

RALPH AND CLEOPATRA

By Pat Morgan

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CAST:

RALPH—RALPH is an Oscar Madison sort of a beagle who has it all figured out. RALPH is five-years old.

CLEOPATRA—CLEO is a sophisticated registered tabby, who has absolutely no fear of dog or man-just life. CLEO does not reveal her age.

JOHN—owns RALPH. Mild-mannered, everyday kind of guy. Has a slight limp and loves his dog.

THIEF—Devious sort or fellow with a Brooklyn accent.

***NOTE: Double cast JOHN and the THIEF.**

SETTING

Living room of the Ramsey residence. Sofa, blanket, TV, chair, table, remote, TV Guide, etc. Food and water dishes are on the floor along with a basket of dog toys. There is a dog door stage right.

COSTUMING

Though a dog and cat costume would be preferred, some facial make-up can go a long way toward deriving the correct look. RALPH should be dressed entirely in brown, while CLEO should wear all white clothing.

SCENE: RALPH and JOHN'S home.

TIME: The present.

AT RISE: *RALPH, a five-year-old beagle, rushes in the door and is all over the room. (RALPH is very excited. HE'S just been for his walk and has had an adventure. HE has on a baseball cap with long brown ears.)*

RALPH: Come on. Hurry up, Johnny-boy. I'll get the ball. We'll do the backyard. You throw – I'll catch. Hey, Pal, did you see that cat? I hate cats, but that was one terrific cat. All spittin' and scrooched up. I dig it when they get scrooched up. Almost got my nose, the little hairball. But I was too fast for it. Did you see my pass on that attack? Ralph, the Wonder Dog. That's me all right.

JOHNNY: Okay, settle down now, fella'. You had the walk and did your thing. Now I gotta' run by the cleaners before I head for work.

(RALPH runs to dog toy basket and dumps it over.)

RALPH: Will you gimme' a break here? Look, I got my Frisbee. No? ***(pulls out a pull toy)*** How about this? You go ape over this.

JOHNNY: So long, old man. See you later. Keep the bears outta' the yard.

(JOHNNY exits and closes the door. We hear the sound of his car starting and pulling out of the drive.)

RALPH: Dad-gum-it! I hate it when he does that. Where's my ear scratch? *And*, he's supposed to check the grub *before* he goes *anywhere*. He knows that. That's the deal. He checks me out, I guard the house. ***(rummaging around in the dog toys)*** And did I get my vitamin? No sir-reee. He has to pick up the cleaning. Never mind about me. He's supposed to think about all that kinda' stuff. Vitamins, baths. Well, forget baths. No baths. He's got some kind of medicated gunk and I stink for a week. ***(RALPH goes to check out his food dish-pops one in his mouth.)*** What is this? Not Purina Senior again? What do I look like, an ol' yard dog waitin' to keel over? Where's my Kibbles and Bits? And no cookie. That tears it. ***(Heads for the sofa and looking for remote)*** Okay, where's the remote. Almost time for *Gary Springer*. That's my man. Him en' *Rifleman* reruns. ***(Swings his arm as if HE's cocking a rifle as Chuck Conners did on the show)*** Bada-bing – Badda-boom. Really cool. ***(HE checks the TV Guide and falls on the sofa)*** Too early. Well, let's just find the old spot and kill some time. Maybe catch a few zzzzz's here.

(RALPH jumps on the sofa, circles three times, flops on his back, settles down and goes to sleep.)

(Three beats)

(A corner of the dog door slowly begins to open and a head with whiskers and furry ears emerges. Slowly, CLEOPATRA, a female cat, slides cautiously inside, being careful not to disturb RALPH.)

(Seeing RALPH sound asleep and feeling secure, SHE slips inside and heads for the food and water dishes. SHE'S hungry.)

(RALPH suddenly stretches [arms and legs stiff], opens one eye and yawns. CLEOPATRA races for the door but stumbles into a table knocking over a vase.)

(RALPH goes berserk. Growling and barking HE backs CLEOPATRA into a corner. SHE spits and scrouches up – taking a poke at his nose with her paw extended.)

(CLEOPATRA makes a break for it with RALPH hot on her heels as they criss-cross the room bounding over the furniture.)

RALPH: ***(wheezing)*** What are you doin' in here, ya' scrawny fleabag?

CLEOPATRA: ***(very sophisticated)*** Don't get yourself all worked up, darling. I'm just a visitor. I'm not staying.

(Around the room they go – RALPH stalking CLEOPATRA.)

RALPH: You're telling me. Get your bony butt out that door right now.

(RALPH makes a swipe at CLEOPATRA)

CLEOPATRA: Be careful. Don't you dare touch me. Watch out, you smelly old *cur*.

RALPH: CUR? Me, a CUR! Beat it, sister, before I make mince-meat outta' ya'.

(Breathless, CLEOPATRA climbs up on the chair and RALPH jumps up on the sofa – glaring)

(Grooming her paw)

CLEOPATRA: Are you going to calm down and act civilized or what?

RALPH: Just 'till I catch my breath. Then I'm tearing you apart. Say, ain't you that mangy, night-screecher lives down the street?

CLEOPATRA: I'm the registered Tabby that lives down the street. And I just came in here for - a rest.

RALPH: Say, I know da' family. Got a kid makes all the noise on some moto-wheels. And a blonde kid, five or so. Sorry, kiddo, they moved two weeks ago. I saw the truck.

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