

PAGEANT PETS

an animated pilot by Crystal Wood

(416) 707-4351
crystalwood@gmail.com

TEASER

FADE IN:

Photos flash on the screen.

Photo 1: A young BUCKLEY THE BULLDOG smiles, holding up a trophy that says "1st Place, Puppy Pageant."

Photo 2: Buckley, another huge smile on his face, proudly wears a sash that reads "Best Darn Dog!"

Photo 3: A slightly older Buckley holds up a trophy that reads "Second place winner." His smile is not quite so big.

Photo 4: Buckley, now old and fat, stands to the side while PRINCESS POOPSIE, a tiny adorable Pomeranian, is crowned.

Photo 5: A newspaper photo of a sad Buckley with the headline: "Too Many Treats? Former Favourite Exceeds Weight Class, Kicked Out Of Competition."

EXT. BACKYARD - DOGHOUSE - DAY

Buckley lays on the ground outside his doghouse, chin resting sadly on his paws. The same newspaper article from Photo 5 is open in front of him.

His friend ROOSEVELT, a dachshund, slips into the yard through a loose fence board. His body is so long that it takes a few seconds.

ROOSEVELT

Why the long face? Don't tell me your owners bought generic dog food again.

BUCKLEY

My career is over!

He pushes the newspaper to Roosevelt with his nose.

ROOSEVELT

That pageant stuff? Buck, you're a house pet. Eating shoes is your career.

BUCKLEY

They said I was too fat to compete. That it's against the rules.

Roosevelt lifts his hind leg at the newspaper.

ROOSEVELT

Here's what I think of their rules!

Buckley snatches the paper away.

BUCKLEY
Stop! This stuff is important to me!
I worked hard for that crown, and
they just handed it to Princess
Poopsie.

ROOSEVELT
Poopsie? Is that her talent?

BUCKLEY
I'm washed up. She stole my spotlight,
Roosevelt.

ROOSEVELT
So, steal it back! Show that bug-
eyed yipper who the real princess
is.

Buckley raises an eyebrow.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
I mean... prince.

BUCKLEY
And how am I supposed to do that?

ROOSEVELT
Put on your own beauty pageant!

BUCKLEY
Oh, I can't do that!

Buckley sticks his paw in his doghouse, and pulls out an enormous leather-bound book. He flips to a page.

BUCKLEY (CONT'D)
Section 6.14-C of pageant regulations
states that no entrant may participate
in a competing event that--

ROOSEVELT
Ain't these the same people that
kicked you of the pageant game?

Buckley considers this.

BUCKLEY
You're right!

Buckley stands up, triumphant.

BUCKLEY (CONT'D)

I can do it! I will do it! I-- uh,
how do I do it exactly?

ROOSEVELT

Don't ask me. I'm a dog!

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

Buckley stands in front of a group of neighborhood animals. This includes Roosevelt, a few other dogs and cats, SCALES, a scrawny chameleon, and ADVENTURE CAT, who's just a tiny bit feral.

SCALES

Let me get this straight. You want me to parade around in a bikini?

BUCKLEY

No, no. There's three categories in pet pageant competition: obedience, tricks and breeding.

Adventure Cat gnaws on his own tail.

BUCKLEY (CONT'D)

Uh, but I'm thinking of changing that last one.

SCALES

But I can wear a bikini, right?

BUCKLEY

Er. Sure.

VOICE (O.S.)

So, what do we get out of this?

Buckley looks around to find the voice. He looks at Adventure Cat. Adventure Cat HISSES at him.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Down here!

Buckley looks down at the ground to see a CRICKET, his ugly bug eyes staring up at Buckley.

CRICKET

I'm a busy insect. I got places to be, lawns to infest. Why should I enter this... what'd you call it?

BUCKLEY

A pet pageant.

An ancient, senile BLOODHOUND lifts one ear to hear better.

BLOODHOUND

Did he say "pet rabbit"?

(MORE)

BLOODHOUND (CONT'D)

I haven't chased a rabbit in about nine years. That's yer human years, of course. In dog years it's about fifty... fifty-two... forty... bacon. What are we talkin' about again?

A CALICO CAT pipes up.

CALICO CAT

Is this pageant gonna be at night? I don't like to go out at night.

ROOSEVELT

Aw, don't be such a scaredy cat.

BUCKLEY

Guys, there'll be prizes! And accolades!

SCALES

Whuzzat? Sounds like a human word.

BUCKLEY

You know, like when your owner gives you a belly rub and calls you a good dog. Or, um, a good reptile.

(pause)

You guys know what I'm talking about?

The animals look at each other, confused. To fill the awkward silence, the cricket CHIRPS.

CALICO CAT

I keep mixing up my owner's shoes with my litter box.

ADVENTURE CAT

Pfft! Hsss!

ROOSEVELT

Okay, not a group that gets a lot of belly rubs. That's why we have to reward ourselves! Let's remind each other why we're the best!

BUCKLEY

(to Bloodhound)

Come on, wouldn't you like to relive your glory days?

The Bloodhound lifts his ear.

BLOODHOUND

What'd you say?

BUCKLEY
 (turns to Cricket)
 Come on, Cricket. I bet winning a
 pageant would make you feel ten feet
 tall!

CRICKET
 Please, do I look like I have self-
 esteem problems?

BUCKLEY
 Adventure Cat--

Adventure Cat looks at Buckley with crazy eyes.

BUCKLEY (CONT'D)
 Uh, hi. Please don't eat me.

Adventure Cat happily BARKS... like the dog that he is not.

SCALES
 Whoa, they got Adventure Cat.

CALICO CAT
 If he wins, I'll never live it down.
 I guess that means I'm in, too.

CRICKET
 (sighs, resigned)
 Me too.

SCALES
 Me too. And I think I can get a few
 others to sign up. I know a snail
 with a huge ego.

Buckley and Roosevelt look at each other and smile.

ROOSEVELT
 Boss, I think we got ourselves a
 "beeyoo-ty" pageant.

BUCKLEY
 Beeyoo-tiful!

Buckley's tail wags happily.

The old Bloodhound's tail wags slowly, arthritically.

BLOODHOUND
 (in time with tail wags)
 Ow... Ow... Ow.

SCALES
 So, who's going to judge this thing?

INT. SEWER - DAY

Buckley walks through the underground sewer with a half-chewed piece of pizza in his mouth.

In a darkened corner, he sees who he's looking for: THE PACK. The Pack is a group of rats. The HEAD RAT sits behind an empty cereal box, with other rats standing around him. The effect is very *Godfather*-like.

HEAD RAT
(with a Brando accent)
What brings you to the underground,
dog?

Buckley places the pizza slice on the cereal box as an offering. The Head Rat sniffs it.

HEAD RAT (CONT'D)
Proceed.

BUCKLEY
I'm organizing a pageant for the
neighbourhood pets and I need someone
impartial to judge it.

HEAD RAT
And what makes you think we're
impartial?

BUCKLEY
Well, you hate us all equally.

HEAD RAT
Harsh words. Just because we are not
interested in your squeak toys and
your human owners and your bathing
does not mean we are not alike.

BUCKLEY
So you'll do it?

HEAD RAT
On one condition.

BUCKLEY
Yes?

The Head Rat looks around, indicating his rat comrades.

HEAD RAT
You don't expect us to share this
pizza, do you?

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Roosevelt trots up to a giant mansion. He stares at it in awe.

ROOSEVELT
Holy dog food endorsement deals!

He trots up to the doggie door, in this case a gold-sequined curtain, and slips through.

INT. MANSION - DAY

Inside, the marble walls of this enormous house display a shrine to all things Pooopsie Pomeranian. Blue ribbons, newspaper clippings, photo after photo (...after photo) of Pooopsie in various way-too-cute poses.

Triumphant MUSIC begins playing. VOICES sing "Here she is, Pooopsie Pomeranian..." to the tune of "Here she is, Miss America." Confused as to where the noise is coming from, Roosevelt runs around in a circle, BARKING.

POOPSIE, a perfectly-groomed Pom in tiara and diamond collar, descends regally down a large staircase.

ROOSEVELT
(sniffs, looks around)
Humans! Where are they? Do they have any treats?

POOPSIE
Humans? Oh, no, darling, that's simply my arrival music. You must be one of my many adoring fans. Would you like an autograph? I'll need my autograph music for that.

ROOSEVELT
Uh, no. I'm here on a mission. Official pageant business.

POOPSIE
Oh, you have to speak to my agent then.

ROOSEVELT
Your agent? You know you're a dog, right?

POOPSIE
Not just a dog. *The* dog. The star of the pageant circuit.

ROOSEVELT

Well, I can balance a watermelon on my nose, so I guess we're all special. Anyways, we're starting up a new pageant and we want you to be there.

POOPSIE

Of course you do. And why should I take time out of my very busy schedule for you?

ROOSEVELT

You like publicity, don't ya?

POOPSIE

I'm a pageant star. Duh.

ROOSEVELT

Well, I can guarantee at least, uh... two to three of your fans will be there.

POOPSIE

I don't know.

ROOSEVELT

What if I threw in a free can of dog food?

POOPSIE

Is it my special dairy-free, gluten-free, low-calorie kind?

ROOSEVELT

No, it's the delicious kind.

POOPSIE

I'm sorry, darling, but I just won't get out of my doggie bed for less than three endorsement deals.

ROOSEVELT

Well, I gave it a shot. Buckley will be real disappointed.

Roosevelt makes a U-turn - head first, then his long trunk, then finally his tail - and leaves.

POOPSIE

Buckley?

Could that be love in Poopsie's voice?

POOPSIE (CONT'D)
 (shouting off-screen)
 Exit music!

Music begins to play from nowhere as she trots out of the room.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

The neighbourhood animals prepare for the pageant:

Buckley, wearing a headband, does push-ups, crunches, jogs on all fours in place.

Scales tries to put on his costume, a sparkly doll's dress, but his head is stuck through one of the sleeves. Beside him, Adventure Cat has eaten his costume, a scrap of cloth hanging out of his mouth.

Buckley again, now walking with his water bowl on his head, practicing his pageant posture.

Roosevelt stands in front of a large piece of paper lying on the ground, a can of red paint beside him. He has paint on his nose and paws.

ROOSEVELT
 (reading)
 "Presenting the first annual Back Alley Pet Pageant, featuring an all-star cast of the town's top talent. Saturday, 6 p.m. Refreshments served." There, perfect!

REVEAL the poster: just a bunch of red squiggles and paw prints.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
 Oh, well. Pets can't read, anyway.

Behind Roosevelt, MICE and BIRDS prepare the stage area *Cinderella*-style. Thimbles and bottle caps are arranged as audience seating. Some plywood boards make up the stage.

Buckley again. He tries to tie a bowtie around his neck. He fumbles a little with his chubby paws. He tries again - this is all a very big deal to him.

INT. SEWER - DAY

The Pack sit at their desk, as ANIMALS line up to give their bribes to the pageant judges. The CALICO CAT holds a piece of cheese. A FERRET holds one sock.

A HAMSTER approaches the Pack holding a shoelace, which drags behind him. He bows to the rats.

HAMSTER

I am but a humble hamster, sirs.

He bows and elaborately presents the shoelace. A MINION RAT takes it and presents it to the HEAD RAT. The Head Rat inspects the shoelace.

HEAD RAT

This gift will get you the Miss Congeniality award.

HAMSTER

But I'm a boy--

HEAD RAT

You heard me.

HAMSTER

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

The Hamster bows again, and scurries away quickly.

A large DOBERMAN approaches next, holding nothing.

HEAD RAT

And what offering do you have?

DOBERMAN

(snarling)

How about I agree not to eat ya?

The Rats confer on this, whispering.

HEAD RAT

Accepted.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Pageant Night has arrived!

BIRDS fly around the stage, flicking flashlights on and off to create a glam spotlight effect.

A shoebox table has been set up to the side of the stage where The Pack sits, looking intimidating, ready to judge.

ANIMALS scurry to find seats. A SNAKE slides around and through all the seats. Also in the audience, bizarrely, is a fishbowl with a GOLDFISH in it.

Two MICE scurry past.

MOUSE 1
 (re: the goldfish)
 How did he get here?

MOUSE 2
 He's a *goldfish*. He must be rich!

EXT. "DRESSING ROOM" - CONTINUOUS

Behind the stage is the animals' dressing room. (i.e. some shoeboxes-as-changing rooms and hubcaps-as-mirrors.) LIGHTNING the snail gets his shell buffed by two FROG ASSISTANTS. Other ANIMALS are adjusting their costumes.

Buckley stands in his own corner, looking at his muddled reflection in a hubcap.

BUCKLEY
 (to his reflection)
 You are a smart dog. You are a good dog. Who's a good boy? You are! Yes, you!

His tail wags happily, then when he realizes he's been talking to himself, he turns away from the mirror and begins pacing nervously.

BUCKLEY (CONT'D)
 Come on, Buckley. Everybody loves a comeback story. You can do this.

Roosevelt approaches. He's now the stage manager, wearing a headset and carrying a clipboard in his paws.

ROOSEVELT
 Five minutes, Buck. You ready?

BUCKLEY
 I can't do this!

Buckley runs behind the hubcap. He is now just a butt sticking out for Roosevelt to talk to.

ROOSEVELT
 What's the problem, Buck? This whole thing was your idea.

BUCKLEY (O.S.)
 No, it was *your* idea!

ROOSEVELT
 Oh, yeah. But I did it for you. You're my best friend, buddy-- okay, I can't talk to your butt. Would you come out of there?

BUCKLEY (O.S.)

No!

Roosevelt takes the marker from his clipboard and draws (with the marker in his mouth) a Buckley-like face on Buckley's butt. Buckley's butt giggles a little.

BUCKLEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

What are you doing? Stop that!

ROOSEVELT

(to the butt-face)

Now I can have a proper conversation.

What's the problem, buddy?

BUCKLEY (O.S.)

I'm scared. What if they laugh at me?

ROOSEVELT

You've got stage fright? But you're a pageant pro! A pageant prince!

BUCKLEY (O.S.)

I'm a pageant... pooper-scooper.

Roosevelt makes a note on his clipboard.

ROOSEVELT

We should have a pageant pooper-scooper. It's gonna be a mess out there.

(to Buckley)

Now, listen, Buck. We got the whole neighbourhood out there waiting to see a pageant. You did that!

Silence from Buckley. His butt-face is shivering with nerves.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

All right, there's a belly rub in it for you if you get out of there.

BUCKLEY (O.S.)

From you? No, thanks!

MELODIC VOICE (O.S.)

How about a belly rub from me?

Roosevelt looks around to see who spoke. Buckley pokes his head out.

REVEAL: It's Poopsie the Pomeranian. She came!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Buckley and Roosevelt stare at Poopsie, in all her glittery glory.

BUCKLEY
(stunned)
Poop-- P-P-Poop-- Poop--

ROOSEVELT
(to Poopsie)
Don't worry, he's housebroken.

BUCKLEY
Poopsie! What are you doing here?

POOPSIE
Well, I had a free evening between shooting my music video and flying to Ibiza to help build that orphanage for abandoned puppies--

ROOSEVELT
Showtime's in five minutes, Poopsie. Get to the point.

POOPSIE
Well, I... I missed you, Buckley.

Buckley and Roosevelt's faces say: "Arf-scuse me?"

BUCKLEY
You mean you missed trampling me in competition? Taking my titles away?

Poopsie WHIMPERS adorably.

ROOSEVELT
(whispering to Buckley)
Buck, I think she's serious. Looks like she's got a case of puppy love for the old Buckster.

BUCKLEY
But pageant rules are very clear about inter-contestant relations. Sanction 38-B says that even the smallest amount of butt-sniffing could be misconstrued as--

ROOSEVELT
What's the matter with ya?!
(MORE)

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
 Did you chase too many parked cars?
 I'm telling ya, she likes you!

They turn back to Poopsie, who is filing her paw-nails with an emery board.

BUCKLEY
 Poopsie, are you here to compete?

POOPSIE
 Compete? Is that the same word as
 "win"?

Buckley's ears droop.

ROOSEVELT
 How's about if Poopsie is like our
 special guest, huh? Our half-time
 entertainment.
 (to Poopsie)
 Think you could do that for us? I
 know Buckley here would really
 appreciate it.

POOPSIE
 Is that true, Buckley?

Buckley's ears perk up. His tail wags excitedly.

ROOSEVELT
 Great! Two minutes to showtime! I'll
 show ya to your garbage can!

POOPSIE
 Do you mean, dressing room?

ROOSEVELT
 That's what I said, garbage can!

POOPSIE
 (singsong)
 Bye, Buckley!

In response, Buckley just smiles and a little slobber runs down his chin.

Poopsie turns to Roosevelt, indicates Buckley's butt-face.

POOPSIE (CONT'D)
 What is that?

ROOSEVELT
 Uh, that's for Buckley's talent.
 Ventriloquism.

EXT. STAGE/AUDIENCE AREA - MOMENTS LATER

The animal audience, excited and impatient, emits a barrage of HOWLS, MEOWS, CHIRPS, SQUEAKS, etc.

At their table, the Pack sit, counting their bribe bounty.

On the stage, Roosevelt, now wearing a bow tie, comes out.

ROOSEVELT
Kitties and gentle-pups, welcome--

He can't be heard over the animal NOISES.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
(louder)
Ahem! Birdies and gentle-fish!

The noises continue.

Roosevelt pulls out a whistle and blows. There's no audible sound (to us humans), but the animals in the crowd instantly stop howling, some covering their ears, others appearing to be in pain.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
(rubbing his ears)
Trust me, this hurts me as much as it does you. Ahem, hamsters and gentle-gerbils, purebreds and mutts, welcome to the first Back Alley Pet Pageant!

The audience stares at Roosevelt in silence.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Okay, well, *now* you can howl a little.

The audience responds: BARK, MEOWS, etc.

Roosevelt holds up the whistle as a warning. They stop.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Tonight, the neighbourhood's most, um... willing... animals will compete in five categories: formal wear, obedience, talent, "guess the smell" competition, and ability to chase your own tail.
(beat)
Five seconds of polite barking.

The audience responds obediently.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
 Good pets! Who's a good pet? And let
 me also introduce our judges!

He gestures to the Pack, who sit with their arms crossed,
 looking intimidating. A few animals in the audience WHIMPER.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
 Applaud, or we'll all get rabies.

The audience howls. The Pack basks in their power.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
 And now, to get the talent competition
 underway, a tap-dancing parakeet!

Roosevelt starts to leave the stage, then turns back.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
 Please hold all howling until the
 end... unless there's an intruder or
 someone falls in a well. Thank you.

Roosevelt leaves. A PARAKEET wearing tap shoes flies above
 the stage. MUSIC starts to play, and the Parakeet starts tap-
 dancing... in the air. The effect is just flying and flailing.

From offstage, Roosevelt watches the act.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
 That's exactly what I thought tap-
 dancing looked like!

Buckley approaches and stands next to Roosevelt.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
 I'm glad you changed your mind about
 doing the pageant!

BUCKLEY
 How do you know I changed my mind?

ROOSEVELT
 You cleaned the face off your butt.

ANGLE ON: Buckley's butt. It's true, he did.

BUCKLEY
 I still don't know. I'm scared,
 Roosevelt.

ROOSEVELT
 Hey, it's natural. I get scared every
 time I see a hot-dog cart.
 (MORE)

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

I think I'm gonna get mistaken for one. But you know what? I walk past it, anyway. Ya know why?

BUCKLEY

Why?

ROOSEVELT

Free mustard.

BUCKLEY

So... I should do the pageant because I'll get free mustard?

ROOSEVELT

No, you should do the pageant because if you take a chance, good things can happen.

BUCKLEY

Things with mustard?

ROOSEVELT

Forget the mustard!

BUCKLEY

Okay...

(thinking, considering)

I'll do it. But if I clam up, you promise to pull the curtain?

ROOSEVELT

Promise, bud.

BUCKLEY

You know, you're really smart.

ROOSEVELT

I know. I had to take puppy training *eight* times!

(beat)

Oh, okay, Max the mouse is almost done his act. He's making his exit.

MAX, a tiny grey mouse, runs off the stage, looking terrified.

Seconds later, Adventure Cat runs off the stage after him, MEOWING ferally.

BUCKLEY

What was Max's talent?

ROOSEVELT

Uh... survival? You're up, Buck! Get out there!

Buckley gulps nervously. This is it.

ANGLE ON STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Buckley pops his head around the stage curtain, looking out at the audience. He sees Poopsie sitting out there. His head disappears.

Seconds later, Buckley pushes a toy piano out onto the stage with his nose.

He sits on his hind legs, his paws at the piano keys. He looks at the audience again.

ON AUDIENCE:

A few animals look bored. A BEAGLE scratches at his fleas with his hind leg. An ORANGE CAT bats a ball of yarn.

Angle on Poopsie. She looks at Buckley with a smile... expectant, smitten.

ON BUCKLEY:

He begins to play. (Something classical, beautiful and melodic.) Buckley is surprisingly good for someone with paws - definitely on a level with Schroeder from *Peanuts*.

ON AUDIENCE:

The animals quiet down and pay attention to Buckley. Dogs tilt their heads, listening attentively. Cats sway gently in time with the song.

A SONGBIRD starts to warble along to the music. Several of the other animals shush him.

ON BUCKLEY:

He continues playing. The music swells to a finish. Buckley plays the final notes, then looks out at the audience.

Silence. The audience is enraptured.

Thinking he was no good, Buckley turns to walk offstage, head hanging down, when suddenly...

The audience bursts into a barnyard-like cacophony of animal SOUNDS: barking, meowing, tweeting, etc.

Loudest of all is Poopsie, who puts her paws to her lips and lets out a loud WHISTLE. Then, remembering her public persona, she looks around to see if anyone noticed. (They didn't.)

ON BUCKLEY:

He is one beaming bulldog. Buckley's back where he belongs.

EXT. PAGEANT STAGE - LATER

All of the competing animals now stand on stage. Roosevelt stands front and center.

A HENCHMAN RAT from the Pack skitters up on stage. He stealthily slips an envelope to Roosevelt.

HENCHMAN RAT
(whispers, looks around)
Psst, I got the goods.

ROOSEVELT
You mean, the winner? Great. Why are you whispering?

HENCHMAN RAT
I was never here. You never saw me.

He quickly slithers away.

ROOSEVELT
Everyone saw you. What are you--
(beat)
Never mind. Critters and gentle-pets,
I have here the winner of the first-
ever Back Alley Pet Pageant!

Roosevelt rips open the envelope.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
And the winner is...

A DRUM ROLL sounds. The animals look around to find the source of the noise:

Onstage, a ST. BERNARD in a sparkly dress has been wagging his tail nervously (loudly) against the stage.

ST. BERNARD
Oops, sorry.

He stops.

ROOSEVELT
(looking at envelope)
The winner is... Buckley the Bulldog!

HOWLS and YAPS of triumph erupt. A few HOWLS of sadness and defeat also, but mostly HOWLS of triumph.

Buckley smiles, tongue wagging happily. He marches to the center of the stage.

Roosevelt hands him an odd misshapen trophy, with an inscription that reads "The Golden Garbage Award." (It's just alley trash spray-painted gold.)

Buckley takes the trophy.

BUCKLEY

I only hope I can live up to the
prestige of this fine award.

(to the audience)

I'd like to thank our judges, the
Rat Pack, because I'm terrified of
what might happen if I don't.

ON THE RATS:

They all nod as if to say "Yeah, you *should* be terrified."

ON BUCKLEY:

BUCKLEY (CONT'D)

And I'd like to thank you all for
coming out tonight. You showed this
pup that all it takes is a dream and
a love of glitter, and anyone can be
a pageant pet--

Standing amongst the other contestants on stage, Scales the chameleon steps forward.

SCALES

I'm sorry, can I say something? I
gave the Pack a week's worth of
amphibian food. How come I didn't
win?

ROOSEVELT

Because amphibian food is gross?

BUCKLEY

You bribed the judges? You can't do
that.

The old Bloodhound ambles forward.

BLOODHOUND

I might've bribed 'em too. Gave 'em
a nice bone with some meat still on
it.

TAP-DANCING BIRD

Um, I bribed them too.

CALICO CAT

Meow too.

ADVENTURE CAT

(in agreement)

Hsss!

LIGHTNING

Not me.

(beat)

I just gave them some human money so that they would make me the winner. What's a bribe?

ROOSEVELT

Guys, please. You're behaving like animals.

Roosevelt turns towards the Rat Pack.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

Judges? What do you have to say about this?

ON THE PACK:

The Henchmen rats are sniffing, wiping their noses with tissue (still overcome by Buckley's performance). The Head Rat remains stoic.

HEAD RAT

Even we are not immune to the beauty of such music, such talent displayed by this canine. As well, amphibian food is gross. We have spoken.

ON THE STAGE:

SCALES

(grumbling)

I don't know what this world is coming to when even rodents won't play dirty.

ROOSEVELT

Three woofs for Buckley, everybody!

The animals WOOF... and MEOW and SQUEAK, etc. Buckley stands with his chest puffed out, proud.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - LATER

After the pageant. The audience has cleared out, leaving audience debris behind them (i.e. scraps and paper cups, but also the odd squeak toy or dog bone.)

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DRESSING ROOM

Buckley packs up his costumes and make-up, his Golden Garbage award next to him.

Poopsie trots up behind him.

POOPSIE

Hi, Buckley.

BUCKLEY

(blushing, stammering)

Oh! Um... Hi Poop-- arf! Hi!

POOPSIE

Congratulations on winning.

BUCKLEY

Oh, well, ya know, it's only 'cause you weren't competing.

POOPSIE

That's true.

(beat)

I still think the pageant council was really unfair to kick you out.

BUCKLEY

Yeah? Thanks.

POOPSIE

I could talk to them if you want, about changing the rules.

BUCKLEY

You'd do that?

POOPSIE

Sure. They love me.

BUCKLEY

I dunno...

Poopsie turns on the big-eyed cuteness.

POOPSIE

Come on, Buckley. Don't you miss the pageant life? The glitter, the applause, the glory?

BUCKLEY

Yeah, I guess.

POOPSIE

Doing 60 TV interviews in a day.
Running laps in the rain so you can
fit into your costume. Getting your
doggie medical done. It's all such a
rush!

BUCKLEY

Actually, I never liked most of that--

POOPSIE

Don't you miss *me*? I always thought
we'd make such a good pageant pair.

BUCKLEY

Woof-gulp! Really? You did?

She trots closer.

POOPSIE

Come on the road with me. We'd be a
pageant power couple! The Beyonce
and Jay Z of the pet world!

BUCKLEY

(smitten, dopey)
The who of the what...?

POOPSIE

Just you and me, Buckley, and our
millions of admirers.

Their noses get closer, closer. A nose-nuzzle is just about
to happen when...

Roosevelt interrupts!

ROOSEVELT

Buck, we're a hit! The animals want
more pageants! We've got to do this
every week!

Buckley recovers himself, coming back to reality.

BUCKLEY

Really? That's great!

POOPSIE

That's not great. You won an award
that smells like garbage.

BUCKLEY
Well, it is garbage.

ROOSEVELT
The *finest* garbage.

POOPSIE
You're not going to choose that over
fame and endorsements, are you? Over
me?

Buckley looks at Roosevelt, at Poopsie. Back to Roosevelt,
back to Poopsie.

BUCKLEY
I'm a dog, Poopsie. Loyalty is what
I do. I gotta stay here and make the
Back Alley Pageant the best back-
alley pageant ever.

Roosevelt wags his tail happily.

POOPSIE
So, this is what second place feels
like? I don't like it.
(beat)
Bye, Buckley.

BUCKLEY
Could I maybe call you sometime?

POOPSIE
Sure, but all calls have to go through
my manager.

ROOSEVELT
You mean your owner?

Poopsie giggles.

POOPSIE
Suburban pets are so funny!

Poopsie prances away. Buckley watches her go, still enamoured.

ROOSEVELT
You're drooling on your trophy there.

BUCKLEY
I made the right decision.

ROOSEVELT
Yes, you're a good boy. And we got a
pageant to plan!
(MORE)

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

We got work to do, Buck. We need to think about expansion - like a web site, and maybe a line of pet wear. Come on, let's go to your doghouse!

BUCKLEY

Why my doghouse?

ROOSEVELT

I might have gotten so excited about the pageant that I piddled in mine.

Buckley picks up his trophy and they begin to trot home. A SLOTH slowly approaches them.

SLOTH

(speaking slowly)

Hello... I... would... like...

Roosevelt picks up the Sloth and slings him on his back.

ROOSEVELT

Let me help you out there. You want to be in our pageant? Sure. Hey, do you know anything about designing web sites?

With a sloth on Roosevelt's back and a trophy on Buckley's, their bodies get smaller in the distance as they continue walking home.

END OF ACT TWO

END OF EPISODE