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If You Give a Cat a Cupcake

*adapted for the stage by Brian Guehring
from the book written by Laura Numeroff and illustrated by Felicia Bond
a play with audience participation for 3-6 performers*

Draft #5.05 post national tour draft

Despite her older brother's warning, seven year old Laura gives her new Cat a cupcake. The Cat is so excited and happy that he asks for sprinkles. When Laura gives him the sprinkles, the Cat makes a huge mess. Cleaning up the mess will get him wet, so Laura gives him a bathing suit...which leads to crazy adventures at the beach, the gym, a mountain, a lake, and a museum.

If You Give a Cat a Cupcake is scheduled to be produced by the Omaha Theater Company for school groups and public audiences in May of 2010 and will run approximately 60 minutes. The original cast and production team were:

CAST

LAURA: Stephanie Jacobson CAT: Miriam Gutierrez
KEITH/SURFER/ MUSCLE HEAD/YETI/ SECURITY GUARD Michael Harrelson
LIFEGUARD/RUNNER/ LOCH NESS MONSTER/ PROFESSOR/DAD: Konrad Case
METAL DETECTOR GUY/PERSONAL TRAINER/SQUID/ MUSEUM GUIDE :Tim Siragusa

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director: James Larson Set Designer: Mark Parrott
Costume Designer: Sherri Geerdes Light Designer: Carson Gross
Development Dramaturge: Michael Miller Stage Manager: Sarah Hutchmeier

If You Give a Cat a Cupcake went out as an Omaha Theater Company national tour during the 2010-11 school year.

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*adapted for the stage by Brian Guehring
from the book written by Laura Numeroff and illustrated by Felicia Bond
a play with participation for 3-8 performers*

Characters

LAURA	an imaginative, impulsive seven year old
CAT	her bossy, overly confident new pet cat
KEITH	Laura's older brother and reluctant babysitter
LIFEGUARD	A hyper vigilant beach lifeguard
PERSONAL TRAINER	An energetic work-out trainer
YETI	A scary looking, but soft hearted snowman
MUSEUM GUIDE	A dottering old security guide at the museum
DAD	Laura's loving father

* for a 3 person cast, the third actor plays KEITH, LIFEGUARD, GYM TRAINER, YETI, MUSEUM GUARD, and FATHER

Settings:

the living room
the beach
the gym
the lake
the museum

Time:

one adventurous afternoon

"If You Give A Cat a Cupcake was a terrific show. Our audiences loved the show and the audience participation. It was wonderful so to see this delightful storybook come alive on stage in such an engaging way."

- Mary E. Katz, Director of Education and Outreach, The Carson Center Paducah, Kentucky

"We LOVE the sound of the audience actively participating in a school matinee show! During *If You Give A Cat A Cupcake*, we heard their joy, excitement, whoops and laughter in every corner of our performing arts complex. Thank you, Omaha Theatre Company, for creating such a meaningful experience for everyone."

-Tina Salamone, Executive & Artistic Director, Marion Palace Theatre , Marion OH

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Scene 1: If a cat comes into your living room...

(Play opens on the living room of a suburban house. The filled room has a treadmill, and rowing machine. There is a bookshelf displaying geodes and cool rocks. The floor is littered with Laura's plastic dinosaurs, stuffed monkeys, a big stuffed whale, and dolls. A large painting of the beach with umbrella is on the wall. A lunch box is by the front door. Another door leads to the kitchen. LAURA, an imaginative, energetic, very loud seven year old, bursts through the front door)

LAURA

MOM! I'm home from school!

(LAURA throws down her books, and slams the front door.)

LAURA

And I had the worst day ever. I lost my favorite pink sparkle pen. The bus driver almost left me at school. And got in a fight with Felicia.

(LAURA goes through kitchen door)

LAURA *(off-stage)*

But it's ok. We made up! We're best friends again.

(LAURA comes right back from kitchen with a cupcake)

LAURA

And I'm starving. I haven't had anything to eat today, 'cus you forgot to make my lunch. I borrowed food from my friends, including Felicia. Which is why we got into a fight. She told me I could have her bologna sandwich, but I don't like bologna, so I took her cookie, which she selfishly wanted for herself. But I didn't have anything to eat, so I would have died if I didn't eat her cookie, so it wasn't my fault. I also got a muffin from Mona, and some pancakes from Pete. Can you believe Pete's Mom gave him pancakes for lunch?

(LAURA sees lunch box waiting by the door, obviously there from this morning)

Look there's my lunch. You did make it. Mom you obviously forgot to give it to me as I left. This cupcake looks delicious.

(LAURA takes the decorated cupcake liner off the bottom of the cupcake, and KEITH, her 15 year old brother enters on crutches)

You can't eat a cupcake, Laura.
KEITH
(KEITH takes away the cupcake)

Why not?
LAURA

Because that is the rule.
KEITH

Rules are stupid. Everyone makes them up just to torture me.
LAURA

No. Rules are made up so the world is a little more fair.
KEITH

What is fair about not letting me eat this cupcake?
LAURA

Mom made them for your class party tomorrow. If you eat one of the cupcakes, then there won't be enough for the party.
KEITH

But I am so hungry, my stomach is practically eating itself.
LAURA
(LAURA acts like her stomach is eating itself)

You're not starving. You are exaggerating. You can have an apple.
KEITH

Who put you in charge?
LAURA

Dad did.
KEITH

Where's Mom?
LAURA

She's on her overnight business trip. Don't you remember?
KEITH

No.
LAURA

KEITH

You never pay attention to anything that isn't about you.

LAURA

Where's Dad?

KEITH

He's at work. I have to baby sit you until he comes home.

LAURA

I'm not a baby.

KEITH

And I don't want to be a baby sitter. After you eat your snack, you have to clean up your toys.

LAURA (*groaning*)

But I'm not done playing with them! Lifeguard Louie just surfed across the ocean and landed on dinosaur island. I think he might get eaten today.

KEITH

Clean them up.

LAURA

Why?

KEITH

Because that is the rule. You have to clean up after yourself.

LAURA

That is another stupid rule that exists for no reason.

KEITH

If you don't clean up your toys, then someone else might fall and sprain their ankle, too.

LAURA

Oh, yeah. How is your ankle today?

KEITH

It is still causing me pain. Like my little sister. You know you could actually apologize to me.

LAURA

Sometimes catastrophes are unavoidable.

KEITH (*very frustrated*)

That accident was avoidable: If you had cleaned up your toys, I wouldn't have sprained my ankle.

(*KEITH starts to exit*)

LAURA

Don't you want to hear about my day? My teacher got SO mad at me for no reason.

KEITH

No reason?

LAURA

None.

KEITH

Were you talking to your neighbor?

LAURA

Wow, you are psychic. That's exactly what she got mad at me for. Isn't that crazy?

KEITH

Laura, if you talk in class, then your teacher will get mad.

LAURA

No, I talk all the time in class. Ms. Iwersen was just in a bad mood.

KEITH (*sarcastically*)

Of course she was. Nothing you do has ANY effect on anyone else.

(*KEITH hobbles to the door*)

I'm going to do my homework. Eat your healthy snack, clean up your toys and start your homework.

LAURA

I don't have any homework.

KEITH

Did you finish your work in class, today?

LAURA

No.

KEITH

Did Ms. Iwersen tell you to finish it at home?

Yes. LAURA

Then you have homework. KEITH

But, Keith, I don't want... LAURA

Laura! Just do what you are supposed to. KEITH

What if I... LAURA

NO! Follow the rules! No ifs, no ands, no buts. KEITH
(KEITH takes cupcake to the kitchen)

Life is so unfair! LAURA
*(LAURA kicks her dinosaurs and dolls around.
KEITH returns)*

Stop throwing a temper tantrum. That's not helping anyone. KEITH

I'm not throwing a temper tantrum! LAURA *(throwing a temper tantrum)*

If you keep acting crazy, then you are just going to hurt yourself. KEITH
(KEITH exits.)

You can't tell me what to do! LAURA
(LAURA kicks the shelf and hurts her foot)

Meow! CAT *(offstage by the door)*
(LAURA stops and listens)

Meow! CAT *(offstage by the door)*

(LAURA opens the door)

CAT

Meow!

LAURA

Oh, you poor kitty. Come on in, here. (CAT doesn't move) Come on. Come on. Please, kitty!

(CAT carefully, slowly walks in on all fours.
LAURA closes the door trapping CAT inside)

LAURA

KEITH! A cat just ran into the house.

KEITH

Laura, what are you talking about?

(KEITH hobbles on)

LAURA

This poor starving cat shot into the house like bolt of lightning. There was nothing I could do to block it.Can we keep it?

KEITH

No, we can't keep the cat. Get it out of here. Shoo, cat.

(KEITH tries to shoo the cat to the door, but
CAT hides in corner farther away from the
door)

LAURA

See, he's scared. He needs me.

KEITH

He might have rabies. Don't touch him.

LAURA

He's not sick. He'd be a great pet.

KEITH

It's a stray cat. We can't keep it.

LAURA

He has a collar!

KEITH

Then it belongs to someone.

LAURA

Maybe the owner was this rich king who died and left the most perfect cat in the world without a home, until he found us.

KEITH

We can't keep him.

LAURA

But I've *always* wanted my own cat.

KEITH

No you haven't. You first wanted a mouse, then a pig, then a moose.....

LAURA

No, I always wanted a cat.

KEITH

You can't have a cat.

LAURA

Nobody ever cares about what I WANT!

KEITH

It isn't always about you.

LAURA

It is never about me!

KEITH

Just get the cat out of here.

LAURA

How? You won't let me touch him in case he has rabies.

KEITH

I give up. Dad can deal with you and the cat when he gets home.
(KEITH exits)

CAT

I don't have rabies.

LAURA

You talk?

CAT

I am a highly intelligent cat. Of course I talk. And I don't have rabies. See my tag.

LAURA

I knew it. What's your name?

CAT

I don't have one. Some people kept calling me something. It might have been a name. I don't know. I didn't really listen to them.

LAURA

Do you belong to another family?

CAT

Cats don't belong to people. We allow humans to keep us in their houses as special guests.

LAURA

Are you the special guest of another family?

CAT

No. Not anymore.

LAURA

Do you want to be my pet? I mean, my special guest?

CAT

Possibly. I am in the market for a new home, and your house seems to have potential. But will you make a good servant for me?

LAURA

Absolutely.

CAT

Well, what do you have to eat? I'm hungry.

LAURA

Would you like an apple?

CAT

No. But I do like cupcakes.

LAURA

I'm not supposed to eat any of the cupcakes. It's for my class tomorrow.

CAT

You aren't going to eat it. I am.

LAURA

Oh well, that wouldn't break the rule. Why not? What could possibly happen if I give you a cupcake?

(LAURA goes to kitchen to get cupcake)

CAT

Oh, joyous day. I love cupcakes so much!

(CAT does happy dance. LAURA returns from kitchen and joins happy dance. CAT suddenly stops. LAURA keeps dancing. CAT is about ready to cry. LAURA finally notices).

LAURA

What's wrong?

CAT

The cupcake.

LAURA

What is wrong with it? Is it the wrong flavor? Not enough frosting?

CAT

No. It has....NO SPRINKLES.

(CAT melodramatically hands the cupcake back to LAURA)

LAURA

Oh. Well we can fix that. We have lots of sprinkles.

CAT

Oh joyous day! Sprinkles, sprinkles, sprinkles! I love sprinkles!

(LAURA goes into kitchen as CAT does silly dance)

LAURA *(from off stage)*

What color do you want? Red, pink, green, blue or purple?

CAT

That is an important question. So important, that I think I need some advice *(to audience)* Hi, friends! *(CAT waves to audience)* What color sprinkles should I get? Speak real loudly so I can hear you? *(CAT listens to suggestions from audience. CAT holds up his paws).* Thank you for the help. *(to LAURA)* I would like every color of sprinkle you have.

(LAURA returns with lots of sprinkles)

LAURA

Do you want me to sprinkle a few on?

CAT

No! I want to do it.

LAURA

OK.

(CAT takes sprinkles and starts to shake sprinkles on cupcake and all over the floor)

CAT (Singing and dancing)

Sprinkles, sprinkles, sprinkles! I love sprinkles!

(LAURA joins in the sprinkle dance. CAT is very proud of the sprinkle encrusted cupcake)

CAT

Beautiful!

(KEITH comes in. CAT drops to all fours and licks his paws)

KEITH

Laura! Keep it down! I'm trying to do my homework.

LAURA

It's not my fault. Sometimes you have to do a song and dance of joy. It would be hazardous to my health if I kept that inside me. There is nothing I could have done about it.

KEITH

What happened to the floor?

LAURA

Oh, those are sprinkles.

KEITH

The floor is a mess. There are sprinkles everywhere.

LAURA

There was nothing we could have done to avoid that. You can't eat a cupcake without sprinkles.

KEITH

I told you not to eat a cupcake!

LAURA

I wasn't. I was serving it to my friend the cat.

KEITH

You better clean it up. Now! If the floor isn't clean when Dad gets home, then you'll be in trouble.

(KEITH takes the cupcake and exits)

CAT

It wasn't your fault.

LAURA

I know. But that doesn't seem to matter to grown-ups. Or even to older brothers.

CAT

Then I will clean up for you.

LAURA

You will?

CAT

Of course. I am a very neat and clean cat.

(CAT licks his paw and smoothes back his ears)

LAURA

Thank you. I'll get you the broom.

CAT

Oh, no. That is not the proper cleaning instrument.

LAURA

A vacuum?

(CAT hisses)

CAT

Definitely not. Vacuums are evil.

LAURA

Then what do we use?

A mop. CAT

A mop? LAURA

Definitely a mop. CAT

OK. LAURA
(LAURA exits to get the mop)

With lots of water and soap. CAT

If you say so. LAURA

I do say so. CAT
(LAURA brings in the mop and bucket of water and bottle of soap¹)

Here they are. LAURA

Put the whole bottle of soap in the bucket. CAT

Are you sure? LAURA

Of course I am sure. CAT
(LAURA dumps the soap into the bucket which foams up)

Now can we clean the floor? LAURA
(CAT inspects the soapy bucket)

¹ Maybe a bubble machine here?
Draft 5.07

CAT

Almost. First, I need a bathing suit.

LAURA

A bathing suit?

CAT

Look how wet the mop is. Mopping the floor is a very wet job. If you are going to get wet, then you must wear a bathing suit.

LAURA

Are you sure?

CAT

Positive. I am a cat.

(LAURA exits to get bathing suit)

And please, no bathing suits with fish on them. If you give me a bathing suit with fish, then I will get hungry.

(LAURA returns with bathing trunks)

LAURA

Will these work?

CAT

Purrrrrfect.

(CAT puts on bathing suit)

LAURA

They are my brother's.

CAT *(singing)*

Putting on a bathing suit, bathing suit, bathing suit. Putting on a bathing suit so we can mop the floor.

(CAT models bathing suit)

How do I look?

LAURA

Very handsome. Much more stylish than Keith.

CAT

Good. Now we can mop the floor!

(CAT mops the floor and does a big dance and makes a lot of sloshy mess)

CAT

We're going to make the floor so clean we could eat off it!

LAURA

There. Now all the sprinkles are cleaned up.

CAT

Now we need to go to the beach.

LAURA

The beach?

CAT

If you wear a bathing suit, then you go to the beach.

LAURA

I don't know if I am allowed to go to the beach.

CAT

Pish, posh. If you wear a bathing suit, then you **HAVE** to go to the beach.

LAURA

You do?

CAT

Yes. I am wearing a bathing suit now, so we should go to the beach now.

LAURA

That makes sense.

CAT

And if we go to the beach, then we need to bring towels,

(LAURA goes to get the towels)

sun-block,

*(LAURA gets sun-block as CAT puts towel
around his shoulders)*

beach balls,

*(LAURA gets beach ball as CAT puts on sun-
block)*

sunglasses,

*(LAURA gets sunglasses as CAT plays with
beach balls)*

a bucket

*(LAURA gets a pail and little shovel as CAT
puts on sunglasses)*

CAT (cont'd)

music,

(LAURA brings a portable music player)

AND a cool drink.

*(LAURA gets cool drink in a glass bottle as
CAT checks out the pail and shovel. LAURA is
exhausted)*

Now we are ready to go to the beach!

Brian Guehring is the Playwright in Residence of the Omaha Theater Company, one of the nation's largest professional theater for young people. Brian has adapted the world premiere scripts of the Newberry Award winning novel **Julie of the Wolves** (directed by Everett Quinton), **The Misfits**, **Miss Bindergarten**, **Holiday Time Around the World**, and **Sacagawea: Discovering History**. Brian's scripts have won several national and regional awards. His original Theater in Education play **The Super Adventures of Pyramid Man and Dr Nutrition** and his adaptations of **Where the Red Fern Grows** and **Old Yeller** won adjudicated AATE (American Alliance for Theater and Education) Unpublished Play Awards. His script **The Bully Show** was selected for the 2002 New Visions/New Voices new play development workshop at the Kennedy Center. Brian received a playwriting fellowship from the Nebraska Arts Council in 2002. His new adaptation of the Newberry Award winning novel **The Giver** was honored as one of the best theater productions of 2008 in Omaha by the Omaha World Herald. His original script **King Chemo** won the Southwest Theater Association's 1997 Best New Play for Children, and his original play **Creating Haley's World** was selected in 2003 for development in the inaugural Playwrights in Our Schools program. His plays have been produced by Lexington Children's Theater, South Carolina Children's Theater, A. D. Players in Houston, Apple Tree Theater for Young Audiences in Chicago, Barter Theater of Virginia, Town Hall Theater in Dayton, Walnut Street Theater in Philadelphia, and many other schools and theaters. **King Chemo** and **The Bully Show** are published by Dramatic Publishing Company.

Brian is also the Education Director of the Omaha Theater Company which does drama and dance education outreach for every single child in over 80 local schools each year. His teen theater troupe **Pride Players** won a Human and Civil Rights Award from the National Education Association in 2006. Brian earned his MFA in Children's Theater and Creative Drama from the University of Texas at Austin. He is currently serving on the national board for Theater for Young Audiences/USA. He has never given his cat Lucas any cupcakes. But you should see the crazy things that happen if you try to give a cat a claw clipping.....



Audience Feedback from the original production of IF YOU GIVE A CAT A CUPCAKE

1. The interaction made this performance so enjoyable for the children. Their faces glowed when they jumped around, caught the balls and sang the songs with the cast.
2. This was an incredible performance. Truly! The best I've seen. I loved how you involved the children into the show as well. Thank you.
4. I thought this was the best show of the season! My girls LOVED the interaction with the audience!
5. very enjoyable show- appealed to all ages and had a valuable lesson at the end for the children.
6. My son was still talking about it a week later and he is six so you know it was perfect for children.
7. Brought 2 second grade girls who LOVED the show and talked about it for days :). Great job to all!
8. Excellent production, the kids loved the adaptation of the book, and we all thought it was very well produced.
9. We loved it. Great show for adults and kids alike. Loved the audience participation. It was wonderful, entertaining and engaging. The best this season. Congrats on a job well done!
10. My child LOVED the interaction with the crowd. He loves to participate in the play.
11. This was our favorite show of the season!! Very well done and adapted from such a short story, extremely entertaining. Thank you for a great year!!
12. My children ages 4-6 loved the interactive theater.
13. I think it was the best of all the shows of the season. I like that the actors interact with the audience.
14. Absolutely loved this performance. Was one of the best ones by far. Loved the interaction with the audience!!
15. We loved it! Thought it was one of the best this season!
16. I thought this was the best show of the season and so did my 4 & 5 year old grandchildren. The show was so good because it stayed true to the original book and it was very interactive. Many chances for our grandchildren to feel like they were part of the show.
17. **The four-year old in our group refused to leave the theater afterwards. She wanted more.**
18. My daughter really wanted cupcakes after the show- how about a local bakery coming in?
19. I thought this was the best show that you had so far this year!
20. This was a wonderful production, we really enjoyed the interaction with the audience. Thanks for such a nice family friendly show.
21. Very cute costumes! My daughter who is 8 loved the show!
22. My 3 year old son really enjoyed this play. His favorite part was the Yeti :).
23. We thoroughly enjoyed the show. The story was delightful and the actors were great fun. I thought the interaction with the audience was superb. The length of the production was perfect.
24. I think this was one of the best shows we have seen at the Rose.....
25. Great show for all ages!!
26. It was very good my 4 and 9 year old enjoyed it very much.
27. That was one of the best performances I've seen. It was funny, engaging and it kept the kids involved throughout the performance. **I almost bought tickets to go again.**
28. FABULOUS! I am so glad I had this survey to complete as I was thinking over the weekend that I should email The Rose to let them know how much our family LOVED this performance. Seriously, this was one of the best that we've enjoyed through regular season shows over the past four years. My three kids, ages 5, 5, and 8 loved this play. They were imitating characters' voices and scenes from the play all weekend. Thanks for such a fun evening!
29. My two year old loved it. The show was excellent
30. This production was one of the most enjoyable this season. I loved the interactive involvement with the audience. As a theatre lover I am trying to instill that same passion for a new generation. My four year old grandson was totally engaged in this production as was my seven year old granddaughter. I've been taking the older child for the last 3 years and have just started introducing the Rose to my grandson. It's always a treat but this last one was spectacular from a young child stand point and thoroughly enjoyable on my part.
31. Our girls ages 12 and 8 loved it!!!
32. My granddaughters ages 10 & 6 loved it.
33. I thought the production was one of the best I've seen for children. Loved it!!!
34. Great fun and very funny in this overgrown child's opinion.
35. This was the BEST show this year! Both of my children LOVED it! WOW, looking for future shows to be just as good! Fantastic! The CAT... AMAZING!!!!All were great! Truly loved the production!
36. It was a wonderful show!!!! I was worried that my 9 year old would think it was too "babyish" but she loved it
37. My family's favorite play of the season!