

PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

a partnership of Seattle Children's Theatre and Children's Theatre Company - Minneapolis
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Bunnicula

Story by

Deborah and James Howe

Adaptated for the Stage by

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Music Composition by

Chris Jeffries

Bunnicula was first presented by Seattle Children's Theatre for the 1996-1997 season.

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NOT LICENSED FOR PRODUCTION.**

CHARACTERS: (2 men, 2 women, 2 boys, 1 puppet)

In order of appearance:

Harold—a male dog (played by male)

Chester—a male cat (played by female)

Robert Monroe

Ann Monroe—his wife

Pete—their son, age 10

Toby—their son, age 8

Bunnacula—a mysterious rabbit (a puppet)

PRODUCTION OF NOTES

The four human members of the **Monroe** family are presented in a somewhat stylized way—as befits their function in the story from the animals’ point of view. Therefore, Mr. Monroe, his wife and their two boys all wear masks and costumes that emphasize (perhaps even **over**-emphasize) their “humanoid” qualities. They might even wear tall shoes, to give them extra height. Their behavior can also be slightly exaggerated—again, seen from the perspectives of a dog and cat.

Bunnacula himself is a large puppet, more in scale with the other animals than with the Monroe family. A puppeteer accompanies him around the stage.

Most importantly, since **Harold** and **Chester** behave in the most detailed and psychologically “human” ways, they should not be given animal costumes with big ears and tails. Rather, their clothes should be that of ordinary humans, with the smallest of concessions to their bestial identities.

In addition, the actors playing Harold and Chester should refrain from animal behavior. No barking, meowing, wagging, hissing, etc. And nothing that would render them undignified, or aware of their own animal natures. Instead, the subtlest “human” gestures or postures should be employed to suggest moments when the audience is reminded that they’re animals. But they never think of themselves that way.

The visual style of the play should also reflect Harold and Chester’s perspectives. All furniture and household settings should be slightly overlarge. It takes a little extra effort for the pets to climb into a chair, for example. But exact scale would be impractical and distracting, as well as impossible for the human characters. Suggestion is sufficient.

Finally, I want to encourage improvisation in all portrayals, to come up with the right stylistic balance. Remember, the story is told from Harold and Chester’s point of view. The styles and production elements should reflect that.

LIGHTS UP on a comfortable suburban home, in the midst of a rainstorm. WIND and RAIN are heard from outside the house.

In the living room area, CHESTER is curled up comfortably on an oversized armchair. HAROLD warms himself by the fireplace.

HAROLD addresses the audience, imitating Bela Lugosi in his first words.

HAROLD

“Good evening.”

THUNDER from outside.

On the other hand, it’s not a very good evening, is it? Outside, that is. The wind and rain are rather ferocious. But here in the Monroe house it’s warm and safe. A good place to be on a night like this.

HAROLD steps forward.

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Harold. My full-time occupation is dog. I live with Mr. and Mrs. Monroe, and their two sons, Pete and Toby.

CHESTER hacks slightly. He goes back to sleep.

Oh yes, our home is shared by a cat named Chester. Whom I am pleased to call my friend.

HAROLD sits on a large beanbag chair. Although it’s a doggie bed, he sits in it like any human being.

But this house is also occupied by another creature. Who appeared in our midst on a night much like this.

HAROLD focuses on the wall.

THUNDER is heard as the storm intensifies.

CHESTER blinks his eyes open and smirks at HAROLD’s concentration.

CHESTER

What are you doing?

HAROLD

Just obeying my orders. While the humans are gone.

CHESTER

They told you to stare at the wall?

HAROLD

They told me to watch the house.

CHESTER

They didn’t mean literally.

HAROLD

They didn’t?

CHESTER

Of course not. You’re just supposed to keep strangers out.

HAROLD

How do I do that?

CHESTER

I don’t know. You’re the watchdog. Bark or something.

Oh. I get it.

HAROLD

HAROLD "barks" at the door.

Hey! Hey! Stay outta here!

CHESTER

Not now. When you hear a noise.

HAROLD

Oh.

He settles into the beanbag.

Why can't they be more precise?

CHESTER

You know the humans. They're just trying to give us a sense of purpose. Like saying, "Be good, Chester."

HAROLD

Or "Stay, Harold!"

CHESTER

Exactly.

He freezes.

Hold everything.

HAROLD

What's wrong?

CHESTER

Flea in my ear.

He scratches furiously.

Got him!

HAROLD

You're shedding again, you know.

CHESTER

So what?

HAROLD

Remember the last time you got cat hair on that chair?

CHESTER sits up, disturbed by the memory.

CHESTER

The vacuum cleaner.

HAROLD
(to the audience)

There's nothing scarier.

CHESTER

Well, I say a little loose hair is a small price to pay for the privilege of owning a cat.

HAROLD

They say some humans don't even like animals.

CHESTER

You're right, Harold. Statistics show that many families will never know the pride and joy of owning a pet.

MUSIC begins, introducing the song "PET IN THE HOUSE." This is a lively number, in sort of a Gilbert and Sullivan style. Chester and Harold sing.

CHESTER

We know the hist'ry of civilization
From Ancient Greece to the Isle of Wight
But it all boils down to domestication
Of animals that no longer bite.

HAROLD

Dogs and cats and turtles and parrots
Mice and chimps and rabbits and ferrets
Squirrels and fish and pot-bellied pigs
Strange-looking insects with thousands of legs

CHESTER AND HAROLD

OH there's nothing like a pet

CHESTER

No reason to fret

CHESTER and HAROLD

Cause there's nothing like a pet in the house!

CHESTER

They Egyptians learned to worship cats
Which goes to show acumen
Can often be quite possible
In a certain breed of human

HAROLD

Goats and geese and horses and rats
Ducks and owls and geckos and bats
Cockatoos just love to prance
But don't put a lobster down your pants

CHESTER looks at HAROLD strangely.

CHESTER and HAROLD

Oh there's nothing like a pet

HAROLD

We almost never wet

CHESTER gives HAROLD a goose (the clawed kind).

CHESTER and HAROLD

No there's nothing like a pet in the house!

CHESTER

Imagine coming home to a dark and empty room

HAROLD

No one's even there to greet you at the door

CHESTER

To rub against your leg and ask you where you've been

HAROLD

And leave a small surprise on the floor

MUSIC hangs expectantly, while CHESTER tries to recover from HAROLD'S gaffe.

**HAROLD
(spoken)**

What'd I say?

MUSIC picks up with the next verse.

CHESTER

Oh you cannot trust a human who does not have a pet
Not even a turtle in a box
And it's no excuse to say you don't have the time
Cause even the President has socks

He holds up a large autographed picture of the famous cat.

HAROLD

Cows and shrews and hamsters and minks
Sheep and hogs and lemurs and skinks
Roaches and worms are not very verbal
But on the whole they're still better than gerbils

CHESTER tries to continue, but HAROLD gets carried away.

HAROLD

Bears and seals and tigers and whales
Moose and wolves and leopards and snails
Sharks and bulls and zebras and rhinos
Clams and yaks and dragons and dinos

**CHESTER
(yelling)**

Stop it!

MUSIC stops again.

What's the matter with you? This is a song about pets! Understand?

HAROLD

Sorry.

CHESTER

Dragons and dinos...for heaven's sake. Those are not exactly pets. Are they?

HAROLD

Well...maybe not in this neighborhood.

HAROLD jumps back into the song before CHESTER can reply.

HAROLD

Oh there's nothing like a pet

CHESTER

Just get one and you're set

CHESTER and HAROLD

Cause there's nothing like a pet in the house!

The song finishes.

A CAR is heard pulling into the driveway.

HAROLD sits up, expectantly.

HAROLD

Quiet. The humans are back.

CHESTER

Oh, stop fawning.

HAROLD

I heard them talking about getting a new vacuum cleaner. One that's even bigger. And louder.

CHESTER jumps up.

CHESTER

Don't just sit there. Help me pick this hair up.

HAROLD and CHESTER grab clumps of hair from the chair, but are caught by the entrance of the MONROE family, dressed in rain gear.

MR. MONROE holds a large box in his arms. Although the lettering indicates a contemporary shoe box, the scale of the box is closer to a packing crate.

MR. MONROE

What is going on here?

MRS. MONROE

Cat hair everywhere. All over my good chair, too.

She turns sternly to HAROLD.

What a naughty dog to be fighting with Chester.

HAROLD

What the...why is it automatically my fault?

CHESTER

Cause you're the dog.

HAROLD

Well, you can just tell them otherwise.

CHESTER pathetically rubs the back of his hand.

MRS. MONROE

Poor kitty.

MRS. MONROE gently rubs CHESTER's head as he grins at HAROLD.

HAROLD

Thanks a lot.

TOBY

Harold! Guess what happened at the movie!

MRS. MONROE

You can tell Harold all about it after you both take off your boots.

HAROLD turns to the audience.

HAROLD

See, everything that happens to them is explained to us. It's not just "Good boy, Harold." Or "Use this little boxy, Chester."

CHESTER

As though I need reminding.

MR. MONROE

If someone would take this, I'd like to get my coat off.

PETE

I'll take him.

TOBY

I'm the one who found him.

PETE

You'll drop him, you squirt.

No I won't.

TOBY

Yes you will.

PETE

Both of you get out of your coats. Now.

MRS. MONROE

HAROLD turns back to the audience.

As I was saying, Mr. Monroe is a college professor and his wife is a lawyer. So they're fairly intelligent humans.

HAROLD

After all, they own us.

CHESTER

The family has discarded their wet clothing, and Mr. Monroe brushes as much of the cat hair off of the chair before he sits on it—with the bundle in his lap.

TOBY sits next to HAROLD to tell him the tale.

All right, here's what happened. We got to the movie really late, because Dad was driving too slow cause of the rain.

TOBY

There's nothing wrong with a little caution on wet streets.

MR. MONROE

And Mom said not to disturb anybody, so we sat in the last row.

TOBY

Which is about a million miles away from the screen.

PETE

But as soon as I sat down, I felt something squishy on my seat and I jumped back up. And this usher came over to check out the noise, and Dad borrowed his flashlight. Too see what was in my chair.

TOBY

He turns to his father.

Can we show them now, Dad?

MR. MONROE

I suppose so. But hold onto them so they don't make any sudden movements. No telling how animals might react.

HAROLD and CHESTER look at each other with consternation.

MR. MONROE places the box on the floor. He opens the box and out comes a large PUPPET of a black and white rabbit. The puppeteer controls the rabbit, as it hops gently around the room, sniffing.

A rabbit?

CHESTER

It appears so.

HAROLD

Just what we need around here. Another mouth to feed.

CHESTER

What's that around its neck?

MRS. MONROE

PETE approaches the rabbit, and removes a ribbon with a piece of paper attached. He tries to decipher the note.

Some kind of note. But I can't make it out.

PETE

Let me see that.

HAROLD

He walks over and looks at the note.

It's just paper, boy. See? You wanna sniff it?

PETE

He puts it in front of HAROLD's nose.

Hmm. An obscure dialect of the Carpathian Mountain region.

HAROLD

How would you know?

CHESTER

I am part Russian wolfhound, you know.

HAROLD

You're part everything.

CHESTER

That may be, but I can read this note.

HAROLD

What's it say?

CHESTER

"Take good care of my baby."

HAROLD

A note from its mother?

CHESTER

Either that, or a piece of Romanian sheet music.

HAROLD

All right, boys. Let's make our little visitor safe and comfortable. There's an old crate and some wire mesh in the garage. That should do for now.

MR. MONROE

He looks hungry. I'll get him some milk and lettuce.

MRS. MONROE

HAROLD pulls CHESTER aside.

What do you think?

HAROLD

I don't think rabbits like milk.

CHESTER

There is a CRASH from offstage.

Ma! Toby broke the rabbit's house!

PETE
(off)

I just dropped it!

TOBY
(off)

MRS. MONROE

Just bring it here, boys.

TOBY

Pete won't let me!

PETE

(off)

He's too little to carry it!

TOBY

(off)

Am not!

PETE

(off)

Are too!

MRS. MONROE enters with a plate of lettuce and a bowl of milk.

MRS. MONROE

Just get it out of here. With as little hysteria as possible, please.

CHESTER

That lettuce looks repulsive. Bt if there's any milk left, I get it.

The boys enter, carrying an oversized wooden crate with open slats.

PETE

Ma, Toby says he's going to keep the rabbit in his room. That's not fair. Harold already gets to sleep with him.

CHESTER

Is that true?

HAROLD

Sometimes, when he sneaks stuff into his room.

CHESTER

What stuff?

HAROLD

Like cheese crackers, or brownies, or pretzels, or peanut butter sandwiches. Except peanut butter gets my mouth stuck.

TOBY

But he's mine! I found him.

PETE

You mean you sat on him.

TOBY

He stays in my room.

PETE

No way. I get the rabbit. You can have smelly ol' Harold if you want. Or that stupid cat.

CHESTER

That does it. I'm gonna bite his ankle.

HAROLD

Careful. He hasn't changed his socks for a week.

MR. MONROE

I think I know the best place for this rabbit. Right over there by the window. He'll get lots of sunlight and fresh air.

The boys put the crate in front of the window unit.

MRS. MONROE

I guess that's all right for the meantime. Now let's put the rabbit into his new home, and then off to be with both of you.

PETE

I'm not sleepy.

TOBY

He's not drinking his milk.

MRS. MONROE

You're right.

She picks up the milk bowl.

CHESTER

This is my chance.

CHESTER slinks over to MRS. MONROE.

MR. MONROE

I think that rabbit needs his sleep. Like two boys I know.

PETE

Not yet, Dad. Let's name him first.

MR. MONROE

Can't that wait until tomorrow?

TOBY

No, now! He has to have a name?

HAROLD turns to the audience as MR. MONROE puts the rabbit in the cage.

HAROLD

I have to agree. It took them three days to name me. And those were the three most anxious days of my life. Mrs. Monroe kept wanting to call me fluffy.

MRS. MONROE

Well, all right. How about...oh, say...Bun-Bun.

TOBY and PETE

Yuck! Ewww!

HAROLD

See? There she goes again.

MRS. MONROE

Well, then, how about...Fluffy?

PETE

Give it up, Ma.

HAROLD goes over and inspects the rabbit more closely. It sniffs HAROLD in turn.

HAROLD

You, he sort of looks like you, Chester. Except he's got longer ears and a shorter tail.

CHESTER

Not to mention a motor in his nose.

PETE

Let's see. We found him at the movies. So let's call him...Mr. Johnson!

Pause.

TOBY

Who's Mr. Johnson?

PETE

The guy who owns the movie theatre.

MR. MONROE

It's a small town, Pete. Let's avoid any confusion. How about Prince?

TOBY

You gotta be kidding.

MR. MONROE

I had a dog named Prince. At least, that was how he was formerly known.

TOBY

Why don't we name him after the movie?

PETE

Dracula? That's a stupid name.

TOBY

No it's not. Besides, I found him. So I should get to name him.

PETE

Mom, you're not gonna let Toby name him, are you? That's favoritism, and I'll be traumatized.

TOBY and PETE start to gang up on their mother.

TOBY

Please Mom? Please Dad? Can I name him Dracula? Please? Please? Please?

MRS. MONROE starts to leave the room with the milk bowl.

CHESTER

Cool it, kid! You're driving the milk away!

MRS. MONROE turns.

MRS. MONROE

No more arguments. We'll compromise. Since he's a bunny, and we found him at "Dracula," we'll call him....
Bunny-cula.

TOBY

Bunnicula! Way to go, Mom!

PETE

Ooh, scary.

MR. MONROE

Very clever of you, Ann.

MRS. MONROE

Thank you, Robert. That should make everybody happy.

CHESTER

Not until you put that milk down.

PETE

The name's okay. But I get to feed him.

MRS. MONROE

I'll put the milk back in the fridge. Maybe he'll drink it tomorrow.

TOBY

What about Chester? Maybe he'd like some.

CHESTER makes a beeline for MRS. MONROE and does some gymnastics in front of her.

MRS. MONROE

Don't be silly, Toby. Chester just wants to play. He's obviously had more than enough milk for today.

CHESTER is crushed. He slinks over to Harold, who sips water from his cup.

MR. MONROE

All right, boys. Bedtime.

The boys come over to the pets.

TOBY

Good night, Harold. Good night, Chester.

HAROLD gives TOBY a Doggie Shake (devise a good club handshake). CHESTER shrugs high and yawns widely.

PETE

Good night, you smelly old dog.

HAROLD spills a small amount of water from his cup onto PETE's foot.

Hey! Quit drooling on me!

PETE takes a step backward, only to bump into CHESTER, who gives him a small scratch.

Ow! Stupid cat.

The boys approach the rabbit, as HAROLD and CHESTER give each other a high five.

TOBY

Good night, Bunnacula.

PETE

(with a bad Transylvanian accent)

"I want to drink your blood."

The rabbit tilts his head, as if understanding this.

MR. MONROE

Bunnacula, eh? You lawyers do understand compromise.

MRS. MONROE

Well, Prince is a lovely name, too.

The family exits, leaving the pets alone with the rabbit.

HAROLD and CHESTER slowly approach the crate.

HAROLD

Doesn't say much, does he?

CHESTER

I wish they had named him Fluffy.

HAROLD

Still mad about that milk, aren't you?

CHESTER

I don't want to talk about it. I just want to curl up on the chair, finish my book, and ignore the rumbling in my stomach.

CHESTER goes to the chair and pulls out a large book. He begins to read. HAROLD turns to the audience.

HAROLD

I guess by now you've noticed that Chester is not your ordinary cat. He was originally a birthday gift for Mr. Monroe, along with a first edition by Charles Dickens.

CHESTER

An illustrious master of the narrative form.

HAROLD

So as you can see, Chester has developed a strong taste for books. Me too, as a matter of fact. I like to eat them.

CHESTER

Will you pipe down? It's hard to concentrate with all your ruckus.

HAROLD

What are you reading now?

CHESTER

Tales of horror and the supernatural. This one is by Edgar Allen Poe. You wouldn't appreciate it.

HAROLD

Maybe I would. Let me have a bite.

A strong WIND is heard from outside. A moonbeam falls on the rabbit's cage.

At this point, the rabbit puppet appears to come to life. He pulls his ears straight back.

CHESTER notices the rabbit.

CHESTER

That's strange.

HAROLD

What's that?

CHESTER slowly moves closer to the rabbit, as HAROLD follows.

CHESTER

I didn't notice his markings before. Look at those black spots.

HAROLD

What about them?

CHESTER

See how they seem to connect his head, neck, and back?

HAROLD

It's like he's wearing some kind of coat.

CHESTER

Not a coat. A cape.

Strange violin music is faintly heard from outside, along with the wind and the rain.

What's that?

HAROLD

Sounds like a violin.

CHESTER

Could it be...a gypsy caravan?

HAROLD

What's a caravan?

CHESTER heads for the window unit, and peers out into the rain.

CHESTER

A band of gypsies, who travel through the forest in their wagons.

HAROLD

Station wagons?

CHESTER

No, covered wagons. They set up camps around great bonfires, doing magic tricks. And sometimes, if you cross their palms with a piece of silver, they'll tell your fortune.

HAROLD

We could give them a spoon!

CHESTER

Silver, not silverware.

The MUSIC gets louder. They peer through the window again.

HAROLD

I don't see any bonfires.

CHESTER

Oh, it's just Professor Mickelwhite next door. Practicing his violin.

CHESTER comes away from the window.

I've got to stop reading these horror stories late at night.

CHESTER notices the rabbit staring at him as he walks past. The rabbit smiles hideously.

Harold.

HAROLD

Yes, Chester?

CHESTER

This rabbit has...fangs.

HAROLD

What, like a wolf?

CHESTER

More like a snake. Or a...bat.

But the rabbit hides his teeth before HAROLD has a chance to see.

HAROLD

What are you talking about? I don't see anything.

CHESTER

There's something very strange about this rabbit. We'd better be on our toes.

CHESTER cautiously curls into a chair, watching the rabbit.

HAROLD tries walking on his toes, giving up, then goes back to sleep in the beanbag.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE as the lights dim, then change to the following evening.

MUSIC CHANGES as PETE and TOBY run in to play with BUNNICULA, who is asleep. They carry a hockey stick and a hoop.

CHESTER, exhausted from his vigil, is now asleep in the chair. HAROLD follows the boys around.

Why does he sleep so much?

TOBY

Dad says rabbits feed mostly at night.

PETE

Well, the sun's going down. Let's wake him up.

TOBY

They open the cage and wake up the rabbit.

Come on, Bunnacula. Let's see if you can do any tricks.

PETE

Hey! I know a new one! Watch this!

HAROLD

HAROLD tries to balance a dog biscuit on his nose.

TOBY holds up the stick for BUNNICULA to jump over.

Jump, Bunnacula! Jump!

TOBY

BUNNICULA jumps over the stick.

Way to go!

PETE

We can have a circus!

TOBY

Good idea!

PETE

I can be a lion tamer, and Chester can be the lion.

PETE approaches CHESTER with a carrot. He pokes CHESTER with it.

Come on, you vicious man-eater. On your feet.

CHESTER opens one eye.

Back off, kid.

CHESTER

He's not in the mood. I'd rather play with the rabbit, anyway.

TOBY

TOBY puts the stick on the floor and hops around the room with BUNNICULA.

Quit hogging him! It's my turn!

PETE

Just a second. I'm not done with him.

TOBY

PETE

Give him here!

HAROLD

What about me? I'll play with you!

HAROLD picks the hoop from the floor where TOBY left it. He puts it around his waist and uses it as a hula-hoop.

HAROLD

Look at me! I'd like to see that rabbit try this. Look! Look!

TOBY

Quit barking, Harold! You'll scare Bunnacula.

BUNNICULA hops onto a table, upsetting a vase.

PETE

Look out!

MR. and MRS. MONROE enter.

MR. MONROE

What are you boys up to?

MRS. MONROE

My flowers! Who let the rabbit up on this table?

PETE

It was the dog's fault.

MR. MONROE

Oh come now.

TOBY

Pete wouldn't let me play with Bunnacula.

PETE

But Harold scared him.

MR. MONROE

Maybe there's not enough room in here to be playing.

MRS. MONROE

Of course there is. You boys just need to show a little more consideration.

A new SONG begins, "ROOM FOR ALL," in the style of a rather twisted ballet.

MRS. MONROE

You've got to slow!

MR. MONROE

Slow!

MRS. MONROE

Down! There's no need to race

MR. MONROE

It helps to give!

MRS. MONROE

Give!

MR. MONROE

Give! Each other lots of space.

MRS. MONROE

You shouldn't run!

MR. MONROE

Run!

MRS. MONROE

Run! All over the place!

MR. MONROE

Cause there's plenty of room

MRS. MONROE

Plenty of room.

MR. and MRS. MONROE

Plenty of room for all!

MR. MONROE

Why don't you Read!

MRS. MONROE

A!

MR. MONROE

Book! Just pick one from the shelf!

MRS. MONROE

Or you can Play!

MR. MONROE

A!

MRS. MONROE

Game! You can do that by yourself!

MR. MONROE

Or you can Ride!

MRS. MONROE

Your!

MR. MONROE

Bikes! It's better for your health

MRS. MONROE

So there's plenty of room

MR. MONROE

Plenty of room

MR. and MRS. MONROE

Plenty of room for all!

MRS. MONROE

We don't mean to lecture

We don't want to criticize

MR. MONROE

We don't want to hurt your self-esteem

Or bring water to your eyes

MRS. MONROE

Just play gently in the house
So flowers and lamps don't fall

MR. MONROE

Cause there's plenty of room

MRS. MONROE

Plenty of room

MR. and MRS. MONROE

Plenty of room for all!

MR. MONROE

Look at the

CHESTER

Cat!

MR. MONROE

And!

HAROLD

Dog!

CHESTER

You never see us fight.

HAROLD

We know we get!

CHESTER

Fed!

HAROLD

Well!

CHESTER

If we just keep out of sight

HAROLD

We know that Seen!

CHESTER

Not!

HAROLD

Heard!

CHESTER

Is the way to act that's right.

MR. and MRS. MONROE, CHESTER, and HAROLD

Yes there's plenty of room
Plenty of room
Plenty of room for all!

PETE

I guess the Way!

TOBY

We!

PETE

Play! Is too rough on the floor

TOBY

If we must Run!

And! **PETE**

Jump! We should really go outdoors **TOBY**

And if we Scared! **PETE**

The! **TOBY**

Pets! We won't do it anymore **PETE**

EVERYONE
Cause there's plenty of room
Plenty of room
Plenty of room for all!

MUSIC ends.

MRS. MONROE
Now what do you say we drive over to the pet story and find a nice new water dish for Bunnacula?

MR. MONROE
Excellent plan, dear.

And some rabbit toys! **TOBY**

There's no such thing. **PETE**

Yes there is. **TOBY**

Like what? Rabbits don't need toys. **PETE**

But I do! I could use a new rawhide bone! **HAROLD**

And I wouldn't mind some catnip. **CHESTER**

Please, Mom? Can we get a toy for Bunnacula? **TOBY**

We'll ask the sales clerk for a suggestion. **MRS. MONROE**

How embarrassing. **PETE**

Just put him back in his cage, Pete. We'll meet you out at the car. **MR. MONROE**

Bye, Bunnacula. We'll be right back! **TOBY**

PETE picks up BUNNICULA.

HAROLD

Why bother to buy a rabbit anything? He doesn't play catch, he doesn't fetch, he doesn't roll over to get his tummy rubbed.

CHESTER mumbles disagreeably from the chair, half-awake.

CHESTER

Neither do you.

HAROLD moves to CHESTER.

HAROLD

You know something? You're becoming downright grumpy.

CHESTER

Hmmph.

HAROLD

Why did you stay up all night watching him? What are you looking for? He's just a cute little bunny.

CHESTER sits up, irritated.

CHESTER

Cute little bunny! Hah! Hah!

PETE

Mom! The cat has another hairball!

PETE exits.

CHESTER

That shows how much you know about this situation. That rabbit is a danger to this household and everyone in it.

HAROLD

What are you talking about?

CHESTER

You'll see.

HAROLD

See what? What have you seen?

CHESTER

Nothing. Yet. Now if you don't mind, I'd like a little shuteye before I go back on night patrol. So go chew on a shoe or something.

HAROLD slowly moves off, muttering.

HAROLD

There's nothing wrong with a good used shoe.

CHESTER

Dogs are so easily offended.

CHESTER goes back to sleep.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE as lights dim to late night.

BUNNICULA comes alive in his cage, opening his eyes and looking around the room, watching CHESTER with caution. Then he stands on his hind legs and stretches out his little arms, in the classic "vampire" stance.

A poof of SMOKE occurs, and BUNNICULA's cage is suddenly empty!

CHESTER opens an eye.

CHESTER

What was that? If only I could...stay...awake...

He falls asleep.

With another poof of smoke, BUNNICULA appears on the floor! He stealthily hops by the sleeping CHESTER, in to the dark kitchen area. He faces the large refrigerator, which suddenly flies open! The light from the refrigerator shorts out, leaving the kitchen in total darkness.

Meanwhile, CHESTER blinks and looks around the room.

CHESTER

Must...stay...alert. Have to...watch...the rabbit.

He looks at the cage.

Gone...That's good...

He settles back down, then suddenly jumps up, arching his back.

Gone? The rabbit's gone!

CHESTER runs to the cage, examining it.

Still locked...How did he get out?

He calls out.

Harold! Harold! Get your tail in here! Harold!

HAROLD runs into the room.

HAROLD

Chester?

CHESTER

Quiet down, will you?

HAROLD

What's going on?

CHESTER

The rabbit's gone!

HAROLD

Gone? Where did he go?

CHESTER

If I knew that, do you think I'd be asking for your help?

A noise is heard from the darkness across the stage.

HAROLD

Something's coming.

CHESTER

Quick. Pretend to be sleeping.

CHESTER runs back into his chair. HAROLD heads for the beanbag. They make a noisy show of sleeping.

A SPOTLIGHT focuses on BUNNICULA as he hops back into the room. He stealthily moves across the floor to the table, when a puff of smoke occurs and the rabbit disappears! The SPOTLIGHT goes out, and the stage is dark.

What was that?

HAROLD

Hit the lights!

CHESTER
(in darkness)

Stage lights come back on to reveal BUNNICULA in his cage.

How did he do that?

HAROLD

How 'bout that? He was there all along.

CHESTER

You saw for yourself, Harold. The cage was empty!

HAROLD

Maybe he was hiding.

CHESTER

Behind what? A carrot? We saw it with our own four eyes.

HAROLD

It does seem a little strange. What do you think it means?

CHESTER

Shh. Rabbit ears are long for a good reason. We'll talk in the morning.

TRANSITION as the violin music, wind, and rain build and then fade with the morning light.

MR. MONROE enters in his bathrobe. HAROLD and CHESTER barely move, blinking their eyes open.

MR. MONROE

Good morning, all. My goodness, you animals are sleepyheads, aren't you? Have a rough night?

He moves into the kitchen area, yawning. He opens the refrigerator door.

Hmm. Hard to see in here. The bulb must have shorted out.

He sticks his head further in.

Holy cow!

HAROLD and CHESTER jump up, glance at BUNNICULA (who appears to be asleep), and run into the kitchen.

MR. MONROE pulls out a large white vegetable from the refrigerator.

Peter, come here! Right now!

HAROLD
(to CHESTER)

What is that thing?

CHESTER

Beats me. It looks like a white tomato.

PETE enters in his pajamas.

MR. MONROE

All right, young man. Have you been playing with your chemistry set in here?

PETE

No, Dad. Why?

MR. MONROE

This looks like one of your experiments. Do you know what this is?

PETE

It looks like a white tomato.

MRS. MONROE and TOBY enter.

MRS. MONROE

What's all the fuss about, dear?

MR. MONROE

I'm trying to figure out what this is.

TOBY

It looks like a white tomato.

MR. MONROE

Don't be absurd. How could...*(he looks at it more carefully)*...you know...it really does look like a white tomato.

MRS. MONROE

Only one way to find out.

She takes it to the table and picks up a large knife. CHESTER sits on the edge of the table, watching.

Chester, get off the table.

CHESTER

Rats.

HAROLD and CHESTER stand on their toes to peer over the table top, while the boys climb into the kitchen chairs.

MRS. MONROE cuts the large fruit in half (perhaps along a Velcro line).

MRS. MONROE

It's a tomato, all right. Here are the seeds.

TOBY

But it's white.

PETE

And it's all dry.

MRS. MONROE

Let me see that thing.

He picks up one of the halves.

So it is. There's no juice at all. What do you make of it, Ann?

MRS. MONROE

I guess it's gone bad. Though I've never heard of a tomato turning white before. Let's just throw it away and have breakfast.

CHESTER pushes HAROLD into the next room while the family begins their morning bustle.

In here.

CHESTER

What, now? She's going to cook some bacon.

HAROLD

Yes, now.

CHESTER

He pushes the reluctant dog into the living room, and makes sure they haven't been followed, before turning back to HAROLD.

A white tomato. Very significant.

HAROLD

Fine. Can I go now?

CHESTER

Did you get a good look at it?

HAROLD

I guess.

CHESTER

Then you must have noticed those suspicious marks on the skin.

HAROLD

Like what?

CHESTER

Like two puncture holes.

HAROLD

Oh, those marks. Sure, whatever you say. Don't you smell that bacon?

CHESTER

Hold on. Let me show you one of the books I've been reading.

CHESTER goes to the easy chair, lifts the cushion, and pulls out a book from his hidden stash. He shows it to HAROLD.

HAROLD

Mark of the.....Vampire?

CHESTER

Shhh!

CHESTER tiptoes over to the rabbit to check on him.

Still asleep, thank heavens. Would you keep it down?

HAROLD

I'd rather keep some of that bacon down?

CHESTER

This is more important.

HAROLD

More important than bacon?

CHESTER

Yes, more important than bacon. Tell me, Harold. Have you noticed anything a little funny about that rabbit?

HAROLD

No. But I've noticed a lot of funny things about you lately.

CHESTER

Think about it. That rabbit sleeps all day.

HAROLD

So do I. So do you.

CHESTER

Furthermore, he's got funny little sharp teeth.

HAROLD

So do I. So do you.

CHESTER

And he can get out of a locked cage.

HAROLD

So do...hmm. That is strange.

CHESTER

Remember where they found him?

HAROLD

At the movies.

CHESTER

Which movie? "Dracula"!

HAROLD

So?

CHESTER

So remember the note around his neck?

He picks it up off the table and hands it to Harold.

You said it was an obscure dialect of the Carpathian region.

HAROLD

That's right.

CHESTER

Now. Where exactly in the Carpathian mountains?

HAROLD looks at the note again.

HAROLD

Offhand, I'd say...Transylvania.

CHESTER

Transylvania! That proves my point!

HAROLD

What point?

CHESTER

And the white tomato confirms it!

HAROLD

Confirms what?

CHESTER

He drained it with his fangs! The evidence is overwhelming!

HAROLD

Evidence of what? What are you talking about? I can't stand it anymore!

CHESTER

Calm down. I thought only poodles got excitable.

HAROLD

Now I remember why dogs hate cats.

CHESTER

Not to worry. This book will tell us everything we need to know about vampires.

HAROLD

You think Bunnacula is a –

CHESTER

Vampire! Yes! That's what I've been trying to tell you!

HAROLD

Hmm. Only one way to find out.

CHESTER

What?

HAROLD

You'll see.

HAROLD goes to the cage and wakes up the rabbit, who turns to him with sleepy attention.

Hey Bunnacula! Watch this!

He jerks his thumb back.

Strike three! Yourrrr outta there! How's that?

BUNNICULA goes back to sleep. HAROLD turns to CHESTER.

Did I do it right?

CHESTER

That's an umpire!

HAROLD

Tell the rabbit. He obviously doesn't know what you're talking about.

CHESTER

Why do I even try?

HAROLD

You're way off base this time, Chester. Hey! Get it? Off base?

CHESTER

Listen carefully, you product of inbreeding. I said vampire. You do know what a vampire is, don't you?

HAROLD

Do I know what a vampire is? You're asking me if I know what a vampire is?

CHESTER

That's right.

HAROLD

You mean to stand there and ask me if I know—

Harold.

CHESTER

Haven't a clue.

HAROLD

Then listen up.

CHESTER

MUSIC begins as CHESTER begins to sing "VAMPIRE THEORY." This is a creepy tune, full of menace.

I don't want to give you nightmares
I don't want to make your dog hair
Stand on end
Cause you're my friend
But you better beware, beware
Beware of Bunnacula!

**HAROLD
(spoken)**

Go on.

CHESTER

Vampires wake up when day is dim
And one may say their blood is thin
They may be dead
But stay well fed
From the neck of their next victim!

HAROLD

You mean Bunnacula?

**CHESTER
(spoken)**

Yes!

HAROLD goes to examine BUNNICULA.

HAROLD

You mean to tell me this poor bunny
Is more than a pet with a nose that's runny

CHESTER

It's just an act, don't be a dummy
I don't think we should be so chummy
With an animal of this much power!

**HAROLD
(spoken)**

What power?

CHESTER

For example you might
Think this cage door is tight
And you would be right
But it puts up no fight
When he pops out at night
And stays out of the light
And although he lacks height
To give much of a fright
What a horrible sight
To turn vegetables white
With a big juicy bite
You know have to be bright
To know that I'm correct
He'll get us in the neck!

The neck?	HAROLD
The neck!	CHESTER
He'll get us in the neck?	HAROLD
They may not hear us holler	CHESTER
So we better wear our collars	HAROLD
Or he'll get us in the neck!	CHESTER
I'm afraid!	HAROLD
Be afraid! Be very afraid!	CHESTER
Cause he'll sink his teeth into you And you'll feel the blood go through you When he gets you in the neck!	
I'm afraid!	HAROLD
Be afraid! Be very afraid!	CHESTER
No it isn't a good habit To live with a vampire rabbit	
Who'll get us in the neck!	HAROLD
The neck!	CHESTER
The neck! He'll get us in the neck!	HAROLD
So now you know my goal is set To alert the humans to this threat Looks like I'll have to offer proof Just like an expert sleuth That this bunny's an evil pet!	CHESTER
Beware of Bunnacula!	HAROLD
Beware!	CHESTER
Beware!	HAROLD
Beware of Bunnacula!	HAROLD and CHESTER

*Song ends with a flourish.
BUNNICULA smiles hideously at the audience, baring his fangs.*