

# **POUND**

## **By Christian Kiley**

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## **CHARACTERS**

### **THE DOGS**

Sue – the leader  
Cal – the surfer  
Zeus – the hound dog  
Romeo – the lover  
Shiver – the whippet  
Pup – the cute puppy  
Sparky – overly eager to please  
Doc – the older dog (hides a limp)

### **THE CATS**

Billy – the leader  
Hook – the one-clawed cat  
Juliet – the lover  
Vanity – the OCD cat  
Phantom – the magician  
Vinnie – the mafia cat  
Pauly – the sidekick (the repeater)  
Erica – instantly addicted to anything and everything

### **THE HUMANS**

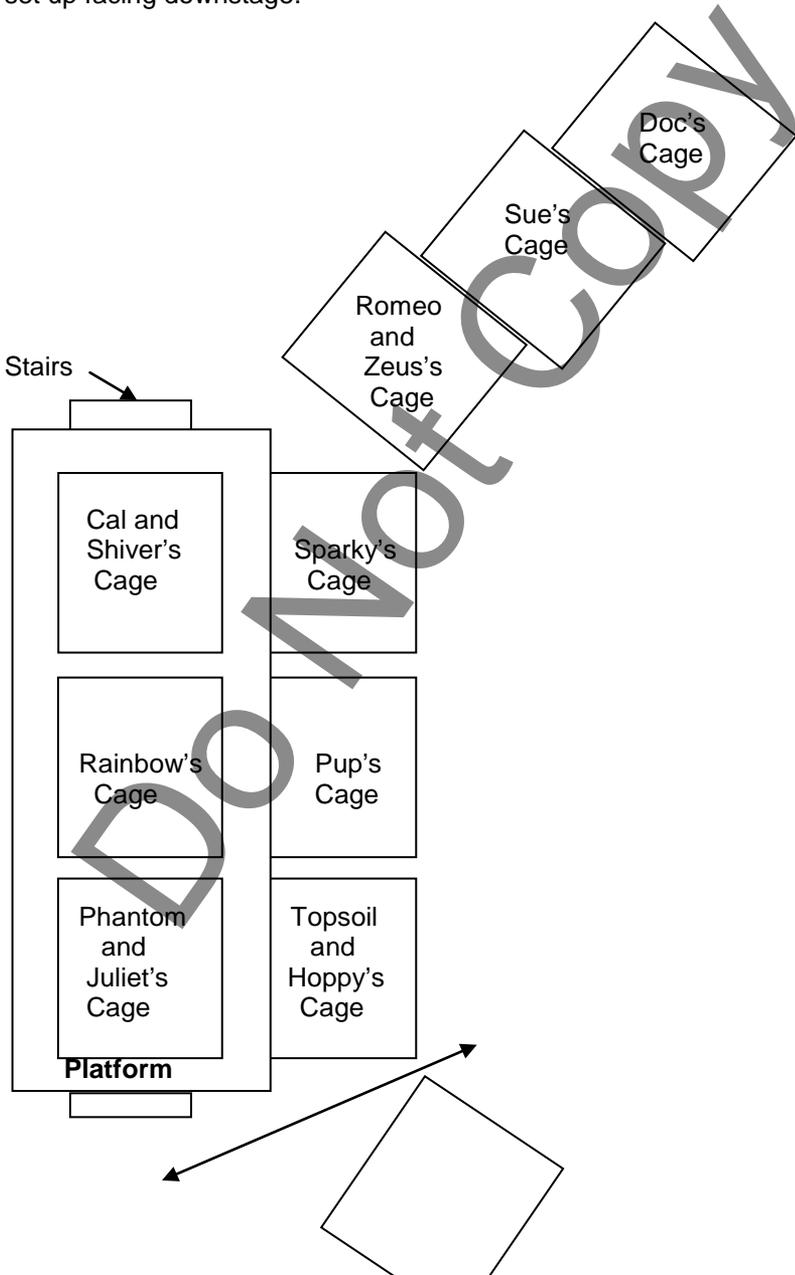
Julie – the kind-hearted kennel worker  
Walter – the matter-of-fact kennel worker  
“The not-so-perfect family looking for the perfect pet:”  
Dad  
Mom  
Sister  
Brother  
Francis\* – a well-groomed woman with OCD  
Jordan\* – an athlete looking for an athletic pet  
Sally\* – the single lady looking for a cat  
*\*Can be played by one actress*

### **THE EXOTIC AND OTHER ANIMALS**

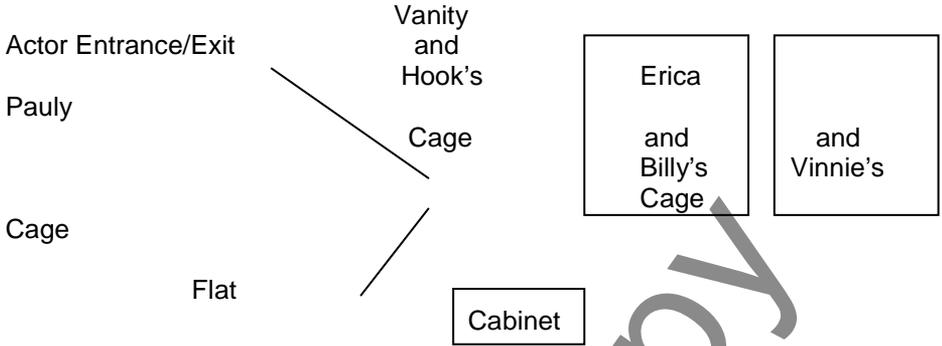
Rainbow – the peacock (known throughout as The Mysterious Figure)  
Hoppy – a bunny that likes to eat red meat instead of carrots  
Topsoil – a groundhog that is obsessed with her lost twin

**SETTING**

An average kennel. Several cages, where the various animals live, are set up facing downstage.



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### **NOTES ON CAGE ASSIGNMENTS FOR POUND**

In the premiere production the cage assignments were as noted in floor plan on the previous page. However, it is quite possible to use fewer cages or more (if you desire to have one cage per animal). The shared cages really capture the true conditions that many animals face. At The Grove Theatre show (Upland, CA) we did not have room for the three stage right and left cages and went with a modified arrangement with two cages on each side. It worked very well and seemed to capture the real overcrowding conditions of many shelters and kennels.

If you use the setup above, here are the cage switches that can be made:

At the beginning of Act II, Pup can move to Doc's cage (from Act I)

Rainbow can move to Pup's cage (from Act I)

Hoppy can move to Rainbow's cage (from Act I)

After Pup is adopted (Act II, Scene 4) Sue can move to Pup's cage

During that same blackout (between Scene 4 and 5) Romeo can move to Sue's cage

Zeus can move to Sparky's cage after Sparky is killed (Act II, Scene 8)

Of course all of this is entirely optional and based on your set design. The best thing to do is what fits your production.

\*A simple possibility would be large cardboard boxes, with strips cut to create cage bars. The cages can even be mimed and the blankets can create the dimensions for each cage.

**COSTUME AND MAKE-UP NOTES FOR POUND**

In the premiere production Kali Smith designed animal hoods and Tiara Brooks created a make-up design for the actors' faces. This approach is both imaginative and cost efficient. It is possible to simply have ears, gloves, and socks that you coordinate for each individual character.

**PRODUCTION HISTORY**

Pound was first performed at Etiwanda High School (Rancho Cucamonga, CA) on November 8, 2007. Pound won Region III (Inland Empire Region) of SCETA (Southern California Educational Theatre Association). The premiere production of Pound was invited to perform at Plummer Auditorium (Fullerton, CA) on January 19, 2008. The cast was awarded Best Ensemble at the 2008 SCETA Festival. Pound was invited to perform a benefit performance at the historic Grove Theatre (Upland, CA). Over the course of six shows and through the cast's selfless volunteer efforts, the production raised over three thousand dollars for animals in need. Pound is endorsed by H.O.P.E. (Helping Out Pets Everyday - President: Margaret Coffman) and Etiwanda's Club P.A.W. (Faculty Advisor: Kristi Dodson). The playwright would like to thank the cast, designers, creative team, and crew for their talent and diligent effort.

**POUND - Cast**

**THE DOGS**

Sue – Raven Takahashi  
Cal – Reanna Cadena  
Zeus – Ryan McPheeters  
Romeo – Ayden Lopez  
Shiver – Kimberly Scott  
Pup – Rahma Gharib  
Sparky – Kenny Gonzalez Jr.  
Doc – Cameron Brown

**THE CATS**

Billy – Victoria Dumapias  
Hook – Amber Shorter  
Juliet – Jade Ealy  
Vanity – Monica Mejia  
Phantom – Kayleigh McDaniel  
Vinnie – Tabitha Lehouillier

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Pauly – Brianne Kadlec  
Erica – Ryan Granados

### **THE HUMANS**

Julie – Alexandria Smith  
Walter – Eric Olney  
Dad – Justin Klinge  
Mom – Ashley Harwich  
Sister – Jessica Mogi  
Brother – Anthony Lopez  
Francis – Kalena Shook  
Jordan – Kalena Shook  
Sally – Kalena Shook

### **THE EXOTIC AND OTHER ANIMALS**

Rainbow – Taylor Rhodes  
Hoppy – Karisa Quick  
Topsoil – Gabrielle Carrasco

### **CREATIVE TEAM**

Director – Christian Kiley  
Assist. Director/Stage Manager – Alexandria Smith  
Makeup Design – Tiara Brooks  
Costume Design – Kali Smith  
Technical Director – Tina Yokoyama  
Tour Coordinator/Crew Chief – Troy Smith  
Prop Master – Thomas Whitmer  
Editing and Proofreading – Pamela Bowen, Bill and Ellen Kiley

## **POUND PROPS LIST**

### **LEASHES**

(2 – leading animals on and off stage)

### **STOOLS**

(2 – for levels during animal scenes)

### **BLANKETS**

(12 – for cages)

### **SQUEAKY TOYS**

(9- kept in Vinne/Pauly's cage until used in Act 1 Scene 1 - then kept in dogs and Erica's cages)

### **BOOK**

(for animals to read, background action)

### **PLAYING CARDS**

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(Pauly/Vinnie, background action)

**FREE WEIGHTS**

(2 – Hoppy training)

**DOG FOOD BAGS**

(in cabinet-props for human scenes)

**CAT FOOD BAGS**

(in cabinet-props for human scenes)

**BOWLS**

(24 – inside cages)

**RED TAG**

(used on Sue and Doc's cages)

**KEYS**

(on hook attached to main platform)

**NAME TAGS**

(19 – one for each animal—will rotate when animals are moved and be taken offstage when animals are taken offstage)

**GOODOO DOG DOLL**

(for Phantom, Act II)

**SYRINGE**

(for Walter, Act II)

**CLEANING STUFF**

(to be used to detoxify Vanity, Act I)

**BLACK DUCT TAPE**

(creates the shock collar for Sparky, attaches directly to collar)

**RUBIK'S CUBE**

(background activity, animals)

**WATER CONTAINER**

(to fill up water bowls throughout the show)

**COCOA PUFFS/CEREAL**

(Dog and Cat Food)

**ANIMAL CRACKERS**

(Dog snacks – throughout)

**NEWSPAPERS**

(stored in cabinet and lining the floor of cages)

**ANIMAL COLLARS AND ID TAGS**

(on actors throughout)

**POUND**

by  
Christian Kiley

**ACT I**

**Scene 1**

***An average kennel. A dozen or more cages are set up facing the audience. There seems to be a clear division between the dogs and the cats. In between are a few other animals: HOPPY the bunny, TOPSOIL the groundhog, and a shadowed figure that lingers in the back of its cage. It is early evening and the kennel workers, JULIE and WALTER, are closing things down for the night.***

WALTER: Everyone has food and water. You ready?

JULIE: Walter.

WALTER: Yah, Julie.

JULIE: You ever wonder what goes on in here after hours?

WALTER: Same thing that goes on in the average American home minus the plasma televisions and pizza.

JULIE: What do you mean?

WALTER: It's no mystery. They're animals. They eat . . . they defecate . . . they run in circles chasing their tails, they sleep, they pursue any similar looking creatures romantically, they have way too many babies and then more of them end up here. It's a cycle just like everything else.

JULIE: So it's an overpopulation issue?

WALTER: It's a let's-talk-about-it-tomorrow issue. Why do you endow them with so much?

JULIE: Because they remind me of me.

WALTER: Come on.

JULIE: *(aside)* Overlooked potential.

WALTER: What?

*(JULIE is caught up in the moment)*

WALTER: Hey, you want to come out with a group of us? We're going to try bumper bowling. No gutter balls. No futility.

JULIE: Goodnight. I'll lock up.

WALTER: How many do you have at home?

JULIE: Five . . . seven.

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WALTER: And the squirrel?

JULIE: Eight. But he's going back into the forest once he recovers.

WALTER: Not everyone can be a pet philanthropist like you.

JULIE: I care.

WALTER: And it's your greatest attribute and flaw.

JULIE: See you tomorrow.

*(WALTER exits. JULIE crosses to SUE's cage.)*

JULIE: Hey, Sue. You still have a few days left. Goodnight.

*(JULIE moves toward the exit.)*

SUE: Goodnight.

*(JULIE stops for a moment; looks around; exits.)*

SUE: Key me, Sparky.

SPARKY: No problem, true-blue Sue.

*(SPARKY retrieves the keys attached to a hook near his cage. HE tosses them to SUE.)*

SUE: Just Sue, please.

SPARKY: Right back at you Sue-preme.

SUE: You really enjoy the human's language.

SPARKY: I speak it better than most of them.

*(SUE opens her cage, gets out and stretches.)*

Take your time Coo-Coo-Ca-Sue.

SUE: Eventually you will run out of rhymes.

SPARKY: No, I think I could-

*(SUE crosses to SPARKY's cage.)*

SUE: If you want to get out . . .

SPARKY: All done. It looks like you grew a few Sue? Ah, it slipped

out! A spasm, an involuntary reaction to my own synapses firing too quickly for me to stop them. Like that peanut butter thing, it

looks so good on the spoon and then a half an hour later you're still licking and licking and-

SUE: Got it.

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(SUE unlocks SPARKY's cage.)

SPARKY: (runs circles around SUE and leaps in the air) Freedom . . . from the smaller cage. But still comforted by the safety that I am not so free that a wild mountain lion or vulture couldn't consume me like a boneless chicken wing left on the side of the highway.

VINNIE: (from inside her cage, hitting the floor) Please. Some of us are trying to sleep.

PAULY: (also from inside a cage, imitating VINNIE) Sleep, yeah. Some of us are trying to.

SUE: Sparky, calm down.

SPARKY: (as HE unlocks the DOGS' cages) Check it out, I wrote a new hip-hop song: Sue is riding with her crew rolling down the hood with her new convertible view, her rhymes constantly spew from her grills and give the crowds thrills, chills, beyond any prescription pills. Ya boy!

SUE: There is a reason why you keep getting adopted-

SPARKY: (hugging SUE) Thanks.

SUE: And returned.

SPARKY: That's my thing, dog.

(DOGS position themselves around stage.)

What about the new kid?

(All the DOGS look to PUP's cage.)

DOC: Kid, what's your name?

PUP: (from inside cage) Me? Pup.

DOC: You scared kid?

PUP: No. Yes. A little.

SUE: It's okay kid. We've all been there before. Let her out, Sparky.

(SPARKY opens PUP's cage. PUP reluctantly moves center stage next to DOC.)

DOC: I guess we should give him the basics.

SPARKY: A little Pound 101, introduction to the kennel, the 411, the preface, the prologue, the opening remarks-

SUE: Maybe Doc and I should handle this.

SPARKY: Got you. I'll be right over here. Stone cold chillin' . . . that ain't no lie son, holler at your boy.

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*(SPARKY crosses, is confronted by the CATS in their cages and turns away, acting tough.)*

SUE: Sparky takes on the personality of the last person who adopted him. And his last adopter was the aspiring rapper and hip-hop artist Sugar Puff Piddy Daddy.

PUP: Wow. Why would you want to come back here? I mean, no offense.

DOC: We all want out of here. Something is wrong with Sparky's medulla oblongata. He doesn't know what he wants.

SPARKY: Don't mess.

DOC: First off you should meet the gang and get some of the ground rules. But before all of that . . . kid, you got nothing to worry about. You'll be adopted before your water bowl has to be refilled. The cute ones go first, then energy, personality, build, color, and last of all . . . age.

SUE: That's Doc. He's a real hero.

DOC: I don't know about that.

*(SUE leads PUP across the stage.)*

SUE: This here is Cal.

CAL: Dude. You remind me of a little two foot wave I once knew. I am as one with the water, and since the water here is measured in ounces rather than feet, I have to use the eye of the mind. It is a powerful thing this eye. Sometimes late at night I imagine I am riding a six foot curler, the white foam lick, lick, licking my board. And I am at peace, I am in a perpetual state of blissfulness until reality creeps back in like a voracious great white shark, also of the mind, and snaps my mental surf board in half like a piece of steak flavored balsa wood.

PUP: Wow, that's . . .

*(SUE takes PUP to the next dog.)*

SUE: Pup, this is Zeus.

PUP: Like the head of the Greek god hierarchy.

ZEUS: Heee . . . llll . . . oooo. Pu . . . uuuu . . . p.

SPARKY: Mix in some vocal fiber there, my constipated friend.

SUE: Zeus doesn't rush for anyone or anything. If a person wanted a perfect porch dog, that would be Zeus.

*(SUE moves next to ROMEO and motions to PUP.)*

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SUE: This good-looking fellow is Romeo.

ROMEO: Good dawning to thee my sprightly young friend. Art of this realm?

PUP: I think so.

ROMEO: Me thinkst thy earnest disposition hath a most pleasing effect on me. I shall keep thee close to my bosom.

*(As ROMEO says the last line, he pulls PUP's head toward his chest.)*

PUP: Oh.

SUE: It's a good thing.

*(PUP is released from ROMEO.)*

PUP: Oh.

*(PUP is led to SHIVER)*

SUE: Over here is Shiver.

SHIVER: Hi . . . hi . . . hi . . . hi.

PUP: Are you okay?

SHIVER: I . . . I . . . I'm a wh . . . wh . . . whippet. A lot of people want to p . . . p . . . put me in cardigans or turtlenecks or sweater v . . . v . . . vests. But I'm not cold I'm j . . . j . . . just a little jit . . . jit . . . jit . . . tery.

*(SPARKY crosses to SHIVER, PUP, and SUE.)*

SPARKY: It's like a "don't do drugs" commercial for canines.

SUE: *(leading PUP center stage)* And you know Sparky now. And I'm Sue. It's not so bad here really. You just need to make sure you get your rest and keep yourself nourished. You never know when that person will come that will adopt you. And if you end up with a person you don't like and you want to come back, you've got a three-day grace period to break a precious family heirloom or take a nice long pee on the futon. As Austin the Australian sheep dog used to say, "like an aboriginal boomerang coming . . . right back home."

*(They ALL look up for a brief moment.)*

PUP: Where's he now?

SUE: He's in the Rugby pitch in the sky. *(PUP looks to the ceiling, confused.)* Look kid, there's one other thing I've got to tell you.

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'Cause in all likelihood you will see it in your time here. The red tag. When someone gets the red tag, they're not coming back.

*(The DOGS look around, some skyward, in a subdued manner.)*

PUP: Ever?

SUE: That's right kid.

PUP: Like Austin?

*(There is a brief moment of silence.)*

VINNIE: *(standing up in her cage)* Hate to break up the party here.

PAULY: *(stands up as well, mimicking VINNIE)* Yeah, sorry. Sorry to break it up. The party.

VINNE: We want out, see.

PAULY: Out, see. We want it. Out . . . see.

SUE: It's our night. Refer to the schedule.

VINNIE: I got a little proposition.

PAULY: A proposition . . . a little one.

VINNIE: A truck of these . . .

*(VINNIE squeaks one of the toys, and all the DOGS turn and look at it longingly.)*

. . . happened to tip over near us.

PAULY: Yeah, a truck of these. Tipped over. Near us.

VINNIE: Pauly!

PAULY: Pauly, yeah.

VINNIE: No. Stop repeating me.

PAULY: Sorry boss. I thought it sounded tough.

VINNIE: Your loyalty to the family is appreciated. *(to SUE)* You want these. I got enough for everyone. Idiot squeakers, I call them. You hear the squeak and instantly become an idiot. Look at all of you, frothing like you're about to get the leftovers of a porterhouse steak dinner that has been picked over by Paris Hilton.

SUE: What's the trade-off?

VINNIE: You're an economist now? Impressive. Freedom for us for a week on your days and ours.

SUE: I don't-

*(VINNIE squeaks the toy. The DOGS all bark and make sounds of glee and anticipation as if they have been transported back to puppyhood.)*

Let them out, Sparky.

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*(SPARKY quickly opens VINNIE's cage and the squeaky toys are released. The DOGS create a chew toy symphony for a moment, building to a frenzy and then stopping, exhausted. The CATS watch in disbelief. SPARKY continues opening the CATS' cages after the chew toy symphony is complete.)*

BILLY: Happy?

SUE: You have no idea.

BILLY: Who would have known that something so simple could reduce a somewhat intelligent animal to a slobbering pile of nerve-endings. *(BILLY moves center stage towards SUE.)*

SUE: Hello, Billy.

BILLY: Sue. Who's the newbie?

SUE: Pup.

BILLY: What, they run out of names?

PUP: I named myself.

*(ERICA crosses to the chew toys but is stopped by BILLY.)*

ERICA: Hey, hey, hey. What are those squeaky things? I like 'em. Like 'em a lot. Can I have one, Billy? No harm, huh? One. One squeaky toy. One toy. No harm in that. One toy.

BILLY: Erica, you're still rehabbing from those pixie sticks that some little girl slipped into your kennel last week.

ERICA: The magic powder.

BILLY: Colored sugar.

ERICA: An amazing source of energy and power!

BILLY: A cruel trick that humans play on each other when they want each other's children to burst into spontaneous riots and acts of psychosis. Here, have a squeaky thing. *(BILLY throws the chew toy into ERICA's cage. The next line is addressed to PUP.)* That's Erica.

*(ERICA runs into her cage and squeaks the toy in a brief frenzy.)*

HOOK: Arrrrr Matey!

BILLY: This is Hook. *(Softly)* She only has one claw.

HOOK: *(turns to confront BILLY)* Aye, I may be able to park in handicapped parking but me ears are functioning fine, matey. The vet counted wrong when he declawed me. Me manicures are a lot cheaper. Arrrrr, 'tis sad but true.

BILLY: Hook wanted to be the first cat ever to work at Benihana.

HOOK: Or be the first feline brain surgeon. Similar skill set. Slicing and dicing mostly.

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*(HOOK makes the motions of 'slicing and dicing' and startles the DOGS)*

VANITY: *(crosses downstage)* Are you aware of the number of germs that can be transferred during even the simplest medical procedure? I mean the latex gloves and all that scrubbing is merely for show. The reality is that you might as well have your lobotomy performed on a movie theatre floor.

BILLY: This is Vanity.

VANITY: I thought we all agreed to wear surgeons' masks at night to cut down the spread of airborne viruses.

*(SPARKY engages in an elaborate sneezing ritual on VANITY.)*

Contamination. Prepare the detoxification bath.

*(The CATS pull out accessories from VANITY's cage and go into an elaborate cleaning ritual.)*

BILLY: And you met Vinnie and Pauly already.

*(VINNIE and PAULY move center stage toward the DOGS. SPARKY moves away, intimidated by VINNIE)*

VINNIE: *(to PUP)* Hey, kid.

PAULY: Hey. Kid.

VINNIE: Watch your back. This ain't Petco or some five star pet spa.

PAULY: Yeah, watch your back. If you think you're at Petco you took a wrong turn.

BILLY: Phantom is the cat that-

*(PHANTOM appears behind PUP.)*

PHANTOM: Appears and . . . disappears without warning.

BILLY: Phantom is a regular Houdini.

PUP: Teach me . . . I love magic.

PHANTOM: It's not magic . . . when it's . . . real.

*(PHANTOM makes a grand hand gesture; the other CATS imitate to the side, mockingly.)*

JULIET: 'Tis that bewitching time of night when love swirls in the hearts of cats and dogs and sounds true, as true as the nightingale who

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warbles softly in lovers' ears as they sleep wakingly or wake sleepily moving toward the heart of their true love. Beateth heart, beateth. Thumpeth, thumpeth. Thumpeth, thumpeth.

*(VANITY is holding JULIET back as SHE speaks, and SPARKY is holding ROMEO back from moving towards JULIET.)*

BILLY: I know it's like a Shakespeare, Michael Jackson hybrid. She's Juliet.

*(ROMEO pulls away and moves downstage.)*

ROMEO: Hark!

BILLY: Oh, no.

JULIET: Sweet nectar.

*(JULIET and ROMEO start moving closer to each other, despite efforts to keep them apart.)*

ROMEO: Sweeter dew of honey rain.

JULIET: Sweetest tears of the angels who weep joyfully at the sight of thee.

ROMEO: Most sweet, sweetheart who ingests those honey tears and speaks words that maketh a deluge of love that I can most happily drown in.

*(ROMEO reaches towards JULIET.)*

SPARKY: Passeth me a barfeth bageth.

BILLY: Separate them.

*(ROMEO is picked up by the DOGS and carried downstage. ROMEO and JULIET call to each other. BILLY seizes the opportunity and takes PUP downstage.)*

BILLY: By the way, I'm Billy. *(extends a hand, but pulls away when PUP tries to shake it)* And don't mistake these introductions for friendship. Cats are cats and dogs are dogs. And every mutt, stray, mongrel, and tomcat are on their own when an adopter is here. Learn that kid and learn it well. You may have acquaintances in here, those you talk to, maybe even share a secret or two with, but when it comes down to it, you are on your own. Got it?

PUP: Think so. Who's in those other cages? *(referring to HOPPY, TOPSOIL, and the shadowed figure.)*

*(DOGS and CATS scatter as if frightened.)*

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