

NUTS!

by
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CHARACTERS

CHIP, *a squirrel in charge*

NUTTY, *a squirrel who follows*

ZIPPY, *a squirrel who doesn't pay attention*

THE DOG, *chaser of all things furry*

Total Roles: 4 male or female

SYNOPSIS

The squirrels of Chestnut Street are tired of living in fear of their mortal enemy: the backyard dog. They assemble their best operatives—Chip, Nutty, and Zippy—to trap the dog and ensure peace and security for all of squirrel-kind. However, their plan quickly goes awry.

SET REQUIREMENTS

A backyard or garden. Items such as trees and bushes may be depicted literally, or simply mimed, as desired.

(A backyard with several trees, which may be representational or simply mimed, as desired. A squirrel, CHIP, enters and scouts ahead for danger. Seeing nothing CHIP uses silent, army-like hand motions to signal the others. Two other squirrels, NUTTY and ZIPPY, enter cautiously. NUTTY follows CHIP's instructions and stands at the designated point while ZIPPY, distracted, wanders off until put in place by CHIP. CHIP then scouts further ahead to ensure that they are safe.)

NUTTY

Is she there?

CHIP

Looks like the coast is clear. All right. Attention!

(NUTTY snaps to, while ZIPPY looks blank.)

Private Zippy.

(ZIPPY snaps to.)

That's better. Now, does everyone remember the plan?

NUTTY

Well we, um... then we... No.

CHIP

Good grief! All right, one more time then. Operation: Sudden Death.

NUTTY

I'm sorry, what?

CHIP

It's just a figure of speech. The target: the family dog, codename Bonehead.

(ZIPPY dissolves into giggles.)

If you please. The mission: to establish our dominance over the backyard once and for all. The plan: to capture Bonehead.

NUTTY

Impossible.

CHIP

So some have said. But we will capture the dog... or die trying.

NUTTY

Uh, Chip, when you say die...

CHIP

A figure of speech.

NUTTY

Can we stop using those?

CHIP

Now then, here's what we're going to do. Nutty, you will act as bait.

NUTTY

Bait?

CHIP

(Not listening)

Meanwhile, I will keep a lookout on the backdoor and give the signal once Bonehead...

(ZIPPY laughs again.)

Zippy!

(ZIPPY stops.)

...once Bonehead is in the backyard. Then, when Nutty has lured Bonehead into position, Zippy will spring the trap. Have you got that?

NUTTY

About this whole bait thing...

CHIP

Private Nutty.

NUTTY

(Standing at attention)

Yes sir!

CHIP

Do you want to always be looking over your shoulder every time you dare venture from the trees?

NUTTY

No sir.

CHIP

Do you want future generations of squirrels to be put through the terror that has become our daily existence?

NUTTY

No sir.

CHIP

Do you want to end up like Old Man No-tail?

NUTTY

No sir.

ZIPPY

(Echoing)

No sir.

(ZIPPY breaks down into another fit of giggles.)

CHIP

Then the proper execution of this plan is of the utmost importance. It is critical that Bonehead be lured into position or else our whole mission is naught.

NUTTY

Not what?

CHIP

Not not, naught. Pointless. Doomed to fail. You must ensure that Bonehead reaches this point here. The fate of every squirrel in the tri-block area depends on your actions. Are you going to let them down?

NUTTY

(With patriotic zeal)

No sir.

CHIP

Then take your position.

(NUTTY proudly does so and ZIPPY applauds enthusiastically. Slight pause)

NUTTY

What do I do when Bonehead gets here?

CHIP

Run like the wind, soldier.

NUTTY

Right.

CHIP

Zippy. Your post is here, behind the tree. Once Bonehead is in position you will spring the trap.

ZIPPY

Trap?

(ZIPPY looks to NUTTY who shrugs.)

CHIP

Did either of you two pay any attention at all during the briefing?

NUTTY

Not exactly...

CHIP

Why not?

NUTTY

I was eating a nut.

CHIP
What?

NUTTY
It was a really good nut.

CHIP
Nutty!

NUTTY
What did you expect? We're squirrels, we're not known for our attention spans.

CHIP
And you, Private Zippy?
(ZIPPY, whose attention has wandered again, acts as if he's noticed CHIP for the first time.)

ZIPPY
Hi Chip.

NUTTY
I rest my case.

CHIP
Will you two please pay attention. The success of this mission rests solely on us. Succeed, and eternal glory shall be ours. Fail, and we'll be torn limb from limb.

NUTTY
Is that a figure of speech?

CHIP
No. Zippy, your job is crucial. When Bonehead reaches Nutty you must throw the net, got it?
(ZIPPY nods vigorously, with no comprehension of what CHIP is saying. CHIP exits briefly and returns with a net, which he gives to ZIPPY.)

NUTTY
A net? We're squirrels, where'd we get a net?

CHIP
A secret team of operatives has been weaving it from grass and twigs for months.

NUTTY
We have secret operatives?

CHIP
Actually, we used chipmunk labor, but the point is it's finished and we're ready for action.

NUTTY

What happens to Bonehead once we catch her?

CHIP

Everyone else is waiting in the trees. Once Bonehead is secure, they pounce! When we're through with her Bonehead will never mess with us again.

(NUTTY looks up in the trees at the invisible army of squirrels.)

NUTTY

How come they get to be up there and we're the ones down here?

CHIP

We drew the short sticks. Now, both of you, get ready!

(NUTTY and ZIPPY take their positions.)

Once Bonehead is in the backyard I will give the signal, "Acorn."

ZIPPY

Acorn! Acorn!

(ZIPPY starts searching the ground for acorns.)

CHIP

Zippy!

(CHIP grabs ZIPPY and puts him in his place.)

Stay in position. It's almost dinner time and Bonehead is always let out before dinner.

(CHIP takes position on the opposite side of the stage, watching for the dog, and they all wait.)

NUTTY

So, Zippy, gather enough nuts for the winter yet?

ZIPPY

Nuts!

(ZIPPY suddenly runs away and offstage.)

NUTTY

What'd I say?

(CHIP looks back and sees that ZIPPY is missing.)

CHIP

Where's Zippy?

NUTTY

Well I said... then Zippy... How should I know? It's Zippy.

(ZIPPY returns carrying a load of nuts.)

CHIP

What are you doing?

My nuts. ZIPPY

Hey, nice stash, buddy. NUTTY

Zippy, get rid of those, it's almost time. CHIP
 (ZIPPY looks for a place to hide his nuts and then realizes CHIP and NUTTY are watching.)

Can't. (Shyly) ZIPPY

Why not? CHIP

He can't do it while we're watching, Chip. They're his nuts. NUTTY

For goodness sake... Fine. But hurry. CHIP
 (CHIP and NUTTY turn their backs on ZIPPY who hides the nuts in the most obvious place.)

OK! ZIPPY
 (CHIP and NUTTY turn back around.)

Now, can we get on with this? CHIP

Come on, Zippy, over here. NUTTY

(Suddenly, we hear the sound of a DOG offstage. CHIP and NUTTY freeze. ZIPPY starts nibbling on a nut.)

There she is. Acorn! Acorn! CHIP

Acorn? Acorn! ZIPPY
 (ZIPPY abandons the net and starts looking around again for acorns.)

Zippy, no! NUTTY

(The DOG enters, sniffing around the ground.)

CHIP

Back in position, Zippy, it's Bonehead.

ZIPPY

Bonehead?

(ZIPPY starts giggling again. The DOG notices ZIPPY and starts to growl.)

NUTTY

Uh oh.

DOG

Grrrrrrrr.....

(The DOG slowly advances on the unsuspecting ZIPPY.)

ZIPPY

(Still giggling)

Bonehead!

CHIP

Zippy, the net! The net!

(ZIPPY isn't paying attention.)

Nutty, lure Bonehead.

NUTTY

But there's no trap.

CHIP

Do it!

NUTTY

(To the DOG)

Yoohoo, over here.

(The DOG sees NUTTY and starts to bark and chase after him.)

Ahhh!!! Chip!

CHIP

Get her in position.

(CHIP crosses to ZIPPY.)

Where's the net?

ZIPPY

(Offering CHIP a nut)

Acorn?

CHIP

No, that was just the signal.

(CHIP picks up the net and gives it to ZIPPY.)

Here, get ready.

(By now the DOG has NUTTY cornered behind a bush or tree.)

NUTTY

Help!

CHIP

Private Nutty, that's not the position.

NUTTY

It'll have to do.

CHIP

Private Zippy: ready, aim, fire!

(ZIPPY looks blank.)

The net.

(ZIPPY throws the net over CHIP.)

Get it off!

(CHIP stumbles around and runs into the DOG. The DOG grabs CHIP and shakes him around.)

Get her off me!

NUTTY

Think of something, Zippy.

ZIPPY

(Offering an acorn to NUTTY)

Acorn?

NUTTY

Zippy, that's brilliant. Gather the nuts.

ZIPPY

Nuts!

(ZIPPY dashes for his stash and together ZIPPY and NUTTY start pelting the DOG with the nuts. The DOG releases CHIP, growls, and goes after NUTTY and ZIPPY.)

NUTTY

Retreat! Retreat!

(NUTTY and ZIPPY run away as CHIP disentangles himself from the net.)

CHIP

What's going on?

(NUTTY and ZIPPY collide with CHIP and the DOG advances on them all.)

NUTTY

Is it too late to abort mission?

CHIP

Run!

(The SQUIRRELS run away while the DOG chases them. NUTTY and ZIPPY run one direction while CHIP runs in another and is followed offstage by the DOG.)

NUTTY

Go, Chip, go! Go, Chip, go!

(ZIPPY joins in the chant.)

NUTTY and ZIPPY

Go, Chip, go! Go, Chip...

(From offstage we hear the sound of squealing tires followed by a crash.)

NUTTY

Ooooh, that can't be good...

ZIPPY

(Sadly)

Bye-bye, Chip.

(Pause and then CHIP re-enters, looking a little worse for the wear.)

NUTTY

Chip, you're OK.

CHIP

The plan? What happened to the plan?

NUTTY

Well, first you recruited Zippy...

(ZIPPY looks up from eating a nut, then returns to it.)

CHIP

I suppose it doesn't matter. Bonehead will never chase us again.

NUTTY

Yeah, and thankfully squirrels can't be sued for property damage.

CHIP

Well done, soldiers, mission accomplished.

NUTTY

Though I do feel a little bad for the kids. That dog was their best friend.

CHIP

A casualty of war. But thanks to her sacrifice future generations of squirrels will be able to live on in peace and security.

NUTTY

A moment of silence for old Bonehead.

(They all bow their heads for a moment.)

Back to the trees?

CHIP

Back to the trees.

(They start to exit when we hear a barking sound, higher-pitched than the DOG's.)

NUTTY

Chip, what's that?

CHIP

(Looking offstage)

Oh no...

NUTTY

What? What is it?

(NUTTY looks past CHIP to see.)

Is that...?

CHIP

It is.

CHIP and NUTTY

Puppy!!!

(ZIPPY waves at the approaching puppy, but CHIP and NUTTY drag ZIPPY offstage with them while we hear the sound of an excited puppy chasing them. Blackout.)