

DOGS!

A Tail-Wagging Musical

Story by Christina Hamlett

Music by Wayne Simpson

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THE STORY

Students will have a howling good time performing this tail-wagging musical about everybody's best friend! Adults will find it heart-warming, knowing the tender emotions expressed can also apply in the broader sense to the love between parents and children.

Ralph, a lonely kind of guy, and Angel, a special young woman from "up north," work at the city animal shelter. Both Ralph and Angel love the dogs they care for but Angel has a special way to communicate with them ("Heart Talk"). In comforting the homeless dogs, she learns each one has a special story to tell. Snoodles, a spaniel, left home when her mistress wanted a human baby ("Puppy Love"). Fifi, a poodle, ran away when a cat made her home life miserable. Daisy, adopted from a pet store ("Take Me Home"), led an exciting life as a fire station dog until she became lost in a blaze. Trevor, an English sheepdog, was separated from his family at the airport. J.D., or John Doe mutt, well, his family always called him dumb. He thinks he is stupid until the other shelter dogs tell him he is not ("Look What You Can Be"). Rover was a beloved dog until his master grew up ("Parting"). And finally there's Max, with leather jacket, greased back ears and sunglasses. He is a cool-cat dog who won't admit he wants a home.

Later that evening the dogs are wondering why humans don't care for them more ("We're the Best Friend You Ever Had!"). Fifi is especially homesick, remembering her owner ("Sleep, Sleep"). When the dogs are finally asleep, a worried Angel realizes only a miracle can save these creatures who want nothing more out of life than to love and be loved.

The next morning Max says that at the shelter — well, dogs come in but they don't come back out. The other dogs are shocked. Surely Angel would tell them if they had a bleak future! Before

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Angel can answer their questions, two wonderful things happen.

Mrs. Henderson from a nearby retirement home enters joyously. The board of directors has ruled the residents at the home CAN have pets and she wants to adopt all the older dogs — dogs who would make good companions. The dogs are overjoyed (“Take Me Home,” Reprise). As Angel goes to get collars and leashes, a young fireman enters — if he could only replace his dog, Daisy, who he thinks perished in a fire. He is stunned to find her alive and they leave happily. Angel feels her prayers have been answered and her temporary assignment is complete. They all leave the stage — except Max that is, who is too cool to need anyone (“Hot Dog”). He commiserates with a lonely Ralph whose blind date the night before was, pardon the expression, a “real dog.” While Ralph thinks some love can be “the pits,” Max, wistful, still wants to be loved (“Puppy Love”-Reprise). Impressed, Ralph invites Max home and they leave together to a happy life in a bachelor pad where they can watch football on TV and eat popcorn to their hearts’ content.

This play is dedicated to every dog who ever was or ever wanted to be a best friend.

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SETTING

All action takes place inside the city animal shelter. The set should be constructed inexpensively to allow maximum enjoyment of the canine characters. Specifically, three platforms are situated SR, SC, and SL; on top of the platforms are large square (or rectangular) frames suggesting cages. Simple nameplates should be affixed to the front of each cage to identify the occupants. On the SR platform is FIFI and TREVOR. J.C., SNOODLES and ROVER are CS. MAX and DAISY are SL. If desired, EXTRA dogs can share the cages and step downstage to join in the songs or simply form a separate chorus floor-level, in front of stage. DL is a table and chair. The room may be accessed by SL and SR doors. Upstage and high on the wall is a window.

PROPERTIES

Book for TREVOR, bone for ROVER, ball for DAISY, large sack of dog food for RALPH, and bowls, collars and leashes for ANGEL.

SONGS

ACT I

HEART TALK: Angel and Ralph

PUPPY LOVE: Snoodles with all Dogs

TAKE ME HOME: Daisy with Chorus

LOOK WHAT YOU CAN BE: Trevor and J.D.

PARTING: Rover and Chorus

ACT II

WE'RE THE BEST OLD FRIEND YOU EVER HAD: Max and All Dogs

SLEEP, SLEEP: Fifi and Chorus

TAKE ME HOME- Reprise: All Dogs

HOT DOG!: Chorus

PUPPY LOVE-Reprise: Max with Chorus

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CHARACTERS

(6 boys, 5 girls, extra dogs as chorus)

HUMANS

RALPH: A young man who works at the city animal shelter. He wears jeans and a shirt with the words ANIMAL SHELTER on the back.

ANGEL: A young, pretty girl who is working at the shelter. Wears jeans and a T-shirt.

MRS. KIMBLE: An elderly lady who wants to adopt older dogs.

MR. HENDERSON: A young fireman looking for a dog.

DOGS

FIFI: Frilly, fussy white poodle with pink bows in her ears, a large, jeweled collar, and painted nails.

TREVOR: An English sheepdog, complete with monocle and deerstalker wool hat.

J.D.: A floppy-eared mutt with a choke-chain sans dog tags.

SNOODLES: Pretty, ginger-colored cocker spaniel with a red velvet bow.

ROVER: Older, brown and white dog wearing a kerchief around his neck.

MAX: One cool dog with greased-back ears, leather jacket and dark glasses.

DAISY: A spotted Dalmatian who wears her red, sooty fire hat with pride.

CHORUS: Other lost, unwanted dogs.

TIME: The present, early evening.

COSTUMES: Dog costumes can be appropriate colored warm-up suits with the addition of felt or fuzzy material for ears.

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ACT I

(AT RISE: FIFI is inspecting her brightly painted nails, TREVOR is reading a book, J.D. is scratching his ear, SNOODLES is looking around in anticipation, ROVER is lying down, chewing a bone. MAX is slicking back his ears and looking cool; DAISY is playing ball. RALPH enters from SR, carrying a big bag of dog food. The moment he enters and crosses to the table, all of the DOGS stop what they're doing and start howling and barking. RALPH tries, unsuccessfully, to quiet them.)

RALPH: Hey! Hey! Quiet! *(Sets bag down.)* Keep it down! Shhh! *(Waves arms)* Come on! *(ANGEL enters from SR with seven bowls. She crosses to the table, amused that Ralph's commands only seem to make the dogs bark more.)* Quiet! Enough! Shhh!

ANGEL: *(After watching for a moment, SHE suddenly claps her hands twice over her head. All of the DOGS stop barking and look in her direction. She addresses them pleasantly but firmly.)* You'll bark yourselves hoarse if you keep that up. *(The DOGS remain quiet and attentive.)*

RALPH: *(After HE does a double-take.)* Whew! I sure gotta hand it to you, Angel. Nobody talks to 'em like you do. Come to think of it, nobody talks to 'em at all.

ANGEL: *(As SHE gives each DOG attention.)* Too bad. They could use a kind word now and then.

RALPH: Just like people, huh?

ANGEL: *(Smiles)* They're not really different, man and beast.

RALPH: *(Chuckles)* Except beasties don't know how to speak!

ANGEL: And men don't always know how to listen...

FIFI: Arf! Arf!

ANGEL: Take Fifi, for instance. Why, just the other day she was saying—

RALPH: Wait a minute. You mean her? The poodle? She said something? *(Laughs)* You're pulling my leg.

FIFI: Arf!

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ANGEL: Of course she did!

RALPH: But that's impossible! *(Beat)* She's never talked to me.

ANGEL: *(Shrugs)* Maybe she didn't have anything to say.

RALPH: *(Suspiciously)* How about the rest of these guys? Can they talk?

(DOGS start to bark; with one look from ANGEL, however, they stop.)

ANGEL: Every single one.

RALPH: *(Intrigued)* You mean they can carry on regular conversations and everything?

ANGEL: In a manner of speaking. Why, Trevor can even converse in four languages.

RALPH: *(Looks over HIS shoulder at the dogs, then beckons ANGEL closer for a confidential question.)* Does 20/20 know about this? *(Snaps fingers)* Or better yet, how about Carson? We could get 'em on the *Tonight Show!*

ANGEL: *(Laughs)* Oh, Ralph! That's not what I meant at all.

RALPH: You didn't? But I thought you just told me they could talk.

ANGEL: In their own way, yes. A way that takes humans lots of time and patience to learn. Take it from someone who knows.

RALPH: *(Curious)* So they talk to animals a lot back where you come from? Back in-uh-where was that again?

ANGEL: *(Pointing heavenward.)* Up north. *(Helpfully)* I could teach you if you like...

RALPH: Nah, I'm too old to be learning any new tricks.

ANGEL: *(Laughs)* Oh Ralph, you're never too old! *(Pulling HIM toward chair.)* Here, sit down and I'll show you.

RALPH: *(Sits)* So what do I do now?

ANGEL: Just watch...and pay attention. We'll start with the basics.

SONG: "Heart Talk"

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ANGEL: *(When song is finished, SHE crosses to RALPH.)*
Would you like to try it yourself?

RALPH: *(Uncomfortable)* Well-uh-gee- *(Notices watch)* Oh
gosh! Look at the time! *(Leaps up)* I'm going to be late!
(Starts to exit SR.)

ANGEL: For what?

RALPH: For a very important date! *(Explaining)* You remember
Julie?

ANGEL: The one you met through the classifieds?

RALPH: *(Nervously)* Not yet. I mean, not until tonight. Up until
now, we've only exchanged letters. *(Quickly)* Listen, why don't
you go ahead and feed the dogs? *(Checks watch)* I'd do it
myself but —

ANGEL: Don't worry about a thing.

RALPH: Thanks, Angel!

ANGEL: *(Waves as HE exits.)* Have a good time! *(Sighs)* Now
there goes a man in love.

*(SNOODLES, who has both paws over her ears, howls in
anguish.)*

ANGEL: *(Running up to HER.)* Snoodles! What's wrong?

SNOODLES: It's that word! I never want to hear it again!

ANGEL: You mean "love?"

SNOODLES: Aauoooo! *(A howl again and the paws back up.)*

ANGEL: *(Gently takes HER paws down.)* But love is wonderful!
It's hearts and flowers and violins!

SNOODLES: *(Sniffing)* And it's crying yourself to sleep every
night on your pillow.

J.D.: *(Looking over at HER and then addressing ANGEL.)* I don't
mean to interrupt but it seems to me that she's just come from
a broken romance.

SNOODLES: Just the opposite, actually. *(Sniffs)* Not a broken
romance but a happy one.

TREVOR: Good gracious! Women are certainly a puzzlement!

J.D.: Yeah, how come you're crying if you're so happy?