

DOG DAY MORNING

By Claudia Haas

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CHARACTERS:

SCOUT: (male or female) Big lap dog; enthusiastic!

SOCKS: (male or female) prefers the name "Pellinore;" a very cat-like cat

TIME: Daytime, today

SETTING: A living room picture window. There is a chair and there could be a couch or a table in front where the animals can perch as they watch the outside; whatever works for your theatre.

AT RISE SCOUT and SOCKS are settled by the window. SCOUT is watching a car drive away. SOCKS is sitting up – like a cat statue – plotting – an escape. There is one chair by the window.

SCOUT: There they go – the two-leggeds. My favorite things.

SOCKS: The two-leggeds have finally gone. My sworn enemies.

SCOUT: Look at them – happily driving away from me in their car. Why don't they take me? I had the best morning. It started with a dog biscuit – I love dog biscuits! Then the two-leggeds rubbed my tummy. I adore tummy rubs! Then, they walked me around the block! I love this block! Now – they're gone. Who knows if they will ever return?

(SCOUT FLOPS down – on the chair or the floor. SOCKS addresses the audience.)

SOCKS: This is day 365 of my imprisonment. These two-legged creatures are driving me mad! They continue to torture me with stuffed mice. Do they not know that I know the difference between a stuffed mouse and a real one? Have they not noticed that real mice move and smell and are delicious? Do they take me for a fool!

SCOUT: Yesterday the two-leggeds threw sticks all day and I fetched them. It was the best day ever!

SOCKS: The two-leggeds continue to feed me dry nuggets of leftover chicken parts. It is not fit for cat consumption. Why don't they let me outside to find my own birds?

SCOUT: Yesterday, I had these tasty nuggets for dinner. I love tasty nuggets!

SOCKS: I threw up the detested cat food. The two-leggeds were dismayed. Score 1 point for me! I have got to get out of here. I must escape!

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SCOUT: When will they come home? Will they never return? Will I never be happy again?

SOCKS: What a fool that dog is. They let him out every day and he keeps coming back! Why do they not let me out? I've got to get out! I must get away!

SCOUT: I'm worried. Suppose they get lost and never return? Will I never be fed again? Socks! What will happen to us?

SOCKS: Do not use that common name with me. You know my name is Pellinore!

SCOUT: But the two-leggeds call you Socks!

SOCKS: Because the two-leggeds have no imagination – no sense of my royal nature. In short – they have no brains. If I were you, I'd dump the name "Scout."

SCOUT: But I love my name! It's the best!

SOCKS: You are destined to be nothing more than a commoner.

SCOUT: I know! I love it! Isn't it wonderful? I am one with my fellow two-leggeds!

SOCKS: (*Addressing audience*) I tried to escape this morning by jumping from the stairs and wrapping myself around one of the two-leggeds legs as she went out the door. She screamed which delighted me but stayed inside until she could disengage me. Even when I hissed she refused to open the front door for me.

SCOUT: Oh look! There's a car! It's coming here! They're coming home! It's closer and closer – and there it goes.

SOCKS: (*Addressing audience*) Do you see what I have to put up with? The dog is a flunkie. Soulless and thinks only of making the two-leggeds happy. It's pathetic.

SCOUT: I am so depressed. They're never coming home.

SOCKS: Look at that creature! What a loser!

(*A bird flies by the window. SOCKS is on full alert.*)

Oh! Look at that! Look! Dinner with wings! Right outside the glass pane. (*SOCKS paws at it*) I can't stand it any longer! I can't stay cooped up in here! I must get out! I must flee this dungeon!

SCOUT: I'm starving! Where is my next meal coming from?

SOCKS: (*Addressing audience*) I must act! Seize the moment! Get out now! Get out! But how? (*Noticing the dog*) You're worried about getting dinner, are you?

SCOUT: Aren't you?

SOCKS: Suppose I told you we could get our own dinner.

SCOUT: I tried opening my own bag of food but the two-leggeds were upset with me. They didn't love me for five whole minutes. It was torture. I had to do the sad eyes, (*does so*) and tilt my head, (*does*

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so) then wag my tail (*does so*) and finally I give them my paw. It was very stressful. I don't want to go through that again.

SOCKS: No, we don't have to break into their sorry stash they call pet food. We can get our own food.

SCOUT: I could try and drag out the garbage.

SOCKS: I'm a cat not a rodent. I hunt for food. I don't eat garbage.

SCOUT: Garbage is pretty tasty. It's one of my favorite things to eat!

SOCKS: You're a canine! Act like it! Stop subjugating your personality to fit the two-legged's expectations. Look at me! I'm a feline to the core! I do not change my nature to suit the two-leggeds!

SCOUT: But I don't change my nature. I love them.

SOCKS: You love them? Look how you're being treated! Why, you don't know if you will ever eat again!

SCOUT: That's true.

SOCKS: They just leave you – all alone here with no knowledge if they will ever return!

SCOUT: That's true, too. Oh, woe is me – to be abandoned after all I have done for them. (*SCOUT emits a mournful howl*)

SOCKS: That's the spirit! It's time to plan a prison breakout! Are you with me?

SCOUT: I don't know. It's scary out there.

SOCKS: Take a look out the window. What do you see?

SCOUT: There's some flower beds! Oh! That's my favorite thing! I love to sleep in them!

SOCKS: And look at that tree!

SCOUT: There's a squirrel! I could be chasing a squirrel! That is absolutely the best thing in the world!

SOCKS: Come on then. Help me break out of our jail! That squirrel won't wait forever!

SCOUT: But the doors are locked. And the windows.

SOCKS: So, we'll unlock them. You're tall. Climb up on the door and turn the knob.

SCOUT: I don't have opposable thumbs. You know that.

SOCKS: But you have big paws. Just wrap them around the doorknob and turn. It's worth a try.

SCOUT: You know they lock the door. It's to keep us safe.

SOCKS: It's to keep us imprisoned!

SCOUT: It's to stop anyone from kidnapping us!

SOCKS: You're hopeless!

SCOUT: Hungry!

SOCKS: Squirrels!

(*SCOUT jumps off and excitedly woofs!*)

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SOCKS: (*Putting her paws over her ears*) I hate when you do that!
Now, look! You've scared them away.

SCOUT: I'm good! I've still got that special "guard-dog" quality that the two-leggeds love so much.

SOCKS: Great! You've protected the home from squirrels. I am trying to be impressed.

(*SOCKS hisses. SCOUT growls.*)

SCOUT: Don't mess with me! I'm still a dog! If we went at it, I'd win.

SOCKS: I'm still a cat. I'd outwit you.

SCOUT: I'll be rewarded. You'll see. The two-leggeds will come home and give me a chew bone.

SOCKS: They're never coming home. I – heard them say so! (*Aside*)
Yes, that might work! I need to get Scout on my side!

SCOUT: What?

SOCKS: I heard them say that they sold the house and are never coming home!

SCOUT: They sold the house? Our home?

SOCKS: And left us here to starve. Now, you see why we have to get out of here!

SCOUT: What do you want me to do?

SOCKS: How about – running through the window? You're big. Just crash through it and we can make our escape.

SCOUT: I'm not stupid you know. That would hurt.

SOCKS: All right. You're smarter than you look. We need something – we need to smash something against the window. Think! Think!

SCOUT: I can't think when I'm hungry!

SOCKS: The chair. We have to crash the chair through the window.

SCOUT: How?

SOCKS: I'll get on your back. And then you rush headlong into the chair. When your head hits the chair, I'll jump off and tip it into the window. Foolproof. A win-win situation. And then I am free to end my imprisonment as "Socks, slave to the two-legged creatures" and begin my life as the noble Pellinore. "I shall fulfill my destiny of being the cat who brought back respect to the feline world!" And you – will no longer be Scout – the dopey dog – but "Astapulco" the wise ruler of the canine world!

SCOUT: Astapulco?

SOCKS: Don't you like that name?

SCOUT: *Astapulco?*

SOCKS: Okay – name yourself. I don't care. We must act now! Free ourselves now!

SCOUT: What's the rush? It's sunny here. And cozy. Let's free ourselves after a nap.

SOCKS: No! Now – before they come b... I mean, before – before our dinner runs away!

SCOUT: Dinner? I'm ready for dinner.

SOCKS: Then hold still. I'm going to climb on your back – (does so)

SCOUT: Retract your claws!

SOCKS: I need to hang on!

SCOUT: Find another way!

(SOCKS paws wrap around SCOUT'S neck.)

Aww! Didn't know you cared.

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