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A Dog's Tale

by

Christopher Miller

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A Dog's Tale

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CHARACTERS

SADIE – *A Chocolate Lab. Filled with energy, naivety, and optimism.*

FELICIA FICKLE – *Human. Seven years of age. Loves cute and cuddly things and wants them when she wants them and doesn't want them any longer when they require work.*

MRS. FICKLE – *Human. An adult version of Felicia. Likes expensive things like shoes that she bought from the department store next to the pet store where they bought Sadie.*

MR. FICKLE – *Human. A know-nothing know-it-all. Mysophobic - always putting a handkerchief (or two) between himself and any source of germs.*

OLD LADY GRUDGE – *Human. A legendary terror in the neighborhood.*

WALTER – *A Basset Hound. Old and always two steps behind. Played by same actor as MRS. Fickle.*

BLOSSOM – *A Corgi. She's airy and optimistic. Played by same actor as Felicia.*

GRISTLE - *A Spotted Cow-dog. Leader of the dump dogs. Wants to live in a world free of human tyranny. Played by same actor as Mr. Fickle.*

SNAPPY – *Pit-bull. A legend in the homeless dog community. All fear Snappy. Played by the same actor as Old Lady Grudge.*

DOG CATCHER – *Nonspeaking. A man who is his job.*

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SCENE 1

(AT RISE: Spot light appears on SADIE, a six-month-old chocolate lab, as she appears on stage. She tensely rocks in place for a moment, suppressing a big smile.)

SADIE

(Barely keeping it together) Hi there. Do you know what I'm doing? I'm staying in place. I'm six months old and I just recently learned how to do a few tricks. One of them is staying in one place.

(Unable to contain herself, SAIDE chases her tail for a moment, then stops.)

SADIE, *Continued*

Guess what. It's harder than it looks. Because what I really want to do is run around and lick the face of every single one of you. Just to say hello. But I'll behave... Oh, who am I kidding?

(SADIE jumps off the stage and runs around through the audience allowing them to pet her as she gives them dog affection.)

SADIE, *Continued*

Okay, now that that's out of my system. Oh, who am I kidding?

(SADIE does another quick round of affectionate hellos to the other side of the audience.)

SADIE, *Continued*

Now, where was I? Oh yeah, introductions. My name is Sadie. What are your names? In an effort to save time, everyone just call them out at once.

(Audience members are encouraged to call out their names.)

SADIE, *Continued*

Okay I'll remember those. Now, how many of you have dogs at home? Show of hands. Better yet, how about a good, big dog woof.

(Audience members who have dogs as pets should, now, "woof" like a dog.)

SADIE, *Continued*

That's what I'm talking about. Speaking of speaking, do you know what we dogs do when humans aren't around? Yeah, as some of you might have suspected, we talk to each other. We talk a lot. You know what we talk about? Well, apart from food. You guys. Humans. We talk a lot about our humans. So if you find your ears are burning, it's a good chance someone's talking about you, and that someone might just be your dog. And if you want us to say good things about you, you'd better be good to us. Now, I want to tell you the story about something very

SADIE, *Continued*

important to us dogs. And it's not food, although that is very important. No, the important thing I'm talking about is called home. Meet the family that brought me home.

(Enter FELICIA, MRS. FICKLE, and MR. FICKLE. They pleasantly wave to the audience in character.)

SADIE, *Continued*

This is my seven-year-old human girl, Felicia. Felicia Fickle.

(FELICIA smiles her pearly whites, blinks adorably, and waves to the audience. SADIE approaches her and nuzzles up against her. Felicia does her best to keep smiling.)

SADIE, *Continued*

And this is her mother, MRS. Fickle.

(MRS. FICKLE brushes FELICIA aside, stands in front of her, smiles her pearly whites, blinks adorably, and waves to the audience. FELICIA tries getting in front, but MRS. FICKLE keeps her at bay. SADIE nuzzles up against her as well with a similar reaction.)

SADIE, *Continued*

And this is her father, Mr. Fickle.

(MR. FICKLE steps in front of MRS. FICKLE and FELICIA, smiles his pearly whites and waves to the audience. SADIE approaches MR. FICKLE and gives him a big wet dog kiss all over his face. MR. FICKLE tries to contain himself, but he breaks, pulls out his handkerchief, and wipes down his face.)

SADIE, *Continued*

Aren't they great?

(LIGHTS FADE on the FICKLES as they exit.)

SADIE, *Continued*

Next, I'd like for you to meet Old Lady Grudge.

(LIGHTS on OLD LADY GRUDGE as she enters.)

SADIE, *Continued*

You know that scary person who lives in your neighborhood and all the kids, and parents, and pets are afraid of? Yeah? Well this is her.

(OLD LADY GRUDGE shoots a scowling look at SADIE and the audience.)

SADIE, *Continued*

Scary, isn't she? Why since the time I was a wee pup I heard stories about her. And believe me, none of those stories were nice. One of the neighbor dogs swears that Old Lady Grudge ran up and bit him. I'm serious.

(OLD LADY GRUDGE shakes her cane angrily as her LIGHTS FADE. She exits.)

SADIE, *Continued*

I'm going to tell you all about her and the Fickles and Snappy and Gristle and Blossom and Walter and... Well heck, rather than me telling you all about them. How about I show you? Would you like that? Yeah? Okay. Now get ready, because I'm going to show you how I made it home.

(SPOTLIGHT OUT on SADIE.)

SCENE 2

(LIGHTS UP on the interior of a little girl's bedroom in the Fickle home. Everything is princesses, ponies, and pink. A bed with floral print sits on one side. A window to the outside and a door leading in. Enter FELICIA FICKLE, pigtails and pretty dress. She carries a little puppy [stuffed animal] in her arms. This is SADIE, a chocolate lab puppy, cute and cuddly. FELICIA cuddles and coos this cute toy as if a real dog. [NOTE: The actor playing the role of Sadie will act as the puppeteer for the toy-dog from behind the bed.]

FELICIA

Who's my cutesy, whootsy, bootsy, wittle, bitty, baby? Is it you? Is it you? *(Waits for a response; turns agitated)* Well is it?! *(Beat; SADIE whimpers.)* It is! It is you my wittle-puppy-princess-poochie-poo. *(Gags)* Ugh, your breath stinks. *(Places SADIE on the bed)* Mom, Sadie's breath stinks!

(Enter MRS. FICKLE, an adult version of FELICIA, with two shopping bags. One bag from "Mill's Puppy Store", the other bag from "Morono St. Bastille." She is all sunshine and sweetness... until she isn't.)

MRS. FICKLE

What is it, dear?

FELICIA

Sadie's breath stinks. I don't want a dog with stinky breath. Should we take it back?

MRS. FICKLE

Well, Felicia Fickle, that is to be expected. Puppies have stinky breath that's all there is to it. That's what the man at the store said. *(Leans in)* I'm sure it's not all that—Ugh! That's awful!

(MRS. FICKLE reaches into her shopping bag and pulls out an oversized bottle of "Mill's Puppy Store Brand Puppy Breath Freshener.")

MRS. FICKLE, *Continued*

Good thing he sold us some of this.

FELICIA

(Taking bottle; reading) Mill's Puppy Store Brand Puppy Breath Freshener?

MRS. FICKLE

Uh-huh.

(MRS. FICKLE opens bottle and dowses SADIE with the spray causing SADIE to gag and cough.)

MRS. FICKLE, *Continued*

Aww, that's sweet!

FELICIA

Aww, that's sweet!

MRS. FICKLE

She coughs like people.

FELICIA

I love her so much.

MRS. FICKLE

I know, dear.

FELICIA

(Crying) I do. I love her so, so much.

MRS. FICKLE

(Cries with FELICIA) Yes, dear.

(They console one another. Enter MR. FICKLE, a male version of MRS. FICKLE.)

MR. FICKLE

Why are my girls crying? I thought buying you a puppy was a good thing?

FELICIA

It is! Thank you so much, Daddy.

(They all hug, leaving SADIE on the bed to wander dangerously close to the edge.)

MR. FICKLE

Well, I'm glad it made you happy. That's the most important thing. And you promise to take care of it, right?

FELICIA

Oh, yes. I will never let her go. Never, ever, ever.

(FELICIA realizes that she has let her go and searches for her. MR. FICKLE walks over to the bed, pulls out his handkerchief, and picks up SADIE.)

MR. FICKLE

Looking for something?

(MR. FICKLE tosses the puppy to FELICIA who catches her and twirls her in the air. He then takes a second handkerchief from his pocket and wipes off the first handkerchief.)

FELICIA

I'll cherish her forever.

(FELICIA smooches the puppy, then tosses it back onto the bed.)

MR. FICKLE

Good. A puppy is a lot of responsibil—

(SADIE yips, interrupting MR. FICKLE.)

MR. FICKLE, *Continued*

A lot of respon—

(SAIDE yips again. This time, she continues yipping.)

FELICIA

Quiet, Sadie. Daddy is talking to you. Bad dog!

MRS. FICKLE

No, she just needs some training. Now, Sadie, no barking.

FELICIA

No, barking.

MR. FICKLE

You have to train her.

FELICIA

I said no barking.

MR. FICKLE

You can't just say it. She'll never listen to you if you just say it. ... You have to ask her... politely. Sadie, can you stop barking please?

(SADIE yips even louder.)

MRS. FICKLE

It's not working, honey.

MR. FICKLE

It'll work, honey! Sadie, Sadie, can you please stop... please... please stop bark—

FELICIA

She won't listen to anybody! What's wrong with her?

MRS. FICKLE

Maybe she's hungry.

MR. FICKLE

No, she's just stubborn. Sadie, no barking! NO BARKING!

FELICIA

No, barking, Sadie!

MRS. FICKLE

For the love of all that is holy BE QUIET!

(SADIE stops.)

MRS. FICKLE, *Continued*

There. That's all you need. A firm tone.

(SADIE emits a small yip. MRS. FICKLE shoots her a look.)

MRS. FICKLE, *Continued*

Now let's give her a toy. The man at the store said if we buy her plenty of toys she'll keep herself occupied.

(SADIE has taken one of the expensive shoes from the "Morono St. Bastille" bag.)

MRS. FICKLE, *Continued*

(Grabbing the shoe) No! Morono St. Bastille pumps with the rhinestone straps are not a toy.

(MRS. FICKLE empties the bag of toys all over the bed and puts SADIE in the middle of the mess.)

MRS. FICKLE, *Continued*

There. That should occupy her for hours. Now, who wants dinner?

FELICIA

Can we have pizza?

MR. FICKLE

Ugh, not pizza again.

FELICIA

Yes pizza.

(They continue their bickering, turning out the lights as they exit. Moonlight floods the room as SADIE slowly moves around the bed playing with each toy momentarily. She then chases her tail for a moment. SADIE grabs a pillow and pulls it behind the bed. Moments later a monstrous sounding growl is heard as pillow feathers fly everywhere.)

SCENE 3

(LIGHTS UP: Daylight floods the room as the Six-month-old SADIE appears from behind the bed and jumps on it, messing up the sheets in the process.)

SADIE

Six months later and I'm as big as... Well, as big as me!

(SADIE chases her tail.)

SADIE, Continued

(To audience) Can you believe I was as small as that? Wasn't I cute? ...Hey, I'm still pretty cute. And of course I still think of myself as that cute little thing. And I'm sure my human family thinks of me the same way. They're such happy humans, especially when I'm around. So happy when I play with them. I'm gonna go make them happy right now!

(SADIE exits. From OFFSTAGE MR. FICKLE SCREAMS. SADIE enters with Mr. Fickle's handkerchief and jumps on the bed, ready to play.)

SADIE, Continued

(To audience) My daddy loves it when I play handkerchief with him. It's his favorite toy, so it's my favorite toy, too.

(Enter MR. FICKLE, panicked, but attempting to remain calm.)

MR. FICKLE

Sadie, drop the handkerchief.

(SADIE smiles, wagging her tail.)

MR. FICKLE, Continued

(Slowly approaching) Sadie, please drop the handkerchief.

(SADIE drops it, but picks it back up as soon as he gets near.)

MR. FICKLE, *Continued*

Sadie! GIVE ME THE—

(He lunges, but SADIE is too quick. He falls over the bed as SADIE runs to the other side of the room with the handkerchief. MR. FICKLE picks himself up, takes off his glasses and reaches for his missing handkerchief to clean them. SADIE waves it around, smiling. Enter MRS. FICKLE and FELICIA.)

MRS. FICKLE

What's all this noise about?

MR. FICKLE

That...thing is a menace.

MRS. FICKLE

Honey, you're overreacting.

FELICIA

Yeah, Dad. You're totally overreacting.

MRS. FICKLE

That's just what puppies do.

FELICIA

Puppies do that, Dad.

MRS. FICKLE

And Sadie is just a pup –

(MRS. FICKLE turns to see Sadie with one of her expensive shoes dangling from Sadie's mouth. Each member of the family stands stunned, dropping whatever they're holding.)

MRS. FICKLE, *Continued*

My Morono St. Bastille pumps with the rhinestone straps!Now that's a good girl. Let's not do anything crazy.

(MRS. FICKLE slowly approaches SADIE who wags her tail.)

MRS. FICKLE, *Continued*

Sadie's a good girl. Yes she is. And Sadie doesn't want anything bad to happen to Mommy's expensive new shoe. Isn't that right?

MR. FICKLE

Ask her what her demands are.

MRS. FICKLE

What?

MR. FICKLE

In hostage situations they always have demands. They always want something in exchange for-

MRS. FICKLE

That's completely ridiculous. *(A beat)* What are your demands, Sadie?

MR. FICKLE

You want a treat?

FELICIA

Sadie, treat? A treat for Mommy's shoe?

MRS. FICKLE

Just hand over the shoe and we can all go on like nothing ever happen—

(SADIE rips off the strap. ALL gasp. MRS. FICKLE FAINTS. SADIE merely tosses the shoe around.)

MR. FICKLE

That's it. We're taking a little drive in the country.

FELICIA

Oh, oh! Can Sadie come, Daddy?

MR. FICKLE

Absolutely.

(LIGHTS FADE as MR. FICKLE scowls at the still playful SADIE. SPOTLIGHT on SADIE as she speaks to the audience.)

SADIE

Oh, boy! This is going to be my first car ride since I came home. How exciting. Where do you think I'm going? The dog park? The Frisbee course? The steak house!? The dog park with a Frisbee course where they throw Frisbees made from steak?! Oh, boy! This is going to be the best car ride ever! I can't wait.

(SADIE chases her tail for a moment then runs off stage. SPOTLIGHT OUT. IN DARKNESS, the sound of a car driving, stopping and car doors opening and closing.)

SCENE 4

(LIGHTS UP on the town dump. Piles of junk litter the stage. MR. and MRS. FICKLE walk, annoyed, as FELICIA and SADIE bounce around. SADIE spins around them, chewing on their clothing, jumping up on them, etc... MR. FICKLE pulls out his handkerchief, picks up a stick from the ground with it, and whistles for SADIE. He tosses the stick for her to fetch, but she doesn't understand. He tries it again with even more enthusiasm, but she only smiles and wags her tail. Still. He throws up his hands, then takes off after the stick, barking like a dog, as all

watch him. He returns with the stick, wrapped in his handkerchief, hanging from his mouth. He throws one more time, she takes a step toward it, turns around, and licks his face. He hangs his head in defeat. MRS. FICKLE brushes him aside and pulls from her purse, the matching Morono Saint Bastille pump with the rhinestone straps. SADIE lights up, salivating. MRS. FICKLE scowls at SADIE and then throws the shoe offstage. SADIE races for it. THE FICKLE FAMILY slowly walk backwards and off stage. SFX: car doors opening and closing followed by a car peeling off. SADIE returns with the shoe, eager to continue playing, but she discovers that she's all alone. Excited, she creeps around the stage hoping to surprise the hiding family. After a while, she realizes that no one is there. SFX: a flash of lightening followed by a clap of thunder.)

SADIE, Continued

Oh, no. I've lost my people. And now it's raining and they'll be lost for sure. I have to find them! They'll be scared to death from this lightning and thunder. They're not nearly as brave as I am—

(SFX: A BRIGHT FLASH of LIGHTNING and a LOUD CLAP of THUNDER. SADIE, frightened by the sound, tries to find shelter. She runs from pile of trash to pile of trash, but no luck. She sees a barrel with a hole in the side, circles it, and finally climbs inside it, but she finds herself stuck. With only her legs visible, she kicks and struggles, but she's wedged in there. She pokes her head out through the hole in the side.)

SADIE, Continued

Would you believe it? Who would have guessed it? Now I'll surely get struck by lightning. Maybe if I push just a little bit harder.

(As SADIE struggles to remove herself from the barrel, a snout peeks from behind a pile of trash, followed by the rest of the head. This is WALTER, a basset hound. From under his head pops the head of BLOSSOM, a corgi. From above Walter's head pops GRISTLE, a spotted cow-dog. They look at SADIE then to one another.)

SADIE, Continued

No matter how much I push I keep getting stuck further in. Maybe if I push even harder...

(As she struggles, the DOGS approach her. SADIE eventually notices them and stops her struggle. They approach her, menacingly. GRISTLE gets right in her face... growls... bares his teeth... then sniffs her. The others join in sniffing SADIE. SADIE giggles at first, then bursts out laughing.)

SADIE, Continued

It tickles.

GRISTLE

(Sniffing her thoroughly) How did you hear about us? Who sent you? Were you followed?

(GRISTLE looks around, paranoid. They all look mean and angry.)

SADIE

Followed? No. No, I lost my humans and I need to find them.

BLOSSOM

(Sweetly) Aww, she's lost. She seems nice. Let's take her in, Gristle.

(GRISTLE shoots her a look. BLOSSOM'S face hardens again.)

GRISTLE

Humans? What do you want with a human? Nothing but trouble. They're a nuisance. Pleh
(Spits)

WALTER

A scourge on society. Pleh *(Spits)*

GRISTLE

They love you till they don't. Pleh *(Spits)*

WALTER

And then leave you on the side of the road. Pleh *(Spits)*

BLOSSOM

(Sweetly) They're not very nice.

(GRISTLE and WALTER slow-burn to BLOSSOM who eventually complies by spitting.)

GRISTLE

So, you've misplaced your humans, have you?

SADIE

Yes they wanted to go for a walk and I should have been taking better care of them but then they really wanted to play and I like to play so I played with them and then I lost them and I know I lost them because I can't find them and now they're probably wandering all around lost because they can't get by without me and now I'm stuck because I'm in this barrel and I can't move which means I'm stuck and you have to help me find them. ...Because I lost them. ...You see we were walking—

(During her spiel, WALTER falls asleep.)

GRISTLE

I get it... So you lost them and they're wandering around searching for you?

SADIE

Yes, sir. So if you could help me out of this—

GRISTLE

Little pup, let me tell you about your humans. You didn't "lose"—

SADIE

—Yes I did.

GRISTLE

Excuse me. ...Them. You didn't lose them. We've all been there. We've all had humans and we've all gone through the same thing. You didn't lose your humans. They abandoned you.

SADIE

No.

BLOSSOM

Oh, Gristle. Take it easy on her. She's just a pup.

SADIE

I'm just a pup.

BLOSSOM

She doesn't know any— Oh, look, butterfly. "Hi."

(BLOSSOM waves to the butterfly; a beat.)

GRISTLE

She has to learn, Blossom. She has to learn just as we've all had to learn about the timeless tyranny of human—

WALTER

(Waking) —I'm hungry.

GRISTLE

Excuse me. ...Beings. The tyranny of human beings.

WALTER

Yes. That's right. The tryyanny—

GRISTLE

Tyranny.

WALTER

Try... Tern... Teh... of human beings. Now, little pup, you have to tell Uncle Walter the absolute truth. Don't lie or he'll know it. ...Do you have any food with you? I'm really hungry. Even some kibble.

GRISTLE

Kibble. I'm trying to start a revolution, an uprising to overthrow the humans and take over the planet and "Uncle Walter" just wants his kibble.

WALTER

I'm starving over here.

GRISTLE

Well... I guess you can't fight a revolution on an empty stomach. Do you have any food?

SADIE

No.

GRISTLE

No food.

WALTER

Ugh. *(Falls asleep again)*

BLOSSOM

Gristle, she seems like a really nice young girl, ya know?

SADIE

I am. I'm a very good girl.

GRISTLE

Oh, a good girl, huh? Do you do tricks?

SADIE

Not really.

GRISTLE

Have the humans got you doing tricks? Do you shake hands with the humans?

(As GRISTLE mentions tricks, WALTER does them in his sleep.)

SADIE

No.

GRISTLE

Do you roll over?

SADIE

No.

GRISTLE

Do you fetch the ball?

SADIE

No. I like shoes. *(Pulls out the expensive shoe)*

WALTER

(Wakes; licks his chops) Oh, what I wouldn't give for a nice shoe right now?

(SADIE hides the shoe.)

GRISTLE

Listen, pup, you need to drop all of that my humans love me and need me nonsense. You wanna know why?Because you have a new life now as one of us. You're a dump dog now. Out here, you're free. Am I right?

WALTER

Right.

BLOSSOM

Right.

GRISTLE

Out here, you're independent. Am I right?

WALTER

Right.

BLOSSOM

Right.

GRISTLE

Out here, you think for yourself and you don't ever have to have another order barked at you again. Now both of you, get her out of there!

BLOSSOM

Okay.

WALTER

Okay.

(BLOSSOM and WALTER help SADIE out of her barrel as GRISTLE holds court.)

GRISTLE

Dogs and humans, it just don't work. It's not a natural combination. We're loyal.

BLOSSOM

They're unreliable.

GRISTLE

We give.

WALTER

They take.

GRISTLE

But out here, we're strong and free and we don't need humans and we never ever have to be afraid of any of them ever again/

WALTER

(Sniffs the air) /Dog catcher/

GRISTLE

/Hide!

(They all quickly hide, except for WALTER who meanders. BLOSSOM finds a blanket and tosses it over WALTER, who still meanders. After several attempts she gets him to remain still. BLOSSOM then finds a place to hide. Enter THE DOG CATCHER. He wears a patch over one eye and carries an oversized net on a pole. He sniffs the air with deep and powerful breaths. He ominously wanders dangerously close to each of the hiding dogs, occasionally turning around quickly, just in case. He spends extra time near the blanket that covers Walter. BLOSSOM makes a noise to distract him. He crosses to the noise, looking around for his prey. Eventually he exits. After a moment, ALL dogs emerge from their hiding spots, except for WALTER, who snores from under the blanket.)

SADIE

I thought you weren't afraid of humans.

BLOSSOM

Oh, that's the dog catcher. He's different. He's beyond human, ya know? He's definitely not nice.

GRISTLE

Any dog with any sense keeps clear of the dog catcher. Every dog is afraid of him.

BLOSSOM

Except for Snappy.

(GRISTLE motions for BLOSSOM to zip it.)

SADIE

Who's Snappy?

BLOSSOM

Oh, well, Snappy, she's uh... uh...

GRISTLE

Not real. She's just a legend. A mythical dog who allegedly wanders the dump. No one in reality. Really.

BLOSSOM

Oh, Snappy's not afraid of anything. (*Acknowledging the scowling GRISTLE*) I mean, if she were real.

GRISTLE

Which she isn't.

BLOSSOM

(*Takes SADIE aside*) Legend has it that she and the dog catcher have been battling for years.

(*BLOSSOM dances around reenacting a heroic battle between Snappy and the Dog Catcher, playing both roles.*)

BLOSSOM, *Continued*

Snappy was born wild. She never spent a day indoors. She ruled this part of town with an iron paw. Then one day, the dog catcher, he flew in on a lightning bolt and crashed into the earth. But Snappy wasn't afraid. She's never been scared of anything. She laughed at him and his oversized net. Ha ha ha! And they sparred. All over the heaps of trash. In and out of barrels and old cars, Snappy showing her enormous teeth. And they clashed and wrestled and he got her pinned, but she wiggled her way out, then she pinned him. Some say that's how he lost the eye. And they growled and snarled and clawed and wrestled some more and raw, bleh, grrr, ahh... (*Overcome with the moment; chewing on her own leg*) But in the end, Snappy won. And when it was finally over he swore to catch her one day. But he never has. And that makes Snappy the ultimate alpha dog of the dump.

GRISTLE

...If she were real, which she is not. Ergo facto that makes me the alpha, thank you very much.

(*ALL look at GRISTLE, confused. WALTER wakes himself up with a snore.*)

WALTER

Dog catcher, better hide.

BLOSSOM

(*Uncovering him*) That's already happened, Walter.

WALTER

Oh. Did we survive?

BLOSSOM

Yes.

WALTER

Oh, goody.

GRISTLE

So, pup, whaddya-say? You ready to join in with us and live a real dog's life?

BLOSSOM

Oh do it, Sadie.

WALTER

Whaddya-say?

SADIE

Um... Every family needs a dog.

(ALL DOGS walk away from her, exasperated. "Ugh!")

GRISTLE

Still sticking with that nonsense, huh? Well, good luck to you, pup.

BLOSSOM

Good luck finding your family.

WALTER

Good luck with the dog catcher.

GRISTLE

Walter, that's already happened.

WALTER

But –

GRISTLE

We've already seen the dog catcher, that was earlier. You silly old hound dog. Your nose is always five minutes behind reality.

WALTER

But -

GRISTLE

If the dog catcher were actually here right now, would I just be standing here rambling on like this? No, I'd run.

(Unbeknownst to GRISTLE, THE DOG CATCHER has returned and approaches him with the big net.)

GRISTLE Continued

But since he's not here I don't have to run. I can do a jig. *(He does.)* I can do jumping jacks. *(He does.)* I can chase my tail around *(He does.)* and around and ...around?

(GRISTLE stops chasing his tail in a circle, noticing THE DOG CATCHER. DOG CATCHER smiles widely, GRISTLE smiles back, swallowing hard. DOG CATCHER raises his net over his head as GRISTLE cowers in fear. ALL DOGS cower at the inevitable when... SNAPPY appears

from atop a pile of trash. She growls at THE DOG CATCHER and then jumps down. LIGHTS TURN BLUE as the two square off. SFX: THEME MUSIC from The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly plays.)

SADIE

(To audience) There she was. The legend was real. It was Snappy. The bravest dog in the world.

(An elaborate battle occurs between SNAPPY and THE DOG CATCHER as they run in and out of the piles of trash. Each gets the upper-hand momentarily, but neither can sustain it. Eventually SNAPPY bites THE DOG CATCHER on rear-end. THE DOG CATCHER yelps and runs off-stage. SNAPPY dusts off her paws. GRISTLE timidly approaches her.)

GRISTLE

Wow, Snappy, that was amazing. I must say, it's nice to finally meet you in person. I'd like to introduce myself/

SNAPPY

/Beat it/

GRISTLE

/Okay.

(GRISTLE, WALTER and BLOSSOM apologetically take their leave, indicating to SADIE to come with them.)

SADIE

I think I'll stay.

BLOSSOM

Oh, you don't want to do that.

SNAPPY

Listen to the lady, kid.

(Again, they motion for SADIE to follow, but SADIE doesn't move. GRISTLE, WALTER and BLOSSOM exit.)

SCENE 5

(SADIE cautiously approaches SNAPPY who barely looks at her.)

SNAPPY, *Continued*

Kid, it's a dog eat dog world and I'm out of kibble.

SADIE

Ms. Snappy, ma'am. That was just about the bravest thing I've ever seen. What am I talking about, it was the bravest thing I've ever seen. Uh, ma'am. I'm just a lost dog. A pup, to be honest. And, I know you don't know me, but I was wondering—

SNAPPY

If I could help you find your way home? Is that it?

SADIE

Wow! How did you know that? Are you psychic, too?

SNAPPY

Yeah, I'm psychic, too—Are you kidding me? You know how many dogs I've seen just like you out here? Their humans just *misplaced* them?

SADIE

Oh, my humans definitely misplaced me. They couldn't get by without me.

SNAPPY

It's the same old story, kid, between humans and dogs. They think you're all cute, and cuddly at first. Then you get bigger. Humans think they're so smart, but they don't understand that little puppies get big and they turn into big dogs. And human kids, they get to go to school for 12 years to learn things. We dogs, we're lucky if we get 12 minutes before the humans give up on us and take us to the dump with the rest of their garbage.

SADIE

How do you know so much about humans? Weren't you born wild?

SNAPPY

Uh, yeah. Born wild. That's right. I'm wild and tough and I don't want nothing to do with taking some pup back to her people just to be dumped again.

SADIE

Oh, but my people—

SNAPPY

Yeah, they love you. Right. Listen, kid, even if I was to help ya, which I'm not saying I am, but if I was, then that would mean we'd have to travel the road together.

SADIE

Ooo, we'd be road dogs. I'd be your sidekick. I'd make a good sidekick.

(*SADIE play-acts a tough sidekick.*)

SNAPPY

Oh, Jiminy Christmas. Kid, kid, enough. I don't want a sidekick. You see, being a road dog, you've got a better shot alone. Less food to share. Less shelter to find. And most of all, less chance of running into the dog catcher again. You don't know how many dogs I've seen taken by that guy. And believe me, where he takes the dog... Let me put it this way. Dogs go into the pound, but they don't come out. If you know what I mean.

SADIE

...No, I don't.

(SNAPPY give a gesture of exasperation. She struts around, tough and annoyed.)

SADIE, *Continued*

Ms. Snappy, ma'am. I need you to help me find my family. And if you help then you could come and stay with us and you won't have to fight for food or shelter and we could play in my big backyard. And you won't have to be scared of people ever again.

(SNAPPY'S strutting halts.)

SNAPPY

What did you say?

SADIE

Oh, which part? The big back yard?

SNAPPY

After that.

SADIE

All the food?

SNAPPY

After that.

SADIE

Never scared of people—

SNAPPY

Bingo. You calling me scared?

SADIE

Uh...yeah.

SNAPPY

Of people.

SADIE

Uh...yeah.

SNAPPY

Oh, oh, oh, oh... oh, you think calling me scared is going to somehow make me change my mind. You calling my bluff—Is that what you're doing? Calling my bluff?

SADIE

Uh... I'm not sure. Maybe?

SNAPPY

Kid, oh, the lip on you. That, that, shew—that takes guts. Guts I didn't know you had.

SADIE

Great. I didn't know I had them either.

SNAPPY

Now I got to rethink this whole thing.

SADIE

Oh, great. ...Why?

SNAPPY

Cause.

SADIE

...Cause why?

SNAPPY

Cause you called my bluff.

SADIE

Oh... that. Yeah. Just to be clear... Why?

SNAPPY

Cause that's dog law. You don't know dog law?

SADIE

Of course I know dog law. Don't be silly. I just, don't remember all of it.

SNAPPY

Dog law. If it fits in my mouth, it's food. If I want it, I pee on it. And if another dog calls my bluff, I can't back down. Well played, kid. Well played.

SADIE

Gosh. Thanks. So you'll help me.

SNAPPY

Not much choice with you calling my bluff and all.

SADIE

Great! But how are we ever going to find them. They're long gone by now.

SNAPPY

You said your human lost her shoe.

SADIE

Right!

(SADIE pulls out the shoe. She studies it hard.)

SADIE, *Continued*

I don't think there are any clues on this.

SNAPPY

Gimme.

(SNAPPY takes the shoe. She wafts the air up through her nostrils like a wine connoisseur.)

SNAPPY, *Continued*

(Sniffing the shoe) Chinese food... twigs, a little oaky... crabgrass, *(Pulls it from her nose)* Rover on 8th Street. Peeyew. He needs to change his diet. *(Resumes)* A slight hint of Bermuda grass growing through a concrete sidewalk which would only be found on 5th Avenue. You live at 4... 453 W. 5th Avenue.

(SNAPPY hands back the shoe.)

SADIE

That's amazing.

SNAPPY

What can I say? The nose knows.

SADIE

So you know where that is?

SNAPPY

Like directions?

SADIE

Yes.

SNAPPY

No.

SADIE

Oh.

(Sternly) ...What was that?

SNAPPY

What?

SADIE

That look there.

SNAPPY

I.. I...

SADIE

That was defeat. That was a look of defeat. (Pulls at SADIE'S coat) What's in there under that dog fur? What is that a squirrel in there?

SNAPPY

No.

SADIE

A cute little bunny rabbit?

SNAPPY

No.

SADIE

A cat? Is that a little fraidy-cat inside that fur?

SNAPPY

No. I'm a dog.

SADIE

That's right you are. You are a dog. You do not accept defeat. That's why they call it dogged determination. You don't back down and you don't lie down. You are a dog. Let me here you say it?

SNAPPY

I'm a dog.

SADIE

You don't sound like one.

SNAPPY

I'm a dog!

SADIE

SNAPPY

And don't you ever forget it. No matter how tough and hopeless it looks for you, you just remember that you are a dog. Like me.

SADIE

A dog like you?

SNAPPY

You're a dog like me.

SADIE

Okay.

SNAPPY

Now are we going to find your home?

SADIE

Yes!

SNAPPY

And why is that?

SADIE

Because we're dogs.

SNAPPY

That's right. And we follow the other rule of dog law. When in doubt, I follow my nose.

(SNAPPY puts her nose to the shoe, then the air and leads SADIE on the trail home. SADIE and SNAPPY roam through the audience.)

SADIE

(To audience) Days passed and Snappy just put her nose to the ground finding little clues along the way.

SNAPPY

(Smelling the shoe and the air) Hints of maple. A banana peel. Ooo, a Butterfinger wrapper. Mmm, that's my favorite.

SADIE

(To audience) She also imparted her timeless advice.

SNAPPY

If I saw it first, it's mine. If I can chew it up, it must be meant for me to chew up. Come on, it only makes sense. Right?

SADIE

Right.

SNAPPY

And here's a big one. If I put my paw on you, you can't leave.

(SNAPPY puts a paw on SADIE's shoulder. SADIE tries to move, but is unable.)

SADIE

You're right.

SNAPPY

Now you try.

(SADIE puts her paw on SNAPPY's shoulder.)

SNAPPY, *Continued*

Works, huh?

SADIE

(To audience) Snappy was very wise like that. And this went on for two days until we finally made it.

(SADIE prances circles around SNAPPY outside of her family's home.)

SADIE, *Continued*

We made it! We made it! It's gonna be so great when we walk in there. Oh, I sure hope they made it. I bet they're as worried about me as I am of them. Don't you think?

SNAPPY

Uh, sure.

SADIE

I bet they are. I don't know how they've gotten along without me. I'm sure it was tough. Don't you think?

SNAPPY

Uh, sure.

SADIE

(Excited beyond herself) Oh, it had to be tough on my mom she can't find her shoes on her own and my dad always loses his handkerchief and I wave it in front of him and it makes him so happy and Felicia she must have been lost without me and so sad and gosh you're really going to love it in my home I can't wait are you excited?

SNAPPY

Uh, sure. Hey, kid, before we go in there, we should probably talk about the possibility, unlikely as it might be, that for all the nonsense and rambling on that Gristle does, he might have had a point about your family.

SADIE

... How so?

SNAPPY

Well... There's always the chance, unlikely as it sounds, that they might have... That maybe it wasn't such an accident that...

SADIE

... Yeah?

SNAPPY

Okay. Kid, your family dumped you. Hard as that is to take, I know, but having been dumped myself, I know what it looks like.

SADIE

Ha, you got dumped. Good one. (*Realizing*) ...You got dumped? I thought you were born in the wild.

SNAPPY

Well, that's not exactly every bit of the truth. Only a small part of it.

SADIE

How much of it?

SNAPPY

None. I had a home and they got mad at me and that was it. We parted ways.

SADIE

What happened?

SNAPPY

I uh... I ate the blinds. I couldn't help it. There was a jogger running around outside the window and I wanted to make sure my humans were okay. I was only trying to help and... well they dumped me. And kid, you got dumped, too. Like yesterday's trash. Like spoiled milk, which I must say isn't as bad as they make it out to be. It's hard to hear, I know, but they don't want ya. There. I said it. The kid gloves came off and I told you the truth, as I see it. And that's that. We can just move on now and forget this reunion with your people nonsense and go back to the dump. (*Noticing Sadie's tears*) The truth really sets you free, doesn't it? What's, what's your little lip doing there? Is it quivering, is that what it is? Are you whimpering? We don't whimper out here. There is no whimpering allowed on the road. You're a road dog now. Road dogs are tough, right?

(Crying) Right. SADIE

You're tough! SNAPPY

(Bawling) I'm tough! SADIE

Oh, Jiminy Christmas. What have I gotten myself into? SNAPPY

Do you really think they dumped me? SADIE

I uh... I never said... I never used the exact word, "dumped." SNAPPY

Yes you did. SADIE

No. No. No, no, no... Maybe you just misinterpreted me. SNAPPY

You said dumped like yesterday's trash. SADIE

Well – SNAPPY

(Bawls uncontrollably) Like spoiled milk. SADIE

Hey, hey, hey. There's no need for that. I was... I was... Testing you. SNAPPY

Testing me? SADIE

To see how enthusiastic you were about us making it to your home and reuniting you with your family. And guess what, kid? SNAPPY

What? SADIE

SNAPPY

You passed the test.

SADIE

I did? I passed?

SNAPPY

With flying colors. Yes you did. You passed. You're ready to go see your people.

(SADIE smiles at this, relieved. She looks at the house.)

SADIE

The doors are all closed. How do we get in?

SNAPPY

We improvise.

(LIGHTS FADE OUT.)

SCENE 6

(LIGHTS UP on Felicia's bedroom. FELICIA lies in bed, covered with a blanket. At the open window, SADIE'S head bobs up and down in and out of sight.)

SADIE

(During each bob when seen) This is the one... That's my human... She made it home... She's asleep... I just need to... Climb in...

(SADIE clings onto the window sill, trying to hoist herself up.)

SADIE, *Continued*

Give me a push. Snappy, give me a—

(SADIE goes flying through the open window and crashes to the ground. After a moment she shakes it off and dances around as her joyous self. She quietly saunters over to FELICIA and sniffs her face. FELICIA, still asleep, waves her away. SADIE tries again, this time FELICIA turns away. SADIE jumps on the bed and licks FELICIA'S face, startling her.)

FELICIA

What the...? Sadie?

(SADIE wags her entire back-end from excitement.)

FELICIA, *Continued*

But you're... You shouldn't be here?

(SADIE'S excitement grows.)

FELICIA, *Continued*

Sadie, you need to go. Go on. Go on. You can do it. Go on. That a girl. Go on.

(SADIE happily goes with the gestures, but never really leaves. SADIE grabs the blanket with her mouth and pulls it, FELICIA pulls back, but eventually SADIE pulls it off revealing a little Maltese Puppy. SADIE drops the blanket and sits, stunned.)

FELICIA, *Continued*

I told you, you should go. If Mom and Dad see you...

(SADIE barks at the puppy.)

FELICIA, *Continued*

Shhh.

MRS. FICKLE, *Off*

(Calling) Felicia, I thought we told you to get in bed.

FELICIA

I am, Mom. Priscilla was having a bad dream.

(SADIE continues barking at the puppy.)

FELICIA *Continued*

Sadie. You have to be quiet. If they see you they're going to call the dog catcher.

(A knock at the door. FELICIA throws her blanket over SADIE who continues barking, trying to find her way out. Enter MRS. FICKLE and MR. FICKLE.)

FELICIA *Continued*

I told you everything's fine.

MR. FICKLE

It doesn't sound fine. Priscilla has a louder bark than I remember.

(As SADIE barks, FELICIA pretends that they're coming from the puppy.)

MRS. FICKLE

Is she okay? We paid top dollar for her, so if she's sick.

(SADIE manages to make her way out.)

MR. FICKLE

You?!

(SADIE runs over and licks MRS. FICKLE'S face.)

MRS. FICKLE

What is she doing back here? *(Breaks free and runs from the room)*

MR. FICKLE

No way are we having two dogs.

FELICIA

She just came back.

(SADIE runs and jumps into MR. FICKLE'S arms, knocking him on the bed, licking his face.)

MR. FICKLE

Oh, get it off me. Honey, call the pound! Oh the humanity!!

(Still on MR. FICKLE, SADIE nips at the puppy as FELICIA tries to free her father.)

FELICIA

Sadie, no. You need to go! Why don't you ever listen to me? Don't you speak English?

(Enter MRS. FICKLE.)

MRS. FICKLE

It's in here!

(Enter THE DOG CATCHER. He spies SADIE who jumps off of MR. FICKLE, running away from THE DOG CATCHER who gives chase. All around the room, over the bed, in and out the door, the FICKLE FAMILY scream at the chaos. Finally, THE DOG CATCHER nets SADIE, stopping her from running away.)

MRS. FICKLE, *Continued*

Thank you for saving us from that, that...

Mr. FICKLE

Menace.

MRS. FICKLE

How can we ever repay you?

(THE DOG CATCHER opens his mouth to speak when SNAPPY bursts through the window.)

MR. FICKLE

Oh my goodness, what is that?

(SNAPPY growls at THE DOG CATCHER.)

MRS. FICKLE

Help him!

MR. FICKLE

I'm not going near that thing.

(SNAPPY and DOG CATCHER square off. THE DOG CATCHER takes the net off of SADIE.)

MR. FICKLE, *Continued*

What are you doing?

MRS. FICKLE

My tax dollars pay for you to catch—Ahhhh!

(SNAPPY and DOG CATCHER go at it, creating even more chaos. Their battle goes into the audience. In and around the audience members, SNAPPY and DOG CATCHER wrestle, SNAPPY always wriggling free. SNAPPY makes her way back to the bedroom, motioning for SADIE to get out of the way.)

SADIE

Snappy, over here!

SNAPPY

Move out of the way, kid!

(But SADIE, trying to help, is in the way and blocking SNAPPY's path. The DOG CATCHER turns his net toward SADIE. He corners her, net ready to drop. Just then SNAPPY pushes SADIE out of harm's way and down comes the net. She's caught. THE DOG CATCHER hauls SNAPPY away as SADIE can only watch.)

SADIE

Snappy, don't go.

SNAPPY

It happens, kid.

SADIE

I'll save you.

SNAPPY

Don't be foolish kid. Just remember what I told you and never forget it. You're a dog, like me.

(SNAPPY is gone. SADIE turns to the FICKLE FAMILY who only turn and walk away. LIGHTS FADE OUT into a SPOTLIGHT on SADIE who wanders the stage, speaking to the audience.)

SADIE

I have nowhere left to go. All I wanted was to go home to my family and they didn't even want me. On top of all of that, the one dog in the world who was willing to help me and I got her thrown into the pound. I don't know what to do. I'm all alone out here. Without Snappy, I might as well just give up, right? *(Off the audience's response)* No? What should I do when I feel so

SADIE, *Continued*

defeated? What was that thing that Snappy told me to remember the last time I felt defeated. She said I should remember that I was... What was it? That I was cool? That I was cute and cuddly? No. It was something else. She said never forget that you're a... *(Off the audience's response)* A dog! That's right! I'm a dog. No matter how tough and hopeless it looks, just remember that I'm a dog. Like her. I'm a dog, doggone it! And I don't just give up. Thanks for reminding me. Now, I'm off to find a real home.

(SADIE strides off stage as LIGHTS FADE OUT.)

SCENE 7

(LIGHTS UP on a front porch and garden. Kneeling down is OLD LADY GRUDGE, her back to the audience. The sound of metal cutting as shards of debris fly from the other side of OLD LADY GRUDGE. She has a rather sinister laugh as she chops away. She turns around to reveal that she's holding the department store sales bill of the newspaper.)

OLD LADY GRUDGE

(Still laughing) Oh, honey, if you think you're getting away with those pants and those shoes, you're not. What's the world coming to?

(OLD LADY GRUDGE continues chopping up the sales bill as she looks at the pictures, laughing. SADIE appears on stage, cautiously watching her.)

OLD LADY GRUDGE, *Continued*

(Without even looking up) Go away.

(SADIE turns to leave, but turns back around, determined.)

OLD LADY GRUDGE, *Continued*

I said shoo, little thing. Last thing I need around here is a dog poking her nose into things causing a mess.

(SADIE cautiously approaches.)

OLD LADY GRUDGE, *Continued*

Do you know who I am? Haven't you heard about me before? Get, you. Shoo!

(She throws a rolled up newspaper at SADIE who yelps and backs away. SADIE then grabs the newspaper with her teeth and then cautiously approaches.)

OLD LADY GRUDGE, *Continued*

Ah, you're a brave one aren't you? You know what that's gonna get you? Nothing but trouble.

(She throws a quick aggressive gesture at SADIE who backs off.)

OLD LADY GRUDGE, *Continued*

Dogs are so dumb. They eat you out of house and home and ruin all your things. Say, don't you belong to that Fickle Family? You've got my pity for that. It must be awful living with a family like them. I hope you've ruined everything they've got. Too much stuff if you ask me, but nobody did. Well, go home to your family and leave me be. Can't you see I'm busy mulching up my newspapers? Get, you!

(OLD LADY GRUDGE continues chopping up the newspaper with her scissors. SADIE watches her from a distance.)

OLD LADY GRUDGE, *Continued*

And don't you be stealing my newspaper. That family of yours can get their own newspaper. I'm not buying the paper for everyone on the block, you know.

(OLD LADY GRUDGE mumbles as she cuts up the newspaper. She stops when she notices SADIE chewing up the newspaper with her teeth.)

OLD LADY GRUDGE, *Continued*

Ah, think you're pretty smart, do ya? Trying to impress me, huh? You know what would really impress me is if you could spread it over my flowers. That would be impressive. *(Sprinkles the paper mulch over her flowers)* Call me back when you learn to do something useful. I'd say you were something if you could do—

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes