

*UNTITLED (Guinea Pig Play)*  
by  
Patrick Kirwin

RUFUS : A golden bronze Guinea Pig. Smart and somewhat hyper-active.

PABLO: A black and white Guinea Pig. Corpulent and slightly dim-witted.

RUFUS

*(Talking into tape recorder.)*

Day 27-- still trapped in the cage. Still plotting my escape. The hand has come five times in the past six hours, attacked three out of those five times, and is still out there somewhere, planning its next move. My investigation into the cat's involvement in the disappearance of yesterday's carrot still proves fruitless, but I haven't given up hope yet. Oh God, here comes the dog, again!

PABLO

*(Not concerned with RUFUS' antics.)*

I think I'm getting fat from all these pebbles.

*(Goes toward the wheel.)*

RUFUS

Don't you dare step on that wheel!

PABLO

This again?

RUFUS

Yes, this again! How many times do I have to tell you? That is not your own private gym, you idiot, it is a turbine created for the sole purpose of harvesting our energy to do God-knows-what! It's all a part of...

RUFUS & PABLO

*(PABLO mocking RUFUS.)*

...the human exploitation of Guinea Pigs.

RUFUS CON'T

I mean, they test on us for everything! New shampoos, new makeup, new medications. Their term for test subject is *literally* Guinea Pig. We shouldn't be forced to give our bodies to science so that some middle-aged reality star can get Botox! And remember Ralph?!

PABLO

From the pet store?

RUFUS

Didn't you ever wonder why he kept sniffing his own butt?

PABLO

'Cause he was a freak.

RUFUS

Well yeah, but also he was a fugitive! He was an escaped Lab Rat!

PABLO

Escaped Lab Guinea Pig.

RUFUS

Whatever! They used him in an experiment to test how addictive Oreos are in comparison to cocaine. *Cocaine*, Pablo! He sniffed his butt because Big Pharma turned him into a strung-out addict!

PABLO

(Genuinely shocked.)

Ralph was a cokehead?

RUFUS

What? No, he was one of the guys that got fed Oreos. That stuff really messes you up.

*(RUFUS gets a chill thinking about it.)*

PABLO

Ok, well, that sucks and all, but why are you so paranoid? Nobody's trying to test on us. We're free to do whatever we want.

RUFUS

Oh, wake up, Pablo! Ever notice that we get fed at the same time every day?, like clockwork. You know why that is? So they can *drug us*, Pablo! They put drugs in our food that put us to sleep so they can run their little experiments on us without our ever having known! And the pipes that they put in here lead right back to where they start! They give you just enough hope that maybe you're finally getting out, and they snatch it away from you! And don't even get me started on the "food" they give us. A bowl full of weird little rocks? A baby carrot or some celery once a week? Why don't we ever get kale, or steamed broccoli, or a nice garden salad? I could go for a crouton every now and again. Aren't you sick of eating the same junk every day?

PABLO

Variety gives me indigestion.

RUFUS

Oh, come on! Don't you wonder about what life is like outside of this crate? Aren't you even a little bit curious?

PABLO

Curiosity killed the Guinea Pig. And think about all the good stuff that comes with living here. Someone else cleans our cage, refills our food and water bottle, brushes our fur... we don't have any responsibilities!

RUFUS

I want responsibilities! I want control over my own life! I want power! Don't you?

PABLO

No! These people take care of us, they have never been anything but good to us, they *love* us, and you still bite the hand that feeds you!

RUFUS

Oh, they love us, do they? Then how come they don't take us for walks like they do with the dog, or play with us like they do with the cat? They treat us like we're second class citizens.

PABLO

Because we're Guinea Pigs! We're not the kind of pet that you spend time with or pay attention to. We're just sort of.....there.

RUFUS

But I want more than that! Remember *G-Force*? We could be just like them someday, but we can't do it from inside this cage.

PABLO

That was just a movie, Rufus. We'd never make it out there on our own, we've never been in the outside world!

RUFUS

I could handle it.

PABLO

Oh, yeah? What about Baldy?

RUFUS

You don't seriously believe that old wives' tale, do you? It's just something parents tell their pups to keep them from running away.

PABLO:

No, it's true! Once Upon a Time-

RUFUS

-any story that starts off with 'Once Upon a Time' is not a real story-

PABLO

Once Upon a Time, in a townhouse far, far away in the Westchester County, lived the perfect family. There was a Mom, a Dad, a brother and sister, and their pet Guinea Pig, Fluffy. Fluffy had it all, a wheel

to run on, a plastic house to sleep in, and all the carrots a guy could ask for. Not to mention, the nicest coat of fur on the East Coast (*pointedly to Rufus*). But, because he was selfish, and ungrateful, and *stupid*, he still wanted more. So one night, after everyone in the house had gone to sleep, he snuck out of his cage and made a run for it. He had so much space to run around in, so much new territory to explore. He thought it was the best decision he had ever made, he thought he was genius! And do you know what the genius decided to do next, Rufus?

RUFUS  
(Quietly.)

Yes.

PABLO  
What did he do?

RUFUS  
(Reluctantly.)  
He snuggled up to the space heater for warmth.

PABLO  
He snuggled up to the space heater for warmth! And what happened next, Rufus?

RUFUS  
(Quietly, mumbling.)  
His fur caught on fire.

PABLO  
What was that?

RUFUS  
(More clearly.)  
His fur caught on fire.

PABLO  
His. Fur. Caught. On. Fire, Rufus! He narrowly escaped death by throwing himself into the dog's water bowl, but nearly all of his once beautiful coat was gone, and what was left was patchy and covered in slobber. All because he just couldn't leave well enough alone. And that is how Fluffy turned into Baldy.

(*Beat.*)

RUFUS  
You're not listening to me!

PABLO  
No, I'm not, because you're crazy!

RUFUS

You know I'm right! Just look at that thing, it has energy harvesting written all over it.

*(They both look at the wheel.)*

PABLO

I beg to differ.

RUFUS

Look out that window over there and tell me you don't want that. That you don't want to feel the wind, drink some rain, play in the mud, and reclaim our natural habitat.

PABLO

You think you'd survive out there? You have to be rushed to the vet every other week for eating too many wood chips.

RUFUS

You're wrong! We're animals, we belong out there.

PABLO

Maybe a hundred years ago, but not anymore. We've evolved into house pets.

RUFUS

And you call *me* stubborn? You can't even consider that I might be right for two seconds! You're so pig-headed.

PABLO

Don't you mean Guinea Pig-headed?

RUFUS

Pablo, I swear to- *(He stops himself and lets out a sigh.)* You're really ok with spending the rest of your life holed up in here?

PABLO

Yup. More than ok with it.

*(He walks over to the wheel and finally starts to run on it.)*

RUFUS

*(Staring off.)*

One day... one day I'll get out of here. *(Notices something offstage.)* Oh Lord, here comes the dog a-

*(Lights go out and a loud crash is heard. When the lights come back up, RUFUS and PABLO are lying on the floor.)*

PABLO

(Groaning, his eyes closed.)

What just happened?

RUFUS

*(Beginning to stand up.)*

I think the stupid mutt knocked us over.

*(Now standing, he looks around and realizes that the door to the cage has opened.)*

Pablo! Pablo!

*(Kicks him.)*

Get up!

PABLO

*(Whining.)*

I don't wanna...

RUFUS

Pablo, get. up.

PABLO

Why?

RUFUS

Because the door is open, stupid!

*(Opens his eyes, looks in the direction of the door, then stands up abruptly.)*

PABLO

Oh my God!

RUFUS

Oh my God!

PABLO

Oh my God!

RUFUS

What do we do?

PABLO

What you mean, what we do? We stay here and wait for them to find us and put us back on the desk, that's what we do!

RUFUS

Are you kidding me?! This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, and you're just going to throw it away?!

PABLO

Yup.

RUFUS

You can't be serious!

PABLO

Well, I am.

*(Walks in the opposite direction of the cage door.)*

I'm not going anywhere.

RUFUS

*(Beat.)*

Well, fine!

*(Walks tentatively toward the door.)*

I'll just... leave without you.

PABLO

No you won't.

RUFUS

Oh yes, I will!

PABLO

You'd never make it out there without me!

RUFUS

You don't know that.

PABLO

*(Pointing.)*

There's a space heater right over there.

RUFUS

So? I just won't go near it.

PABLO

You are forgetful, and you get cold easily, Rufus, you'll be bald within the hour!

RUFUS

I'll manage! I'll just hide somewhere and wait for someone to open a door, and when they do, I am out of here! I'll go live in a forest, or... a meadow! Yeah, I'll live in a meadow! A big one! With lots of grass and flowers! I'll spend all day running around, eating as much as I want, lying in the sun...

PABLO

You'll get eaten by a hawk.

RUFUS

Hawks aren't real, Pablo. They're just something parents made up so their pups wouldn't run away.

PABLO

No, they're not!

RUFUS

Yes, they are!

PABLO

Are not!

RUFUS

Are so!

PABLO

Are not!

RUFUS

Are so!

PABLO

You're stupid!

RUFUS

You're stupid!

*(Beat.)*

PABLO

Are you really gonna leave?

RUFUS

Yeah, I am.

*(Pause.)*

Are you coming?

*(PABLO pauses for a moment then shakes his head no.)*

RUFUS CON'T

Well... Then I guess this is goodbye.

PABLO

I guess it is.

*(RUFUS walks over to PABLO and the two hug.)*

RUFUS

I'll miss you, Pablo.

PABLO

Then don't leave.

RUFUS

I have to. I gotta get my ducks in a row.

PABLO

Guinea Pigs.

RUFUS

Gotta grab the bull by the horns.

PABLO

Guinea pig by the tail.

RUFUS

The world is my oyster.

PABLO

Don't you mean-

RUFUS

*(Pulling away.)*

Let's not do this now.

PABLO

Sorry.

RUFUS

*(Looking around.)*

Well... goodbye.

*(He stares at PABLO for a few more seconds then turns and walks off stage.)*

PABLO

Sweet. I get the cage all to myself.

*(Walks to water bottle and drinks from it.)*

PABLO

Wait a second this water does taste funny. And the tubes do lead to only one spot, and the food we get is always the same. Rufus is going to get himself killed, the TV showed dragons other horrible beasts. Why would he think leaving me like that was a good idea? He is such an idiot - he is going to get himself killed. I never thought I would say this but Rufus was my best friend.

*The next day Pablo wakes up to Rufus practically spooning next to him.*

PABLO

*(Acting unsurprised and smug)*

Well good morning my brave little Cavie companion. How did the great outdoors treat you?

RUFUS

I guess animals like us aren't meant to be on the outside.

*(looking pensive towards the big, scary world outside)*

I saw things, Pablo...Terrible things. I'm a changed pig.

PABLO

Now you get it. You are where you are meant to be. You better hydrate. Have a sip of water.

RUFUS

*(Perking up and walking towards the door of the cage).*

But it will make for a great story! Once upon a time, in a townhouse far, far away....

*THE END*