THE ALLEGORY OF THE CATS
By David J. LeMaster

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A Ten Minute Comedy Duet

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SYNOPSIS: A student is tutored by his professor, who seeks to impart the truth. Problem is, with this professor, the truth is an elusive commodity.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 either; gender flexible)

TEACHER (m/f) ....Tries to teach concepts involving the truth *(76 lines)*

STUDENT (m/f) ....Seeks to learn the truth *(74 lines)*

NOTE: This duet can be played on a bare stage.

AT RISE: *Lights up on the TEACHER.*

TEACHER: Welcome, dear students, to our Symposium of Logic. Gather around me all ye who long for knowledge, and I will enlighten you to the great truths of the universe. Come and satisfy yourself at this, the fountain of knowledge.

STUDENT: Greetings Professor.

TEACHER: We are informal here. Call me Teacher.

STUDENT: Oh, great Teacher, I seek the truth.

TEACHER: What is truth?

STUDENT: Truth is that which you will teach me.

TEACHER: And what makes truth true?

STUDENT: Truth.

TEACHER: And truth means?

STUDENT: Truth.

TEACHER: But what is true which is not untrue?

STUDENT: Yes, great teacher. Confuse me. Make my head spin, as your teacher, Aristotle did for you, and as your teacher's teacher, Plato, did to your teacher, Aristotle, and as your teacher's teacher's teacher, Socrates, did to your teacher's teacher, Plato.

TEACHER: Now *my* head is spinning.

STUDENT: Oh, great one. I am honored to make your head spin.

TEACHER: Silence. Concentrate.

STUDENT: Yes, tea—

TEACHER: Silence! *(Pause.)* Concentrate—

STUDENT: Yes, tea—

TEACHER: Don't say "yes, teacher!"

STUDENT: What should I say?

TEACHER: Just concentrate.

STUDENT: Just concentrate.

TEACHER: Breathe in and breathe out. Consider the ideas I describe to you. Weigh each one carefully. *(Pause.)* Do you hear me?

STUDENT: Just concentrate.

TEACHER: Yes, just concentrate. *(Pause.)* Do you hear me?

STUDENT: Just concentrate.

TEACHER: Yes, but do you—

STUDENT: Just concentrate.

TEACHER: I think we've got a miscommunication here.

STUDENT: Just—

TEACHER: Shut up. *(Pause.)* Listen for a moment, will you, Einstein? I'm going to teach you something.

STUDENT: Oh, great—

TEACHER: Shhh. *(Pause.)* We will begin with a logic puzzle.

STUDENT: I love puzzles!

TEACHER: Shhh…. Consider this. A, B, C, and D, are in a room.

STUDENT: You mean the letters in the alphabet?

TEACHER: No, I mean A, B, C, and D.

STUDENT: Are they men or women?

TEACHER: What does it matter?

STUDENT: I can't picture it unless you tell me what to picture.

TEACHER: They're men.

STUDENT: All men?

TEACHER: Yes.

STUDENT: Okay.

TEACHER: Okay. A, B, C, and D are in a room—

STUDENT: Are those are their real names?

TEACHER: What names?

STUDENT: A, B, C, and D's names.

TEACHER: They don't have names.

STUDENT: They're just called A, B, C, and D.

TEACHER: Yes! Are we good now?

STUDENT: Yes.

TEACHER: Yes…. Now listen carefully. A, and Not A, cannot be.

STUDENT: What?

TEACHER: A and not A.

STUDENT: They're not B.

TEACHER: No, it's not "they're not B." They cannot be.

STUDENT: Cannot be what?

TEACHER: A and not A.

STUDENT: Are not B?

TEACHER: Cannot be.

STUDENT: Cannot be what?

TEACHER: Be.

STUDENT: You mean *(Draws the letter.)* B?

TEACHER: Yes.

STUDENT: I've got it!

TEACHER: Shhh. We're still setting up the premise…. While A and not A cannot be, there are two doors. Behind door one is a lady. Behind door two is a tiger. C knows the truth but always lies. D always lies but does not know the truth. A does not know the truth but relies on C for his truth. B does not know the truth but relies on D for his truth. C says, "There is a tiger behind both Door One and Door Two." D says, "Neither the tiger nor the lady has any teeth." The tiger says, "Feed me, I'm hungry." The lady says, "If you don't let me out of here soon, I'm going home and I'll never speak to you again." If A and not A cannot B, who will arrive at the bus station first, how many people can fit in the room, can A sit next to C, what color is the tiger, is the lady married or single, and how many were going to St. Ives? Discuss.

STUDENT: *(Long pause.)* I think maybe I should hire a tutor.

TEACHER: The answers are obvious.

STUDENT: They are?

TEACHER: Take a guess.

STUDENT: But—

TEACHER: Guess.

STUDENT: A is greater than B. The hypotenuse is equal to C++. If A and not A cannot be, X equals 42. The lady is single and has a crush on C. There are three people going to St Ives, but they cannot go now because they can't afford plane fare. And… It'll be the Yankees over the Dodgers in 6, and the Cowboys plus three over the Patriots in January. Call now and I'll give you next week's point spread.

TEACHER: *(Long pause.)* Cowboys plus three?

STUDENT: As long as there are no injuries.

TEACHER: Well, of course. There's always that…. *(Pause. Pulls out paper and pencil and writes it down. Pause.)* Now we shall discuss an allegory.

STUDENT: I love allegories!

TEACHER: You know what that is, don't you?

STUDENT: Yes.

TEACHER: *(Pause.)* Yes?

STUDENT: Yes.

TEACHER: Then tell me.

STUDENT: Tell you what?

TEACHER: What is an allegory?

STUDENT: It's the former Vice President of the United States. Al'uh Gor'ee.

TEACHER: Well, I walked right into that one... No.

TEACHER smacks STUDENT on the head.

STUDENT: Oh, hey!

TEACHER: It's a new teaching technique called Negative Reinforcement. You say something stupid, and I bop you on the head. *(He demonstrates.)*

STUDENT: Ow.

TEACHER: Let us begin again. An allegory is a story—

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