

# DAWGS

## By Michael Soetaert

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## CHARACTERS

BUDDY	An older, non-descript breed of dog. He is a nice guy, but reluctant to do the right thing, even when the right thing might be obvious.
CLAUDETTE:	A French poodle. She is very vain. Narcissistic is a good word.
CALVIN	A rat terrier. He is a militant who would like to see all dogs everywhere revolt against their masters.
WINSTON	A bulldog. He is not a nice dog at all. He is a mean bully.
PEDRO	A Chihuahua. He is desperate to get out. To say he is paranoid is an understatement.
TUTTLE	A turtle. A very depressed turtle.
YIPPY	A hyper-active Pomeranian. He is so wired that, for the most part, he's oblivious to everything going on around him.
LEOPOLD	A kitten. Very innocent. Truly, all she wants to do is play.
SPARKY	A puppy. Like Leopold, he is innocent, too. He is unaware that dogs are supposed to hate cats.
RASPUTIN	A big, nasty snake. He's not so much mean as hungry, doing what snakes do best -- eating things.

Almost all characters, with minor changes, can be played by either sex, though LEOPOLD and CLAUDETTE: would probably work best as girls, and BUDDY and SPARKY would work best as guys. Doubling is not possible.

## SETTING

The set should be kept to a minimum. The only requirement is a practical door.

## PROPS

A book by Pavlov (for Buddy)  
A tape measure (for Buddy)  
A manicure kit (for Claudette)  
A compact mirror (for Claudette)  
A checker board (for Winston and Pedro)  
A small book (for Winston)  
A very large coffee cup (for Yippy)  
Roll card (for Pedro)  
A collar (for Calvin)  
A shoe or two (to be thrown on stage)

## COSTUMES

The actors can be costumed completely as animals, partially as animals (such as fake ears), or, if you're brave, not at all. If not at all, clothing can be selected to fit the animals' personalities, such as having Tuttle wear a turtle neck, or Calvin wearing a beret. Claudette will need to have her hair in pig tails, tied with pink ribbons. Pedro will need a sweater for the end of the play.

## SOUND AFFECTS

A tape of traffic noises.

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

Dawgs was first presented in Aurora, Missouri, on March 23, 2007, with the following cast and makeup artists:

<b>Character</b>	<b>Cast</b>	<b>Make-up</b>
<b>Buddy</b>	Logan Eley	Thea Hasley
<b>Claudette</b>	Shelby Baker	Ashton Hall
<b>Calvin</b>	Lauren Fite	Marissa Hilton
<b>Winston</b>	Lydia Lane	Kristen Kekich
<b>Pedro</b>	Josh Jenkins	Jodi Cantrell
<b>Tuttle</b>	Thomas Barkhurst	Crystal Hope
<b>Yippy</b>	Graham Weldin	Rebecca White
<b>Leopold</b>	Erin Simmons	David Chapman
<b>Sparky</b>	Kayla Weckerly-Woods	Traci Jarvis
<b>Rasputin</b>	JD Moore	Brittney Schmitt

Directed by: Michael Soetaert

Student Director: Thea Hasley

Lights and Sound: Trevor Taylor and AJ Harrison

Set Design and Construction: Linda Priester

Makeup and Costumes Designed and Created by Associated Theatrical Contractors, Springfield, Missouri.

*For Eric*

## DAWGS

by

Michael Soetaert

The stage will become Happy Doggy Land. The proscenium arch will become the “frame” for the front window of the store, with “Happy Doggy Land” printed as a sign above it—or on the door, whichever is easier. There is a practical door DL opening out to the audience. This is the front door of Happy Doggy Land. All dialogue will be from the animals. In fact, we will never see any “people.” The people that are there will be described through the eyes of the animals. The animals, however, will never make animal noises. Their actions, while not being specifically animal like, should give the impression of animals. For instance, the kitten should never specifically lick herself, but she can push her hair back with the back of her hand. The actors can be costumed completely as animals, partially as animals (such as fake ears), or, if you’re brave, not at all.

**AT RISE:** *The stage is partially lit. BUDDY, CLAUDETTE, CALVIN, WINSTON, PEDRO, and TUTTLE are all on stage. BUDDY is DL with his back propped up against the doorframe reading Pavlov (yes, it needs to be Pavlov). CLAUDETTE is LC, doing her nails, spending more time admiring her work than actually doing it. WINSTON and PEDRO have a checker board set up at Center on TUTTLE’s back and are slowly moving their pieces and studying their moves. CALVIN is DLC, sitting and practicing over and over again the raised right fist power salute. After a few moments, a hand reaches behind the glass on the door and changes the sign from “Closed” to “Open” and the lights come up.*

**BUDDY:** *(alarmed, quickly tossing his book aside) People!*

*(WINSTON and PEDRO quickly push their pieces off into a box, along with the board, and shove it aside. CLAUDETTE hurriedly hides her manicure set. The three then try to act casual. TUTTLE, however, does nothing. After all, he’s a turtle. What do you expect? CALVIN simply rolls over on his back with his feet and hands in the air. After all, HE is a dog.)*

**CLAUDETTE:** Hey! There’s a customer!

***(All of the animals, except WINSTON and, of course, TUTTLE, hurry over to DL, by the door, and watch an imaginary person go in. During the following conversation they will all be watching the imaginary person move around in the store.)***

WINSTON: ***(pushing the others aside)*** Get out of my way!

***(WINSTO will follow the imaginary person UL before turning around in disgust.)***

WINSTON: Doggie-Woggie! That child just called me a Doggie-Woggie! I'd rather live in a houseful of cats for the rest of time than to be forced to spend one day with such an ignorant and unimaginative human!

PEDRO: Well, maybe they want an ignorant and unimaginative dog!

CLAUDETTE: ***(fluffing her hair)*** Maybe she wants a poodle. Who wouldn't want a poodle? ***(to PEDRO while looking in her compact)*** How do I look? Tell me I look fine.

PEDRO: ***(not looking at her at all)*** Ah, you look fine, But she don't want no poodle. She ain't the Poodle type. She wants a Pedro.

CLAUDETTE: ***(with disdain)*** Why would she want a stupid little dog like you?

PEDRO: ***(offended)*** Hey, who ya callin' stupid?

CLAUDETTE: Oh, be serious! You're so stupid you can't even spell your own name.

PEDRO: What? That's easy. P-E-D-Row. Pedro.

CLAUDETTE: No. I meant "Chihuahua."

PEDRO: Chihuahua? What's a Chihuahua?

CLAUDETTE: You are.

PEDRO: I always thought I was a Pedro.

BUDDY: Quiet! We gotta look good. Nobody wants annoying dogs.

PEDRO: Somebody might. They bought Yippy.

WINSTON: If they do, then you're a shoe in.

PEDRO: A shoe in what?

WINSTON: I have a suggestion. . .

BUDDY: Quiet! Here she comes! Here she comes! She's. . . she's. . . ***(disappointed)*** She's buying some fish.

***(They all turn away and go back to their respective corners. After a moment. . .)***

PEDRO: Fish? Who would want fish?

TUTTLE: Somebody who wouldn't want a turtle. But who could blame them? I guess that would be everybody. I wouldn't even want a turtle.

WINSTON: (*with disdain*) The only person who would want a fish is a cat.

CALVIN: (*with disbelief*) A cat?

**(Everyone shudders.)**

ALL: Uhhhh. . . cats.

WINSTON: I don't know why anybody would want to be a cat when you could be a dog.

**(During the following lines, the dogs will start chanting "Dogs" in the background, becoming increasing louder. After each dog's lines, the others will ad lib such things as "Yeah!" "Right on!" and "Dig that!". . . but not too much.)**

PEDRO: To have the blood of wolves running through your veins!

WINSTON: To stand defiant against your enemies!

BUDDY: To bravely face the flames and rescue small humans!

CLAUDETTE: To be cute and loveable!

CALVIN: To be mean and nasty!

ALL: (*chanting*)

Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!

Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!

Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!

Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!

**(The following can either be rhythmically spoken or sung.)**

BUDDY:

Who's got a furry handshake?

Who's got a wagging tail?

Who can tell a friend from foe

Simply with a smell?

It's dogs!

ALL:

Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!

Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!

PEDRO:

You don't need a husband.

You won't need a wife.  
If you've got a dog,  
You've got a friend for life.  
We're dogs!

ALL:

Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!  
Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!

BUDDY:

We'll keep you safe from crooks.  
We'll bring in all the cows.  
We'll work for you all day long,  
And we'll still call you our pal!  
Oh, we're dogs!

ALL:

Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!  
Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!

CALVIN:

I won't tolerate no collar.  
No leash upon this mutt.  
And if you think I'm going to beg,  
Well you can kiss my furry. . .

ALL:

Hey! We're dogs!  
Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!  
Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!

WINSTON:

Don't let the moniker fool you,  
For we're truly not the same.  
Some of us are quite sophisticated,  
And some of us rather. . . plain.

ALL:

We're dogs!  
Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!  
Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!

CLAUDETTE:

If you want something elegant,

If glamour is your choice,  
Then picture me sitting  
In back of your Rolls Royce.

ALL:

We're dogs!  
Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!  
Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!

Yeah, We're dogs!  
Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!  
Dogs! Dogs! Dogs! Dogs!

Oh-h-h-h-h! We're dogs!

***(A shoe comes flying in, stopping the song.)***

ALL: ***(adlibbing)*** Hey! Ow! All right already!

CALVIN: I'll bet they don't throw shoes at cats!

PEDRO: Still, I wouldn't want to be no cat. The only thing worse than being a cat would be. . . sleeping.

BUDDY: How many times do I have to tell you that there's nothing wrong with sleeping?

PEDRO: ***(at his paranoid best)*** Yeah, that's what you say. Look at me. I'm a nervous wreck. I haven't had a good night's sleep since I was a puppy. They want you to sleep. They even train you to pretend you're sleeping. Just so they can get you to close your eyes. That's all it takes. Then, they can get rid of you. They're just waiting to fire up the ovens.

BUDDY: ***(realizing there's some truth to what PEDRO says)*** Nobody's going to get you if you fall asleep *here*. Besides, you got it wrong. It's not *falling* asleep. It's being *put* to sleep. Besides, we'll all look after each other. ***(louder, to the others; hopeful)*** Don't we guys? Don't we all look out for each other?

***(All the others, except WINSTON, give nervous affirmations, none very convincing.)***

BUDDY: See.

PEDRO: Maybe you will. . . ***(confidentially)*** . . .but do you really trust Winston? And what if they come for you first?

CLAUDETTE: Oh, those are just stories they tell puppies to scare them.

PEDRO: What? About Winston?

CLAUDETTE: No, silly. (*rethinking*) Well, maybe. . . But I was talking about being put to sleep. Nobody puts dogs to sleep. Everybody loves dogs. Especially poodles. Especially me. (*fluffs her hair*)

PEDRO: (*confused*) Poodles love dogs?

CLAUDETTE: No, silly. Everybody loves poodles. Especially poodles. I just love being a poodle. Everybody loves poodles because poodles are popular. If I had a cell phone everybody would be leaving me messages. (*looking in her mirror*) See, I'm the cutest pet in the whole store.

CALVIN: (*sarcastically*) If you're so cute, then why are you still here?

CLAUDETTE: It's by choice. I'm waiting for just the right owner. And when I get the right owner, I'll even be more popular. Then everybody will call me on my cell phone. Oh, I would just die without my cell phone.

PEDRO: But you don't even *have* a cell phone.

CLAUDETTE: Well, if I had one, then I would just die without it.

PEDRO: But what would be the point in having a cell phone?

CLAUDETTE: What do you mean? I mean, duh! You have a cell phone so people can call you.

PEDRO: But none of your friends have a cell phone.

CLAUDETTE: Once everybody knew I had a cell phone, then they would all get one too, just so they could call me.

BUDDY: That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard.

CLAUDETTE: No, it's not. You're just jealous.

BUDDY: OK, how do you know everybody would get a cell phone if you got one?

CLAUDETTE: Because nobody has one yet.

PEDRO: I can't take it!

BUDDY: What? Claudette? Just ignore her.

PEDRO: No. It's not Claudette. Not entirely. It's this whole life, that's what it is. I can't take it anymore.

BUDDY: Hey, dog, don't worry. You'll get a home.

PEDRO: That's what I'm worried about.

BUDDY: (*confused*) I thought you were worried about not getting a home.

PEDRO: I am.

BUDDY: (*even more confused*) Well. . . what's so wrong about getting a home?

PEDRO: They come with masters.

BUDDY: Well. . . yeah. So?

PEDRO: (*panicked*) What if my master wants me to do things? Like fetch? What am I going to have to fetch? What if I can't find it? I don't know how to shake! I can't roll over. And I'm not gonna beg. Oh no!

Don't make me beg. What if I have to be a watch dog? I don't even own a watch. What if Timmy falls down a well?

BUDDY: Dude, seriously. Calm down. Besides, it could be worse. He could want you to play dead.

CLAUDETTE: Hey, if you get a good master, there's no worries.

CALVIN: (**militant**) A good master? No master is a good master! As long as we have masters how can we truly be dogs? They'll be telling you what to do, where to go, even when to go. Nothin' but humiliation. We do all their work, and what do we get for it? A "Good boy" and a pat on the head.

CLAUDETTE: Except for the boy part, that all sounds okay to me.

CALVIN: That's just the assimilationist attitude that keeps us down. We're nothing but property. We can be bought and sold and even bred – all for their pleasure. And when they're done with us. . . Uh uh, baby, there ain't no retirement.

PEDRO: (**still worried**) What if someone breaks into the house? What if they want me to attack someone? I mean, I could get hurt!

CALVIN: Dog, I'd never risk my life for The Man. What did he ever give to you? I'll tell you: The only way we can ever truly be free is to cast off our collars and our leashes and rise up in rebellion!

PEDRO: Not me. I'm not going to wait. I'm escaping. I'm going over the wall!

BUDDY: What wall?

PEDRO: It's just a figure of speech. (**aside, to BUDDY**) I've got a plan. You see, we wait. And then we cause a diversion by the door. Maybe we could get Tuttle to cause a commotion.

BUDDY: Tuttle?

PEDRO: Well, maybe not Tuttle. But, how about Calvin? Or Claudette? It don't matter. (**regaining his momentum**) You see, we create a diversion. And then, when nobody's looking, we slip out the door.

BUDDY: How are we going to slip out the door?

PEDRO: That's the part I haven't worked through yet.

BUDDY: To say the least. And what's up with "we"?

PEDRO: You and me.

BUDDY: Why me?

PEDRO: Because I couldn't go by myself.

BUDDY: Well. . . what about. . . Uh. . . Yeah. . . I see what you mean. Well, assuming that we work out the minor details, like how we create the diversion and how we open the door, what do we do when we get out?

PEDRO: I got it all figured out. We go north. Join a tribe of wolves.

BUDDY: Lookit, dude. I've heard stories. Dog catchers. Cars. Little girls who put ribbons in your hair and make you ride in baby buggies. I

don't know about you, but wolves scare me. You ever see a wolf? Up close?

PEDRO: No. . . Have you?

BUDDY: No. But that's my point exactly. I want to keep it that way. You know what the wolf word for Chihuahua is?

WINSTON: (**walking up; evilly**) Hors d'oeuvres.

**(YIPPY enters from UL.)**

YIPPY: (**jumping around, uber-hyper**) Hi guys! Hi guys! I'm back. I'm back.

TUTTLE: (**like usual, with no enthusiasm whatsoever**) Well, what do you know. It's Yippy.

YIPPY: (**running circles around TUTTLE**) Hey, Tuttle. Hey, Tuttle. How are ya? How are ya? How are ya?

TUTTLE: Oh, the same. Nothing ever changes. Nothing ever will. Day in, day out. Until I die. Which is going to be a long, long time.

BUDDY: Hey, Yippy, why are you back?

YIPPY: Hey Buddy! Hey Buddy! I don't know. I don't know. They just brought me back. They just put me in the car this morning and brought me back. They brought me here, so here I am. Here I am. Whadayawannado? Whadayawannado?

BUDDY: But I didn't think you could bring pets back.

YIPPY: Oh, you can. Oh, you can.

BUDDY: But they won't give you your money back, will they?

YIPPY: I don't think they cared. Hey Winston. Hey Winston. Did you miss me? Huh? Huh? Huh? Did you miss me?

WINSTON: No. I most certainly did not.

YIPPY: (**hurt**) You didn't? You didn't?

WINSTON: No. Even if you hadn't been gone only overnight, I still wouldn't have missed you.

YIPPY: (**turning to CLAUDETTE**) Hey. Hey. Hey. Claudette. Claudette. Did ya miss me? Did ya? Did ya?

**(CLAUDETTE: snobbishly turns her back on YIPPY, takes out her compact mirror, and starts poofing her hair. YIPPY turns immediately toward CALVIN.)**

YIPPY: Hey, Calvin! Give me some paw!

**(YIPPY offers his paw for CALVIN to slap, which he does not. About half way through the following tirade YIPPY will turn toward PEDRO, ignoring CALVIN, who will not stop.)**

CALVIN: (*militant*) You come around here trying to act like you're my brother or something. Dog, why don't you wake up? We are the oppressed. Trying to be a "good dog." Trying to please The Man. We need to rise up against the system and throw off our collars. We have nothing to lose but our leashes. I'm talkin' revolution! I'm talkin' the end of oppression! And you come around here thinkin' that you're my brother. Stuff! You're just a pampered Pomeranian. You don't know what it's like to suffer. Try hanging out with rat terriers for just one day. One day! Even our names are oppressive. And my name ain't Calvin. I refuse to answer by the assimilationist name given to me by my human master. Don't call me Calvin anymore. It's Y.

BUDDY: Y?

CALVIN: Because X was already taken, that's why. (*CALVIN turns his back in a huff*)

YIPPY: (*having already forgotten CALVIN; to PEDRO*) You missed me. Didn't you Pedro? Huh? Huh? Huh?

PEDRO: (*taking him aside*) Yeah, dog, sure. Listen, what's it like out there, dog?

YIPPY: Out where?

PEDRO: Outside, dog. Beyond the pet store. What's the world like? Which way's north?

YIPPY: There's lots of cars and trees, and more cars and more trees, and then we turned down a street, and there were even more cars, but not as many trees, but on the next street there were more trees than cars, so it all worked out. Trees and cars. Trees and cars. That's all. Trees and cars. Trees and cars.

PEDRO: (*almost desperate*) No, dog. Listen. What's it *really* like? I mean, I gotta get outta here. I'm going over the wall. I've got a plan. But I need to know what it's like out there. I need to know how to get to Happy Doggy Land.

YIPPY: (*breaking away from PEDRO*) Cars and trees. Cars and trees. Nothing but cars and trees. I think I'm going to get some coffee!

(*YIPPY exits DR.*)

WINSTON: (*walking up to PEDRO; sarcastically*) Happy Doggy Land! How pathetic.

PEDRO: (*desperate – no longer almost*) It's there! I tell you, it's there!

(*During the following speech PEDRO will get increasingly more terrified.*)

WINSTON: Yeah, sure. Go ahead and dream of your Happy Doggy Land. I guess that's better than hoping that somebody will actually

want a scrawny little Chihuahua that's even more pathetic than Happy Doggy Land. You know the only place you're ever going to go to?

***(PEDRO shakes his head nervously "No.")***

WINSTON: Well, I'll tell you. It's where all unwanted dogs eventually go. ***(evilly)*** You get to go *to sleep*. It's not just a story made up to scare puppies. It's that long walk down a short hall. It's a dead dog walking. The green mile. It's the journey you never come back from. ***(faking a look over Pedro's shoulder)*** Hey, I think they're coming for you now. . .

***(PEDRO screams and runs off stage. HE will then come back on, staying in the background. BUDDY walks over to WINSTON, who is quietly laughing to himself.)***

BUDDY: Dude, why you gotta be that way?

WINSTON: ***(innocently)*** What way?

BUDDY: Oh, don't give me that. Torturing that poor dog like that.

WINSTON: What's wrong with a little torture? It builds character. And from what I can tell, that poor dog could use all the character he can get.

CALVIN: ***(spinning around and abruptly joining the conversation; to BUDDY)*** It's because Winston's nothing but a tool of The Master. ***(getting in WINSTON's face)*** And you know the only thing worse than being The Master? It's being a tool of The Master. ***(with disdain)*** You're no better than Rasputin.

WINSTON: ***(puffing up)*** You think I'm afraid of you? And I'm not afraid of Rasputin, either. I'd much rather be a snake any day of the week than be a scrawny little rat terrier like you.

CALVIN: ***(not backing down, but realizing he's over-matched)*** You think I'm afraid of a. . . big, very big. . . bulldog like you?

***(WINSTON bumps his chest against CALVIN, who glares into his eyes for a second before quickly turning away. HE'll walk away a few steps before defiantly turning back around and saying. . .)***

CALVIN: Just you wait! When the Revolution comes, we'll see who gets lined up against the wall with The Master! We'll see who's wearing the collar and who's holding the leash!

***(CALVIN turns and stalks off to UL, where HE stands around brooding, which is something HE does well. WINSTON just laughs***

**to himself before turning away, as well. CLAUDETTE then gets up and moves over to TUTTLE.)**

CLAUDETTE: **(holding out both hands)** Which do you think looks better, the pink or the red? I like the red, but the pink looks better with my pom-poms. What do you think?

**(During TUTTLE's following lines, PEDRO will come back on stage; CLAUDETTE will lose interest in TUTTLE after about two words.)**

TUTTLE: **(totally ignoring CLAUDETTE's question; slowly, as always)** You know what the trouble with being a turtle is? We can't go away. Everybody always wants to go somewhere else, but can a turtle? No. Oh, sure. We can walk here and we can walk there, but when we're done, we're always just where we started. Back in our shell. So, what's the use? What's the use in anything? Why even try? I was just saying the other day. . . **(Enter UL LEOPOLD, the kitten. TUTTLE will be the first to notice. Slowly, no emotion, upon seeing the LEOPOLD)** Oh, my.

PEDRO: **(who caught the last of TUTTLE's lines; not noticing the kitten)** You were saying, "Oh my?"

TUTTLE: No. I was saying "Oh my" because of that. **(points at LEOPOLD)**

**(During the following lines LEOPOLD will calmly watch the others, never getting upset or worried.)**

PEDRO: **(terrified)** Soggy doggy biscuits! What is it? What is it?

CLAUDETTE: **(near hysteria)** It's a . . . it's a . . .

BUDDY: **(much calmer)** It's a cat.

**(CLAUDETTE screams and falls in a faint.)**

PEDRO: **(now more curious than scared)** I always thought they were bigger than that, you know. **(mimicking)** With lots of big nasty teeth and big sharp claws. You know, like they could rip you in two with one swipe or something like that.

BUDDY: **(clinically examining the kitten, as if she weren't really there)** They generally are. **(takes out a tape measure and does some quick measuring)** What we got here seems to be a kitten.

PEDRO: A kitten?

CLAUDETTE: **(suddenly waking back up)** A kitten?

CALVIN: **(after circling LEOPOLD)** Another tool of The Man. Just another way to hold the dog down.

**(CALVIN will stalk over to join the rest of the dogs, who will all group DR. TUTTLE will remain sitting, sullenly, in the middle.)**

BUDDY: **(ignoring CALVIN)** Yeah. A kitten. A little cat. *Feline furballicus.*

PEDRO: Are all little cats kittens?

BUDDY: Let's not even go there. We'll just get into a big philosophical discussion that will just end up confusing everybody and wasting time.

PEDRO: More than you just wasted?

BUDDY: Much more.

PEDRO: OK. But I still don't see why we got a cat.

WINSTON: **(sarcastically)** My guess is because we're a pet store.

PEDRO: Yeah. That's my point exactly. Who would want to buy a cat?

CALVIN: Well, what are we supposed to do with a cat?

WINSTON: I think the proper thing to do is to yell at it.

CLAUDETTE: That seems, so. . . loud.

WINSTON: Well, yes, that is the general idea.

PEDRO: **(to WINSTON)** You start, dog.

WINSTON: **(high, and cracking)** Hey. **(clears his throat, much louder)** Hey!

**(All the dogs start yelling "Hey" at LEOPOLD, who is happily watching. They continue yelling, throwing in an occasional moose-ear and nose-thumb. Enter SPARKY. HE will watch for a few moments. During the following conversation one by one the dogs will lose interest and wander off, starting with CLAUDETTE, then CALVIN, then WINSTON, and then PEDRO.)**

SPARKY: **(after a few moments)** Hey. Whatcha doin'?

WINSTON: **(snobbishly)** Well, if it isn't Sparky. Now that the puppy's here, the morning's complete.

BUDDY: **(to SPARKY; ignoring WINSTON)** We're yelling at the cat. **(to LEOPOLD)** Hey!

SPARKY: What's a cat?

BUDDY: **(pointing at LEOPOLD)** That is.

SPARKY: But it's so little. . . and cute.

BUDDY: Don't let that fool you. Hey! They get bigger and uglier. Hey!

SPARKY: Oh. But why are you yelling at her?

BUDDY: Hey! Because we're supposed to. Hey!

SPARKY: Why?

BUDDY: I don't know. Hey! We just always have.

SPARKY: I haven't.

BUDDY: Hey! Not “we” in the first dog. It’s more “we” in the second dog.

The general, all-inclusive “we.” Dogs in general. Hey!

SPARKY: Why?

BUDDY: Hey! It’s just the way things are. Hey!

SPARKY: Is it fun?

BUDDY: **(thinks for a moment)** Sometimes. I guess. **(less enthusiastic)** Hey.

SPARKY: Can I try?

BUDDY: Sure, kid, give it a rip.

SPARKY: **(very high pitched)** Ha!

BUDDY: No, kid. First of all, it’s “Hey,” not “Ha.” And don’t yell with your throat. More in your chest. Like this. Hey! That way you don’t get hoarse.

SPARKY: Why would I want a horse?

BUDDY: Not that kind of horse.

SPARKY: Are there other kinds of horses?

**(BUDDY notices that the others are having no effect whatsoever on the kitten and have lost their enthusiasm. The kitten is simply enjoying it.)**

BUDDY: Oh, never mind. This is useless.

**(All the dogs stop “barking.”)**

SPARKY: Why?

BUDDY: Because we’re supposed to scare off the cat.

SPARKY: Why would you want to do that?

BUDDY: Because we’re supposed to.

CALVIN: **(chipping in)** Yeah. The only good cat is a scared cat.

BUDDY: **(aside)** Then I guess this one isn’t very good. **(to SPARKY)** Look, kid, all I know is that dogs hate cats. We always have. We always will. It’s just the way things are.

SPARKY: But that’s silly. I don’t even know any cats. Except for this one, but I guess I don’t really know her. But she does seem nice. Do you know any cats?

BUDDY: No. Of course not.

SPARKY: Why not?

BUDDY: Because they’re cats. Why would you want to know a cat?

SPARKY: Because they might be nice.

BUDDY: But they’re cats!

SPARKY: **(confused)** Oh.

CALVIN: **(joining back in, to SPARKY)** Let me spell it out to you. All bad things start with cats. A cat comes into the neighborhood, and

the next thing you know, there's a leash law. And then, the dogcatcher. Then, before you know it, you're wearing a sweater and some human's following you around with a scooper. It's nothin' but bad. And it's all because of cats.

SPARKY: But that's just silly. How could a cat make you wear a sweater? And that's still no reason to hate a cat.

WINSTON: **(sarcastically)** Yeah. Typical kid. Thinks he knows everything. Never mind a thousand dog years of tradition.

SPARKY: But it seems like a silly tradition.

WINSTON: Hey. Don't bad mouth tradition. Next thing you know you won't want to chase cars.

SPARKY: What? I gotta chase cars? What happens if I catch one?

WINSTON: Oh, never mind. The trouble with today's youth is that they're too young. They ask too many questions and don't like the answers. If you'd just accept things the way they are without question, then everybody would be a lot happier!

SPARKY: Except cats.

WINSTON: Who cares about cats?!

BUDDY: Oh, forget it.

***(All the dogs except for SPARKY exit. TUTTLE is still on the stage, too. TUTTLE is always pretty much on the stage. But then, he's not a dog.)***

LEOPOLD: Where are they going?

SPARKY: I don't know.

LEOPOLD: I thought they wanted to play. I was having fun. My name is Leopold. What's yours?

TUTTLE: I'm Tuttle. Oh, I'm sorry. You weren't talking to me. That's okay. Nobody ever talks to me. Just ignore that I'm here. I do.

SPARKY: ***(after a beat; ignoring TUTTLE)*** I'm Sparky. How come you've got a boy's name?

LEOPOLD: Because nobody looked.

SPARKY: Looked for what?

LEOPOLD: ***(innocently)*** I haven't a clue.

SPARKY: Why don't you change it?

LEOPOLD: To what?

SPARKY: I don't know. Maybe Godzilla! ***(sees the disdain in her eyes)***  
Or Fluffy.

LEOPOLD: What kind of name is Fluffy? Besides, I don't mind Leopold. And most people call me Kitty anyway. ***(sad)*** But I don't have any people, now. What happens if you don't get any people?

SPARKY: ***(nervous)*** I don't know, but I don't think you'd like it. Besides, we don't have to worry about that, now.

LEOPOLD: Why not?

SPARKY: Because it's now. We don't have to worry about what happens later until later. Right now we can play!

LEOPOLD: What do you want to play?

RASPUTIN: ("**slithering up**") Why don't we play lunch? I'll be a customer at the restaurant (**to LEOPOLD**) and you can be the main course. (**to SPARKY**) And you, little puppy, can be the appetizer.

SPARKY: (**nervous**) I don't think we want to play with you, Rasputin.

RASPUTIN: Why not? It would be fun.

SPARKY: Because Buddy told me not to play with the snake, that's why.

RASPUTIN: (**getting real close to SPARKY**) So, why listen to Buddy? When was the last time he wanted to play?

SPARKY: (**ignoring the question**) Buddy says that the only thing you want to do is eat me. Why don't you just eat rats and leave the rest of us alone?

RASPUTIN: Rats! (**gives a disgusted shutter**) Everybody always feeds rats to snakes. They even enjoy watching us eat the rats. Sick! Rats, my friend, are the McDonald's of the animal world. And who wants to eat McDonald's when they can have filet mignon?

LEOPOLD: Filet what?

RASPUTIN: Mignon. . . Oh, never mind.

SPARKY: Oh, I kinda like McDonald's.

RASPUTIN: That's not the point. The point is, there are so many other, more *tasty*, things to eat. . . than rats.

SPARKY: (**nervous**) Such as. . . ?

RASPUTIN: (**checking out SPARKY**) Puppy's good. When dogs get older they get a bit *tough*. (**pinching SPARKY's upper arm**) How old are you?

SPARKY: (**scared**) I. . . I. . . I don't know.

RASPUTIN: Of course, little dogs. . . little dogs like you. . . are always a treat. (**turning to LEOPOLD**) But my favorite, by far, is kitten.

(**YIPPY enters from DR**)

YIPPY: (**startling RASPUTIN**) Hi guys! Whatchadoin'? Whatchadoin'?

RASPUTIN: (**taking a few steps back**) I thought I was doing lunch. Care to join us?

YIPPY: Kibbles and Bits. Kibbles and Bits. When do we eat! When do we eat!

RASPUTIN: (**disgusted**) Not now. . . unfortunately! (**turns to leave but stops and says. . .**) But don't worry, I'll be back. Stay tender. (**exits**)

SPARKY: Boy, I'm glad he's gone.

YIPPY: Yup, he's gone. Yup, he's gone. But you're still here. Whatchawannado? Whatchawannado?

LEOPOLD: What kind of dog are you?

YIPPY: I'm a Pomeranian. I'm a Pomeranian. I like being a Pomeranian.  
What kind of dog are you? Huh? Huh? Huh?

LEOPOLD: I'm not a dog. I'm a cat.

YIPPY: **(stops dead in his tracks; after an uncharacteristic pause)** A cat? You're a cat? **(getting wound up again)** Aren't dogs supposed to chase cats? Or is it that cats are supposed to chase dogs? Which is it? I never can remember. If you don't mind, I'm busy right now. Maybe we can chase each other later. That would be fun. That would be fun.

BUDDY: **(entering)** Dude. One word. Decaf.

YIPPY: What? What? Why would you say that? Huh? Huh? Huh?

LEOPOLD: What's your name?

YIPPY: They call me Yippy. But I don't know why. I wouldn't've called myself Yippy. Yippy, Yippy, Yippy, that's what everybody always calls me. I guess because it's my name. I mean, that's a pretty good reason to call someone a name, if it is their name. And Yippy is my name. Yippy. Yippy. Yippy.

LEOPOLD: **(a bit cautious)** Do people actually want little hyperactive, shrill, yelling dogs?

YIPPY: Apparently not. Apparently not. But I don't mind. I like it here.

LEOPOLD: Don't you worry. . . you know. . . that no one will ever want you? And. . . then. . .

YIPPY: No worries. No worries. If you drink enough coffee, you won't worry, either. Do you like it here? Here's a nice place. Except sometimes it's not. Everybody's friendly, mostly. Mostly. Just watch out for. . . **(stops suddenly and looks around; in confidence)** Watch out for the. . . **(whispering)** snake. **(back to his hyper old self)** Hey! Gotta go. Gotta go. Day's a wasting. Has anyone seen my coffee cup? Oh, never mind. Who needs a cup when you can have the whole pot?

**(YIPPY exits, along with SPARKY. BUDDY notices that HE's suddenly alone on stage with LEOPOLD. There is an uneasy silence for a few moments while BUDDY stares at LEOPOLD and she just smiles.)**

BUDDY: **(not too loud)** Boo!  
**(LEOPOLD just smiles some more.)**

BUDDY: **(much louder)** Boo!

**(LEOPOLD giggles. After a moment, BUDDY fakes a jump at LEOPOLD with both arms out while loudly shrieking a very mean**

**yell. LEOPOLD shrieks in fear and then screws up her face and starts quietly crying. BUDDY is immediately sorry and ashamed for what HE's just done, but unsure how to respond to her tears.)**

BUDDY: Wh. . . What are you doing?

**(LEOPOLD continues to quietly cry, not concerned with split infinitives. BUDDY moves toward the kitten, as if he might put a kind arm around her, but stops short and puts his hands in his pocket with his head down.)**

BUDDY: Gee. . . I'm. . . sorry. I didn't mean to make you cry.

LEOPOLD: **(sniffly)** I thought you wanted to play.

BUDDY: Well. . . no. Why would I want to play?

LEOPOLD: I thought *everybody* liked to play.

BUDDY: I guess we do. Well, maybe not everybody. But most everybody.

LEOPOLD: Then why don't you want to play with me?

BUDDY: Because you're a cat.

LEOPOLD: What difference does that make?

BUDDY: **(stumped)** Um. . . because. . . Because you're a *cat*.

**(LEOPOLD just stares blankly at BUDDY.)**

BUDDY: Um. . . Because I'm a dog?

**(LEOPOLD continues to stare expectantly.)**

BUDDY: Aw, geez! I don't know what difference it makes. We're just not supposed to. **(after another awkward pause)** Are all cats like you?

LEOPOLD: I don't know. Are all dogs like you?

BUDDY: Um. . . No. I don't think so. Sure, I suppose. But not all of them.

LEOPOLD: That's good.

BUDDY: Why?

LEOPOLD: Because I don't like mean dogs.

BUDDY: **(thinking)** What? Calvin? He's not really mean. He's all yell and no punch.

LEOPOLD: No. I like Calvin. I think he's funny. **(hesitant)** It's Winston.

BUDDY: **(not really wanting to lie)** Oh. . . Winston. You just have to get to know Winston. He's really not that bad. . . once you learn to ignore his. . . eccentricities.

**(SPARKY comes bounding on the stage.)**

SPARKY: **(excited)** Hey! You'll never believe it. I found a place where we can go swimming!

LEOPOLD: Is that fun?

SPARKY: You bet it is! **(second thought)** As long as you don't mind fish.

LEOPOLD: **(piqued)** I love fish!

**(They both go bounding off excitedly.)**

BUDDY: **(watching them go; to himself)** You know, cat, you might be okay. Too bad you're a cat.

**(BUDDY exits, leaving the stage blank for a beat. Then PEDRO walks slowly on stage. HE dejectedly walks around before slowly crossing to the doors, where HE looks out, with his head going back and forth, following cars. HE perks up as he sees a particular car go by, following to his right with his eyes, where he sees Calvin, who has since entered DR.)**

PEDRO: **(to CALVIN)** Wow! Did you see that?

CALVIN: What? What could possibly be worth seeing out there?

PEDRO: It was a dog in a car. He had his head out the window, just taking it all in. What a life!

CALVIN: Dog, what would you do if you got out?

PEDRO: I don't know. **(sudden thought; miming the following)** I could be a police dog! I could have a badge and a gun and chase bad guys and get shot in a shootout and the whole town would turn out for my funeral and they would build a statue of me downtown. A big statue. Ahhh. . .

CALVIN: You've got to be kidding!

PEDRO: Or I could be a farm dog!

CALVIN: Dog, what do you know about farming?

PEDRO: What do I need to know? I could ride in the back of the pickup with the wind blowing my ears back. That would be cool! You know, yellin' at people in other cars: "Hey! Made ya look!" Singin' along with the radio. Owww Oughhhhhh!

CALVIN: So you think that makes you qualified to be a farm dog?

PEDRO: I could be a sheep dog.

CALVIN: A sheep dog?

PEDRO: Yeah. You know. Rounding up the sheep. I could do that. Check it out: "Hey, you! Sheep! Yeah, you with the wool! Get over here!" Not bad, huh?

CALVIN: You have got to be the dumbest dog I have ever known!

PEDRO: Well, how smart do you have to be to round up sheep?

CALVIN: Dog, you just don't get it, do you? Even if you're a sheep dog, you're still a tool of The Man.

PEDRO: Well, like, what else is there?

CALVIN: **(dreamily)** Could you imagine a world where dogs would never have to fetch for no one but themselves? Where no one was ever bought and sold? Where there's no collars and no leashes? Where we're in charge of our own destinies?

PEDRO: **(distant; dreaming as well)** Happy Doggy Land.

CALVIN: **(annoyed, as usual)** There you go again with that made up doggy poo!

**(During the following lines, CALVIN will slowly become interested.)**

PEDRO: No, dog. Happy Doggy Land. My mama used to tell me about it. It's a long way away. In a land called Kansas. . . Or Canada, or maybe both. And when you get there, the first thing they do is take your collar. And you never have to wear it again. . . unless you want to.

CALVIN: Who would want to wear a collar?

PEDRO: No, dog. But that's the point. You can do whatever you want. And there's no people.

CALVIN: No people. . .

PEDRO: None. Nowhere. Ever. Unless you want them.

CALVIN: Who would want them?

PEDRO: Exactly! And the Kibble and Bits grow on trees. They fall off every morning so you don't even have to pick them.

CALVIN: **(hopeful)** Are there cats?

PEDRO: Oh, yeah, dog. There's cats all over the place.

CALVIN: **(tiffed)** See, dog! I knew that was just stuff. Biscuits and bologna. What kind of wonderful place for dogs would have cats?

PEDRO: No, dog. They're old and fat and slow. And none of them have claws. . .

CALVIN: Hey, now you're talkin'. So, when do we revolt?

PEDRO: No, dog, you don't need to revolt. You just walk there.

CALVIN: How do you know where it is? How do you know where you're going? What if you go the wrong way? What if you get lost? What if you end up in Mean Cat Land?

PEDRO: No, dog. It's easy. Just follow the fire hydrants. All the way to Happy Doggy Land.

CALVIN: **(dreamily)** Happy Doggy Land. **(after a beat, back to his old self)** Dog! You're just kidding yourself. There's no such place as Happy Doggy Land! We're never getting out of here. Unless we revolt! We all shall rise up at once and put down The Man! Then we'll live like we want!

PEDRO: And what if we fail?

CALVIN: Then we fail! If we die tryin', at least we were tryin'!

PEDRO: Wow! I like that. All except that one part.

CALVIN: What part is that?

PEDRO: The dying part. That ain't no way to live to be old.

CALVIN: So, you're willing to give up everything – even your stupid Happy Doggy Land – just to live to be old? You'd be willing to live forever with some stupid human who only lets you outside to do your business only when it's convenient for him? You'd be willing to do that just so you wouldn't die?

PEDRO: Well. . . yeah. When do we go?

CALVIN: Dog, you just don't get it, do you?

PEDRO: No. But I want to.

***(CLAUDETTE will enter quietly during the following lines and stand unobtrusively in the back.)***

CALVIN: Look, dog. You're never getting out of here. Nobody wants a pathetic Chihuahua.

PEDRO: I know! That's why I have to get out of here! That's why I have to escape!

CALVIN: Dog, as long as there's a leash on your mind, then you'll never be free!

***(CALVIN exits in disgust.)***

PEDRO: ***(as CALVIN's walking away)*** Well. . . Well. . . Oh dog! I don't need you! I'll escape on my own! I'll go to Happy Doggy Land without you!

CLAUDETTE: ***(suddenly stepping up)*** Take me with you!

PEDRO: ***(startled)*** What?

CLAUDETTE: Take me with you. When you go. When you escape. Take me with you.

PEDRO: ***(hopeful; excited)*** Like boyfriend and girlfriend?

CLAUDETTE: No! Ewww! Gross! ***(seeing PEDRO's disappointment; sensing SHE's made a mistake; forcing herself to move closer to PEDRO)*** I guess we could. I mean, that would be okay. If that's what it takes. . .

PEDRO: Hey, you're just using me. . . Are you?

CLAUDETTE: Look, I've got to get out of here! Will you help me or not?

PEDRO: Why are you worried? You're a poodle. Everybody loves poodles. You said so yourself.

CLAUDETTE: Then why am I still here?

PEDRO: I thought you said you were waiting for the right owner. . .

CLAUDETTE: Oh, don't be so stupid! (**sees the hurt look on his face; trying to cover**) I mean, don't be so. . . I mean. . . Oh, just take me with you!

PEDRO: But you're a poodle. You're gonna get a good home.

CLAUDETTE: What if I don't? What if nobody wants me at all? Do you think they're going to let me stay here forever?

PEDRO: I don't know. How long's Buddy been here? I mean, he's old. He's pushing 2 at least.

CLAUDETTE: I don't know how old he is. But do you think they're going to let *him* stay here forever? What about when he gets old? I mean really old. What about when I get old? What about when *you* get old?

PEDRO: Pedros don't show their age. My grandmother lived to be 15, almost 16, and when she died, she didn't look a day over 12.

CLAUDETTE: But I'm a poodle!

PEDRO: Are you afraid I might forget?

CLAUDETTE: You don't understand. We don't age well. I'm already starting to lose my puppy cuteness. I've got to do something. . . before adolescence!

PEDRO: You'll get a home by then. . .

CLAUDETTE: But what if it's not a good one?

PEDRO: How could it be bad? I mean, they feed you, don't they? If they let you outside regularly. . . Wow, what more is there?

CLAUDETTE: What if. . . what if they have a cat? A mean cat? What if I'm expected to like the cat? What if the cat doesn't like me? What if she does? I don't want to be liked by a cat!

PEDRO: Well. . . um. . .

CLAUDETTE: What if I get some little kid who wants to put bows in my hair? Some little brat that wants to tie ribbons around my ears?

PEDRO: I thought you liked ribbons and bows.

CLAUDETTE: Don't be so stupid!

PEDRO: You know, that's harder to do than you'd think.

CLAUDETTE: (**ignoring the comment**) I'm a dog. Do you know any dog that really wants bows on her ears?

PEDRO: Hey, you could put bows on my ears and my tail. I don't care. And I'm a guy. (**confidentially**) You can do anything you want just as long as it doesn't involve sleeping.

CLAUDETTE: Then you'll take me with you?

PEDRO: (**thinks for a beat**) Sure.

CLAUDETTE: (**squealing with delight**) Great! When do we go?

PEDRO: As soon as you figure out how to open the door.

CLAUDETTE: (**puzzled; trying not to be annoyed**) You mean. . . that's it? That's your plan?

PEDRO: Yeah. Pretty much. I mean, there's more to it than that. Like, once we get outside. But I got all that figured out, too.

CLAUDETTE: (*with a modicum – it's a word – of interest*) Really?

PEDRO: Yeah! Once I – we – get out, we'll go somewhere.

CLAUDETTE: Where?

PEDRO: I haven't figured that out yet. . . not exactly. And then, on to Happy Doggy Land.

CLAUDETTE: (*annoyed*) You call that a plan?

PEDRO: Well, yeah. Shouldn't I?

CLAUDETTE: That isn't a plan!

PEDRO: (*offended*) Yeah, it is. It may not be a very good plan, but it's still a plan.

CLAUDETTE: (*walking away with disgust*) Don't bother me until you have a real plan! (*turning back around and facing PEDRO*) In fact, don't bother me at all! I wouldn't go with you if you were the last dog on the planet! (*turns and exits UR*)

PEDRO: (*as SHE's leaving*) Well. . . well. . . well. . . I might be! And then you'll be sorry!

*(PEDRO turns and dejectedly exits UL. The stage is blank for a few moments. . . except for TUTTLE, who has been there all along.)*

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