

ELK MOUNTAIN SHELTER

By

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**Synopsis:**

Snowbound in mountain top animal shelter, three friends find their salvation in an unlikely hero.

**Wright Now Play Later: October**

**Prompts:**

*Riding a dogsled (like they use in the Iditarod) except instead of dogs, it has cats*

*&*

*Small gnome doll/toy named Gucki who has been to 10+ countries and has lost an ear and an arm along the way.*

Cast: 4 (Flexible)

## STAGE DIRECTIONS:

*The front reception area of an animal shelter. Dead of winter. The space is a shambles. Our three characters are disheveled and worn.*

- A: It's snowing again.
- B: Is that helpful? Do you think that's helpful? It's not. It's not helpful.
- C: I think that was probably just a reminder that we're going to have to make some decisions? All of us. Together. Soon.
- B: I understand this is my fault. All my fault. I put us into this situation. All of us. I won't lie, I understand now just what a bad idea it was to open 'The Elk Mountain No Kill, No Cage, No Spay, No Neuter, Feline Shelter'.
- C: You couldn't have known we'd have a winter with record snows. Or that the road would be covered by a rockslide.
- A: But you should have known that a no kill, no cage, no spay, no neuter shelter would quickly outgrow a 1200 square foot former tanning salon.
- C: Yeah. And the food needs.
- A: And the/
- B: The Litter! I know. The litter. I'm sorry about the litter.
- A: The three of us should just lock up and walk out.
- C: We'd never make it to the main road.
- B: And we can't really do that to the cats, can we?
- C: It would be inhumane.
- A: The whole business model is inhumane.

B: I have a plan. I'm gonna need your help to figure it out. Where's that box of stuff the tanning people left.

A: Here it is.

B: Great. Now hear me out. There's a lot of Zip-Ties in there, right?

C: Why does a tanning salon need that many Zip-Ties?

A: Or a garden gnome? Or sparklers? Or doorjams? There's like a dozen doorjams in here.

B: Now listen. We take the Zip-Ties, we hook and tie them together into harnesses.

A: And work our way down the mountain to safety.

B: No the harnesses are for the cats. We harness them together, like a dog sled, and have them lead us all to safety.

A: They can't!

B: Those cats don't know the meaning of the word 'can't'.

C: But how will you?

B: I imagine the first two or three will be the most difficult. But once we've got a few into harnesses, the super structure of the harness should make getting the others in much easier.

A: This may finally get you to regret our not declawing them.

C: Also inhumane.

B: And those claws will provide critical gripping power in the snow. We'll fashion a sled from the litter boxes and use these leftover tanning lotion samples to wax the sled, and waterproof the cats.

(Beat)

*STAGE DIRECTIONS*

*A disembodied voice speaks*

D: There's only one problem with that plan... The snow will not displace the weight of three grown adults. It is too powdery. It is a snow the Inuit call 'tlapa'.

C: It's the gnome!

A: What the?

B: Your observation is a keen one, my friend.

D: My name is Klemto Zookwinkle, but you may call me Gucki.

B: Thank you, Gucki.

GUCKI You there. Lift me up! While I am sentient I am not animate.

C: Is that better?

GUCKI There is a secondary problem.

B: And that is?

GUCKI While a cat can achieve a speed of thirty miles an hour, they cannot maintain it. The cats will need to keep a slow and constant pace to accomplish this escape.

B: You're quite the gnome.

GUCKI I've traveled extensively and seen many things in my years.

A: You look pretty beat up.

GUCKI I lost my ear to a Siberian Grey Wolf while making my way to a tribal coronation outside of Ulan Bator. My arm? Falling off a ledge while trying to impress a potential lover at Carnival in Rio.

A: I don't believe any of this.

GUCKI        Neither did the Grey Wolf or my lover. But they both know better now. And soon, so will you.

B:            Where do we start?

GUCKI        Considering the resources at your disposal, your plan is incredibly sound. I calculate we'll one-hundred cat harnesses. We fashion one litter box sled for Gucki. I'll lull the cats using ancient Gnomes telepathic techniques so we can harness them. I'll be able to alert the authorities to your location by morning.

C:            Gucki, how can we ever thank you?

GUCKI:       I'd like the sparklers and the doorjams.

B:            What for?

GUCKI:       If our paths cross again human, I will be sure to tell you. Now, put me on the counter and to work on those cat harnesses!

**SCENE**