ONE
DOGGONE WISH

By Tim Kelly

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Looking for something different? You won't have to be a dog psychologist to enjoy this clever romp. Coco is a lovable French poodle who dies of a broken heart after being DOGNAPPED! Every pooch in doggie heaven gets one wish and Coco's wish is to return to Criswell Academy on the day of the mid-term dance. Her former owner, a teacher named Steve Ritter, taught Coco to "sing" and he planned to have her entertain. Coco was anxious to make him proud.

Keeper, the basset hound in charge of such things, grants the wish but sends two other dogs to keep an eye on Coco as French poodles are inclined to be somewhat frivolous. The two other dogs are Alice, a blood-hound, and Rhoda, a Rhodesian ridgeback, both in human form, of course.

When Coco returns to earth, she finds Steve in serious trouble. Someone is plotting to destroy his chances for advancement and the dognappers are using the school as a base of operation! How Coco traps the crooks, saves Steve's job and gets to sing at the dance makes this show riotously entertaining.

Many small roles that can be managed with minimal rehearsal. There's plenty of action and great characters including a cook who never serves anything but "Mystery Meat," a talent scout looking for a new teenage sensation and thinks Coco might be it, and a lip-syncing campus beauty who considers Coco a rival and plans to do something nasty about it. A wild collection of students, teachers and lovable human mutts are around, too. Charming, funny, laugh-a-second. Easy to stage. This is one howler of a show that earns a dog biscuit!

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(7 M, 15 W - Optional Extras)
(In Order of Appearance)

COCO: teenager, in actuality, a French poodle.
KEEPER OF THE RECORDS: Doggie Heaven bureaucrat, a Bassett hound.
ALICE: Another teenager, a bloodhound in disguise.
RHODA: Another teenager, really a Rhodesian Ridgeback.
SECRETARY: To Keeper of the Records.
ROSEMARY: Student at Criswell Academy.
DOBIE MANN: Another student.
OREN: Another student.
COACH BURNETT: Heads athletic department.
LESTER PEWTREE: Maintenance engineer.
CORAL MOORE: Student, a spoiled beauty.
WENDY: Coral's lukewarm friend.
ANATASIA: School cook.
STEVE RITTER: Faculty member, Coco's former owner.
MISS BRADY: School secretary.
VANESSA EVANS: Another faculty member.
MRS. JANICE MAYNARD: School principal.
BATHSHEBA JONES: Janice's cousin, a talent scout.
MISS FLOSSFLUBBER: Chemistry teacher.
ROOSTER: Small-time hoodlum.
DET. GRIFFITH: Local law.
DET. LASERCRAFT: More of the same.
***ADDITIONAL STUDENTS:** As/if desired.

TIME: The present.
PLACE: Criswell Academy, a private boarding school.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Scene 1: Early one morning.
Scene 2: Later the same day.

ACT II

Scene 1: Still later.
Scene 2: Later.
Scene 3: At the dance. Evening.

Playing Time: Approximately 90 minutes.

See ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION NOTES at end of script.

SETTING

The stage in the auditorium of Criswell Academy. In Act I, most of the decorations for the evening's mid-term student dance are up - streamers, balloons, a large banner proclaiming "Criswell Academy." Optional scenic backdrop. DSR there's a bench. DSL a table with a few chairs. USC, possibly elevated, an area to suggest a bandstand or disc jockey station - chair, sound equipment. Also in evidence-a stepladder and a worktable or plank of wood resting on two supports, covered with decorating material - paint buckets, brushes, staple gun, hammer, nails, crepe paper. The usual "putting up decorations" paraphernalia. Few items scattered on the DSL table also, as a paint bucket, brush.

In Act II, the gym is now completely decorated and all the work items are put away. More tables and chairs have been added along with a decorated refreshment table.

ACT I
Scene 1

(PRIOR TO ACTION SOUND EFFECT: Barking dogs, howling dogs, yapping dogs, baying dogs. The sound grows in volume, tapers off.)

(AT RISE: The stage is in peculiar LIGHT - as if it belonged to "The Twilight Zone." Dreamy, vague. Some colored lights might twinkle. As the sound of "Dog Talk" fades, we hear voices from off SL.)

KEEPER'S VOICE: Coco! Coco! Come back, Coco!
ALICE'S VOICE: Here, Coco! Nice Coco!
RHODA'S VOICE: Where are you, Coco?!
SECRETARY'S VOICE: Nice girl! Nice girl! Nice Coco!

(A teenage girl, who is actually a French poodle named COCO, hurries onstage from SL. Nervously, she looks over her shoulder, as if she feared being "caught." She holds her hands like "paws", and if she could actually be wearing a "poodle skirt," it would make for a nice touch.)

KEEPER'S VOICE: Coco! Coco! *(Almost a whimper)* Woof.
ALICE'S VOICE: Here, Coco! Nice Coco! *(Worried)* Woof.

(COCO scampers off, SR. KEEPER OF THE RECORDS enters. He's a gruff sort, carries a large ledger. He is followed by two girls, same age as Coco. One is ALICE and the other is RHODA. Keeper, Alice and Rhoda, like Coco, are canines in human form. The only "hint" of a dog's life is the dog collar with tags each wears around the neck. That and the floppy basset hound ears on Keeper. NOTE: For various suggestions on costuming and staging, consult Production Notes. Keeper crosses SC, Alice and Rhoda with him.)

KEEPER: It won't do. That poodle hasn't been with us more than a month and she's already upset the routine. Running off like a beagle puppy.

ALICE: Don't forget, Keeper of the Records, she is entitled to one wish before she has to stay in doggie heaven forever.

KEEPER: True enough. However, most dogs take a long time deciding what their one wish will be.

RHODA: Not Coco. The minute she arrived in doggie heaven she knew what she wanted.

ALICE: That's more than you can say for me. I'm still wishing for something to wish for.

KEEPER: Where's my secretary? *(Calls SL)* Secretary! *(As if calling a hound)* Nice Secretary! Here, girl! Here, girl! Come to Keeper.

(SECRETARY enters, large pad and pencil in hand. Wears glasses perched on the tip of her nose. Also wears a dog collar)

SECRETARY: I'm right here, sir. Woof. *(She joins the others.)*

OTHERS: *(In way of greeting)* Woof.

KEEPER: Are you certain Coco was headed here?

SECRETARY: No doubt about it, Keeper. She told me herself. Besides, when she entered doggie heaven she recorded her wish. *(Points to ledger with pencil)* You'll find it listed under "w" in your record book.

KEEPER: I know, I know. Still, she should have followed proper procedure. I've never known a dog so anxious to return to earth.

SECRETARY: Not just to return, Keeper. But to return on this day. This very day.

ALICE: What's so special about this day?

RHODA: I dunno. But it's mighty important to Coco. *(Sniffs)* She's around here some place. I've got her scent.

(OTHERS sniff the air and "woof, woof.")

End of Freeview

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