're looking for neutral third-party judges, I can make several recommendations—

**CHARLIE:** No one asked you, Alexa!

*CHARLIE and ALEXA exit stage right. SOPHIE, SABRINA, CUSTARD and JELLYBEAN are left at downstage right in a face-off with SHADOW and PEPPER at downstage left. There is a long, awkward pause as they all stare at one another.*

**PEPPER:** *(In a loud stage whisper to SHADOW.)* See? Told you cats are unfriendly.

**SHADOW:** It's probably from all the hairballs.

**SOPHIE:** Hairballs??

*SABRINA hisses at SHADOW and swipes her claw in his direction. SHADOW yelps, knocking into the trash can(s) again, and races off stage left, whining. PEPPER shrugs and follows, exiting stage left.*

**CUSTARD:** Hey! My trash cans! He's/she's spilling all the food!

*CUSTARD waddles over to the trash can(s) at downstage left to set them upright. JELLYBEAN scurries after CUSTARD. SABRINA crosses to downstage center.*

**SABRINA:** Would you forget about your stomach for once in your life??

**JELLYBEAN:** How can he/she? Look! It's right under his/her nose!

*CUSTARD looks down and pokes his/her stomach experimentally.*

**CUSTARD:** Yup. Look! There it is right there.

*SABRINA slaps a paw to her forehead, shakes her head, and sighs.*

**SABRINA:** You two are so not ready for this competition. We need some calisthenics. Stat.

**SOPHIE:** “We”? What do you mean “we”?

**SABRINA:** (*Turning to SOPHIE.*) You too, Miss Priss. Running a few laps won’t make you break a nail.

**SOPHIE:** (*Turning away from SABRINA; to herself.*) No. But clawing your eyes out might.

**SABRINA:** You’d have to catch me first.

*SABRINA grabs CUSTARD and JELLYBEAN by the arms and pulls them toward stage right exit.*

**SOPHIE:** I was only joking. You don’t seriously think I’d waste a perfectly good manicure on you?

*SABRINA, CUSTARD, and JELLYBEAN exit stage right.*

**SOPHIE:** Hey!! Don’t wait for me or anything!

*SOPHIE runs after them, exiting stage right. After a moment, KAREN steps out from behind the wall or from upstage left, laughing evilly. She drums her fingertips together.*

**KAREN:** Egg-cellent! Egg-cellent! Everything is falling egg-zactly according to my master plan! (*Calling authoritatively over her shoulder.*) Karli! Moco! Get out here!

*KARLI and MOCO step out from behind the wall or from upstage left and join KAREN at center. KARLI looks around nervously.*

**KARLI:** Karen!! Like, what are we doing here?? This corner is crawling with cats! And dogs!

**KAREN:** I told you. We are finished cowering before cats and dogs. We. Are. Birds! Clearly we are the superior animals. And it’s finally time for the world to know!

**KARLI:** What are you going to do??

**KAREN:** Correction. What are we going to do?

*KAREN crosses to downstage right as she plots.*

**KAREN:** The cats and dogs are fighting over this street corner. If they destroy each other, then who can take over this corner?

**KARLI:** Rats?

**KAREN:** (*Whirling back to face KARLI.*) No, you fool! Birds! Birds can take over this street corner! First the corner, and next, the world!!!

*KARLI looks at MOCO as though he/she said something. MOCO, expressionless, doesn't move a muscle.*

**KARLI:** What's that, Moco? (*A beat, as if listening.*) Oh. Yeah. Totally agree.

**KAREN:** What?? What did he/she say?

**KARLI:** He/She says you're a little bit scary when you're plotting total animal world domination.

**KAREN:** It is those cats and dogs who should be scared. Come!

*KAREN moves toward stage right exit.*

**KARLI:** Where are we going? Ooh! Can we go to the mall??

*KAREN stops and whirls around to face KARLI.*

**KAREN:** NO!! We cannot go to the mall! (*Crossing to KARLI, regaining her composure.*) We're going to volunteer to judge the cats versus dogs competition.

**KARLI:** What?? Why?!?

**KAREN:** (*Losing her temper again.*) Have you not been listening to a word I've spoken??

**KARLI:** Ummmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm...

**KAREN:** If we judge the competition, we can make sure that the cats and dogs destroy each other.

**KARLI:** But... then no one wins.

**KAREN:** WE win, Karli! BIRDS win!!!

**KARLI:** Ohhhhh! That's, like, so smart, Karen. You are so smart. (*Turning to MOCO.*) Isn't she, like, so smart?

*MOCO, expressionless, says nothing.*

**KARLI:** *(To KAREN.)* He/She says you're so smart.

**KAREN:** Come on. Let's go find those mangy mammals before they choose a squirrel or something for a judge.

*KAREN walks toward the stage right exit. KARLI and MOCO follow.*

**KARLI:** *(Snickering.)* A squirrel! Can you imagine? Squirrels are, like, so dumb! Right, Moco? Right. So dumb.

*KAREN, KARLI, and MOCO exit stage right. Lights fade. End of Scene.*

### SCENE 3

ALLEY; ONE HOUR LATER

**AT START:** *Trash can(s) at downstage left. A low, graffiti-covered brick wall at upstage center, optional. Two free-standing flip scoreboards have been placed at downstage left and downstage right, one for the cats and one for the dogs. Both scoreboards are set to zero. Lights rise.*

*KAREN stands importantly with a clipboard and stopwatch at center stage with MOCO, still blank-faced, just behind KAREN on her left, and KARLI just behind KAREN on her right. KARLIE looks around nervously. CHARLIE, ALEXA, SABRINA and SOPHIE stand on stage right, stretching. CUSTARD and JELLYBEAN stand at downstage right, looking back at KARLI. ANNIE leads PEPPER and SHADOW through warmups at stage left. ROCKY hovers near the upstage left.*

**CUSTARD:** *(To JELLYBEAN.)* Mmmmmm. Those birds look so tasty. I can't wait to eat them.

**JELLYBEAN:** Custard! You can't eat those birds!

**CUSTARD:** I can't eat those birds?

**JELLYBEAN:** No. They're our judges!

**CUSTARD:** Judges? Not chicken nuggets?

**JELLYBEAN:** No. They are not chicken nuggets.

**CUSTARD:** Awwwww.

*CUSTARD and JELLYBEAN step back to join CHARLIE, ALEXA, SABRINA and SOPHIE in the stretches. KARLI tugs on KAREN'S wing at center.*

**KARLI:** Karen, can we, like, get this thing started already? That big cat over there is making me nervous. He/She keeps looking at me and licking his/her lips.

*ANNIE stops exercising and turns to the CATS.*

**ANNIE:** Are you cats about ready yet? I'm not getting any younger over here.

**CHARLIE:** Okay, okay. Quit hounding us. We're ready.

*CHARLIE turns to KAREN.*

**CHARLIE:** Karen? The corner is yours.

**KAREN:** *(To herself.)* Not yet. But it will be.

*KAREN clears her throat and looks down at her clipboard.*

**KAREN:** Good afternoon, felines and canines. And welcome to the competition Cats versus Dogs, a series of challenges we have created to reveal which mammal is superior. My name is Karen. Beside me are Karli and Moco, and we are your judges.

**PEPPER:** What?! *(Turning to ROCKY.)* Rocky, is this true? Are we actually taking orders from birds?!

**ANNIE:** *(To PEPPER.)* Why are you asking Rocky? He/She can't even look at those cats without breaking into hives. I'm in charge now.

**CHARLIE:** *(To ANNIE.)* You may be in charge of the dogs, sweetheart, but I speak for us cats.

**SABRINA:** You do??

**ANNIE:** *(Turning to CHARLIE, derisively.)* Hey. Garfield. I wasn't talking to you. Why don't you go back to your litter box?

**CHARLIE:** *(To ANNIE, stepping forward on the offensive.)* Listen, grass eater—!

**KAREN:** SILENCE! The next mammal, cat or dog, that interrupts me will receive a point deduction!

**SOPHIE:** (*Whispering to SABRINA.*) Boy, she's in a fowl mood.

**KAREN:** THAT'S IT! Minus one point for the cats! You now have negative one point! Moco! The scoreboard!

*MOCO walks heavily to the scoreboard at downstage right, flips it backward to negative one point, and then crosses back to KAREN'S left side.*

**SABRINA:** Sophie! Now look what you've done! The dogs are winning!

*PEPPER spins to look at the scoreboards.*

**PEPPER:** We are?? We are!! Hooray!

**KAREN:** If you don't cease this infernal jabbering, you're ALL going to be losing points!!

**KARLI:** Yeah!

*KARLI steps forward and whips out a megaphone from behind her back.*

**KARLI:** (*Through the megaphone.*) LISTEN UP!!!

*The megaphone screeches. The CATS and DOGS cringe and cover their ears. SHADOW whines. KARLI crosses back happily to KAREN.*

**KARLI:** There you go, Karen. They're ready for you now.

*KARLI flips her hair as KAREN grabs the megaphone from KARLI.*

**KAREN:** (*Dripping sarcasm.*) Thank you, Karli. Oh, what would I ever do without you?

**CUSTARD:** (*To JELLYBEAN.*) Are you sure she's not a chicken nugget?

**SABRINA:** (*To CUSTARD.*) Shhhh!!!

**KAREN:** (*Facing the audience.*) Let's begin, shall we? Our first competition today will test your physical dexterity. Each team will select one participant who will maneuver their way through a complex series of obstacles.

**CHARLIE:** *(Looking around the empty stage.)* Series of obstacles? Where? I don't see anything.

*KAREN gestures off stage left.*

**KAREN:** It's just around the corner there.

**KARLI:** Yeah. We spent, like, an hour setting it up!

*CHARLIE, ALEXA, SABRINA, SOPHIE, CUSTARD, JELLYBEAN, ANNIE, ROCKY and PEPPER take a step forward and crane their necks to look off stage left. SHADOW turns to ANNIE beseechingly.*

**SHADOW:** An obstacle course! Ooh! Pick me! Pick me! I've been training for this my entire life!

**PEPPER:** You have?

**SHADOW:** *(Turning to PEPPER.)* Of course! I'm going to be a secret agent, remember? I can knock out this obstacle course in no time!

**ANNIE:** Shadow, I really don't think that's such a good idea—

**KAREN:** It appears the dogs have chosen their champion. Shadow, please step forward.

*SHADOW steps forward downstage, crossing to stand on KAREN's left.*

**SHADOW:** Woo hoo! No one can outmaneuver The Black Shadow!

**KAREN:** And you cats? Who do you select as your champion?

*CHARLIE, ALEXA, SOPHIE, CUSTARD and JELLYBEAN turn to look at SABRINA.*

**SABRINA:** Who, me?

**CHARLIE:** Well, we're certainly not sending in the Meatball.

**SOPHIE:** I suppose, when it comes to dexterity, you are the best. Now, if there happens to be a beauty contest . . .

**SABRINA:** *(Shrugging.)* All right. I'm game.

*SABRINA steps forward downstage, crossing to stand on KAREN'S right. SABRINA looks over at SHADOW.*

**SABRINA:** So... The Black Shadow. What is that? Some kind of code name?

**SHADOW:** Yes, exactly! For when I become a secret agent!

**SABRINA:** Secret agent, huh?

**KAREN:** And now to begin the first competition of Cats versus Dogs!  
Are the contestants ready?

**SHADOW:** Oh, hold on. Wait a minute.

*SHADOW reaches up and turns on his/her collar.*

*SOUND FX: Secret agent music*

**SHADOW:** There. Ready!

**KAREN:** On your mark—

**ANNIE:** You mean, bark.

**KAREN:** *(Sighing.)* Whatever. Let's just get this thing started. On your bark, get set—

**CHARLIE:** Meow, you did not just say that!

**KAREN:** GO!!!

*SABRINA easily slips past SHADOW and exits stage left. SHADOW awkwardly galumphs after her, exiting stage left. CHARLIE, ALEXA, SOPHIE, CUSTARD, JELLYBEAN, ANNIE, ROCKY and PEPPER cheer and shout encouragement while looking off toward stage left.*

*SOUND FX: A loud crash. The secret agent music stops.*

*A moment later, SABRINA, reenters stage left, shaking her head. SABRINA crosses back to downstage right. SHADOW enters stage left a few steps behind SABRINA, hanging his/her head.*

**ROCKY:** *(To SHADOW.)* What was THAT??

**PEPPER:** Well, Shadow did say he/she could knock out that obstacle course in no time.

**KARLI:** We spent an entire hour setting that up! An hour! Karen, do something!

*KAREN glances down at her stopwatch.*

**KAREN:** Since the dogs have destroyed the obstacle course—in a record .45 seconds, I might add—I have no choice but to award the point to the cats. Moco? The scoreboard.

*CHARLIE, ALEXA, SABRINA, SOPHIE, CUSTARD and JELLYBEAN cheer and ANNIE, ROCKY, PEPPER and SHADOW gripe as MOCO crosses to downstage right and replaces the CAT'S score of negative one with a zero.*

**KAREN:** And now we're back to a tie.

**SHADOW:** *(To ANNIE, ROCKY and PEPPER.)* Sorry, guys. Two left feet.

*SABRINA steps forward, looking at SHADOW at downstage left.*

**SABRINA:** Hey. Black Shadow.

**SHADOW:** Yes?

**SABRINA:** You might want to consider a different career path.

*Dejected, SHADOW slinks upstage next to ROCKY, who pats SHADOW'S shoulder encouragingly. CHARLIE rubs his/her paws together.*

**CHARLIE:** Let's keep this winning streak going! Meow what's next?

**KAREN:** *(Facing the audience.)* Next, we will test your intelligence with a series of carefully selected questions.

**SOPHIE:** An intelligence test? This should be a piece of cake!

**CUSTARD:** Cake?! Where??

**KAREN:** Everyone will participate in this event. Karli will now distribute one buzzer per team.

*KARLI crosses to stage right and hands CHARLIE a buzzer. ALEXA, SABRINA, SOPHIE, CUSTARD and JELLYBEAN gather in a semicircle around CHARLIE. Then KARLI crosses to stage left and hands ANNIE a buzzer. PEPPER, ROCKY, and SHADOW gather around ANNIE, but ANNIE is looking at the CATS.*

**ANNIE:** Now hooooold on just a minute. Just how stupid do you think I look?!?

*JELLYBEAN slowly raises his/her hand. SABRINA lowers JELLYBEAN'S hand.*

**SABRINA:** (To *JELLYBEAN*.) Trick question. Don't answer that.

**ANNIE:** (To *KAREN*.) The cats have two extra players. I think two of them should have to sit out.

**KAREN:** She does have a valid point. (Turning to *ALEXA, SABRINA, CUSTARD, SOPHIE, CHARLIE and JELLYBEAN*.) Cats, you will need to bench two of your players for this competition.

**CHARLIE:** Not a problem. It only takes one of us to prove we're smarter than any dog. In fact, let's do it: we'll put up one cat against all of you dogs. What do you say?

**ANNIE:** One of you versus four of us?

**ROCKY:** Careful, Annie. It might be a trap.

**ANNIE:** (To *ROCKY*.) How can it be a trap? I don't know a lot about math, but I do know that four is greater than one.

**CHARLIE:** (To *KAREN*.) Judge? What do you say?

**KAREN:** I will allow it. One cat versus four dogs. Cats, who will be your champion?

**CHARLIE:** (Quickly.) We choose Alexa!

*CHARLIE shoves the buzzer into ALEXA'S hands.*

**ALEXA:** How kind. I will represent the feline race with pride.

*ALEXA robotically crosses downstage to stand right of KAREN as CHARLIE, SABRINA, SOPHIE, CUSTARD and JELLYBEAN move upstage to stand behind ALEXA.*

**ANNIE:** (To *ROCKY*.) Is it just me or does she seem a little bit... robotic?

**ROCKY:** Told you it was a trap.

**KAREN:** Are the contestants ready?

**ALEXA:** Ready!

*ANNIE, ROCKY, PEPPER, and SHADOW exchange questioning looks.*

**ANNIE:** I guess.

**KAREN:** Let's begin. Question one. What bird is the smallest in the world, often weighing less than a nickel?

**PEPPER:** A nickel? What's a nickel?

*ALEXA pushes the buzzer.*

**KAREN:** Cats?

**ALEXA:** That would be a hummingbird, Karen. Native to both North and South America. Tricky to catch but absolutely delicious.

**KAREN:** That is correct.

**KARLI:** And just a little bit disturbing.

**KAREN:** Nevertheless, the cats win the first question.

*CHARLIE, SABRINA, SOPHIE, CUSTARD and JELLYBEAN cheer for ALEXA, who looks back at them and bows, curtsies, or salutes.*

**SHADOW:** But I wasn't even ready!

**ANNIE:** No surprise there.

**PEPPER:** What's a hummingbird??

**KAREN:** Question two. Which of our feathered friends devours its prey whole?

**JELLYBEAN:** Feathered friends? I don't have any feathered friends. All my friends have fur!

**CUSTARD:** *(To JELLYBEAN, glumly.)* I don't have any friends.

**SABRINA:** *(To CUSTARD.)* Shhh! Don't distract Alexa!

*ALEXA pushes the buzzer.*

**KAREN:** Cats?

**ALEXA:** And the answer, of course, is the owl. It's actually quite fascinating. Even though owls consume their food whole, their bodies are unable to digest certain parts: bones, teeth, fur—

**SHADOW:** I think I'm gonna be sick!

**ALEXA:** So their gizzard packs all those undigested parts into a pellet and then the owl vomits it back up!

**SOPHIE:** Now that is disgusting. Custard, I take back everything I ever said about you being disgusting.

**CUSTARD:** Thank you! (To *JELLYBEAN*.) I guess I do have a friend!

**KAREN:** The cats are now up two questions to zero.

**ROCKY:** No offense, Annie, but maybe you better let one of us younger dogs have the buzzer. Quicker reflexes, you know?

**ANNIE:** If you're sure your allergies won't get in the way. Fine. Be my guest.

*ANNIE hands the buzzer to ROCKY, who moves to the center of the DOG semicircle.*

**KAREN:** Question 3. Which flightless bird has been known to kill humans?

**ROCKY:** Known to kill WHAT??!

**PEPPER:** Can I phone a friend?

**SHADOW:** Is it just me or are these questions getting scarier and scarier?

*ALEXA pushes the buzzer.*

**KAREN:** Cats?

**ALEXA:** That would be the cassowary, Karen.

**ANNIE:** Now hold on just a minute here. Is anyone else noticing that all of these questions are about birds??

*KARLI steps downstage to glare at ANNIE around KAREN.*

**KARLI:** Well, yeah! Like, you have a problem with that??

**ROCKY:** Yes! I mean, no, not because it's about birds. But aren't you supposed to be testing our intelligence?

**KAREN:** Don't you think an intelligent animal would know about ALL species?

**KARLI:** Yeah!

**ROCKY:** Sure. But you're only asking us about birds!

**PEPPER:** Maybe you should give her a break, Rocky. She's just a bird. You know. (*Whispers.*) Birdbrain.

**KARLI:** What did you just say??

**KAREN:** It's okay, Karli. Let's just continue with the competition.

*A ruffled KARLI steps back into place behind KAREN'S right side.*

**KAREN:** Currently, the cats have three questions to the dogs' zero.

**ROCKY:** How many questions are there altogether?

**KAREN:** Five.

**ROCKY:** Five?! We may as well stop now then. We can't win. Especially not against Robocat.

**JELLYBEAN:** Hey! That's what I call her!

**KAREN:** Fine. The dogs surrender. The second competition of intelligence goes to the cats.

*CHARLIE, ALEXA, SABRINA, SOPHIE, CUSTARD and JELLYBEAN celebrate while ANNIE, ROCKY, PEPPER and SHADOW grumble. MOCO crosses to downstage right and replaces the CAT'S score of zero with a 1.*

**SABRINA:** Way to go, Alexa!

**CUSTARD:** (*To ALEXA.*) Do you know the answer to everything??

**ALEXA:** Well, not everything. But I certainly know more than my cousin Siri.

*CHARLIE crosses to downstage right to look at the scoreboard.*

**CHARLIE:** Look, who's back into the positive numbers! Take that, canines!

**ANNIE:** You have one point. Way to celebrate mediocrity.

**PEPPER:** (*To ANNIE.*) What's "mediocrity"?

**ANNIE:** When you learn how to use Google, I'll show you an online dictionary.

**ROCKY:** (*To ANNIE, PEPPER and SHADOW.*) Come on now, guys.

Stay focused. It may be only one point, but we have to beat these cats! Karen, what's the next competition?

**KAREN:** Our third competition today will be a foot race to see which species is faster: cats or dogs?

**JELLYBEAN:** A race! We get to race?? I love to race!

**PEPPER:** Yeah! Me too!

**KAREN:** Everyone will participate in this competition. Please assemble at the starting line right over there.

*KAREN points to a starting line at downstage left. ANNIE, ROCKY, SABRINA, CHARLIE, ALEXA, SOPHIE, CUSTARD, JELLYBEAN, PEPPER and SHADOW eagerly cross to downstage left, pushing and shoving each other along the way to get the best position at the front of the line. ROCKY tries to stay as far away from SABRINA, ALEXA, CUSTARD, JELLYBEAN, CHARLIE and SOPHIE as possible. KAREN sneaks over to downstage right.*

**KAREN:** Karli! Moco! Get over here!

*KARLI and MOCO cross to KAREN at downstage right. KAREN looks around furtively before handing each of them a red laser pointer, keeping one for herself.*

**KAREN:** Here. Take these.

**KARLI:** What's this?

**KAREN:** It's a laser pointer.

**KARLI:** A laser?!?

**KAREN:** Not a laser. A laser pointer. It's not going to hurt anyone. It just makes a little red light.

**KARLI:** And, like, what are we supposed to do with these?

*KARLI pretends to accidentally shine the light in MOCO'S eyes. MOCO groans.*

**KAREN:** Not shine them directly into each other's eyes, Karli! Are you trying to make Moco go blind??

**KARLI:** Oh. No. (To MOCO.) Sorry, Moco.

*MOCO grunts.*

**KARLI:** So, like, what do you want us to do with these little red light thingies?

**KAREN:** Use them. Make sure the cats do not win this competition. Distract them.

**KARLI:** Uh, Karen? Wouldn't that be considered fowl play?

**KAREN:** Egg-zactly. We have to keep this competition close. We need the cats and dogs to stay at each other's throats.

**KARLI:** But... why?

**KAREN:** Why? WHY??? Are you kidding me right now?! (*Exhaling in exasperation.*) As much as I hate the term, maybe there is such a thing as a bird brain. Karli, I nominate you as their Queen.

**KARLI:** Me? Queen?!? Why, thank you!

*KAREN stomps back to downstage center. KARLI turns to MOCO.*

**KARLI:** Did you hear that, Moco? I'm a Queen!

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