

NATURAL ORDER OF PETNESS

A dogologue.



by Rick Butts | **Dogs want to talk.**

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A PERUSAL COPY FOR REVIEW.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

CHARLIE HOUND A dog person, any gender, any age. (Not a person who likes dogs, but a dog who presents as a person.)

SCENE

A place where crowds gather to hear CHARLIE HOUND make the case for the primacy of dogs in the natural order of petness. With a stool.

TIME

Now.

SYNOPSIS

A dog named Charlie notices that raccoons are domesticating. It's cultural appropriation. He believes it's part of a plan to replace dogs and cats as pets. He fears a loss of status for dogs and urges humans to oppose this demographic redefinition of petness.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES ABOUT CHARLIE AND PACING*

*My apology to the director for perhaps stating the obvious. RB

A dire warning issued by Charlie Hound, a character with an intense dislike for raccoons. Not a surprise, given dogs instinctively see raccoons as rivals and threats.

Although Charlie's concerns are real and well thought-out, the actor is not pensive or deliberative but rather passionate and emotionally charged. This is reflected in the pacing of the lines. The delivery is quick, if not quite a mile a minute, certainly a bit frantic.

The challenge for the actor with this monologue on stage is that its humour is as much about the character Charlie as the absurd situations that are presented. Pauses should be responsive to the audience. When a line evokes laughter, the actor lets it peak but then moves quickly to the next line before it dies away.

SETTING: Any public place where a speaker can advocate for a cause.

AT RISE: CHARLIE sits on the stool looking at a phone, nervous and tentative. Glances up at the audience periodically. Then back to the phone.

CHARLIE

You've heard about cultural appropriation? Well, now raccoons are doing it. They say they're domesticating. Shortening their snouts. Going with floppy ears. But I know what they're up to. They're trying to do DOG.

And yes, I'm a DOG. Charlie's my name and fetching's my game. I don't like this scam by raccoons. They're pulling the fur over your eyes.

They're evolving to have smaller teeth. I get that. What's the point of big teeth when your primary prey is the weakest trash bin in the herd? And licking out our pet food cans? That's disgusting. Creepy! No wonder they wear masks.

(Points at eyes.)

Look at my eyes. PUPPY DOG EYES! Because I'm a PUPPY! I was literally born a puppy. It's a law of nature: only puppies have puppy dog eyes! Raccoons have ugly beady little eyes.

You know why they're doing this? They want to be pets. Replace us. Take our jobs. They want the deal dogs and cats have. Getting cuter is all part of the plan.

It's a clear violation of the natural order of petness. And what is the natural order of petness? I'm glad you asked.

(Reads from a phone.)

From the top. DOG. HUMAN. *(long pause)* CAT. *(beat)* Everyone else.

Of course, you have questions. The elephant in the room. And an elephant is NOT a pet, by the way. But why include CAT? It's about some appearance of being progressive.

Let's review what makes the perfect pet. DOG? Of course. HUMANS? You drive cars. Dogs need drivers. So humans make the list as pets to DOG.

But what's the point of cats? Why do we even have them, right?

(Surveying the audience.)

Anyone here know a cat? Yeah. So you get that there's no reason for them.

Unless it's to be pets to other pets. Dogs have humans as pets so humans must have *your* pets. It may as well be a cat.

I live with a cat. Its name is Fluffy. Or Get-Down-From-There.

A few hours ago, I'm at home reviewing my notes for this talk and waiting for my driver to bring the car around. And the cat rubs up against me. I'm dressed in my good pants and now I'm covered in cat fur. I look like a Samoyed about to be hitched to a sled.

She says she wants to talk about CATS. And the natural order of petness. Getting CATS on the list.

Okay, maybe I barked at her. Not on your life! All nine of them.

This morning she puked a hairball into my water bowl and walked away like she didn't do something very DISGUSTING!

Hey, people, you don't dunk your donuts in another human's coffee, right? I'm thinking of a witty comeback to her when my phone dings. My driver's here. I grab a ball and toss it down the hall so she'll chase it and I'll get away.

She stands there staring at me.

On the drive here, I think about what the cat dragged up. What does it take to succeed in the perfect pet racket? It's gotta be more than just sleeping on the couch all day and shedding hair. If that's it, my human's ex-husband would be a pet.

I'm feeling bad. I know she's been working like a dog to be taken seriously as a pet. She shouldn't have to live a dog's life, especially with nine of them.

So I text her. "*Ok Bug Breath, you're in. Cats are officially perfect pets.*"

Which brings me to this scam by raccoons. They are not pets.

A week ago, there's a ruckus at the trash cans. I admit that when it comes to raccoons stealing our stuff, I'm like a dog with a bone. I race over. They're hiding their faces but I'm sure it's the same two I threw out last week.

I've got them red-pawed. Into the smoked trout and beetroot lentils she made last Saturday that even I wouldn't touch. The fat one's been snorting desserts from what I see on his snout. Probably macarons and Timbits but I'm not going in for a lick!

Then I see their lawyer. He says, "Local laws about eating other people's garbage don't apply to animals. They're immune from prosecution."

I know he's right.

Then he says, "Go after my clients and you're barking up the wrong tree!"

Wow, that's offensive. But he's not wrong.

I watch them, these trash pandas pooping and scooting the tiramisu across the terrazzo. I don't want to get petty about this. Then the light goes on.

Making a legal claim to our garbage now? It's an opening move. Next, they'll be coming INSIDE the house. Pinching a burger off the counter. Snatching a sausage because they smell amazing. Licking themselves on the couch. And then we're OUTSIDE eating trash!

There's not a dog's chance I come out of this smelling good if I get into a legal cat-fight with a raccoons' lawyer who knows the law.

DOGS have spent centuries selectively breeding humans to be our pets. It's incredibly difficult teaching an old HUMAN new tricks but we're dogged about it because we know you crave our approval. You're so needy.

You know the trick GIMME YOUR PAW? Do it. Raise your paw.

(Waits for some in audience to raise their paws.)

We train you to do tricks and praise you so you learn other social behaviours you find rewarding. Like carrying our biscuits in your pockets and picking up our poop.

If raccoons get into the pet racket, believe me, the whole thing will be a dog's breakfast.

(END OF PLAY)