

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

CHARACTERS

CORPORAL CATSUP - A Colonel Mustard-type. Always ready for adventure, but even more ready to tell a story about his greatest adventures. He runs the Club and finances it, although, lately he's been requiring LEAH to donate considerable sums to keep the Club afloat. He is incapable of thinking of the needs of others and always puts himself first, making him an absolutely insufferable human.

ILLINOIS JOHNSON - An Indiana Jones-type. Although he's constantly on adventures, he would much rather spend his time in the classroom, where it's safe and comfortable. He only goes on adventures because of his need to pay off his overwhelming student loan debt. He's a professor of archaeology at the University of Wisconsin. He's also not too bright.

LEAH FISHER - A Princess Leia/Carrie Fisher-type. She's bold, loud, and incredibly wealthy. She's also never seen without her enormous martini glass in her hand. She's a fun drunk, ready to party whenever and wherever she can. She runs Fisher Pharmaceuticals, an international drug firm on the Fortune 100 list. She has recently donated a lot of money to the club in the hopes that Catsup would be able to locate the Fountain of Youth and she could use it to bring a new product to her company.

MONTY/CAPTAIN MARLIN/BARNEY - A Captain Nemo-type whose hand has been possessed by a puppet named MONTY. MARLIN is mute due to the possession so MONTY does all the talking. MARLIN has a submarine named the Thunder From Down Under, which is where he spends most of his days due to being crushingly introverted. MONTY is the polar opposite of MARLIN. He's outgoing, brash, and hyper-sexualized. MONTY is, in reality, the spirit of the lost adventurer BARNEY who mysteriously disappeared on an expedition with CATSUP.

MARY JANE - The club's long-standing intern, acting as the secretary, accountant, and whatever official duties The Club needs having done, all without getting paid. She's strong, but soft-spoken. She's been walked on for her entire life and is finally ready to be the one who does the walking. She often joins the club members on their adventures, serving as a key piece of their successes, but CATSUP refuses to see her contributions.

KARYN WARNER - She's a new member who's also the sea witch who cursed MARLIN with a possessed puppet because MARLIN and CATSUP were responsible for wiping out her entire tribe while on the hunt for the Fountain of Youth. She'll spend a lot of time suggesting people buy into her new business, BB-NFT, which stands for Beanie Baby - Non-Fungible Tokens.

It's a take on the Beanie Baby craze of the 90s, but somehow supposedly related to cryptocurrency, while in reality, just another pyramid scheme she's using to scam people out of their money.

PHANTOM/BERNICE - At the start of the show, PHANTOM's voice comes out of a potted plant she has 'possessed'. The plant should be something that can be brought from table to table for AUDIENCE interactions. She has been haunting CATSUP for the last year because she is BERNICE, the daughter of BARNEY, a former club member who disappeared on an adventure with CATSUP. She's been haunting CATSUP to get details on BARNEY's disappearance, as well as to get revenge on CATSUP for his involvement in it. BERNICE is a little crazed from spending the past year in solitude and has a difficult time understanding boundaries and normal human interaction.

PREMISE

The Cabal of Crusading Knights is holding its 100th Annual MacGuffin Ball, an event for all members of this band of adventurers to come together and celebrate the past year and discuss their greatest triumphs. All people in the AUDIENCE are considered members of the Cabal and should be treated as such.

SETUP

There is a podium, table, and five chairs set up on the stage. The PHANTOM's potted plant is set at the center of the table. The room should be decorated with artifacts from the different adventures of the club's members. These could be a combination of real artifacts, like the Staff of Ra, and funny artifacts, like "Motel Room Key Found at the Bottom of the Pool of the Motel 6 in Scranton".

PRE-SHOW

Guests of the event will start the night at the check-in desk with MARY JANE, who will give them their name tags and sign them in. She will remind them of needing to pay their club dues, as no one has been paying them and the club is destitute. They've even had to sell the club's mansion, which is why the event is not being held there. She will be friendly, but annoyed that she is being left to do the actual work while the rest of the club's board members are inside having fun.

The rest of the CAST, except PHANTOM and KARYN, will be escorting groups to their tables, as available. KARYN will come in as a guest and will be seated at a table.

CATSUP will tell everyone about his latest adventure, THE PILLAGING OF THE FORGOTTEN SACRED CHEST, an obvious retelling of RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK.

ILLINOIS will reluctantly take people to their seats, while spending far more time inspecting his notebook and a map, which he believes leads to the location of the Lost Ark, somewhere at the event's location. His map is a children's menu for a Lou Malnati's pizza restaurant with a maze on it which has a treasure box in the middle. He may identify relics around the room and give their historical significance, while also asking for help in deciphering the 'map'.

LEAH will have an enormous martini glass, filled with a clear liquid, and will be annoyed that she is being asked to help out at all. She'll ask people what they think about CATSUP as their leader and if they have any ideas of how

they can get him out of his position. For the most part, she'll do her job as efficiently as possible, seating people quickly so she can get back to drinking, unless there is a particularly good-looking club member whom she will lavish attention on.

MONTY, will be very eager to meet everyone, especially if they are female. CAPTAIN MARLIN will look exhausted by the whole endeavor, as he is merely being taken along for the ride MONTY is leading him on, but MONTY will be more than ready to talk to everyone about everything, as long as he can make it dirty. MONTY will make countless jokes about MARLIN's tiny penis, making it obvious how much these two absolutely hate each other.

When KARYN is seated, she will be focused on selling the people at her table on her newest product line, BB-NFT. She'll be excited to tell everyone about how this is different from the last time Beanie Babies were a hit and that this time they're actually a great investment. She won't have a lot of specific details on how it works and will resort back to telling them how much money they can make instead of answering questions, as well as letting them know that if they really want to make money off their investment, they should join her in selling them, because they get paid in Beanie Babies. She may also roam the room to look for others who might be interested in joining her company.

CATSUP, LEAH, MONTY, ILLINOIS, and MARY JANE will each select people for the oath/handshake during this period.

ACT I: INTRODUCTIONS

Once the guests have arrived, CATSUP will gather the CAST, except KARYN, to join him on stage. They stand in a line, starting STAGE LEFT: LEAH, ILLINOIS, CATSUP, MARLIN, MARY JANE.

CATSUP
(to AUDIENCE)
Ahoy hoy, Adventurers!

CATSUP will work with the AUDIENCE to get them to reply with "Ahoy hoy", which is an ongoing bit for the start of all segments of the show.

ALL
We are the Crusading Knights!

CATSUP
(steps forward)
For exploration!
(steps back)

ILLINOIS
(realizing it's his
turn, steps forward)
Adventure.
(steps back)

LEAH
(steps forward)
Freedom.
(steps back)

MONTY
(steps forward)
Honor
(steps back)

MARY JANE
(steps forward)
Respect.
(steps back)

CATSUP
And most of all, we crusade for those
who can crusade with us no longer.

ALL
(the CAST is much
more sincere in this
one)
For Barney!

They all look to the ground in a moment of silence. All except CATSUP go to their seats. LEAH and ILLINOIS are seated on one side of the table and MARY JANE and MARLIN are seated on the other. The podium will be set at the middle of the table.

CATSUP

(to AUDIENCE)

Welcome one and all to the 100th Annual MacGuffin Ball. I am Corporal Catsup, the leader of the Cabal of Crusading Knights, and it is my great pleasure to welcome you all here tonight. As tradition dictates, we will begin the festivities by announcing this year's board of directors.

CATSUP indicates ILLINOIS to stand and introduce himself. ILLINOIS reluctantly complies.

ILLINOIS

Yeah. So, I'm Dr. Illinois Johnson, professor of archaeology at the University of Wisconsin.

ILLINOIS returns to his seat.

CATSUP

(laughing)

Don't sell yourself short, Dr. Johnson. Our young friend here is quite possibly the greatest adventurer to have ever explored our planet. He recently discovered the location of the lost city of Machu Picchu!

ILLINOIS

Actually, Hiram Bingham discovered it in 1867.

LEAH

(laughing)

Yeah, second-rate Indiana Jones here only 'discovered' it because his Uber driver drove him there.

CATSUP

(incapable of being less enthusiastic about this)

Regardless of how, he found it! Ms. Fisher, you are next.

LEAH

Pass.

ILLINOIS

You know he's not going to shut up until we all do it.

LEAH

(stays seated)

Fine. I'm Leah Fisher. I run Fisher Pharmaceuticals. And yes, I was on the cover of Forbes last year.

MONTY stands without being asked to.

MONTY

And I'm Monty, the lovable mascot who's a big hit with the ladies.

ILLINOIS

What's with the puppet?

MARLIN gestures to indicate he can't help it.

MARY JANE

Didn't you hear, Doctor Johnson? Captain Marlin was cursed by a sea witch and can now only talk through his puppet,
(annoyed)
Monty.

MONTY walks to CATSUP, hand extended.

MONTY

Hey pal, nice to meet you. I've heard you've got a really tiny dick.

CATSUP

(gasps in surprise)

What?

MONTY

Don't worry. Marlin here has got a micro penis, too. You guys could start a new club when this one goes under. Call it the Teeny Weeny Peenie Committee.

CATSUP

Captain Marlin, I must insist you cease this foolishness.

MONTY

No can do, Ken Doll. You're stuck with me until the good old captain here can get his curse lifted.

(TO AUDIENCE)

And all the ladies cheer!

KARYN cheers obnoxiously loudly from the AUDIENCE.

CATSUP

What our good old Captain Marlin would tell you, is that he is the captain of the finest undersea vessel, the Thunder from Down Under, which has charted the deepest depths of the ocean. Places which have never before been seen by humankind.

MONTY

Just like your willies!

CATSUP glares at MONTY before continuing.

CATSUP

For the next order of business--

LEAH

Now wait a second. What about Mary Jane?

ILLINOIS

Yeah, you're not going to try to skip over her again, are you?

LEAH

(imitating CATSUP)

Why would I introduce our intern? She's hardly an adventurer!

ILLINOIS

(also imitating CATSUP)

Why no, I hadn't heard she assisted you in getting the secret launch codes from the Nazis, I'm certain she couldn't have been much help.

LEAH

(still imitating CATSUP)

And don't tell me how she out drank thirty men as a diversion for you to steal the scepter of Ra.

LEAH AND ILLINOIS
(both imitating
CATSUP)

Drinking and adventuring are hardly
the same thing.

MONTY
(excited to join in
on the joke of
imitating CATSUP)

The only adventure she's ever had to
go on was the hunt for my penicus
insignificus.

CATSUP
Is that quite enough?

MARY JANE
I haven't gotten to do one yet.

CATSUP
Very well.

MARY JANE
(imitating CATSUP)
Mary Jane, you will never amount to
anything more than a secretary for
this club if I have anything to say
about it.

There's a brief uncomfortable silence.

CATSUP
Now, to continue--

PHANTOM
You weren't going to forget about me,
were you?

MONTY
Holy shit! Did that plant just talk?

CATSUP
Please ignore the plant.

PHANTOM
Girl, you know I'm not going to let
them ignore me.

ILLINOIS
The puppet's right. That plant's
talking.

PHANTOM

First of all, I'm not a plant, I'm a phantom, possessing a plant.

MARY JANE

A phantom who has spent the last year haunting the Corporal.

CATSUP

And unfortunately, this particular phantom is not some magnificent Victorian spirit who regales me with the torments of her death. No, my specter is the sort which chooses to wake me up at three o'clock in the morning singing the theme song to Sponge-bob Squarepants.

LEAH

I like this plant.

ILLINOIS

If she's such a nuisance, couldn't you just throw it out or stop watering it or something?

PHANTOM

Oh, he's tried, cutie.

CATSUP

But she just keeps coming back! Now, may I please continue?

CATSUP looks to the CAST who shrug in response.

CATSUP (cont'd)

Thank you.

(TO AUDIENCE)

Now, some of you have been chosen to join us in the recitation of the club oath. For those who have been selected, please join us on the stage now.

The CAST each brings someone on stage. KARYN comes up on stage at this time as well. CATSUP will ask them all to introduce themselves and for details of their latest

adventures before moving on to the next bit.

CATSUP (cont'd)

Please pair up with someone to perform the handshake.

There may be some hesitation from the AUDIENCE on this, so CATSUP will coax them through light berating, while MARY JANE may be a bit more helpful.

CATSUP (cont'd)
And now, for the oath and handshake.
You may begin.

Some improv will be required here since the AUDIENCE won't know the handshake, but could respond in a number of ways. Ultimately, CATSUP will determine that they have no clue what he wants of them.

CATSUP (cont'd)
What the dickens is going on here?
Does not a single one of you know the
handshake?

The AUDIENCE will be forced to respond. If they don't on their own, CATSUP can pick someone out directly and ask them before moving forward.

CATSUP (cont'd)
(to the CAST,
annoyed/defeated)
Will somebody please walk them
through the handshake?

The CAST all quickly say, "NOT IT" and place their fingers on their noses, with LEAH being the last to do so.

LEAH
(getting up from her
seat)
I don't know why we even have a
damned handshake.

ILLINOIS
Looks like you're going to have to
put down your drink.

LEAH
(taking her drink
with her)
Don't get too comfortable, Rescue
Ranger. I need a partner.

ILLINOIS reluctantly gets up from his seat. LEAH gets behind ILLINOIS and reaches her left hand forward through ILLINOIS' legs. ILLINOIS then grabs her hand with his right hand. The two of them pause this way and look to the AUDIENCE members.

ILLINOIS
(to AUDIENCE MEMBERS)
Come on, let's get this over with.

LEAH
(to ILLINOIS)
Quoting your girlfriend?

THE AUDIENCE will then be coached to get into the same position as LEAH and ILLINOIS. MARY JANE will help while CATSUP again continues with his lightly berating them.

ILLINOIS
(to LEAH)
You ready to start?

LEAH
My hand's already between your legs.
What else do you need?

ILLINOIS
I mean the oath.

LEAH
The stupid oath. Fine. An
Adventurer will always go--

CATSUP notices no one else is joining in.

CATSUP
Come on, everyone. Let's do this
together.

KARYN
(raises hand, while
still in position
for the handshake)
What's the oath?

CATSUP
(suddenly enraged)
What's the oath? There are but two
requirements to being a member of the
Cabal of Crusading Knights. First,
that you are an adventurer who seeks
to quench the thirst of curiosity.
The second is that you know the
damned oath and handshake.

LEAH
Don't forget the third.

ILLINOIS
What's that?

LEAH

Drink.

LEAH takes a sip of her drink without leaving the handshake position.

MARY JANE

(taking charge)

I'll walk them through it.

MARY JANE approaches the AUDIENCE MEMBERS with a gentle smile.

MARY JANE (cont'd)

Hi everyone. I'll say a line, and you repeat after me. An Adventurer will always go as deep as they can push.

MARY JANE gestures for the AUDIENCE MEMBERS to copy her.

MARY JANE (cont'd)

An Explorer will dive in head first, regardless of how hard.

MARY JANE gestures for the AUDIENCE MEMBERS to copy her.

MARY JANE (cont'd)

A Conquerer will never claim defeat and will always reach the climax.

MARY JANE gestures for the AUDIENCE MEMBERS to copy her.

MARY JANE (cont'd)

And a Pioneer will reach around to grasp their quest's reward.

MARY JANE gestures for the AUDIENCE MEMBERS to copy her.

CATSUP

And now for the reach around.

ILLINOIS

Ah, come on, do we have to?

LEAH

Another from your girlfriend?

CATSUP

It's not a handshake without the reach around!

LEAH and ILLINOIS will show how the AUDIENCE needs to have the person behind reach forward with their right hand around to the front of person in front, who will grab the offered hand with their left hand. LEAH will attempt to do it with her drink still in her hand, but will ultimately put it down to complete the task.

CATSUP (cont'd)
And the shimmy!

ILLINOIS and LEAH shimmy together while still holding hands. The AUDIENCE MEMBERS are urged to copy.

MONTY
(excited by the
movements)
When do I get to do the handshake?

CATSUP
(dramatically
exhausted)
Now that we have finally performed
the oath and the handshake, our
fellow adventurers may return to
their seats.

KARYN will be the last one to be sent down the stairs.

KARYN
(extends her hand to
CATSUP)
Hi, I'm Karyn, a consultant for
Scentsy, Herbalife, Younique, and the
newest craze, BB-NFT.

LEAH
(pulling out a
second bottle to
place next to her
first one)
I'm going to need another bottle if
this is where the night is headed.

KARYN
It's a multi-level marketing business
opportunity where Beanie Babies are
the newest crypto-token. But even
better is--

CATSUP
Could you please return to your seat
so I may continue?

KARYN

Sure, um, I guess I was just wondering when the networking part of the event was going to happen. Are we going to split out into groups or something?

CATSUP

Group play occurs during the after-party.

KARYN

Group play?

CATSUP

Yes, when we all join together as one, our bodies in rhythm, our voices screaming out in passion, our--

MARY JANE

(quickly cutting
CATSUP off and
stepping between the
two of them and
directing KARYN back
to her seat)

He's talking about the karaoke party. At least I hope that's what he's talking about.

CATSUP

Correct. Now please, return to your seat.

KARYN returns to her seat.

PHANTOM

That was disappointing. Corporal, why do you have to lead a girl on like that.

LEAH

Oh, yeah, Corporal. You screwed up the club name again.

ILLINOIS

(sarcasm, using
CATSUP impersonation)

What could possibly be wrong with the Cabal of the Crusading Knights?

LEAH
(to ILLINOIS as
though he's CATSUP)
Well, Corporal, you remember how we
talked about how sometimes those
small words, such as 'of' in this
case, can be considered for inclusion
within an acronym?

ILLINOIS
(still as CATSUP)
Of course.

LEAH
Yeah, so, in this case, the Cabal of
Crusading Knights becomes--

ILLINOIS
(gasps loudly, still
mocking CATSUP)
I had no idea!

CATSUP
(true gasp)
I honestly didn't!

LEAH
Just like how there was no way for
you to know what people might think
of the Gay Fellows League.

CATSUP
But gay refers to our pleasant
demeanors.

PHANTOM
I absolutely adored those cute little
leather uniforms he made you wear.

ILLINOIS
Remember when he used to call us the
Sofa Kingdom.

CATSUP
Because we would sit upon the
davenport and tell our tales of
adventure!

The CAST laughs.

MONTY

If you're looking for a new name, how about The Stupid Haughty International Team of Humans who Eat Aardvark Dicks...Society.

MARY JANE

Since we're talking club business, would now be a good time to bring up our finances?

PHANTOM

(feigning concern)

Oh no, is the club in trouble? I'd hate for anything bad to happen to my 'wittle' Corporal.

LEAH

Don't tell me we're out of money again.

MARY JANE

It wouldn't be so bad if anyone paid their club dues.

ILLINOIS

Don't look at me. Catsup takes it out of every treasure I bring back.

PHANTOM

I'd pay, but this planter doesn't have pockets.

LEAH

(to MARY JANE)

How bad is it?

MARY JANE

We're broke. Even after selling the club mansion. I don't even want to tell you what I had to do to convince them to let us use this theater.

MONTY

Would you tell us if we asked really nicely?

LEAH

You sold the mansion? What about all the money I donated?

MARY JANE

That was used to fund Doctor Johnson's expedition to South America.

MONTY

Don't forget all the money Catsup gave to Marlin so he could repair his ship after he ran aground chasing that rare jellyfish.

ILLINOIS

What kind of jellyfish was it?

MONTY

A plastic bag.

LEAH

(to CATSUP)

You spent all my money paying off your friend's vacations?

CATSUP

What is the point of this club if no one ever goes on any adventures?

MARY JANE

The bottom line is, we need to raise at least two million dollars to keep up with our current debts.

LEAH

(to CATSUP)

Two million? I already gave you ten!

CATSUP

And that was a fine down payment, but--

LEAH

Oh no, buddy. I'm not giving you another cent. If you want money, you're going to have to ask someone else. Like, maybe all these freeloaders out here.

LEAH gestures to the AUDIENCE.

CATSUP

This is hardly the type of discussion to be having publicly. Perhaps we could discuss this more intimately?

LEAH

I've got a better idea.

(to AUDIENCE)

We're going to take a little break to get a drink or whatever it is people who don't drink do. And, the Corporal's going to stop by and have an 'intimate' chat with each of you. Enjoy!

BREAK I: DRINK BREAK

During this period, CATSUP will go from table to table reluctantly asking for money, although he'll quickly lose focus and will have to be reminded of what he's supposed to be doing by LEAH.

LEAH will tell everyone how they need to replace CATSUP as club president, due to his misappropriation of finances, and will mention how there are far better people, like herself, the CEO of a Fortune 100 company, who could run things.

MONTY/MARLIN will have brought PHANTOM down into the AUDIENCE, who will tell people stories about how she has pranked CATSUP over the past year. PHANTOM will convince people to take her to different tables so she can continue the process of telling people embarrassing stories about CATSUP. She'll also have people sneak her up behind CATSUP so she can terrorize him further.

ILLINOIS will be continuing his process of seeking out the Lost Ark, which he believes is hiding somewhere in the theater. He will look under tables for clues, and ask people things like if they have seen anything that looks like an X.

MONTY/MARLIN will be out hitting on everyone he can, while telling them how much he hates MARLIN. A relationship between MONTY and PHANTOM should slowly grow during this period, since they are both possessed items and MONTY is ready for any action he can get.

MARY JANE will pretend to help convince people to pay their dues, but will mostly be talking bad about CATSUP behind his back because she's finally fed up with how he has been treating her.

KARYN will go around trying to network with people throughout the AUDIENCE about BB-NFT.

ACT II: EXPOSITION EXPEDITION

CATSUP will arrive back on stage and will work to gain everyone's attention.

CATSUP
Ahoy hoy, Adventurers!

CATSUP puts his hand to his ear to await the AUDIENCE's reply.

PHANTOM
(from the AUDIENCE)
Corporal. Oh Corporal! Don't forget about me!

CATSUP
(ignoring PHANTOM)
I hope you all enjoyed your--

PHANTOM
Don't ignore me, Corporal, or else I'll have to tell everybody how you ugly cried at the ending of The Notebook when they--

CATSUP
Oh for Pete's sake, can someone please bring that damned plant up here? And I have nothing to be ashamed about. Ryan Gosling is a national treasure.

MONTY
I'd be delighted to.

MONTY will talk to the PHANTOM as he brings her to the stage. LEAH, ILLINOIS, MARY JANE, and KARYN will make their way to the stage during this as well. They all sit in seats around the table after they arrive.

MONTY (cont'd)
So, what do you think? A puppet and a plant? I could put a little Audrey II in you, if you know what I mean. Or maybe you're already one of those man-eating plants?

PHANTOM
(seductively)
I am feeling mighty thirsty. I haven't been watered in a long, long time.

MONTY brings PHANTOM's plant to the podium.

CATSUP
Alright, out with it. What is it you wanted to say?

PHANTOM
Oh, nothing. I just couldn't stand to be so far away from you.

CATSUP notices KARYN is now seated at the table with everyone else.

CATSUP
(to KARYN)
You again?

KARYN
(extending hand for handshake)
That's right, it's me, Karyn Warner, the CEO and founder of BB-NFT, the Beanie Baby--

CATSUP
What are you doing here?

KARYN
Like my mentor, and sometimes lover, Ty Warner, always says, 'You miss one hundred percent of the--

CATSUP
Never mind.

KARYN
Actually, if you would just give me a second to discuss my new company, BB-NFT, with you, I think you'll--

CATSUP
That reminds me. During the break, I had an epiphany regarding the name of our organization. The Foundation of the Undying Curiosity Keepers. I even wrote the acronym down this time so you can all see how absolutely perfect it is.

CATSUP holds up a piece of paper with the letters FOTUCK on it.

MONTY
Can I tell him?