

# PUSS IN BOOTS

by Geoff Sims

## Cast:

Simple Simon: A rather dim lad.

Puss: His loyal feline companion.

Dame Cornflower: Simon's mum.

King Dom: The bumbling, well-meaning monarch.

Hastings: The king's loyal (?) advisor.

Princess Rosalita: The beloved heir to the throne.

Jill: The princess' lady-in-waiting.

Jack (Of all trades): The palace dogsbody.

King Rat: A downright nasty beastie.

Scratch: One of King Rat's right-paw-rats.

Sniff: Another of King Rat's right-paw-rats.

The Coarse-hairs: King Rat's vile henchvermin (Pi-rats).

Catishah: The guardian of cats everywhere.

Enor Mouse and Fay Mouse: White mouse servants of the queen of cats.

## ACT 1:

Scene 1: In front of the windmill

Scene 2: The throne room

## ACT 2:

Scene 1: A mystical deserted building

Scene 2: The Palace

Scene 3: By the well (front of tabs)

Scene 4: On board the pi-rat ship

Scene 5: In the brig (front of tabs)

Scene 6: The palace of carabbas

ACT 1

SCENE 1: In front of the windmill

*Enter Catisha.*

Catisha: Once upon a time, in the little village of Darkly-Down-Daggons, there lived a poor miller's wife and her son. They had fallen on hard times and were no longer able to afford even the flour ground at their own mill, but they were kinder to the village folk than they were to themselves and everybody loved them. One day the Queen of Cats was passing, oh, that's me, Catisha! She was travelling through the land observing, as a cat will, everything with a keen, green eye. She saw how good the hearts of the miller's wife and her son, Simon, were and decided to grant them a gift. A kitten from her own litter to be their guardian.

*Enter puss as a very young cat- possibly one of the youngsters?*

And Catisha watched, and she waited, for the time when young Puss would make them the happiest people in the land.

*Exit Catisha.*

*Enter Villagers and Simon.*

*HAPPY VILLAGER SONG*

Simon: Hi everybody!

Villagers: Hi Simon!

Simon: *(to audience)* Hello!

Audience: Hello!

Simon: You can do better than that, it's a lovely day! Hello!

Audience: Hello!

Simon: That's better. Lovely to see you. Welcome to Darkly-Down-Daggons!

Villager 1: Simon, mum said to let you have this string of sausages.

Simon: That's very good of your mother, are you sure she can afford it?

Villager 1: She says you can pay her for them when you're very rich.

Simon: Fair enough, I will make a note of it.

Villager 2: Simon, my dad says if you ever want any firewood just call round and he'll let you have some.

Simon: Thank you, I'm afraid we can't afford to pay this month.

Villager 2: That's okay Simon, you can pay us when you're very rich.

Simon: Fair enough, I'll make a note of it.

*Villagers exit*

Puss: Miaow!

Simon: What was that?

Puss: Miaow!

Simon: It's a kitten! What are you doing here little fellow? Are you lost?

Puss: Miaow!

Simon: Haven't you got an owner? *(Puss shakes his head)* Aah, poor little homeless creature, would you like to come home with me? *(Puss nods vigorously)* Well we can always use the extra company, don't suppose you're any good at milling? *(Puss shakes his head)* Ah well, neither am I you see, that's part of the problem. I don't think I was destined for milling. Come on then. Ooh, I'll just put these here a moment. *(Hangs sausages on a hook on the pros. arch. To audience:)* Could you keep an eye on them for me? Just shout out "Saussies Simon!" if anyone tries to take them?

Audience: Yes.

Simon: Thanks ever so.

*They head towards the windmill door. Suddenly there is a scream from inside and Dame Cornflower rushes out in a flap, stands and fans herself at the corner of the stage, breathing heavily.*

Simon: Mum? Are you alright?

Dame C: What? Oh, hello Simon. Yes, yes, no big deal. *(She has made a very big deal out of it!)*

Simon: What's the matter mum?

Dame C: Simon, I saw a mouse!

Simon: Where?

Dame C: There, on the stair.

Simon: Where on the stair?

Dame C: Right there. A little mouse with clogs on.

Simon: Well, I declare.

Dame C: Going 'clip-clippity-clop' on the stair!

*A white mouse appears inside the windmill door. Dame C shrieks again and flaps her skirts around.*

EEK! See! Scram nasty creature, shoo!

Simon: Looks like you turned up at the right time puss! Off you go!

*Puss runs into the windmill after the mouse. Banging and crashing sound effects offstage, then puss returns with two sheepish-looking white mice.*

Dame C: Oh, well done Puss! I think we'll keep you around. Now take them off into the fields and do whatever grisly thing it is that cats do with mice.

*Puss ushers the mice off, they look fearful.*

Dame C: Now Simon. Did any of the nice villagers give you anything this morning?

Simon: Yes mum, I got a nice string of sausages.

Dame C: And did you offer to pay?

Simon: Yes mum, they said I could pay them when I got rich.

Dame C: Oh Simon, they are so good to us. I'm afraid if we ever did get rich we'd owe them so much we'd be poor again very quickly. Did you make a note?

Simon: Yes mum, I made a note of it.

Dame C: Good boy. Now come inside and help your mother with her bunions.

Simon: Awh mum! It always makes my eyes water.

Dame C: That's ONIONS, not BUNIONS.

Simon: When it comes to your feet there's not much difference! (Holds nose)

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*Enter Scratch and Sniff*

Scratch: Be this the place Sniff?

*Sniff consults a map*

*During the following, Puss spies the two rats and conceals himself somewhere where he can spy on them.*

Sniff: Aye, Looks like it Scratch.

Scratch: Right then Sniff, ye heard what the Cap'n said. There's just an old woman and her dimwit son with all that lovely grain.

Sniff: Aye aye Scratch, lovely grain! Er, Scratch. Why do we want the grain? Can't we raid a baker's and get some luvverly pasties instead?

Scratch: Ahar me dear Sniff. Ye'll get yer pasties. We'll start with this here mill, then move on to the butcher, the baker...

Sniff: The candle-stick maker.

Scratch: The candle-stick maker. What? No, idiot! We're taking all their food, then there'll be a national famine and the king and all his fancy-pants courtiers will have to come crawling to us! Ahahar! The Coarse-hairs! The great Pi-rats!

*SONG: Yo ho yo ho (A pirate's life for me)*

Sniff: Ahahar, right. I'll, er, just go knock shall I?

Scratch: Nincompoop! Didn't ye hear what I said? We're Pi-rats... we don't go knocking and asking, we takes what we please!

Sniff: Hey, Scratch, there's some nice-looking jewellery over there! (to member of audience)

Scratch: Ahar yes, Sniff. Let's have a closer look shall we?

They skulk off into the audience, eyeing up jewellery, investigating handbags etc.

Sniff: Hey Scratch, I think this one's genuine Gucci.

Scratch: Nitwit! They're five for a pound down Cranborne market, not worth anything.

*They make their way back to the stage. En route Sniff spots the sausages.*

Sniff: Hey, Scratch!

Scratch: Yes Sniff?

Sniff: A sausage tree!

Scratch: A sausage tree? Let me see. Mmmm, lovely saussies...

*He goes to take some. The audience shout out, Scratch and Sniff leg it back into the audience. Simon enters, bringing with him a sack of corn. Puss runs over to him and gestures hurriedly.*

Simon: What's all the noise about? Oh Puss, I'd love to stop and play, but I've got work to do. I need to bring all these sacks upstairs for mum.

*Simon goes back into the mill. Puss comes centre stage, peering into the audience for signs of the rats. The rats creep up on the sausages once more. Audience shouts. Simon returns with another sack, rats flee again. Puss gestures out into the audience.*

Simon: Yes Puss, I'm sure the nice boys and girls would love to play with you. I'll join you when I've brought all the sacks up.

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*Roll of thunder, enter King Rat.*

King Rat: And so it begins... my domination is underway,  
Soon all the kingdom will be in my sway!  
Allow me to introduce myself. King Rat's the name, evil's the game. Ye know they say  
you're never more than twenty feet from a rat, well they're all my little servants and they're  
watching you my pretties! Oh yes they are! So next time you even think of dialling rent-o-kill  
remember, big brother's watching you!

*Enter Catisha*

Catisha: King Rat, we meet again.

King Rat: Curses, it's that prissy cat-queen. Well my dear, if you think you can spoil my schemes this  
time ye'r sadly mistaken. Yer little kitten guardian there was totally useless against my  
henchmen, and to say they're not the brightest pair of gemstones in my piratical doublet is  
the understatement of the century.

Catisha: King Rat, don't count your chickens. I've only just begun with you and your foul (fowl?)  
crew. Tell me, oh pi-rat king, why is it you always pick the dumbest for your henchmen?

King Rat: Quite simple my dear queen of cats. In my line of work it doesn't pay to have minions who  
can think for themselves. (To audience) So watch out ye lot of lubbers there! Most of ye look  
pretty mindless, but the slightest hint of mutiny and I'll be down among you with a different  
kind of cat before ye can say Jolly Roger!

*King Rat sweeps offstage.*

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*Puss stretches again and begins to rise, when he notices that his legs are functioning a little differently.*

Puss: Mmmore and mmore purrplexing. My paws appear possessed of a purrverse purrmutation.

*He tries to stand on two feet, rather wobbly.*

Puss: Miaow! My goodness, what purrfidiousness is this? My purrrfect paws supurrrposed in  
parchment. Miaow. How purrterbing. I must, purrforce, purrsue a purrfuncutory  
purrrambulation and purrruse the purrrformance of this purrrpendicular purregination.  
Though I purrspire, I must purrsevere.

*Puss totters around the stage, slowly gaining his feet. Simon emerges from the mill, half asleep.*

Simon: Puss, what's all this noise about.

*He rubs his eyes and stares at puss.*

Simon: Puss! You're walking.

Puss: Purrcipiently purrceptive young Simon.

Simon: Puss, you're talking!

Puss: But of course I'm talking.

*Pause*

*Both together:*

Simon: Wait a moment

You can talk!

Of course I can hear you.

You've never talked before.

Animals can't talk.

Puss: Wait a moment

You can hear me!

Of course I can talk.

You've never listened before.

All animals can talk

You just have to know how to listen.

Simon: Oh puss, this is wonderful! How has this happened?

Puss: I'm not purrfectly sure as to the purrpetrators young Simon.

*Enor and Fay scuttle out of hiding and jump up and down, excitedly miming 'queen of cats' and 'king rat'.*

Puss: Rrreally? Did she? Miaow, my my.

Simon: Puss, can you understand what they're saying?

Puss: But of course my dear Simon. Like I say, all animals can talk, you humans just don't listen. Let me translate. The mice, who, by the way, are no mere mice but purrsonal repurresentatives of her majesty, the queen of cats, say that the arch enemy and purrpetrator of purrnicious purrterbation, King Rat, has returned to these shores.

*All freeze and look around themselves*

Simon: King Rat?

*All freeze and look around*

Puss: Yes, King Rat

*All freeze and look around.*

Simon: Who's King Rat?

Puss: King Rat is a purremptory villain, a self-proclaimed pi-rat king who roams the skies in his armoured dirigible, the Lead Zeppelin.

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*Puss hides. Enter Jack with a bugle, Jill close behind.*

Jill: I wish you wouldn't go so fast Jack, I can barely keep up.

Jack: Sorry Jill, the king does insist I go on ahead to proclaim his arrival, and when they're riding in a coach and I'm on foot I have to go quickly or they get there before me. Anyway, aren't you supposed to be riding in the carriage with the princess?

Jill: She sent me on ahead to find a nice picnic spot. Somewhere sunny, but not too bright, shady, but not too gloomy.

Jack: Better keep moving then. This lot don't look too bright but they're pretty gloomy.

Jill: We'd better move the plot along and get to the jokes then. Here will be fine. Well?

Jack: No, it's a mill.

Jill: No, I meant well.... are you going to proclaim or not?

Jack: Isn't it a bit early in the plot for that? The weddings won't be for another hour yet at least.

Jill: I said proclaim, not propose. The royal party will be here any minute.

Jack: Oh yes, you're right. (In a loud, proclamation voice) His royal highness, King Dom and her royal highness, the princess Rosalita. What do you think?

Jill: Not bad. Bet they couldn't hear you at the back though. You'll have to give those lungs more practice. Don't worry, a short spell in the (Aldersholt Drama Club) and they'll at least be able to hear you halfway down the hall.

Jack: I've always been told I have trouble projecting. That's why I lost my job at the cinema. Luckily I have this (holds up bugle) to get people's attention.

Jill: And I do love a man with a big horn.

Jack: Jill! It's a bugle.

Jill: Then play that bugle-oo baby, let's hear you swing.

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*Fanfare, enter Puss.*

Puss: Your majesty, I have travelled far to bring you a gift from my master, the Marquis of Carrabas.

Dom: Your master is a tent?

Hastings: Marquis, your majesty, not marquee. But mark my words, he is looking to canvas your support. One might even say, pleading for your a-tent-tion.

Dom: That's quite enough Hastings. What is a Marquis anyway.

Hastings: Somewhere between a duke and an earl.

Dom: Sounds uncomfortable.

Hastings: (to puss) If I may enquire, sir, where exactly is this 'Carrabas' you speak of? I've never seen it marked on any maps.

Puss: Erm, it is known by that name in the cat tongue, sir. Where exactly it lies in human terms I cannot be sure. But the Marquis is human, your majesty.

Dom: A land of cats eh? Sounds just what we need to get rid of those blasted rats.

Puss: Yes, your highness. And to show his support for your cause, my master has sent you a gift.

*Puss waves a paw, the two white mice appear.*

Dom: Argh! Rats! Traitor! Traitor cat has brought rats into my palace, off with his head!

Hastings: Your majesty, they're only mice.

Puss: I beg your pardon, sir, but these are not 'just mice'. Allow me to introduce Enor and Fay, two very magical white mice. A present for your majesty from the Marquis of Carrabas.

Dom: Magical, eh? What do they do?

Puss: Allow them to demonstrate.

*The mice perform a feat of acrobatic or magic skill.*

Dom: Oh very good! I shall appoint them court jesters and they shall be my daughter's pets. Rosalita!

*Enter the princess.*

Rosalita: You called, father?

Dom: Yes, Rosalita I have a present for you. These two remarkable white mice. Show her what you can do.

*More tricks from the mice.*

Rosalita: Oh, father, they're adorable. Do they have names?

Puss: Yes, your highness. They are called Enor and Fay, a gift from my very rich, very handsome master, the Marquis of Carrabas, sent with love.

Rosalita: Ooh! A kitty cat! Can I keep him too?

Puss: Alas, your highness, I must be away to muster the army of the Marquis of Carrabas against the rats. However, surely our paths shall cross again. May I bear your thanks to my master, who is, of course, very handsome and very rich?

Rosalita: Oh yes. Tell him to come and visit very soon

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ACT 2:

SCENE 1: Some mystical deserted building.

*Scratch and Sniff are on watch.*

Sniff: Hey, Scratch?

Scratch: Yeah Sniff?

Sniff: What're we doing again?

Scratch: We're on lookout Sniff.

Sniff: *(Sniff looks round)* What Scratch?

Scratch: Lookout Sniff.

Sniff: I can't see anything, Scratch.

Scratch: Not Look Out Sniff, we're on lookout, we're looking out.

Sniff: Oh, I see Scratch. Um, Scratch, what are we looking for?

Scratch: We're looking to see if we see anything.

Sniff: I see. And say I see something, what do I say?

Scratch: Ye says what ye sees.

Sniff: Like catchphrase?

Scratch: Yes, Sniff.

Sniff: So, say I see something, I say what I see?

Scratch: Yes, Sniff.

Sniff: Scratch?

Scratch: Yes, Sniff?

Sniff: I see something.

Scratch: What?

Sniff: I see a tree.

Scratch: Ye see a tree?

Sniff: I see a tree.

Scratch: Ye don't need t' say if ye see a tree. Ye only need t' say if ye sees something unusual.

Sniff: Oh. Scratch?

Scratch: Yes, Sniff?

Sniff: I see an unusual tree.

Scratch: Oh ar? And what's so unusual about this tree ye say ye sees?

Sniff: It's creeping up on us Scratch.

Scratch: Creeping up?

Sniff: Yes Scratch. You said to say what I see if I see something unusual and I say I see an unusual tree creeping up on me.

Scratch: Trees don't creep Sniff.

Sniff: I know, Scratch, that's what makes it so unusual.

*Hastings appears in the wings. He is either a) dressed as a tree, or b) holding some twigs in front of his face.*

Hastings: Pssst!

Sniff: Scratch!

Scratch: What?

Sniff: The tree 'pssst' me!

Scratch: The tree 'psst' yer?

Sniff: The unusual tree crept and 'psst' me!

Scratch: That's a very unusual tree. It must have had bad experiences with dogs.

Hastings: Psst! It's not a tree, it's me.

Sniff: The unusual tree I say I see creeping up on me and psssting says it's not a tree, it's me.

Scratch: Well it can't be ye, ye'r ye and I'm me, so who's the tree?

Sniff: Unusual tree, you can't be me and you can't be him, who are you?

Hastings: Idiots! (*Drops disguise*) It's me, Hastings.

Sniff: Hey! It's not an unusual tree! It's the king's advisor.

Scratch: What do ye want? And how did ye find us?

Hastings: Idiot! That's not your concern. I must speak with King Rat.

Scratch: Well King Rat's having a rat nap and he's not squeaking to ye nor no one.

*Crash of thunder. Enter King Rat.*

King Rat: Enough! Scratch. Go and iron me long johns.

Scratch: Oh, but cap'n, they're so cheesy!

King Rat: Of course they're cheesy! Get on with it! An' do it Caerphilly!

Scratch and Sniff: Aye aye. (Exit)

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Dame C: Ah, there there sire. Tell Dame C what the problem is.

Dom: It's Rosalita, she's not in her rooms. My darling baby's been kidnapped by pi-rats!

Simon: Are you sure? Maybe she just went out for a walk?

Dom: I found this in her room. *(Holds up a hat, glove or something else recognisable from Hasting's costume)*

Puss: It's that Hastings! Your majesty, Hastings has betrayed you, he's in cahoots with King Rat.

Dom: Oh my poor daughter, in the hands of that brute.

Simon: Dont worry your highness, we'll rescue her. Somehow.

Dame C: Where's that Jack fellow? He seems a pretty useful chap to have about.

Puss: Oh no! Jack and Jill, the Pi-rats have them too!

Simon: You mean, it's just us?

Dom: Against a pi-rat horde?

Dame C: Oops, I think I left the tap running...

Puss: Come, madam, courage! Are you a man or a mouse?

Dame C: Neither. Whatever gave you that impression?

Dom: Madam, we cannot sit back and let King Rat take my daughter and Jack and Jill hostage. I may be old, but I will join you Puss.

Simon: And I may be simple, but I'm with you Puss.

Dame C: And I may be young and beautiful but I guess I'll have to come along to keep an eye on you two.

Puss: Then that's settled. Off we go!

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King Rat: Now my pretty, how'd you like my ship? Ain't she the finest vessel ye ever clapped eyes upon?

Rosalita: Hah. My dad's got a nicer gravy boat.

King Rat: Arharharhar! The lassie's got guts. Tie her to the mast!

*A couple of rats lead the princess a bit upstage and tie her to the mast.*

Rosalita: As soon as my father knows I've gone he'll be after you with all the palace guard, and the army of the marquis of carabbas, what do you think of that?

King Rat: Well missy, I've sailed all over this 'ere land and I've never heard of no marquis of currant bun, whoever he might be. If you mean that there feline fellow I'm afraid he's floundering with the fishes right now, arharharhar!

Puss: *(Offstage)* Is that so?

*Puss, King Dom, Simon and Dame C enter. Puss has a rapier, the others have makeshift weaponry improvised from household items.*

King Rat: What?! Puss in boots! Well now, it seems the cat has nine lives... let's see how many I can rid him of!

Puss: King Rat, your reign of terror is over!

King Rat: Is that so? Scratch, Sniff!

*Scratch and Sniff come piling onstage.*

S&S: Aye aye cap'n?

King Rat: Which one of you left the rope ladder down?

*Scratch and Sniff point at each other.*

King Rat: Never mind. It's time our guests were made comfortable, I'm sure there's room in the brig.

Sniff: Oh yes cap'n, it's a big brig.

Dom: Release my daughter at once you villain.

King Rat: Ah, your majesty. So glad you could join us. Your crown, if you please?

Dame C: Just you try and take it.

King Rat: And Dame Cornplaster too. I do love these family affairs. Attack!

*Comedy fight- It's more of a chase than a battle. Characters run offstage pursued by enemies then back across with the order reversed. Occasional comedy trips, hits with cod weapons, chase out into audience, maybe letting kids 'hit' the evil rats etc.*

*At one point Sniff runs across the stage, looking into the wings. Dame C creeps up behind him and is about to clobber him. Scratch enters behind her.*

Scratch: Avast behind!

Dame C: *(Whirling round)* How dare you!

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