

Super Funtastic World

by Dan Katz

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

BARKY
MEOW-MEOW
MOO-MOO
RIBBIT
DWAYNE

(A workers' break area at an amusement park. There are several benches, a door to the outside on one side of the stage, a mirror on one wall, and a door leading to an office on the other side. There is also a liquor cabinet, and sacks on the ground in the corner. It is very hot. In the background, cheery carnival music plays quietly in the distance. BARKY, a human-sized dog, and MEOW-MEOW, a human-sized cat, both with unusually shaped heads and dressed in brightly colored clothes, trudge into the room and sit down wearily. BARKY has a banana peel on his shoulder, which MEOW-MEOW notices as they sit.)

MEOW-MEOW

Uh, Barky? Shoulder.

BARKY
(feeling his shoulder)

God damn it! Stupid punk kids. *(He brushes the peel off his shoulder.)* It was even worse a few minutes ago. I got a whole can full of garbage thrown on me.

MEOW-MEOW

Been there. It comes with the territory. Everywhere you look in this park there's some smart aleck with a bad attitude. You just gotta learn to stay away from the kids who think they're tough.

BARKY
Well, he tricked me! I'm walking down the path, bouncing back and forth, and I see this little kid looking at me, his eyes wide and a big smile on his face. Like I'm the best thing that's ever come into his life. And he stretches his arms out wide like he wants a hug. So what am I gonna do? I go over there to hug him, and next thing I know he trips me and he and his buddy are tipping a trash can over my head.

MEOW-MEOW
It was probably that damn Taylor kid; I know his routine. Watch yourself, Barky; looks can be deceiving. When you drove in today, did you see that swanky neighborhood across from the park?

BARKY

Yeah. Something Heights, right?

MEOW-MEOW

Westerfield Heights. All rich snooty families, neglecting parents who let their kids do whatever the hell they want. So naturally, the kids all buy season passes, hang around here all summer, and see how much hell they can raise. Last year they put together a point system. I'm a prime target; making me fall down is worth a hundred points, and getting me to swear at them is two hundred. I bet the Taylor brat's up to two thousand by now.

BARKY

Damn...

MEOW-MEOW

Just like that. You let out a "damn" or a "shit" or a "bastard" in front of the pre-teens, they think it's the funniest thing they've ever seen. But that's one of our first rules: no cursing in public. And you'd better remember it. We've got a reputation to uphold. This is a professional family entertainment venue.

BARKY

I'll say... and has your sanitation crew got it together! At Playville, if a kid dumped a trash can, it probably would have been reeking on the ground past closing. When they tipped one here, I was barely on my feet when a pair of guys in uniform started cleaning things up. It was amazing.

MEOW-MEOW

(amused)

You're in the big leagues now, Barky. Playville, Schmayville. That's the minors! At Super Funtastic World, we take our work very seriously. We provide a brand of entertainment that's respected the world over, and to maintain that respect, we've got to do everything we do to the best of our ability.

BARKY

Well, look, I'm not saying Playville was all bad...

MEOW-MEOW

Barky, Playville's behind you. They're bush-league. You're not. We barely even pay attention to that place, but word got to management that you were single-handedly driving the live entertainment division over there. That's when we knew you belonged here with us.

BARKY

Thanks, Meow, that means a l--

MEOW-MEOW

Meow-Meow. I prefer Meow-Meow.

BARKY

Thanks, Meow-Meow. I'm glad you guys have so much faith in me over here. (*He scratches his neck.*) I just wish it weren't so hot.

MEOW-MEOW

It's not so bad. Gets more bearable after sunset. As for faith, I don't need to speculate. We've got a parade in ten minutes. Then I can see you in action, and I can tell you what I really think.

BARKY

Is it safe for all of us to go out there at once? You'd think those brats would drop a bomb on us or something.

MEOW-MEOW

Oh, don't worry, we've got security guards who work all the parades. Most of the kids have figured out this isn't the best time to mess with us.

BARKY

Are the guards that convincing?

MEOW-MEOW

The tasers are. Once you feel a couple thousand volts through your body, you pretty much know we mean business.

(MOO-MOO enters. She is a jaded, bitter cow.)

MOO-MOO

I have seen the end, gentlemen. After twenty years of blood and sweat, does our end come in a blaze of glory? No. It comes without fanfare, without honor... like a tiny lifeless yelp amidst the endless darkness.

MEOW-MEOW

(quietly to BARKY) That's Moo-Moo. She gets a little dramatic. *(aloud)* What's up, Moo-Moo? Bad day?

MOO-MOO

You have no idea. Have you seen it?

MEOW-MEOW

I think that depends what "it" is.

MOO-MOO

That thing. That monstrosity. *(disdainfully)* The Surger.

BARKY

Oh yeah, that new roller coaster. Looks great... 80 mile-per-hour drops, triple corkscrew... it's a beautiful piece of work.

MOO-MOO

(to BARKY, disgusted) You are so naïve. *(to MEOW-MEOW)* Have you seen the line for that thing?

MEOW-MEOW

Yes, Moo-Moo. It's very long.

MOO-MOO

Very long... It stretches halfway across the fucking park! It's ridiculous! I was assigned to the north side this morning. I was busting my ass trying to get the kids to come and dance with me, but everybody was dead set on staying in that god damn line. Doesn't anybody appreciate a good theme park mascot any more?

BARKY

(aside to MEOW-MEOW)

Is she always like this?

MOO-MOO

(retrieving a bottle of whiskey from the cabinet and taking a swig)

I tell you, it's all about the fucking rides now! Rides, rides, rides.

MEOW-MEOW

(aside to BARKY)

Just be glad she hasn't started with the suicide threats yet.

MOO-MOO

You know, much more of this and I'm going to kill myself. One good stab, right between the udders. Don't think I won't do it.

MEOW-MEOW

Moo-Moo... *(goes to her)* We go through this every year. Yes, it's a big exciting new roller coaster. People are bound to be enthusiastic, but the thrill will be gone soon. Rides are going to come and go, but we will always be here, Moo-Moo. And when the novelty wears off, the kids are always going to come back.

MOO-MOO

I don't know this time, Meow-Meow.

MEOW-MEOW

Just think of the parade, Moo-Moo. We'll go out there and we'll remind them what they paid their sixty bucks for.

MOO-MOO

(his spirits raised)

Damn it, you're right. This is going to be the best goddamn parade we've ever done. Flawless. *(He looks at BARKY)* The new kid's not going in, is he?

MEOW-MEOW

Of course he is. He's part of the team now.

MOO-MOO

Are you insane? He's never worked a park of this magnitude before, and you tell him he's going to do a parade on his first day?! *(to BARKY)* No offense, kid, I'm sure at Playville they think you march just great, but I think you're a bit out of your league here.

MEOW-MEOW

Dwayne said he wanted him on the job right away. And Dwayne wouldn't have brought him in if he was out of his league.

BARKY

(trying to lighten the mood)

Boy, it just keeps getting hotter back here, doesn't it?

MOO-MOO

(ignoring BARKY)

What does Dwayne know? Dwayne spends the whole day in that cushy office.

MEOW-MEOW

(motioning toward the stage left door)

Ssssh! Keep it down, Moo-Moo! I don't feel like dealing with him right now.

MOO-MOO

He's never been out there under the hot sun. Never toiled away for hours on end, just trying to make kids smile. Never bled for...

MEOW-MEOW

Oh, give it a rest. *(to BARKY)* Barky. Be honest with me. Do you think you're ready to be in a parade?

BARKY

Well, I... um...

MEOW-MEOW

Tell me how you really feel. And don't worry about Moo-Moo thinking you're a hot-shot, because frankly, he's stubborn enough that he'll think that no matter what.

BARKY

Well, then... *(takes a deep breath and states proudly)* Yes. Yes I do.

MOO-MOO

Ugh. *(he sighs and sits down)* Great. Here we go, on our way to the sloppiest show we'll ever put on.

MEOW-MEOW

Moo-Moo, would you cut him some slack? You know, you were a new guy too once.

MOO-MOO

Yeah, twenty years ago! Things were simple back then. Now we've added precision. That parade has evolved from vaguely rhythmic walking to a glorious work of art. You know it and I know it. But does this new guy know it?

MEOW-MEOW

He does have a name. It's Barky.

MOO-MOO

Whatever. Does "Bark-O" know it? He's probably standing there thinking, oh, it's just a parade, what's the cow getting so worked up about.

BARKY

Is it really that complex?

MEOW-MEOW

Don't worry, Barky, she's just being a jerk. All you've got to do is stay behind me, do what I do, and everything will be fine.

MOO-MOO

Meow-Meow, you have no passion for this business.

MEOW-MEOW

Moo-Moo, I have plenty of passion for this business. I just don't focus my passion toward being a pompous ass.

BARKY

Guys, settle down! *(There is an awkward silence.)* Moo-Moo, I can do this. I'm sure of it. Give me a chance. If I make a fool of myself, I'll sit out of the next few parades and you can show me how it's done. Fair?

MOO-MOO

Who cares if it's fair? It's not like I have a choice. If Dwayne says you're in the show, you're in the show. So good luck.

BARKY

Thanks.

MOO-MOO

You're gonna need it. *(to MEOW-MEOW)* What's time looking like?

MEOW-MEOW

About five minutes left.

MOO-MOO

Well, you better get ready, sport. *(He starts stretching. RIBBIT, a frog, comes rushing in. She is a bit hyperactive.)*

RIBBIT

Hey guys! Hey guys! Have you heard the news?

BARKY

Is it that thing about the Surger?

RIBBIT

No, there's a-- *(nervous)* Why, what's wrong with the Surger?

MEOW-MEOW

Don't worry--

RIBBIT

I knew that thing wasn't safe! I knew it'd be trouble! They never test these things enough before they open them...

MOO-MOO

That's it. We're switching her to decaf.

RIBBIT

They just keep saying make them higher! Make them faster! And they make them higher, and they make them faster, and the next thing you know people are falling to their deaths, and nobody cares!

MOO-MOO

Decaf or ritalin. Maybe both.

RIBBIT

(jumping up and down)

What are we gonna do? What are we gonna do? What are we--

MEOW-MEOW

Ribbit, chill out!! *(He does.)* There's nothing wrong with the Surger.

RIBBIT

But he said--

MEOW-MEOW

I'll explain later. Now, just take a deep breath (*they both do*) and tell me your news.

RIBBIT

The techs are having trouble with the stereo system for the parade. They've been trying to fix it all morning, but I don't think we're gonna be able to start on time. Poor kids...
Waiting out there...

MOO-MOO

It's always the same. Modern technology consistently yields disappointed children.

BARKY

So what do we do now? (*He is visibly becoming annoyed by the heat.*)

MEOW-MEOW

Well, I respect the need for preparation, but too much and you're asking for a pulled muscle or a nervous breakdown. I think we should sit down and take a breather.

RIBBIT

Are you kidding? If we're getting started late, we're going to have to be even better than usual! And we can't do that without some serious warmups! (*He starts doing jumping jacks, or something similar.*)

MEOW-MEOW

Ribbit, let's just relax for a minute.

RIBBIT

Relax? Don't be ridiculous! Let's keep getting ready! (*jumping jacks*) 100, 99, 98...

MOO-MOO

Ribbit! (*Ribbit stops*) I respect you as a colleague and a friend, but I'm about five seconds away from removing your vocal chords.

RIBBIT

(*He is silent for a moment.*) Maybe we should take a break.

BARKY
(*eagerly*)

Thank God. I'm sweating bullets in here.

(*BARKY removes the head of his costume. The other animals stare at him, dumbfounded.*)

RIBBIT

What the hell?!?!

BARKY

What?

MOO-MOO

You're *human*!!

BARKY

What do you mean? Of course I'm hu-- (*stops dead for a moment*) No way. You're kidding me. You guys aren't-- You can't be.

MOO-MOO

This is the big time, kid. It's not "Mediocre Funtastic World." Not "Substandard Funtastic World." *Super* Funtastic World. We do things the way they were meant to be done. We don't half-ass the rides, we don't half-ass the parades... and above all, we certainly don't trust humans in stupid costumes to provide our entertainment.

RIBBIT

This is awful! This is terrible! What in the world was Dwayne thinking? He must have known.

MOO-MOO

The son of a bitch must have lied on his application. (*to BARKY*) What did you write down in the box marked "animal"?

BARKY

Well, I put "dog". But I thought they meant...

MOO-MOO

Well, there you go. He's just a lying bastard.

BARKY

Look, I didn't-- Oh, come off it. This is bullshit. There's no way you--

(He grabs RIBBIT by the neck and tries to pull her head off. RIBBIT emits a weird guttural croaking noise that makes BARKY let go.)

RIBBIT

Ouch! You sick son of a bitch! Are you trying to break my neck?

MOO-MOO

I can't believe we let Woofy go for this.

BARKY

Woofy?

RIBBIT

You think you're the first dog we've-- or excuse me, "dog" (*she makes quotation marks with her hands*) we've had here? It's kind of a crucial animal in the mix.

MOO-MOO

Woofy was damn good at what he did... he was just getting old... and they sent him out because some new guy was on his way in. And all this time, the new guy was just some human in a stupid plastic suit! You selfish bastard!

BARKY

I'm sorry, I had no idea! I didn't know... (*MOO-MOO and RIBBIT are beginning to approach menacingly. BARKY runs to MEOW-MEOW, who has been standing in the corner silently.*) Meow-Meow, do something! (*MEOW-MEOW whirls around and faces BARKY, staring at him.*)

MEOW-MEOW

Barky...

BARKY

Actually, it's Bill. (*The others gasp, appalled.*)

MEOW-MEOW

(softly, gradually becoming more threatening)

Bill... The business world was designed by man, and it's designed to benefit man. Do you know what kind of job market there is for giant humanoid animals with deformed heads? I'll give you a hint, Bill, it's not a big one. If you look like me, and you try to get a job at McDonald's, you're gonna have a damn hard time. It's hard to get by, but we support each other, and most of all, we trust each other. So when some slimy little human swipes one of the few jobs we have access to, when they've got an entire world at their beck and call...

BARKY

(regretful and uncomfortable)

I'm sorry, Meow-Meow, I didn't-- I just don't know what to say.

MEOW-MEOW

(getting excited)

You don't know what to say. You never met Woofy. You know what Woofy meant to me? He was my best friend. Where do you think Woofy is now? Working the express checkout at a supermarket? Doing somebody's taxes? He can't even hold a pencil! He doesn't have opposable thumbs!!! Do you know what they do to an old dog that can't work the parks any more?

BARKY

I don't think I want to--

MEOW-MEOW

(grabbing BARKY by the throat, hysterical)

They put him to sleep! You had my best friend put to sleep, you selfish, opposable-thumbed asshole!!!! *(RIBBIT and MOO-MOO pull her off and MEOW-MEOW tries to regain her composure.)* You know what, this isn't worth getting excited over. Let's just give him to Dwayne.

MOO-MOO

Exactly what I was thinking. *(RIBBIT goes to open the stage left door.)*

BARKY

Who-- Who's Dwayne?

MEOW-MEOW

Dwayne? Dwayne's our supervisor. He also just happens to be a giant man-eating tarantula that we have to feed every few hours so he doesn't kill us.

RIBBIT

And guess who's today's lucky entree? *(He opens the door.)*

(From behind the door, DWAYNE emits a loud, high-pitched, garbled sound that manages to convey the fact that he's hungry. As he hears this sound, BARKY screams and scampers outside and offstage. The others watch him leave, then they start laughing and remove their heads.)

RIBBIT

Look at the poor son of a bitch go! I can't believe he fell for it!

MEOW-MEOW

I can't believe your costume didn't come off when he was yanking on it. I thought the whole operation was up the creek right there.

MOO-MOO

I never doubted it for a minute. Excellent work, ladies. *(He shakes their hands.)* Another potential competitor disposed of. Looks like the paycheck'll be split only three ways once again.

RIBBIT

Yup. I'd say everything's back to normal.

(The stage left door bursts open and a giant tarantula's arm thrusts onto the stage. We again hear the hungry voice of DWAYNE.)

MEOW-MEOW

Well, yeah, as normal as things ever get around here. Sounds like it's lunch time. Places!

(RIBBIT and MOO-MOO put their costumes back on, grab some sacks, and head out the door, while MEOW-MEOW puts hers on and admires herself in the mirror, licking her paws. Offstage, there's a flash of light, a scream, and the sound of an electric shock. RIBBIT and MOO-MOO return with the bodies of children over their shoulders. MEOW-MEOW looks at the one RIBBIT is carrying.)

MEOW-MEOW

Well, if it isn't young Mr. Taylor! Well done, Ribbit. Nine hundred points.

(RIBBIT and MOO-MOO toss the bodies into the room with DWAYNE as MEOW-MEOW returns to the mirror and begins humming along with the carnival music from outside. RIBBIT and MOO-MOO bring in more bodies and the music gets louder, blending eerily with the screeching and chewing sounds of DWAYNE, as we fade out.)