

Big Plans:Scene II

From Collaborative Writing

SCENE II: Research: Ask the cat on the street.

(Location: The front of a store or restaurant of some kind. Jared and Davis have a booth set up with various materials provided by Davis ready to be handed out. Over them hangs a banner that says something like "CAT LOVERS WELCOME!" or something to that effect. Supplementary signs with similar enticements posted around to lure in the cat-owning segment of the populace.)

(Scene opens with Davis and Jared handing out materials to passers-by. Davis is extremely gregarious with the public while Jared is now less certain of himself than he was in Scene I.)

What follows is a traditionally written scene, but due to the improv nature of this work, this should be understood as just a blueprint with suggestions. With that in mind, the basic structure of the scene follows thusly:

- Aside interaction between Jared and Davis where Jared explains that they are there to bring their idea to the public and "plant the seed of need."
- Davis addresses crowd, tells them why they're there, introduces Jared as their "champion."
- Jared begins his pitch.
- Alan and Mary appear, two very different types of stereotypical cat owners, each offering their perspectives on the idea.
- Alan is more skeptical, but Davis wins him over with various amenity ideas for the park that appeal to his urban sensibilities. This starts to bring up the idea of the park not being exactly free.
- More ideas from Mary, Alan, and hopefully the rest of the crowd
- Thank you's from Davis.

DAVIS

Hi there! Beautiful day, isn't it? You folks cat-lovers? Me too!

(And so on and so forth with that kind of thing. Jared stands in the background offering the occasional wave and "hello.")

DAVIS

It is great to see so many cat lovers out here on this beautiful Austin day! This is just wonderful! Make some noise for me if you're a friend to the felines!

(And the crowd goes wild.)

DAVIS

Oh that is just great! *(Turns to Jared)* You see, this is how you get it going.

JARED

What?

DAVIS

Identify your base and lure them in. Quit trying to convince people with all your facts and statistics. People don't care about facts. They care about what they want.

JARED

Well I don't know what people want.

DAVIS

That's why we're here.

JARED

Oh! Like research?

DAVIS

My friend, we are engaged in an operation much more powerful than mere research. That's just boring old fact-finding. No, you and I are here to do what we in the biz call "Planting The Seed OfNeed."

JARED

That sounds--

DAVIS

Intense? Oh it is.

JARED

I was gonna say... So how do we do that thing you were talking about?

DAVIS

It's all about helping people realize that your product is the necessity without which they've been suffering for their entire stupid idiot lives. Until now.

JARED

My...product?

DAVIS

Your cat park, sweetie, keep up.

JARED

I never thought of it as a product.

DAVIS

It's the good and/or service that you are offering to the community, and together, with your passion and my resources, you and I are gonna show these good people that their lives have been sorely lacking without it.

JARED

I don't know, I just kind of wanted--

DAVIS

You wanted what? Hmmm? To fail? To spend your whole life being ignored by people like these walking right past you and your little clipboard and your little pin and your uncut hair and your picture of your precious little tabby?

JARED

I just wanted a place where me and Timber could sit and enjoy the sunshine.

DAVIS

Then you want to succeed, Jared. For Timber.

JARED

For Timber.

DAVIS

Right. And to do that, you have to make these people want what you want. You have to instill them with your desire. Recruit them to your cause. Get them involved.

JARED

How do I do that?

DAVIS

For starters, quit trying to convince people of the value of your product and talk to them like it's going to happen.

JARED

My cat park product?

DAVIS

Right. And then, you ask them to give you their opinion. Trust me, people love nothing more than an opportunity to offer up their opinions and feel like someone's actually listening. So?

JARED

So?

DAVIS

So what do cat owners and their vermin want?

JARED

Vermin?

DAVIS

Let's find out, huh? *(Turns to crowd)* Everyone? Everyone, if I may? Hi. Welcome cat lovers! My associate and I would just like to say how happy we are to have you with us here today in support of this great cause to improve the lives of our feline friends.

(Crowd is now paying attention to Davis and Jared. Among them are Alan and Mary, two different types of cat owners.)

ALAN

This is for a cause? I didn't sign up for any cause.

DAVIS

Are you enjoying your coffee? *(Be awesome if there was free coffee, mmmm, freeeee cooooffeEEEE)* Good! Now then, here to say a few words to us, our champion, the person who has made all of this possible--

ALAN

This what?

DAVIS

My partner and associate, Jared!

(She claps vigorously and pushes Jared to the forefront. The crowd gives him a half-assed round of applause)

DAVIS

(To Jared) Go ahead.

JARED

Uh, hi everybody. Thank you so much for being here. Um, my friends, did you know that there are over twelve off-leash dog parks in the city of Austin?

ALAN

Yeah? So?

JARED

So, while dog-lovers have a whole selection of city-funded recreational facilities where their four-legged friends can freely and safely enjoy the out of doors, not one such facility currently exists for cats.

MARY

Are you quite serious? That's an outrage!

(Perhaps some grunts of agreement and disagreement from plants throughout the crowd.)

JARED

I'm afraid I am serious, ma'am. The unfortunate truth is that cat lovers have long been underrepresented, and our needs and the needs of our beloved kitty friends have often gone ignored and unaddressed.

MARY

You know, my landlord tried to tell me I couldn't keep any more than three cats in my apartment.

DAVIS

Unbelievable.

MARY

I know! I said to him, "What am I supposed to do with the other twelve?" He just laughed at me.

ALAN

You have fifteen cats?

MARY

At the moment. They just seem to flock to me. What am I supposed to, turn them away to starve?

ALAN

I'm sure your neighbors wouldn't mind.

MARY

My toilet's been broken for the past two weeks, but I can't call maintenance. I'm afraid they'll come take my precious babies.

JARED

That's terrible.

MARY

Would you like to see pictures of my babies?

ALAN

Gross. Okay, so, uh, am I misunderstanding you, or are you proposing that the city build a dog park for cats?

JARED

I'm proposing that we build a cat park for cats.

DAVIS

And their owners!

MARY

I don't like to think of myself as their owner. They're my babies, you know?

ALAN

A cat park? Are you serious?

JARED

I've got it all figured out.

DAVIS

(Revealing a basic design.) We have what we believe to be a very compelling rough design for a fully functional outdoor feline facility. As you can see, it's designed to provide your pets with the experience of the outdoors while keeping them safe from so many of the dangers that they encounter in the urban wild.

JARED

My design! It's so....shiny.

MARY

It's wonderful!

DAVIS

We think this is a good start, but we need your feedback in order to make this into a facility that is worthy of our city's beautiful felines. We're asking you help us make this the nation's premier cat park.

JARED

Premier?

DAVIS

Premier.

MARY

Well I think it's a wonderful idea. You know, I keep planters full of catnip all over my apartment and my little darlings just love it.

DAVIS

Catnip! *(Draws a patch of green on the design to represent a catnip garden.)* Kitties love their catnip. We'll give 'em a whole garden full of it.

JARED

I can't believe I didn't think of that.

DAVIS

(Aside to Jared as she shoves the marker into his hand.) See, this is what I'm talking about. *(Back to crowd.)* What else?

MARY

I know my kitties love having lots of things to climb on.

DAVIS

Lots of heights!

JARED

But not too high. We don't want our cats getting stuck in trees.

DAVIS

But just in case, we'll build it close to a fire station.

(Jared draws.)

MARY

I keep ladders and step-stools all over my apartment for them to climb around on.

ALAN

Is there any room in your apartment for a person ?

MARY

I have a hammock. But Mittens and She-She like to sleep in it, so I usually just sleep on the floor.

ALAN

Look, I appreciate the free coffee and everything, but I have to tell you, I find the whole idea of a catpark very unappealing. I mean, I like to have another living thing around, but I want it to leave me the alone and I don't want to have to pay it too much attention. So to me, the idea of going some place to be around other people and their cats runs contrary to the whole point of having a cat.

DAVIS

That's a great point. You're a cat person, not a dog person. And your park should reflect that.

(Davis takes the marker from Jared and draws in private spots with single-person benches.)

JARED

What's that?

DAVIS

Single-occupant benches, a few double-occupants over here for couples. All strategically arranged between the trees and kitty-climbing structures so that park-goers do not have to interact with each other any more than necessary.

ALAN

I think I like it.

MARY

What about when the babies have to do their business?

ALAN

Oh my god, we're not going to be expected to pick up after our cats, are we?

JARED

We would provide bags.

DAVIS

How about an entire row of litter-boxes? The self-cleaning kind, surrounded by a garden of aromatic herbs to mask any unpleasant odors.

MARY

What unpleasant odors?

ALAN

Oh my god, I love my self-cleaning litter box. I think I'd have to take Dwayne to the pound if I had to clean it myself every day.

MARY

What about scratching posts? Of course I guess they'll have plenty to scratch on in the outdoors.

ALAN

No need here. My cat's declawed.

MARY

How could you?! How would you like it if someone pulled your fingernails out of your hand?

ALAN

If I scratched their West Elm sofa, then I would have to say I deserved it.

MARY

Would my babies and I have to share the park with monsters like him?

DAVIS

I don't see why we couldn't divide the park into clawed and declawed zones. Of course, clawed cats present a greater liability. We'd have to keep buckets of water around to break up scuffles. We'll take that into account when we start thinking about admissions.

JARED

Admissions?

DAVIS

What else? This is your park, what else would you like to see?

(Davis draws their suggestions as they call them out.)

ALAN

How about wi-fi?

MARY

Things to chase? Like mice?

ALAN

Gross! Why not just laser pointers? Cats love that. And how about coffee? Like a Starbuck's at the entrance would be sweet.

DAVIS

You got it!

JARED

This is getting expensive.

(Alan, Mary, perhaps other bystanders toss out other suggestions for a bit and Davis does her best to represent them in the plans.)

DAVIS

Wonderful! Wonderful! Austin's cats are going to have the most wonderful park in the world thanks to all of you!

(Scene)

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