



WHY CATS CHASE RATS

A play for two actors
from Roustabout Theatre Home Delivery

This play is written for you to practise and put on at home.

You could perform it for the people in your household, or why not try filming it on a video call to others in your family, or friends!

There are ideas and hints to help you. The only rule is to **HAVE FUN!**



Did you know?

This play is based on a legend from the **Congo** in central Africa. Traditionally, it would have been told by the Alo Man, a storyteller who travelled from village to village, entertaining people with his tales.

The Characters

This play needs two actors. One actor plays **CAT**. The other plays **RAT**.

Decide who you would like to pretend to be!



CAT



RAT

Costumes

CAT and **RAT** are what are called anthropomorphic characters. This means that they are animals that walk, and talk, and behave like humans. It is up to you to decide how human or how animal their costumes are.

Props

The things that actors use in a play are called props. They don't have to be real! You can make-believe. For this play, you will need:

A boat

Tick them off to make sure you have everything!



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How to Put on the Play

The words next to the characters' names are what they say.

The words in **green boxes** are called stage directions, and tell you what the characters do.

When you see the word **[Aside.]** that means that the character is talking to the audience, and the other characters can't hear them.

A number of times in the script you will see the stage direction **[Beat.]**. This is a very short pause between lines, and usually shows when a character has had a new idea. Every time you see one, ask yourself, 'What is the new idea that my character has just had?'

A Suggestion!

The play is written as three separate scenes. One on the beach of a desert island, one on a boat in the middle of the sea, and one on a beach on the mainland. How will you show these three different places? And what will happen whilst you move from one scene to another? Perhaps there could be some music playing.





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Checklist:

Have you decided which character you will be?

Have you got your costume?

Have you collected your props?

You are ready to go! Here is the script. Let's play!



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**Here you will find what you need to say!
Read the words in black.**



SCENE ONE

**Here you'll find what
you need to do!**



CAT and RAT are sunbathing on the beach of the desert island that they share.

CAT

Do you know what, Rat?

RAT

What, Cat?

CAT

We really are very lucky, aren't we?

RAT

We are. Very lucky. Two dear friends, sharing this island together.

CAT

It's paradise. Both of us have plenty to eat. You have the roots of the cassava trees.

RAT

And you have the birds that nest in the cassava trees.

CAT

Delicious.



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▶ RAT Delicious.

Pause.

◈ CAT Rat?

▶ RAT Yes, Cat?

◈ CAT Do you ever get bored?

▶ RAT Bored?

◈ CAT Bored with eating the same food every day. I mean, I love eating birds, but I wonder if there's something else.

▶ RAT And I love eating cassava root, but it does get a bit same-y after a while.

◈ CAT What else could we eat though?



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RAT points out to sea.

▶ **RAT** I bet there's loads of different foods out there, across the sea.

◆ **CAT** Across the sea?! You know that I can't swim. And I hate my fur getting wet. *[Beat.]* I am a cat, after all.

▶ **RAT** But what if we could get across the sea without getting wet? How about then?

◆ **CAT** That's impossible.

▶ **RAT** No, it isn't. I've made a boat.

◆ **CAT** You've made a boat?!

▶ **RAT** Yes, I've made a boat.

◆ **CAT** You are a clever fellow, Rat, and a very dear friend. *[Beat.]* How did you make a boat?

▶ **RAT** What, Cat?



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🟡 CAT

How did you make a boat? You are a rat, after all. How does a rat make a boat?

▶ RAT

I used my teeth. I dug up a whole cassava root, and hollowed it out.

🟡 CAT

That must have meant doing a lot of work.

▶ RAT

It meant eating a lot of cassava.

[Beat.]

So, how about it? Do you fancy sailing to the mainland together? In my boat that will keep us both safe and dry?

🟡 CAT

Do you know what, Rat?

▶ RAT

What, Cat?

🟡 CAT

I do.





SCENE TWO

CAT and RAT are on board the boat in the middle of the sea.

▶ **RAT** Well, this is all going rather well, isn't it? We're halfway to the mainland, the boat is holding out, and neither of us has been seasick.

◀ **CAT** You're a very dear friend, Rat.

▶ **RAT** I am, Cat.

◀ **CAT** Do you know what, Rat?

▶ **RAT** What, Cat?

◀ **CAT** All this rocking back and forth is making me sleepy. Is it alright if I have a little nap?

▶ **RAT** Of course, it is my dear friend. I'll wake you when we get to shore.

CAT falls asleep and starts to snore.





▶ RAT

[Aside.] Listen to him, snoring away! I'd have a little nap too, only I am so hungry. If only I had thought to bring some cassava with me, so that I could have a snack.

[Beat.]

Wait! I did bring some cassava with me. Our whole boat is made of cassava! What harm could it do for me to have a little nibble?

RAT eats a bit of the boat.

▶ RAT

[Aside.] I thought that I was bored of cassava, but right now that tastes delicious! I'll have another little nibble.

RAT eats a bit more of the boat.

▶ RAT

[Aside.] Scrumptious! I'll have another little nibble.

RAT eats even more of the boat.

▶ RAT

[Aside.] It's hard to stop once you've started. And I am so hungry.





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RAT eats a lot of the boat.

▶ RAT

[Aside.] I am one full rat!

[Beat.]

Wait! Why are my paws wet? Oh no! What have I done? I've eaten a hole right through the bottom of the boat! We're sinking.

RAT shakes CAT.

▶ RAT

Wake up, Cat! We're sinking! We're going to have to swim for it.

▶ CAT

Okay.

[Beat.]

No, I've just remembered. I can't swim.

▶ RAT

Hold on to my back, dear friend, and I will get you safely to shore.



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SCENE THREE

CAT and RAT are lying exhausted on the beach.

🟡 **CAT** We made it. Thank you so much, Rat, dear friend. You have saved my life.

▶ **RAT** A pleasure, dear friend. And, now that we have reached the mainland, we can start looking for other things to eat. No more cassava!

🟡 **CAT** No more birds!

🟡 ▶ **BOTH** Hooray!

🟡 **CAT** I wonder what I'll find to eat.

[Beat.]

Wait. Why did the boat sink, Rat?

▶ **RAT** It just did, Cat.





- 🟡 CAT Boats don't just sink, Rat. Where did the water come from?
- ▶ RAT The sea.
- 🟡 CAT And how did the sea get in the boat?
- ▶ RAT There was a hole.
- 🟡 CAT And how did the hole get in the boat?
- ▶ RAT Erm....
- 🟡 CAT How did the hole get in the boat, Rat?
- ▶ RAT I... er... ate it...
- 🟡 CAT You ate it? You ate it?? You ate it???
- ▶ RAT Yes. Sorry.





A long pause.

🟡 CAT

Do you know what, Rat?

▶ RAT

What, Cat?

🟡 CAT

I've decided what I am going to eat.

▶ RAT

Birds, Cat?

🟡 CAT

No, Rat. You!

▶ RAT

You'll have to catch me first!

RAT runs off, as fast as RAT can go. CAT chases after him.

The End.



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