

Captivity

by

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Captivity

A one-act play by
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Cast of characters:

Joey.....Early twenties, even late teens.
Fred.....Late forties, early fifties.
Iggy.....Mid-thirties.
Betty.....Mid-thirties.

Setting: The zoo, present day.

SCENE 1

SETTING: AT RISE, JOEY AND FRED ARE
SITTING ON THE GROUND UNDER A TREE.

JOEY
What about that one?

FRED
Too skinny.

JOEY
What about that one?

FRED
Too fat.

JOEY
What about that one?

FRED
Stop.

JOEY
No, really what about that one. In the pink sweater.

FRED
Just cut it out, all right?

(pause)

JOEY
What about that one?

FRED
I don't like this game.

JOEY
Don't be such a stick in the mud.

FRED
I don't like this game. It makes me hungry.

JOEY
The guy will be by soon.

FRED
Jerry?

JOEY
No, the new guy.

FRED
What happened to Jerry?

JOEY
I don't know, they don't tell me anything. What
about that one? The little one.

FRED

You have a one track mind.

JOEY

You have to be more creative. What about the little one? Look! Look, he's on the edge! He's walking up on the edge!

FRED

It's not going to happen.

JOEY

You don't know! You don't! You see that? All it would take is a little push. A little gust of wind. He could lose his balance and- Ah, hell.

FRED

They keep a very close eye on the little ones. I've noticed that.

JOEY

Look at them.

FRED

Do I have a choice?

JOEY

Look at them, with their little ones.

FRED

What are you going to do?

JOEY

I don't know.

FRED

What are the bears doing?

JOEY

I don't know.

FRED

Take a look.

JOEY

Hey! Hey!

(JOEY waves.)

FRED

What are they doing?

JOEY

I don't know. Bernie's got his butt hanging halfway out the cave and Mary's in the pool. Maybe I'll take a swim.

FRED

Oh no you don't.

JOEY

What?

FRED

You're not going to go sloshing around in that
crappy moat-

JOEY

It's hot, man.

FRED

And then drag your wet hide back up here and make my
nice place all muddy.

JOEY

I wouldn't do that.

FRED

You would. You're like that.

JOEY

But I'm so bored, Fred.

FRED

Welcome to the zoo.

JOEY

Fred. Fred, I'm bored.

FRED

Just watch the people. You might learn something.

JOEY

It's closing time.

FRED

Then take a nap.

JOEY

A nap? Look at me. I'm all wound up! I was not
meant to live in this little cage-

FRED

Enclosure.

JOEY

Whatever. This little enclosure of a world. This
is not how I am supposed to live! I know it!

FRED

How are you supposed to live?

JOEY

I am supposed to be wild. I have wild blood in my veins. I come from wild, unruly places.

FRED

You come from Cleveland.

JOEY

My father was wild.

FRED

Sure.

JOEY

He told me. They captured him. On the Serengeti plain.

FRED

On the Serengeti?

JOEY

In the middle of the night. And he fought, too. He was a mean one.

FRED

The Serengeti? In Africa?

JOEY

Yeah.

FRED

There are no tigers in Africa.

JOEY

Not anymore. They took them all.

FRED

Forget it.

JOEY

I don't know what to do with myself. I'm a hunter, Fred. I have to hunt.

FRED

Why don't you pace?

JOEY

Pace?

FRED

Yeah, pace. You know, walk it off. Like Lucy does. When she gets to feeling antsy, she paces.

JOEY

Is that why she does that?

FRED

Yeah, what did you think she was doing? Flirting with you? Oh no.

JOEY

Well she never talks to anyone.

FRED

Save it, Casanova.

JOEY

She's got nice eyes.

FRED

You just watch yourself. She'll bite you where your stripes end.

JOEY

How come they never talk to us?

FRED

Who? The ladies?

JOEY

Yeah.

FRED

They will. Be patient.

JOEY

It's been six months. They won't even look cross-eyed at me.

FRED

Well, after that stunt you pulled with Olga.

JOEY

I didn't know. I was new.

FRED

She let you know.

JOEY

Just a scratch. It was the hyena who told me she was in heat. Last time I listen to him. Asshole!

FRED

You couldn't tell she wasn't in heat?

JOEY

I was just trying to be friendly.

FRED

How could you not tell?

JOEY

I... I don't smell so good.

FRED

No worse than me.

JOEY

No, I mean, my nose. I... I can't smell too good.

FRED

Really?

JOEY

Yeah. Allergies.

FRED

Oh. Oh. That explains a lot.

JOEY

I work around it.

FRED

Can you smell anything?

JOEY

A little, but I figure, hey, what's to smell?

FRED

Well, everything.

JOEY

Really?

FRED

Yeah. Everything has a smell.

JOEY

What do you smell?

FRED

Right now?

JOEY

Yeah.

FRED

Well... The grass. The dirt. The water in the moat. The popcorn. A sno-cone, melting. Hot pavement. Asphalt.

JOEY

What about the people?

FRED

Sure. The people. Their smell is everywhere. They try to cover it with all kinds of other smells. Perfumes, soaps, flowery smells. But underneath it, you can smell them. The smell every animal has.

JOEY

You smell all that?

FRED

All of it. Especially the animals. Their own smell, it radiates from them, a wave in the air driven out by the squeezing of their little hearts.

JOEY

Now you're making me hungry.

FRED

You can't smell anything?

JOEY

I compensate.

FRED

How?

JOEY

I just do. Don't make a big deal out of it.

FRED

No, like, how do you know when the meat guy's coming?

JOEY

The sun.

FRED

I don't get it.

JOEY

You see the shadow of the tree? When the shadow gets to the moat in the morning he comes, and when it's at the top of the wall in the afternoon, he comes.

FRED

You worked this out yourself?

JOEY

Don't make a big deal out of it.

FRED

What if the sun isn't out?

JOEY

What?

FRED

What if it's cloudy? No sun.

JOEY

Oh... Then I just wait by the door.

FRED

Oh.

JOEY

I can smell some. Up close. I have to get real close, though. That's why I was trying to get closer to Olga, to get a good sniff. I guess I got too excited thinking about it.

FRED

Yeah.

JOEY

The girls in Cleveland were a lot friendlier.

FRED

You wait. They'll warm up.

JOEY

I don't know. Seems like a long time.

FRED

You'll see. It's a small enclosure. Days go by. Weeks. Years. Everyone gets lonely sometimes. Even the ladies. Some night, you'll be lying up on the hill, watching the sun set over the monkey house, and some nice girl will walk up, lie down next to you. You're not expecting it, it just happens. And you'll both just watch the sun go down. And you'll feel, just for a moment, like you're the king of the world. You'll feel like the warm-blooded animal you are. And that night, as you feel her warmth next to you, you'll be transported out of this little cage in this little zoo, and the two of you will be somewhere else. Somewhere away from the keepers and the tourists. Somewhere you're free. And in the morning, you're back in the zoo. Marking time.

JOEY

It's a raw deal, Fred.

FRED

It could be worse.

JOEY

It's pretty bad.

FRED

What are you going to do?

JOEY

I've got to do something.

FRED

What? You going to jump up and down like the monkeys? Howl all night like the wolves?

JOEY

Why not? I could howl. I could roar all day and all night.

FRED

Have some pride. The best thing you can do is just lie here.

JOEY

That's it?

FRED

That's it. Give them nothing to look at.

JOEY

Is that what you do?

FRED

I do that.

JOEY

And it works?

FRED

Most of the time.

JOEY

All right.

(JOEY tries this out, but finds he is too fidgety.)

JOEY

(continuing)
It's no good.

FRED

You aren't really trying.

JOEY

I gotta move. I gotta hunt.

FRED

Again with the hunting?

JOEY

I'm going nutso, man. I gotta be me. You know what your problem is?

FRED

I have a problem?

JOEY

You like people too much.

FRED

I do not.

JOEY
You do. That's your problem.

FRED
I do not.

JOEY
Do you hate them?

FRED
Joey-

JOEY
Do you?

FRED
That's not the point.

JOEY
You like them don't you? Because if you hated them,
really hated them, you'd be going nuts like me.
You'd have to do something. Do you like them?

FRED
I have a certain contempt for them.

JOEY
Is that a fancy way of saying you like them?

FRED
It means-

JOEY
Contempt?

FRED
It means I look down on them.

JOEY
Why?

FRED
I just do.

JOEY
Is it because you think you're better than they are?

FRED
Maybe.

JOEY
Because you think you're smarter than they are?

FRED
Sometimes.

JOEY

Because you know, deep down, that if it was just you and them, no walls, no fences, that they are no match for you. That with one leap, you could be on top of them. With one paw you could tear their little limbs off and shred their little faces? With one snap of your jaws you could break their necks pull their hearts still beating from their open chests? It's true, isn't it?

FRED

It's True. Not how I would put it, but it's true.

JOEY

You ever thought about breaking out?

FRED

The best thing to do is just lie here.

JOEY

Come on. It's never crossed your mind?

FRED

You mean escape? To where?

JOEY

India. Tibet.

FRED

Joey...

JOEY

I bet we could swim the moat. It's not that far.

FRED

There's a wall.

JOEY

We could climb that.

FRED

There's a wire.

JOEY

A wire?

FRED

An electric wire. There was a tiger, Moby. Years ago. He was like you. Young, full of fire. He tried to swim the moat. He found the wire. On the other side? He didn't know. He bit the wire, tried to break it. His jaws seized shut.

JOEY

Wow.

FRED

He couldn't let go. His body went all stiff. Smoke coming out of his eyes, little flames at the tips of his ears. And the smell. Awful. The whole zoo smelled like it for weeks. They rounded us up, put us in the pens. But as I was going in, I saw them cutting his mouth open with a saw. That was the end of Moby.

JOEY

Is that why you don't go like to go in the moat?

FRED

Why take chances?

JOEY

Jeez.

FRED

It's not so bad.

JOEY

It's not right.

FRED

They feed us, take care of us when we're sick.

JOEY

Yeah, but we can't hunt. We can't stalk. I caught myself stalking plastic fork yesterday. A fork. How desperate do you have to be to try to sneak up on flatware?

FRED

It could be worse.

JOEY

How?

FRED

We could be out there.

JOEY

We'd be free.

FRED

Out there? There's no freedom out there.

JOEY

How do you know?

FRED

I know.

JOEY

How do you know there aren't packs and packs of tigers waiting for us in the jungles of India. In Tibet?

FRED

I know.

JOEY

You know. Oh, right. Fred the wise. Fred the wise old tiger. What do you know? Have you ever been out there? Have you? You were born here weren't you? You were born in captivity, you have lived in captivity, and you will die in captivity. And that would suit you just fine, wouldn't it? As long as you got your meat twice a day and an occasional fling with some girl up on the hill once every blue moon? Is that all life is to you?

FRED

You watch yourself.

JOEY

You may think you're this big tough jungle cat. But when I look at you, all I see is a big pussy. A big tabby kitten, lying around in his cushy zoo and waiting to be fed.

FRED

Who do you think you're talking to?

JOEY

You are so pathetic.

FRED

Who do you think you are talking to? Who protected you when you first got here? Who protected you from Olga when she wanted to rip your nuts off? You would have had your ass kicked all around this zoo if it weren't for me. I may be older than you but I still have some teeth around here. Don't you forget that, little boy.

JOEY

I don't care.

FRED

You don't care?

JOEY

You've probably never even thought about getting out.

FRED

I've been out.

JOEY

You have?

FRED
I have.

JOEY
When?

FRED
A long time ago.

JOEY
How?

FRED
I was a lot younger. I was stupid like you.

JOEY
How did you get out?

FRED
Like I'd tell you.

JOEY
Come on, Fred.

FRED
They don't like us, we don't like them. Our situation is a compromise. Do you understand?

JOEY
A compromise?

FRED
They are necessary things.

JOEY
How far did you get?

FRED
Well, I can smell, you know.

JOEY
How far?

FRED
I got past the gate. I got out to the street. You have no idea.

JOEY
What was it like?

FRED
The smells, the lights, the noise. You have no idea.

JOEY
What happened?

FRED

They got me.

JOEY

How?

FRED

Does it matter? They did. They got me. I'm just lucky they did. Because if I had spent another minute out there, I wouldn't be alive today. Alive to warn you.

JOEY

How did you get out? Come on, Fred. How?

FRED

They thought the keeper had left the pen open.

JOEY

They never leave the pen open.

FRED

I know. You haven't thought this through.

JOEY

I have.

FRED

You're not going to make it.

JOEY

Either way, I'm not going to make it.

FRED

You get used to it. You're young. Give it time.

JOEY

Time?

FRED

It's a phase. We all go through it. You'll get over it.

JOEY

What if I don't?

FRED

You will.

JOEY

What if I don't? What if I never get used to it?
What if my stomach is always tied in these knots?
What if my my jaws are always clenched with desire?
What if I pace around the cage until I've worn a
trench into the earth? And my paws are worn raw
from clawing at the walls? What will I do then?

(more)

JOEY (cont'd)

How long will it be before I give up? Because I feel like I'm there, Fred. I feel like I'm on the edge of my sanity. Like my heart is leaping out of my chest with desire for the world, for love, for freedom, and my body is trapped here. Hemmed in by these concrete walls, by these fake rocks? Fred, how long will it be before I am swimming across that moat to bite that wire myself?

FRED

It's that bad?

JOEY

This may work for you, but it's not for everyone, Fred. Not for me. I have to go. Please, Fred. You were young. How did you do it?

FRED

I can't let you do it.

(JOEY slams the rocks with his paws in frustration. Then suddenly-)

JOEY

OK, I have an idea.

FRED

Oh, God.

JOEY

No, you'll like it. It's a compromise. You like compromises.

FRED

Joey-

JOEY

Here it is: You can come with me.

FRED

Do you know what compromise means? Because that's not a compromise.

JOEY

I wasn't done. You are concerned about me, and I appreciate that. But I have to get out of here. Even just for a little while. So, you come with me, and we'll go out, but we won't leave the zoo.

FRED

What?

JOEY

We'll stay in the zoo. We'll just have a walk around. See the place, visit some folks. Then we'll come right back.

FRED

In the zoo.

JOEY

Right in the zoo. You know your way around the zoo, don't you?

FRED

Well, yeah.

JOEY

So we'll go see the zoo.

FRED

And we'll come right back?

JOEY

Right back.

FRED

No funny business?

JOEY

Cub's honor.

FRED

You'll do exactly as I say?

JOEY

Exactly. It will be a little adventure.

FRED

I wouldn't mind seeing the little elephant again.

JOEY

See, it would be fun. A fun night. Better than watching the grass grow.

FRED

All right.

JOEY

Really?

FRED

Yeah. Ok.

JOEY

Great! This is great! What do we do?

FRED

Well, we have to wait until their last check, after it gets dark. There's a spot on the back wall. Near the oak tree. You have to get up into the tree and jump. If you run and jump, you can get up on the edge of the wall.

(more)

FRED (cont'd)

From there you walk carefully along the edge to where it meets the moat. Then you jump, a big jump, over the wire to the walkway.

JOEY

You won't regret this.

FRED

I already do. Oh, uh...

JOEY

What?

FRED

You'll have to help me get up in the tree.

JOEY

Ok.

FRED

All right. We come right back.

JOEY

Just a stroll.

FRED

Ok.

JOEY

OK. This is going to be great!

SCENE 2

SETTING: A PATH THROUGH THE WOODS.

(There is a path running through a dense forest. IGGY sits in the middle of the path. FRED and JOEY ENTER.)

JOEY

This sucks.

FRED

Quiet.

JOEY

It does. You can't see anything. I think half these cages are empty.

FRED

They're not empty.

JOEY

How do you know? I don't see anything.

FRED

If you could smell, you'd know.

(JOEY takes a few determined sniffs.
FRED takes up a quiet stance looking at IGGY.)

JOEY

Ugh. What's that smell?

FRED

(Whispering.)
Monkeys.

JOEY

What?

FRED

Monkeys.

JOEY

(Seeing IGGY, dropping into a crouch.)
Wow.

FRED

You feel it too, huh?

JOEY

I feel it. It feels good. You feel it?

FRED

It's been a long time.

JOEY
Why isn't he in a cage?

FRED
I don't know. He should be in a cage.

JOEY
It would be safer for him, don't you think?

FRED
It might be.

JOEY
Should I kill it?

FRED
We shouldn't.

JOEY
But you want to, right? Right?

FRED
It's not the neighborly thing to do.

JOEY
Let me kill it.

FRED
No.

JOEY
Let me kill it.

FRED
You said you'd listen to me-

JOEY
Fred-

FRED
No.

JOEY
Fred-

FRED
No!

(FRED roars. IGGY turns around slowly.
The three stare at each other.)

IGGY
Oh boy.

FRED
Don't worry.

Oh wow.

IGGY

C'mon Fred.

JOEY

No.

FRED

You guys are good. You guys are real good.
Sneaking up from down wind, perfect pouncing crouch.
Classic feline. Beautiful. All right, come on.

IGGY

What?

FRED

Come on, I'm ready for you. Come on.

IGGY

I think he wants us to...

JOEY

What are you doing?

FRED

Come on, I haven't got all night. Let's go.

IGGY

Go where?

FRED

You're going to eat me, right? I can't tell you how exciting this is.

IGGY

You want us to eat you?

FRED

Don't argue with him.

JOEY

I never thought this would happen to me. I mean, here I am in a zoo, right? Should I lie down?

IGGY

Listen, don't be afraid.

FRED

Afraid? Do I look afraid?

IGGY

He's not afraid, Fred.

JOEY

IGGY

Two big carnivores come creeping up on me, why would that make me afraid? This is very exciting.

FRED

Exciting?

IGGY

Jesus, you gonna eat me or what?

JOEY

Just let me taste him. A little taste.

IGGY

I waiting here.

FRED

Listen, you don't have to worry-

IGGY

You keep saying that. What am I supposed to be all worried about?

FRED

Well, I just want you to know that... Well, we're not going to eat you.

IGGY

Excuse me?

FRED

We're not going to eat you.

IGGY

You're not?

FRED

No.

JOEY

I don't believe this.

FRED

We're not. Really. We're not.

IGGY

Why not?

FRED

Excuse me?

IGGY

Why not? What's wrong with me? Don't I look tasty?

JOEY

You do.

IGGY

Thank you. I think so. I think I look pretty tasty. I'm young, well-fed, not too fat. Good clean coat. Why not eat me?

FRED

Well, I-

IGGY

I could make quite a good meal.

JOEY

He's got a point, Fred.

IGGY

Very nutritious.

FRED

Listen, it's nothing personal. We're not eating anybody.

IGGY

It's very personal. My family has been eaten for generations. We are as quite the delicacy.

FRED

We're just out for a walk.

IGGY

A what?

FRED

A walk, you know, a stroll, through the zoo here. We're not eating anyone.

IGGY

Yeah. Pull the other one and it plays Jingle Bells. Do I stink? Is that it? Do I smell funny?

JOEY

I wouldn't know.

FRED

What are you doing out here?

JOEY

I don't smell so good.

IGGY

No worse than me.

FRED

Hey, hey! Excuse me. Don't you have a cage?

IGGY

Sorry?

FRED

A cage. Don't you have a cage you should be getting back to?

IGGY

Me? Nah.

JOEY

What?

IGGY

Hmmm?

JOEY

No cage?

IGGY

Nope. Live in the tree.

FRED

What, this tree?

IGGY

This tree. This is my tree.

JOEY

You don't have a cage?

IGGY

He's the smart one, right?

FRED

They let you live in a tree?

IGGY

Yup.

JOEY

And there are no bars, no moats...

IGGY

No bars, no moats, no electricity, no nothing. Just me and the tree. They bring me food. I stick around. It's a pretty simple deal, really.

JOEY

So you can leave anytime you want?

IGGY

I guess so.

JOEY

Why don't you?

IGGY

Why don't I what?

JOEY
Leave?

IGGY
Is he serious? Leave? Where would I go?

JOEY
Out there. The world.

IGGY
The world? Can you be a little more specific?

JOEY
A jungle. Africa?

IGGY
No no no no.

JOEY
Why not?

IGGY
He's kidding right? OK, for starters, I am a Rhesus monkey. Native to South America. There's a sign. Does he read?

JOEY
Sorry.

IGGY
Second of all, why would I want to leave? They feed me. They take care of me when I'm sick. They give me a nice tree to live in.

FRED
(Looking up at the tree.)
Is that a platform?

IGGY
Yes it is, thank you. A platform to sit upon. Pretty swank, wouldn't you say?

JOEY
A platform?

IGGY
You ever tried sitting in a tree twelve hours straight? That bark is no day at the beach.

JOEY
But you could be free.

IGGY
Excuse me?

JOEY
I said, you could be... free?

IGGY

What does that mean?

JOEY

Free. You could do as you like.

IGGY

I do as I like now.

JOEY

In here.

IGGY

Yes, in here. In here is as good a place as any to do as I like.

JOEY

But you could be out there-

IGGY

He's like a broken record.

JOEY

You could hunt for your food-

IGGY

I eat fruit.

JOEY

Yes, but you could forage-

IGGY

Who hunts fruit?

JOEY

No, but you could forage for fruit.

IGGY

Forage?

JOEY

You could forage for fruit and live by your wits. By your instincts. In the natural world. You could seek out a tree-

IGGY

I have a tree.

JOEY

I know, but-

IGGY

I have a tree, with a platform, mind you. They bring me clean, safe food, every day, including weekends and holidays, without fail. I have my family and my friends right here.

(more)

IGGY (cont'd)

Why would I give all that up to be "free"? What if the food was no good? What if the trees were no good? What if I got sick? What then? And, I'm sorry, but do you see these hands? Do these look like the hands of someone who "forages"? Your freedom sounds like too much work, thank you very much all the same.

JOEY

Unbelievable.

IGGY

Are you going guys to eat me or what?

FRED

Joey-

JOEY

It's not fair.

IGGY

This kid is incredible.

JOEY

We have a moat. We have a fence. We have a- a-

FRED

A wire.

JOEY

We have a wire.

IGGY

Ooo, the wire. Wires are bad.

JOEY

Right, so we have all that. And you have what- a tree?

IGGY

You're right, that doesn't sound fair.

JOEY

Damn right, it doesn't sound fair.

IGGY

But you're forgetting something. You're forgetting something very important.

JOEY

What?

IGGY

I'm extremely cute.

JOEY

I'm cute.

IGGY

Sure, sure, in that sort of ferocious way. But I'm cuddly. I'm adorable. They love me.

JOEY

I don't believe this.

IGGY

And more than that, I'm also extraordinarily harmless. Completely benign. You know what I'm talking about, right? Show him.

(FRED opens his mouth and bears his teeth.)

IGGY

(continuing)

That's what I'm talking about. You guys are dangerous.

JOEY

I'm not dangerous.

FRED

Ha.

JOEY

I'm not. I could control it. If they gave me a little patch of grass, a little hill to lie on, I would behave. I wouldn't eat them. Not many of them.

IGGY

Not going to happen. Hey, you can't help it kid, it's how you are. Nothing to be ashamed of. It just has consequences. They do it to everybody. That's why they run the show. They build a moat and a fence and a wire for you, and you stay put. They build a four foot wall around the seal pool, fat little seal can't get over, he stays put. They put a four inch grate in the ground, the elk are afraid to go over it, they stay put. They give me three squares a day and a comfy tree, I stay put. That's the zoo, babe.

JOEY

I still don't like it.

IGGY

You don't have to like it.

FRED

We should get going.

IGGY

Going? Where you going?

FRED

We're walking.

JOEY

He wants to see the elephants.

IGGY

Oh----. No you don't.

FRED

Why not.

IGGY

Trust me. You don't. The place is crawling with keepers.

JOEY

What do you mean?

IGGY

You didn't hear?

FRED

Hear what?

IGGY

Of course you didn't. Fence, moat, wire. Well, there was a big mess up there last week. Everyone's on edge.

FRED

What happened?

IGGY

Sad story. Young male elephant, coming of age. Hormones running amuck. He's in this pen with his mom and couple of sisters. And you know how elephants are, right? Boys over here, girls over there. Anyway, he's bending the rules, moving in on the girls, getting a little too friendly. He makes a pass at his mom. But he's a teenager, right? They can't even see straight. And she's having none of it. But he's determined and he comes back, and she shoves him away again. Third time, she picks him up. Trunk around his waist. Picks him up, throws him in the moat. Throws him. Elephant. In the moat. Broke his neck.

FRED

She killed him?

IGGY

Game over. Keepers are on twenty-four hour watch up there. You'd be better off going up that way.

FRED

Thanks.

JOEY

What's up there?

IGGY

Hoofed stock, penguins, small mammals, and birds. I could go with you, if you want.

FRED

That's OK.

IGGY

I could come in handy. I have thumbs. Lookee lookee lookee. Good for opening doors, climbing things. You'd be surprised.

FRED

Thanks anyway.

IGGY

Well, there's a hole in the aviary net on the Western side. You can cut through there to the East side of the zoo, and take the trail South. If you keep moving you should make it back to your place by sun up. And avoid the keepers.

JOEY

Thanks.

IGGY

Did you know him?

FRED

I met him once.

IGGY

He was just young. He didn't know better. The young ones, they don't always adapt well to it. Zoo culture, the caged lifestyle. But they learn. Or... Well, you sure you don't want to eat me?

FRED

Thanks anyway.

IGGY

How about you? Generations of flavor built right in.

JOEY

No, thanks.

IGGY

OK, but you don't know what you're missing. Y'all have fun.

(Iggy exits.)

JOEY
You OK?

FRED
Let's go.

JOEY
I'm sorry about your friend.

FRED
You just listen, OK? Remember.

JOEY
Ok.

FRED
Let's go.

(FRED and JOEY EXIT.)

SCENE 3

SETTING: THE AVIARY, LATER THAT NIGHT.

(JOEY and FRED ENTER.)

JOEY

We never should have listened to that Monkey.

FRED

We're not lost.

JOEY

We're lost Fred.

FRED

We're not lost. It's just up ahead here.

JOEY

Where?

FRED

I don't know. Up here. Somewhere.

JOEY

So we just keep wandering around? This is pointless.

FRED

You have a better idea?

JOEY

This was supposed to be an adventure, you know?
Excitement. Danger.

FRED

This isn't exciting to you? You met a monkey.

JOEY

One stupid monkey, great.

FRED

He's not stupid.

JOEY

He can leave and we won't. That's stupid.

FRED

He depends on them.

JOEY

He wants to be eaten. What was that about?

FRED

You have to be more tollerant. More compassionate
toward his situation. Some are born to follow.

JOEY

And some to lead?

FRED

Perhaps.

JOEY

Fine. One extremely tollerated monkey. Other than that? Bupkiss.

FRED

What did you want?

JOEY

I wanted... I don't know. Something wild. Something unexpected.

FRED

You were expecting the monkey?

JOEY

How come he doesn't have a cage?

FRED

Not this again.

JOEY

How come we have a cage-

FRED

Enclosure.

JOEY

Whatever. How come we've got one and the monkey doesn't.

FRED

If they didn't put you in a cage would you stay here so they could look at you?

JOEY

I don't know. If they treated me nice. I don't know.

FRED

Oh, please.

JOEY

I don't. I don't know how I'd be. How would you be if you had never been put in a cage. Ever. How would you be? Can you tell me? Because I don't know. I might stick around, I might eat them all, but I don't know. The point is: I was never given the choice.

FRED

And this is relevant how?

JOEY

I just want the choice is all.

FRED

We have to keep moving if we're going to get back before the sun comes up.

JOEY

We're lost, man.

(BETTY ENTERS pecking at the ground.)

FRED

You're really starting to get on my nerves, you know that?

JOEY

You're in a big hurry to get nowhere.

FRED

You said you would do what I told you to do. Do you remember that? Was that my imagination?

JOEY

(Seeing BETTY, dropping into a crouch.)
Should I kill it?

FRED

(Reluctantly dropping too.)
What now?

JOEY

Look.

FRED

It's a bird.

JOEY

Yeah. So?

FRED

We don't eat birds.

JOEY

Have you ever tried?

FRED

You are impossible.

JOEY

They could be tasty.

FRED

I'm going to get directions.

JOEY

Then can I kill it?

FRED
If you must.
 (to BETTY)
Excuse me.

BETTY
What?

FRED
We're a little lost.

BETTY
What?

FRED
We're a little lost.

BETTY
Can't hear you. Speak up.

FRED
 (Louder.)
We're a little-

BETTY
Left side please.

FRED
We're a little lost.

BETTY
I'd say so. Have you seen any seeds?

FRED
What?

BETTY
Seeds. On the ground. Looking for seeds. Pardon me.

FRED
Uh, no. No seeds, but-

BETTY
Aha!

(BETTY pecks furiously at the ground.)

FRED
I see. Listen, we're trying to find our way back to the tiger enclosure.

BETTY
 (Smacking her lips.)
Delicious.

JOEY
They're good?

BETTY
Oh! There are two of you!

FRED
Yes, we-

JOEY
Are they good?

BETTY
What?

JOEY
Are the seeds good?

BETTY
Excellent. Great seeds.

FRED
We're trying to get back to the tiger enclosure.

BETTY
Tire disposal?

FRED
Tiger enclosure.

BETTY
Fire proposal?

JOEY
Our cage. The tiger cage.

BETTY
Ah, cage, yes, well, of course you are. Pardon me.

FRED
Do you know where it is?

BETTY
Oh yes. Yes.

JOEY
What is she doing?

FRED
I don't know. Maybe if we keep going-

JOEY
Why are you doing that?

BETTY
Doing what?

JOEY

Why are you looking for seeds?

BETTY

Seeds are what I eat. I'm very hungry.

FRED

Can you tell us how to get to the tiger cage?

BETTY

Yes, it's... ummmm...

(Pointing.)

That way. Yes. That way.

FRED

What, through the bush?

BETTY

No no no. Over the bush. Over the bush, West at the reptile house, bank East on the warm current coming off the power plant and cruise... maybe four clicks South over just the bear island.

JOEY

What?

BETTY

That's how you go. Just like that.

FRED

What if you were walking?

BETTY

What? Left side please.

FRED

Walking. What if you were walking?

BETTY

Oh, I wouldn't walk it. Too far. Take too long.

FRED

What if you had to?

BETTY

Why would I have to? Pardon me.

JOEY

Why are you so hungry?

BETTY

Why is the sky blue, why do the stars shine? I just am.

JOEY

Don't they feed you?

BETTY

Pardon me.

JOEY

Don't they- Don't they feed you?

BETTY

Who?

JOEY

Them. The keepers. Don't they feed you?

BETTY

Oh. I don't live here.

JOEY

You don't?

BETTY

You're not going to tell on me, are you?

JOEY

No, we won't tell, right Fred?

FRED

I'm tired Joey.

JOEY

He won't tell.

BETTY

Pardon me.

JOEY

So you live... out there?

BETTY

Out there? Yup. Out there. Outside. That's me.

JOEY

What's it like?

BETTY

What's what like?

JOEY

Out there. The world out there.

BETTY

It's OK.

JOEY

That's it? OK?

BETTY

Yeah. It's OK. It's not like in here.

JOEY

I wouldn't think so.

BETTY

No. Very different from in here.

JOEY

I bet.

BETTY

No. You're very lucky to be in here. Very lucky indeed. Pardon me.

JOEY

I don't understand.

BETTY

Look at this. They feed them so much they just leave good seed lying on the ground. AHA!

JOEY

Lucky?

BETTY

Left side.

JOEY

You said lucky?

BETTY

Oh yes. I've always wanted to get a spot in the zoo. A little nest of my own. All the seed you can eat. Maybe some juicy little grubs. Have you ever had grubs?

JOEY

No, but-

BETTY

Very good. If they're juicy. If they dry out, forget about it. But a good juicy grub, paradise.

JOEY

You want to be in here?

BETTY

You bet. Free food, free nest. Sign me up. Pardon me.

JOEY

But then you wouldn't be free.

BETTY

So?

JOEY

So? It's an important thing.

BETTY
Nah.

JOEY
It is.

BETTY
Who told you that?

JOEY
Nobody had to tell me. I know it.

BETTY
Freedom is highly overrated. Usually by folks who think they've never had any. Have you had any?

JOEY
No.

BETTY
Aha. Stick to what you know, kid.

JOEY
That's easy for you to say, you're free.

BETTY
I'm free. Yahoo for me.

JOEY
It's not funny.

BETTY
Look, what does it matter if a scavenge for food out there or take it from a plate in here? Huh? Either way I get what I need.

JOEY
But you can choose.

BETTY
Choose what? No matter where I am I will still get hungry. I will need safe food to eat and a safe place to sleep. I go where life is safest. That's what animals do, kiddo. It's called survival. You ought to try it sometime.

JOEY
I want to.

BETTY
No you don't. It's no pleasure cruise. You don't know how good you have it. You aren't a captive, you're safe. Safe from the wind and the rain and the snow and the predators.

JOEY
I am a predator.

BETTY

Even predators have predators. How do you think you got here?

JOEY

But all this safety it's... stifling. It's killing my wild soul.

BETTY

That's your problem right there.

JOEY

My wild soul?

BETTY

No. That you think you have one. Listen, you don't want to be free.

JOEY

I do.

BETTY

No you don't. What you want is a change. You want a change from your routine. So you've gotten out, you've had a little adventure. Fine fine fine. Look at the stars from here, enjoy this new angle, all that. Now do yourself a favor. Get back to your cage.

JOEY

I can't go-

BETTY

Listen to me. You feel your instincts? You feel that wild hunger in you? Good. It means your alive. But there's nowhere you're gonna go that's gonna give you the relief you're looking for. We cannot escape ourselves. There's only one way to do that. And that's a one way ticket, baby. With no guarantees. Go home. Take him with you. Don't screw up your good time, bubby. I gotta go find more seeds. If I don't eat at least four times my body weight I get a little loopy. If you hear of an open spot around here you'll put in a good word for me, won't you?

JOEY

Huh? Sure.

BETTY

What?

JOEY

Yeah. OK.

BETTY

Thanks. See ya. AHA!

(BETTY EXITS pecking.)

JOEY

Fred? Hey.

(FRED is asleep.)

JOEY

(continuing)
I know how you feel.

(JOEY looks up at the stars.)

SCENE 4

SETTING: THE AVIARY, THE NEXT MORNING.

(FRED and JOEY are asleep. FRED stirs awake.)

FRED

(Yawning.)

Joey? Joey? Joey! What did you do? What did you do?

JOEY

(Waking up.)

Stop it.

FRED

What did you do?

JOEY

What did I do?

FRED

You fell asleep?

JOEY

You did.

FRED

Me?

JOEY

You fell asleep first!

FRED

Why didn't you wake me up?

JOEY

You looked so happy.

FRED

This is very bad.

JOEY

What? We'll just go back to the-

FRED

We won't make it back now.

JOEY

Sure we will we'll just...

FRED

Just what? We'll just go walking through the zoo and hope no one notices the great big carnivores?

JOEY

It might work.

FRED

I can't believe I let you talk me into this.

JOEY

Right. It's all my fault.

FRED

It is. You and your stupid talk.

JOEY

You know you wanted to, just as much as I did.

FRED

They're going to find us.

JOEY

So?

FRED

So?

JOEY

So they'll take us back to the cage- enclosure, right?

FRED

Eventually.

JOEY

What do you mean, eventually?

FRED

They will, but first there will be nets and prods and darts-

JOEY

Darts?

FRED

You won't like them, trust me. Then there will be a cage. A very small cage. For a very long time.

JOEY

How do you know?

FRED

I've done this before.

JOEY

So what do we do?

FRED

We're going to have to give ourselves up.

JOEY

What?

FRED

We'll just walk along until we find somebody, and then we'll give ourselves up.

JOEY

How do we do that?

FRED

We'll have to tell them we mean no harm.

JOEY

You've learned some English I don't know about?

FRED

Body language. We'll lie down and roll over.

JOEY

Like we're dead.

FRED

Just like that.

JOEY

And they'll know what that means?

FRED

They might. Come on.

JOEY

What if they don't? What if they don't understand?

FRED

Joey, you got a better idea?

JOEY

No but.. No fight, no struggle...

FRED

What?

JOEY

I have this wild soul, Fred. The bird doesn't think I do, but I know I do.

FRED

What are you talking about?

JOEY

I was up last night, while you were asleep, looking at the sky, thinking.

FRED

Great.

JOEY

Something the bird said. About looking at the stars and appreciating it because I'd never see them from this angle again, you know?

FRED

We don't have time for this.

JOEY

And I realized, Fred, that we're not the same. We're different, you and me. And I can't be like you. I can't be a gentle tiger.

FRED

They're looking for us.

JOEY

I've got to fight. I have a wild soul and my wild soul says fight.

FRED

You want to get us killed?

JOEY

A real tiger would fight.

FRED

I am a real tiger.

JOEY

No you're not. You're not. You're a kept tiger, a pet tiger, a little stuffed tiger. The tiger in you is dead. You're just a big cat. That's all, Fred. A cat.

FRED

I don't understand you. Haven't I been good to you? Haven't I protected you, shown you how to get by?

JOEY

It's not you, Fred.

FRED

Who is it? Is it them? Haven't they treated you well? Haven't they fed you and given you shelter? Haven't they taken care of you when you were sick and-

JOEY

Well who asked them to, huh? Who asked them to? I didn't. I didn't ask to be kept, to be pampered. I didn't. They have put me into this position. They have crippled me with their kindness. They have beaten me down with their helpfulness, with their safety and their love, Fred. I want to be wild. I want to be free. I want to be a tiger. And I don't know how.

FRED

You are a tiger.

JOEY

Am I?

FRED

I know. I feel it too. More so out here than back in.. there. You're right, you and I are different. You are young. You don't see that value in our... system. Our arrangement. You have to have faith, Joey. Faith that it will care for you. That it will provide for you. You entrust your life to it, and have faith that it will give back to you that which you require.

JOEY

I don't want faith. I want blood. Wild blood. The blood of the world, outside.

FRED

No you don't.

JOEY

I do.

FRED

You don't know the outside.

JOEY

I do.

FRED

Haven't you learned anything tonight? Haven't you learned how hard it can be? Haven't you seen? Aren't you afraid?

JOEY

You got out there, didn't you? Why are you so scared?

FRED

The world isn't what you think it is. You think it's this vast jungle kingdom, but it's not. The people, they are everywhere. They are on every square foot of this planet. They are under the oceans and in the skies. You should be happy, so happy, to have a piece of land where they are not. Where they will never go, and they will leave you be. Because no matter where you go out there, they'll always get you. No matter where you go.

JOEY

But to live, in a cage?

FRED

Sometimes a cage is a necessary thing. In our case, it's not about keeping us in, it's about keeping them out.

JOEY

But my soul...

FRED

No, you just think you do. Joey, come on. Think. You have a good life. These dreams about freedom and wild blood. They're just that. Dreams. Enjoy them, but don't think they can come true. If you do, they become cruel taunts you hurl at yourself. We all want to escape. But you and I, we're lucky. Because we've seen the truth.

JOEY

Which is?

FRED

There's nowhere to escape to.

JOEY

It hurts.

FRED

I know.

JOEY

It hurts. Inside. So much.

FRED

I know. It's part of you dying. It's gonna be OK.

(JOEY laughs.)

FRED

(continuing)

What?

JOEY

They think a cage can hold us.

FRED

In some ways they're right.

JOEY

In some ways they're wrong.

FRED

We are better than they are, you know that?

JOEY

How?

FRED

Because we see the truth. We see the truth and go on living in spite of it. They wouldn't last a minute in here.

JOEY

Is that contempt?

FRED

Yes. Come on, we'll go down together.

JOEY

Can we stay for a few more minutes?

FRED

They're going to be looking, Joey.

JOEY

Just a minute. To dream.

FRED

Ok.

JOEY

Thanks.

(A ball rolls across the stage and we hear THE SOUND OF CHILDREN LAUGHING NEARBY.)

JOEY

(continuing)
Fred?

FRED

Yeah?

JOEY

What about that one?

FRED

Too skinny.

End of play

