

CAT & MOUSE

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CAST: CAT large man, pointy ears, whiskers, long tail
MOUSE small man, round ears, whiskers, long tail

SET: Blank stage

[MOUSE is standing around trying unsuccessfully to open a bag of Cheetos.]

[CAT stealthily approaches from behind, braces, wags his rear,
and springs, landing on mouse's tail.]

CAT

Gotcha!

MOUSE

[throws the Cheetos up]

Aaaagh! Gosh darn, don' t ever do that!

CAT

It' s all over, slick.

MOUSE

Scared the cheddar outa me!

CAT

Sure enough did that, yup.

MOUSE

How' d you like it if some bone-lick dog did that to you?

CAT

Well, I sure wouldn' t like that. No. I sure wouldn' t.

MOUSE

[pause] What the hell you grinning at?

CAT

I got me a mouse is why I' m grinning, boy.

MOUSE

Where do they learn this talk?

"You in a heap o' trouble, boy". What are you on - grits?

CAT

You in more than a heap o' trouble, boy. You dead meat.

MOUSE

Oh, okay. I get it. It's the intimidation, right?

I'm supposed to go, "Oh please Mister Cat, don't eat me.

I'm so scared". That's what you're after, right?

CAT

Something like that.

MOUSE

Okay fine, but I'm not into that.

So if that's what you want, go jump some other mouse, okay?

CAT

I don't need no other mouse, Alvin. I got you!

And pretty soon you gonna catch on to how got you are.

And it's gonna be a whole new attitude.

MOUSE

Look, if you're gonna be like this,

I don't see any point in discussing it further.

CAT

Well good, cause I don't either. I'm done talking.

Talking time is over. You know what time it is now,

fancy feast?

MOUSE

I suppose you're gonna bite my head off and eat it.

CAT

Not so fast. I'm coming to that. First we're gonna play a little game. You know what the game is called? [long pause]

Come on; it's not that hard.

MOUSE

It is when you're trying to think of a really great sarcastic reply, and nothing's coming.

CAT

We are gonna play cat and mouse.

MOUSE

Why didn't I think of that?

CAT

You know how to play cat and mouse?

MOUSE

No, I can't say I've ever played that one.

CAT

Well, I'm the cat, see?

MOUSE

My God.

CAT

Just listen, okay. The cat has caught the mouse, and it looks like it's all over, but no, the cat wants more than just a meal. He wants entertainment. And a dead mouse is somewhere around ball of yarn level. But a live mouse, now that's primo.

MOUSE

Must be the danger.

CAT

Because a live mouse thinks if he plays it well, he just might get away.

MOUSE

You mean if he's not so chewed up he doesn't care?

CAT

Yeah. That's right.

MOUSE

Okay, I can appreciate where you're coming from. All the mice I know would give you exactly what you're looking for. But there's something going on here you gotta understand, okay. I am not your normal mouse. [pause] Now I'm not asking for special privileges, but try to understand this. I am not in the game.

CAT

[pause] What in the cheese dip you talkin' about?

[CAT smacks MOUSE up the side of the head and sends him tumbling.]

CAT

You in the game, boy, cause you the ball!

[CAT smacks him around some more.]

[MOUSE plays Gandhi - no flight, no cowering, no resistance.]

CAT

Come on! Do something! [continues battering]
Look, you want me to start bitin' parts off? [pause]
Hey! I'm talking to you.

MOUSE

Bite me.

[CAT smacks him again.]

CAT

Okay, I get it. It's the old "sick mouse" trick, right? I know that gig. Once I caught this mouse. He didn't do nothin', just kinda squeaky groaned and rolled over and shook hisself. So I figured, hey I ain't that hungry. Sucker give me some bubonic crud. But then I thought, "what if it's just a act?" I don't know. So just to be sure, I bit his head off anyway. Spit it out. So if that's what you're thinking..

MOUSE

This is not the "sick mouse" trick. It's the "mouse don't give a rip" trick. It's not even a trick. It's reality.

CAT

Yeah right.

MOUSE

Do I look sick to you? Here, watch this.

[MOUSE runs in place and does some calisthenics to prove his health.]

There! So, whatever you wanna do, go ahead and do it.

[CAT is totally befuddled. Walks around mouse, trying to decide what to do.]

MOUSE

Just don't bore me to death, okay.

[CAT sits down next to mouse.]

CAT

You wanna talk about it?

MOUSE

Hey, if I ever find anything worth talking to, there's not much chance it's gonna be a ring worm pussy cat.

CAT

Hey! Don't be calling me that.

MOUSE

Chew on it.

CAT

Look, I'm tryin' to give you a break, Clarence.

MOUSE

[pause] You ever wonder why mice are mice? [long pause]
It's because they *deserve* to be mice.
They don't have the guts to be anything else. [pause]
You know why mice are such low self esteemers? [pause]
It's because they deserve low self esteem.
They let themselves be tyrannized by mediocrity.
You know why...

CAT

Because they deserve it?

MOUSE

Yes, but do you know *why* they deserve it?

CAT

[pause] Cause they're mice?

MOUSE

Because they're *afraid*. Not just "Boo!" and they jump. The very core of their being is fear. You know what mice are afraid of?

CAT

Cats?

MOUSE

I used to think they were afraid of death. But then I started asking around. I asked them straight out, "Hey do you really enjoy living?" You know what they said? [pause] Nothing. Evasions. Wouldn't answer the question. You know why? [pause] Because they were *afraid* of the answer. [pause] Now. You starting to catch on?

[long pause. MOUSE slowly stands up, starts to walk away.]

[CAT grabs his tail.]

CAT

Wait a minute! Just don't be making no hasty assumptions, alright. I'm thinkin' about this. [pause] Tell you what. I'll spot you some points.

[MOUSE looks exasperated.]

CAT

No, listen. You see that over there? What is that?

MOUSE

A mouse hole.

CAT

Right. Now. I'm gonna give you a fair chance to run for it. Maybe you make it; maybe you don't. I don't care. Maybe you don't either. But it's your only chance.

MOUSE

I told you, I don't play games.

CAT

Hey! Games are all we got, alright? Now, I'm gonna back off in this direction, and whenever you feel froggy, jump. [pause] Come on. [pause] Come on, what do you want - my paws tied?

[MOUSE walks over to cat.]

MOUSE

"Games are all we got"?

[CAT tries to maintain, but breaks down and sobs.]

MOUSE

Aw, come on, puss.

CAT

Don't call me that!

MOUSE

Hey, at least you got a life; you're a cat.

CAT

Yeah right. I'm a cat. Got nine lousy lives.

MOUSE

Hey, I wouldn't mind bein' a cat.

CAT

Here it comes. Everybody wants to be a cat. We got the walk; we got the talk. We cool. Even dogs wanna be cats.

MOUSE

You complaining?

CAT

No, it's fine with us. That's what the game's all about.

MOUSE

Oh.

CAT

And now you talkin' about something else. And, like uh... Cats don't talk about nothin' else. You get my drift?

MOUSE

Mmh.

CAT

Cause once you open that door, it's like... you don't even want to *know* what it's like. You know? And really I oughta just eat you and go take a nap, cause like this kinda talk is just totally not on the program.

MOUSE

What kind of talk?

CAT

You know what kinda talk, Socrates!
Be pokin' that pointy nose in uncool places.

MOUSE

Okay, sorry. So, what are you telling me?
I thought cats had it all down [pause]
Are you saying... cats don't really know where it's at?

[CAT sobs uncontrollably.]

MOUSE

Oh wow!

CAT

It was all hype! All of it! We walk around lookin' cool.
"Hey, cat, gimme four." It's bird doodoo. We all know it.
But nobody ever says anything.

MOUSE

Wo-o-ow!

[MOUSE walks back in the direction he came from.]

[During cat's next line, MOUSE casually walks closer to the mouse hole.]

CAT

Everybody thinks we're great lovers cause they hear us all night. You know what it's really like? Just when you start gettin' into it, she screams and runs off. And then she rolls around in the grass and looks at you like, "Hey, you wanna do it again?" I mean sure, I'll do it again, but dog slobber, woman, do it right this time!

MOUSE

I'm sure you realize, this throws a whole new slant on absolutely everything.

CAT

Hey, get back here.

[MOUSE dashes for the mouse hole.]

[CAT jumps after him, but too late.]

CAT

Darn you! Get back here! That's no fair! [CAT throws a tantrum.]

Darn doggone lousy pig mouse lying sand box lump!! You get back out here and do it right! We were on a time out!

You said no games, gosh darn it! You can't move around on a time out! That is really naughty! Oh am I gonna get you! I am gonna get you so bad!

[starts walking away]

"Not in the game". *Aaagh!* I'm gonna get that guy!

MOUSE

Hey, cat!

CAT

You are so dead meat!

MOUSE

Mister cat, wait a minute.

CAT

I'm gonna start with the feet, then the tail, just a little bit at a time, then I'll figure out the rest as I go.

MOUSE

Hey, I know you think I'm laughing my whiskers off right now, but I'm not.

CAT

Don't you say a word to me you... you *mouse!*

MOUSE

Hey listen, okay. I'm not proud of this.

CAT

Real conflicted, huh?

MOUSE

I want you to know something. I really meant what I said.

CAT

What? The part about no games?

MOUSE

When I said it, I really meant it.

CAT

Oh *hah!*

MOUSE

I thought I meant it. I really thought I meant all of it.
But then when I saw a way out...

CAT

Just too tempting, huh?
Reality just wasn't what you thought it was.

MOUSE

I didn't know it was gonna feel like this.

CAT

What is this, an apology?
Are you saying you're sorry you won the game?

MOUSE

It wasn't a game.

CAT

Why? Because the stakes were too high?
That's what makes the game!

MOUSE

No. It's not that.

CAT

Okay, then you're not the mouse you thought you were. You're just another mouse. That's what stings, isn't it? You *deserve* to be a mouse. And now you know it.

[CAT turns and walks away.]

[MOUSE comes out of the hole.]

MOUSE

Cat!

[MOUSE cautiously walks center stage.]

[CAT braces for a charge.]

[MOUSE walks forward.]

[CAT charges, knocks MOUSE over and away from the mouse hole. CAT bats MOUSE around a few more times, then circles around mouse, deciding what to do. The moment of truth. CAT picks up the bag of Cheetos, opens it, eats one, doesn't like it. drops the bag in mouse's lap, exits.]

Blackout