

Paw to God

A 10 minute play

by Jake Lewis

CHARACTERS

Bugsy - an old dog

Snowball - a young dog

Jimmy (voice only) - Bugsy's master

Emma (voice only) - Snowball's owner

SETTING:

Bugsy's backyard

Midday

Lights up on:

BUGSY, curled on his side, back turned to the audience. There is a bowl of water to the side as well with his name on it. He is doing something unseen that is making him make noises of delight, with small jerky motions. After a few moments, SNOWBALL enters the scene.

SNOWBALL: *(in awe)* Oh wow! That is some bone you got there, big guy! Should I give you some privacy?

BUGSY gets up, walks in a circle a few times, and then lays back down in almost the same spot, but now facing the audience. He moves slowly, as an old dog does, and struggles slightly getting up and down. It now shows he has a bully stick in his mouth.

BUGSY: Snowy.

SNOWBALL: You must've been a good boy to get that!

BUGSY: *(proudly)* As if there was any doubt.

SNOWBALL: There was that time you barfed on your master's bed/

BUGSY: Jimmy didn't mind. He loves me no matter what.

SNOWBALL: True, you are pretty lucky.

BUGSY: Indeed I am. *(Offering the bone to SNOWBALL.)* Want some?

SNOWBALL: Are you kidding? Your drool is all over that. No way!

BUGSY: Sorry, didn't think you'd care. After all, I've seen you go to town licking your own ass.

SNOWBALL: Fair enough. But nah, not in the mood.

BUGSY: Something on your mind, pal?

SNOWBALL: Life and death.

BUGSY: *(Drops bone.)* So, nothing serious.

SNOWBALL: It's just that...well...life isn't fair.

BUGSY: I learned that a long time ago when I got my balls cut off.

SNOWBALL: No, I mean....I was just thinking...Why do we have to die when our masters get to live forever?

BUGSY: What do you mean, "live forever"?

SNOWBALL: What do you mean, "what do I mean"? Masters, like your Jimmy and my Emma...they're immortal.

BUGSY: No they're not! Everything dies, Snowy. Kinda' sad to think about it...until you realize that cats also die. Then it's not so sad.

SNOWBALL: True. I was shitting bricks when Asgard bit the dust.

BUGSY: Who names a cat Asgard?

SNOWBALL: Better name would've been AssHOLE.

They both bark/howl in delight.

SNOWBALL: Anyway, my point is...have you ever known a dog to outlive its master?

BUGSY: Well...Napoleon, from next door! His master just died last week!

SNOWBALL: Man, I thought you were a smart dog. Old Lady Harding didn't die!

BUGSY: Sure she did! I saw her being carried out of her place on one of those roly bed things. And! And! Just the other day, a buncha' people were over there cryin' and stuff.

SNOWBALL: Bugsy, buddy ol' pal...It was all staged!

BUGSY: You mean she faked her death?

SNOWBALL: Yes sir.

BUGSY: That's absolutely ridiculous.

SNOWBALL: Listen up. Emma, took me to the bookstore with her the other day--

BUGSY: Let me guess, you're her therapy dog.

SNOWBALL: Well, I mean, I got the vest.

BUGSY: Yeah, that's what I thought.

SNOWBALL: Ssh, let me finish! So there we were, looking at the new Hillary Duff autobiography, and that's when I saw Old Lady Harding!

BUGSY: You sure it was her? All old ladies look the same.

SNOWBALL: Don't be ageist. And it was her! I swear on the life of my children.

BUGSY: You don't have children.

SNOWBALL: I could...somewhere! I was a pretty wild and crazy stray before I became the perfect pet you see before you.

BUGSY: A real mutt about town, eh?

SNOWBALL: You know it! And get this! Old Lady Harding? She had a new dog with her! A French bulldog no less!

BUGSY: Get outta' town!

SNOWBALL: Paw to God!

BUGSY: Fine, let's say it was her. Why would old lady Harding fake her death?

SNOWBALL: Duh! Because Napoleon was driving her batshit crazy! All that yipping, non-stop! It still haunts my dreams. For a little ball of fluff, he made a lotta noise. It was a real little guy complex.

BUGSY: Hmm... *(Realization dawns.)* Now that you mention it, Nappy once told me that old lady Harding was always trying to step on him, but I just chalked that up to the little fluffball getting underfoot. He was always a bit nosy.

SNOWBALL: Which isn't easy to do when your nose is smushed into your face like that.

BUGSY: *(Remembering.)* One time, I was doing my business over in my corner of the yard--

SNOWBALL: The infamous Shit Pit.

BUGSY: Bingo. And in struts Napoleon in that ugly pink sweater he always wore, even in summer. And he comes right up to me, and asks, "Ya' poopin'?" And I said, "No, I'm doing my taxes."

SNOWBALL: Good one!

BUGSY: Danke schoen! So anyway, the next thing you know, he's got his piggy little snout investigating back there. And I can't just stop in mid-flow--

SNOWBALL: Even if you could, those were the exact two inches of lawn you wanted!

BUGSY: You get what I'm saying! I had spent a good ten minutes sniffing back and forth, going away, coming back to it, just to make sure!

SNOWBALL: As one does.

BUGSY: Bingo! So he's watching the whole time, and after I concluded my toilet and kicked the leaves over it so Jimmy "accidentally" steps in it later, you know what Nappy does then?

SNOWBALL: Uhh...eats it?

BUGSY: Good guess, but no. He looks at me all serious-like, and says, "Something doesn't smell right."

SNOWBALL: You're full of shit.

BUGSY: I sure was that day!

SNOWBALL: Oh! Zing!

BUGSY: Thanks, I'm here all week. Yeah, so naturally, I gave it a good blast of the olfactory sense and told him it smells just perfect to me. Best I've ever smelled, as a matter of fact.

SNOWBALL: You showed him!

BUGSY: He just said it smelled wrong to him and I should go to...the vet!

SNOWBALL shrieks in fear.

SNOWBALL: That son of a bitch.

BUGSY: Yeah. She he was basically telling me to go kill myself.

SNOWBALL: So you see what I mean! Old Lady Harding wanted out!

BUGSY: Jeez, you've given me a lot to chew on. Whatever happened to Napoleon anyway?

SNOWBALL: I think he was brought to the pound or something.

BUGSY: I never liked him much, but I wouldn't wish the pound even on a cat.

SNOWBALL: (*Nosing the water dish.*) May I?

BUGSY: Drink up.

There's some silence for a moment or two.

BUGSY: Here's what I think.

SNOWBALL: Hm?

BUGSY: About why we dogs die before our masters.

SNOWBALL stops drinking and sits to listen.

BUGSY: Humans, they're imperfect, right?

SNOWBALL: Is that a rhetorical question?

BUGSY: It takes them a long time to figure things out.

SNOWBALL: That's for sure. It took Emma 20 minutes one time just to unwrap a toy she got for me.

BUGSY: Heh. Well, I mean, the bigger things. Like, forgiveness and unconditional love. Stuff like that.

SNOWBALL: Oh, I gotcha. Yeah, and some humans don't even figure it out at all!

BUGSY: You hit the nail on the head with that one! You know, Jimmy still is mad at Daria for something she did years ago, but do I hold a grudge for that one time he called me a dumb dog?

SNOWBALL: My guess is no, you do not.

BUGSY: And your guess is correct. Because my love for him is...what's the word....

SNOWBALL: You could say it's instinctual.

BUGSY: Right. So that's why we don't live as long as humans, in my humble opinion; we dogs figure things out early on, while they need more time.

SNOWBALL: Who're the dummies now, eh?

BUGSY: It's not their fault. Just how they were made.

JIMMY: *(from off-stage)* Bugsy!

BUGSY: There's my exit music. *(He gets up slowly, issuing a small moan as he does.)*

SNOWBALL: Where ya' off to?

BUGSY: I dunno. Maybe the park! I think there's a cocker spaniel down there who's been eyeing me for awhile.

SNOWBALL: Poor her.

BUGSY: Always the wise guy. I may not have the muscle I used to in my youth, but I still got my charm.

BUGSY starts to trot off.

SNOWBALL: Hey, Bugs, you ok?

BUGSY: Never better. I've had a great life.

SNOWBALL: Ok, just checking.

BUGSY leaves. SNOWBALL looks off in that direction.

From offstage we hear:

JIMMY: *(choked up)* C'mon, buddy...into the car...please.

BUGSY's excited barking is heard.

From the other side of the stage we hear:

EMMA: Snowy! Where are you?

SNOWBALL slowly walks off the way he entered, looking once more over his shoulder.

EMMA: Oh, I love you, Snowball. You're the best dog ever.

Lights fade to black.

The End