

Born to Be Wild

A Comedy by Bryan Starchman

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This play is dedicated to my muses: my wife Noel and our two cats. My wife inspires and supports me and has never tried to eat my head. My cats...well, they are a mystery to me and I would love to know what they really think about us.

The Playwright, Bryan Starchman

STORY OF THE PLAY

Ever wonder why your cat acts like he's king of the world? Or why flamingos stand on one leg? Have you ever imagined what a spider would have to say to a fly just before devouring him, or what "small talk" sounds like when a cannibalistic female praying mantis goes on a date with a naive male praying mantis? Well, Bryan Starchman has given the animals of the world a voice in this hilarious new comedy. Focusing on simple costumes and sets, a large flexible cast, and ten whacky scenes, your audience will get to see and hear what animals really think about us humans! Stretch your actors -- and your imagination -- as you get ready to take a walk on the wild side!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Widely flexible cast of 32. Minimum 5 actors with doubling and basic costumes: 2 m, 1 w, 2 flexible.)

Scene 1: Curiosity Killed the Cat

Mr./Miss Piddles (cat)

Sir/Lady Meows A Lot (sort of a cat)

Scene 2: Standing on One Leg Is for the Birds

Bob/Barbara (flamingo)

Travis/Tammy (flamingo)

Scene 3: What a Tangled Web We Weave

Floyd/Florence (fly)

Slayer (spider)

Scene 4: Ignorance Is Bliss

Pig

Chicken

Sheep

Cat

Dog

TV Announcer/Telemarketer (offstage human voice)

Scene 5: What's My Motivation?

Muffins (dog)

Duke (dog)

INTERMISSION

Scene 6: Teens Can Make Their Parents Batty

Mother (bat)

Father (bat)

Daughter or Son (bat)

Scene 7: The Heist

Rocky (raccoon)

Doc (raccoon)

Pepper (raccoon)

Smokey (raccoon)

Continued

Scene 8: Till Death Do Us Part

Gary (praying mantis – male)
Nancy (praying mantis – female)
Frank (praying mantis – male)

Scene 9: The News Can Be Bananas

Bobo (monkey)
Kiki (monkey)
George/Georgia (monkey)
Diddy (monkey)

Scene 10: Deer Xing

Jaden (deer)
Chet (deer)
Marvin (deer)
Extra (human playing car)

SCENES

This is only a suggestion for the order of scenes. Feel free to create your own “play list” depending on your cast, costume changes, etc.

A Few Notes About Casting and Costuming

It is a lot of fun to write from the point of view of an animal, but as a director, it can be a nightmare. I've added this little section to put your mind at ease.

Don't shy away from producing this show because you don't have the budget, the materials, or even just the patience to dress every actor from head to toe. For short scenes like this, it isn't worth the money or the headache to do full body costumes. The audience will understand that they are watching a dog or a cat or even a monkey or flamingo if you simply focus on the head (and maybe the tail). The opening for each scene includes costuming notes, but the general rule is this: have all of your actors and actresses provide their own black pants and long-sleeved black shirts. Some simple black make-up on the nose, some floppy ears and a tail from a costuming website, and you have a cheap and easy dog. Get creative with the flamingos, maybe even chop the heads off of those plastic ones out in your neighbor's yard, thread some wire through them and place them on top of your actors' heads. Heck, even a pink hoodie with pink leggings would work.

There is one final costuming option I would like to suggest. I have anthropomorphized these animals, so why not go with a completely minimalist approach? No make-up, no ears, no wings. Just jeans and a black t-shirt with white iron-on letters that spell out the animal or the animal's name. This might make for a very interesting show since we are already treating them as if they are on the same level as humans.

Focus on blocking, direction, facial expressions, and voice. If your actors have their lines down and are delivering them with passion, then your audience will be very forgiving when it comes to costumes.

Lastly, this play is not based on science. Sure, I did some Google searches and read some Wikipedia articles, but if a biology teacher comes up to you afterwards and wants to argue about how flamingos actually do walk on two legs or how often a female praying mantis eats its mate's head, you may want to remind them: "YOU JUST WATCHED A SHOW ABOUT TALKING ANIMALS!" -- Break a leg!

Scene 1: Curiosity Killed the Cat

(AT RISE: Two cats, MR. /MISS PIDDLES and SIR/LADY MEOWS A LOT are looking over the audience. They are extremely cocky and believe that they rule the world...which in their case is a small studio apartment. Mr. Piddles is the alpha, Sir Meows A Lot is subservient but appears very loyal.)

MR. PIDDLES: They call me...Mr. Piddles. But that wasn't always my name. No, our human servant, the one that feeds us and scoops out our waste, at first she called me Cuddles. But I do not cuddle! Not with the likes of her! She is beneath me and I have no respect for one who eats TV dinners and watches re-runs of *The Facts of Life*. I earned my title "Mister"...because I am a gentleman and I know how to treat the ladies. *(Or if played by a female..."Miss" because I am a purebred and I know how to behave like a proper lady.)* And "Piddles"...because I have a weak bladder. *(Dramatically gestures to his/her cohort, Sir Meows A Lot.)* And this is my minion: Sir *(Lady)* Meows A Lot. He *(she)* got his *(her)* name because...

SIR: Meow.

MR. PIDDLES: Enough said.

SIR: *(As if in agreement.)* Meow.

MR. PIDDLES: And today the one who calls herself "Shelly" left; she is staying at her mother's house for the weekend. That *would* be fine. We don't need her shuffling around in her crusty robe, brewing her chamomile tea and reading her romance novels with the bare-chested man beasts on the cover. She is of no concern to us...except when she forgets to feed us.

SIR: *(Angry.)* Meow!

MR. PIDDLES: She's going to be gone for two days. We've been abandoned for two days with nothing but a bowl of water! I've already scoured the kitchen floor for her human food droppings, but a couple of moldy green beans and a tortilla chip will not satiate the hunger of Mr. Piddles.

End of Freeview

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