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**From Art House to Bounce House:
The Evolution of "Diva Cat in the 21st Century"**

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**From Art House to Bounce House:
The Evolution of Diva Cat in the 21st Century**

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Report

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**From Art House to Bounce House:
The Evolution of Diva Cat in the 21st Century**

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"From Art House to Bounce House: The Evolution of Diva Cat in the 21st Century" chronicles the creation and development of a feature length screenplay with an alternative narrative structure, its transition into a comedic family film, and the impact upon the writer, Patrick Michael Pryor.

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Chapter I: Enter the Diva

When I first started the MFA screenwriting program at UT, I came up with three screenplay titles and vowed to write them over the course of two years. The first two, *The 666 House* and *A Fist Through the Head*, never came to fruition. However, the last title, *Diva Cat in the 21st Century*, began as a character sketch and expanded to my final thesis project as I completed the program.

After inventing the title, *Diva Cat in the 21st Century*, I thought of potential plot lines to hang on it. I really liked the juxtaposition of a glamorous cat with a pseudo-futuristic sounding setting. So, my brain initially jumped to some sort of sci-fi space opera starring a fastidious, Capote-esque, cat. Visions of a furry cat flying through space, firing laser cannons and rescuing space vixens, floated through my head. However, not a huge fan of science fiction, I opted for a more comedic route. I stuck to my comfort zone, comedy, and *Diva Cat* became more of a body-switch style jaunt, similar to *Big*, *Vice Versa*, and other 80's films. A spoiled and sassy housecat, cursed by a magic spell, would transform into a man and face the human world.

The diva muse came calling during my first screenwriting class in the Fall of 2010. As a writing exercise, I wrote a character sketch for *Diva Cat*. I named the cat Chairman Meow and wrote a brief biography about him. In the character sketch, I explored Chairman Meow's likes and dislikes, goals and aspirations. He hated wearing clothes and loved lounging in the sun. Catnip mice tickled his fancy, and he hated working a human

job, since he grew up a lazy spoiled housecat. However, despite the fun ideas, I had no intention of pursuing the character much further. Chairman Meow seemed like a funny character, but at the time, I felt a bit uncomfortable tackling a feature length script about a talking cat. Generally, my writing consisted of more horror and darker comedic fare. I had previously written a feature length screenplay about rabid killer grizzly bears, called *Bear City*, so I was not particularly in the mood to devote months of my time to the escapades of cute and cuddly kittens. I decided to put Diva Cat on hold that semester and write another horror screenplay, instead. I created a rollicking yarn about heavy metal roadies battling demons called, *Killed by Death*.

As time progressed, however, I became more and more drawn to the concept of writing a family friendly screenplay about a cat-man. Perhaps, I burnt myself out on the horror genre after writing two gore laced screenplays, or maybe I felt like switching gears a bit, but the idea of writing a straight comedy absent of horror elements seemed quite appealing. I had never seen a comedy that explored the day-to-day problems of a cat transforming into a man. Films like *The Shaggy D.A.* or *The Animal* usually skirt over the dilemmas of a transformed animal and jump straight into broad humor about biting mailmen or solving some arbitrary mystery. With *Diva Cat*, I wanted to explore the wants, desires, and dilemmas of a cat-person to the fullest degree. I wondered if a cat-man would like wearing clothes, only eat meat, or become attracted to other humans. Would a cat-man even enjoy life as a human, or would he want to

laze in the sun and play with twine all day? These questions seemed a bit ridiculous to ask myself, but I felt treating Chairman Meow as a living and breathing entity would help craft an interesting and unique script.

Chapter 2: Influences and Inspiration

Initially, I pictured *Diva Cat* as an adult art-house version of a children's movie. I wanted to write a script for adults who grew up watching the edgier, more freewheeling children's films of the 80's and early 90's. I sought to strike a tone with the bite of *The Goonies* and the ample kookiness of *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*. If successful, the finished screenplay would feel as if it emerged from a time warp - a long lost children's classic brimming with the joy and attitude of a bygone era. I wanted to write a script from the time when PG films could get away with a handful of curse words, a sprinkling of sexual content, and a few intense and frightening scenes. The screenplay for *Diva Cat in the 21st Century* would venture back to the decade where practical effects, synthesized soundtracks, and menacing villains were king. I thought back to the old VHS tapes I rented from the library as a child. *The Dark Crystal*, *Gremlins*, *Back to the Future* - each had a special place in my heart. I wanted to write a *family* movie both adults and children could enjoy, instead of a juvenile film that panders to the lowest common denominator and sells fast food toys. I wanted to recreate the cinema of my childhood, throw my kids' movie influences into a blender and serve them up with my own style and flair. I wanted to create a genuine and compelling film that multiple generations would enjoy.

As I continued brainstorming for *Diva Cat*, my scope grew more and more ambitious. I cribbed from the more thought-provoking "fish out of water" stories, like *The Enigma of Kaspar*

Hauser and *Brother From Another Planet*. Although I wanted to write an entertaining film for children, I also sought to slip in some wry social commentary. As an outsider, Diva Cat would question our social institutions, like Kaspar Hauser and the alien from *Brother*. Concepts like money, dating, and religion would seem quite foreign to a cat who spends most of his time eating Fancy Feast and chasing mice. In a way, Diva Cat originally served as a sort of author surrogate. For better or worse, I used Diva Cat to vent my own frustrations with human society and grapple with my own cynical outlook on life. Thus, I created a simple story for the plot. Diva cat transforms into a human, finds nothing but frustration and heartache in the outside world, and decides to return to life as a cat.

In addition to film, I found influence in coming of age stories, particularly novels like, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and other bildungsroman. These stories often feature a protagonist who leaves home and ventures into the outside world. Once in the outside world, the protagonist gains knowledge and grows as an individual. Eventually, the protagonist rejects the outside world and returns home a more experienced and learned individual. I wanted to follow this classic literary structure for my script. Chairman Meow, like the protagonist of a bildungsroman, would undergo a transition from naivete to wisdom, leave home and return again. So, I constructed a basic plot to fit the mold. An ancient curse transforms Chairman Meow into a human and forces him to leave home. Once in the outside world, Chairman Meow learns about human life and betters himself.

Mundane human tasks like working a dead end job, living in a cramped apartment, and squirreling away money for food, would grind down Chairman Meow. He would become disillusioned with human life, but become less spoiled as a result. At the conclusion of the screenplay, he would reverse the curse placed upon him and return home, more experienced and wiser from the time spent in the human world.

The tales of Hans Christian Andersen also provided some influence for *Diva Cat in the 21st Century*. At the time of writing *Diva Cat*, I was taking a literature course on Hans Christian Andersen. I read many of his tales, and I found them surprisingly sarcastic and dark. I wanted to adopt the same sort of tone for *Diva Cat* as the Hans Christian Andersen tales. The script would be fun, yet dark -- fantastical, yet grounded with personal conflict and social commentary.

Chapter 3: The Trailer

Before I wrote a word of an outline for *Diva Cat*, I filmed a faux trailer about Chairman Meow and his adventures for a production workshop course. I had already created a character sketch for Chairman Meow, and I needed an idea for a final project for the production workshop course. So, a fake trailer for *Diva Cat* seemed like the next logical jump. A bevy of fellow classmates helped both in front of and behind the camera. I starred as Chairman Meow in the trailer, and it included snippets of the basic plot I had constructed. An evil wizard, named Zarzoza, becomes jealous of Chairman Meow and his cute kitten ways. So, Zarzoza casts a spell upon Chairman Meow and turns him into a human. Once in the human world, Chairman Meow fends for himself in the big city of Austin, Texas. The trailer featured many shots of Chairman Meow drinking milk out of tumblers and crying to "Looking for Love (in All the Wrong Places)." I even stripped down to my underpants to perform Chairman Meow's transformation from feline into human. A cat was placed on a bed and then switched out with me, which created an ultra-low budget effect of a cat disappearing and a human appearing.

The trailer also featured the more mundane aspects of the human world, which Chairman Meow adjusts to. He takes a driving test (and fails), looks for a job in the newspaper, goes on a bum date, and steals Fancy Feast from a supermarket. Some of these little scenes made their way into the actual screenplay, but others did not make the transition. The trailer also nailed down

the tone of the soon-to-be screenplay fairly accurately. Scenes of Chairman Meow scared in the city, looking for love in all the wrong places, were juxtaposed with fun moments of him perched in trees and grooming himself. Footage from big budget action movies, like the climatic bridge explosion in *The Long Kiss Goodnight* were edited into the trailer as jokes. Not only did *Diva Cat* have humor and an intriguing concept, it also contained huge action scenes that rivaled the latest Hollywood blockbuster. In both tone and content, the fake movie trailer helped create a solid blueprint for the rest of the script to follow.

Chapter 4: Alternative Poetics and *L'Avventura*

I first started drafting the screenplay for *Diva Cat in the 21st Century* while taking an Alternative Poetics course in the Spring of 2011. Most of my screenwriting classes up to that point had covered the standard Hollywood three-act narrative structure, but Alternative Poetics featured many other narrative models used in film. I was, and still am, not a huge proponent of three-act structure. This narrative style generally favors a protagonist who overcomes obstacles to reach a goal, and the structure is divided into a beginning (Act I), middle (Act II), and end (Act III). Scripts that follow Hollywood three-act-structure usually play out in a chronological, straightforward fashion. The action in one scene spurs the action in the next in a cause and effect style. Many big budget blockbusters, and more character driven (think Academy Award) dramas, utilize a three act narrative structure. However, as I learned in Alternative Poetics, some works of world cinema and films from auteur directors often do not follow the dominant Hollywood narrative mode. The professor for Alternative Poetics screened films like *L'Avventura*, *The Headless Woman*, and *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. Watching these films, which followed different narrative beats than ones outlined in screenwriting classes, really expanded my cinematic horizons and my approach to screenwriting. If a film could justify an alternative plot line for artistic reasons, I thought, then I could do the same.

For the final project in Alternative Poetics, I wrote an outline for a screenplay with an alternative narrative structure.

As long as I presented an artistic justification for my decisions, any narrative was fair game. I thought long and hard about a good idea for an alternative narrative structure. Then, I remembered *Diva Cat*. Influenced by *L'Avventura*, I decided to write a screenplay about a cat-man in an existential crisis. The plot of *Diva Cat*, like *L'Avventura*, would be scant to highlight the disorienting and oppressive nature of the surrounding world. I left out a concrete villain, a specific reason for why Chairman Meow transforms, and a clear goal for him to pursue once he becomes a human. For me, the central conflict of the story revolved around the cruel, selfish, untrustworthy nature of humans. Once thrust into the modern world, Chairman Meow would experience a bleak and unpleasant human existence, seek to return to his cat form, and fail. To emphasize the drudgery of the human world, I issued Chairman Meow a variety of mundane tasks. He first stayed in a homeless shelter, then worked a dead-end job, then looked for an apartment. Life for Chairman Meow consisted of nothing but a series of dead ends and disappointments. Thus, an alternative plot structure with no clear goals for the protagonist would highlight Chairman Meow's existential dread as an outsider in the human world, much like *L'Avventura* highlighted the existential crises of its characters through an ever shifting plot with no concrete protagonist or goals. With the added element of talking cats to my screenplay, I hoped to sugar coat the bitter narrative pill. I wanted to write an art film dressed up as a silly B-movie that touched upon the fears of an outsider in today's society.

Chapter 5: Characters

With the basic premise in place, I set about writing *Diva Cat*. I started by constructing a few characters. I already had created Chairman Meow in a previous character sketch, but I added more nuance and depth this time around. He had an entire backstory. Originally a stray, he was adopted when he was three months old by a hyperactive 7-year-old named Megan. After living in a suburban household for several years, Chairman Meow forgot about his wild roots and became fat, lazy, and spoiled. Only upon venturing into the outside world, does he shed his diva nature and become grateful of his owners.

I imbued my own anxieties and personal hang-ups into Chairman Meow as well. My own stubbornness, anxiety, and feelings of being an outsider translated to Chairman Meow's behavior as a human. He was uncomfortable in his human body, disliked most people, and always felt out of place in the human world. He was definitely, for better or worse, a writer friendly character.

The addition of several new characters fleshed out the story. Chairman Meow's owner, Megan, loves her pets. She treats Chairman Meow like a doll - trims his fur, throws tea parties, and dresses him up like a sad-and mixed up baby doll. I included a sub-plot about Megan searching for Chairman Meow to make the story a bit more child friendly as well. As a child, I had a cat of my own. I drew upon childhood experiences with my cat to make Megan a more fully realized character. I remember cutting my cat's fur with scissors, dressing her up in costumes, reading her

stories, hugging her too tight, and dragging her around the backyard. Some of these memories I ripped directly from my childhood and put into the script.

Doctor Ginormous, Chairman Meow's cat "brother," also serves as an addition to the story. Chairman Meow lives with Doctor Ginormous in suburbia. Older and wiser, Doctor Ginormous shows Chairman Meow the ropes once he transforms into a human and must fend for himself in the outside world. I drew inspiration from the friend character in *Big* for Doctor Ginormous. He helps Chairman Meow and provides moral and emotional support. In the original version of the outline, Doctor Ginormous becomes jealous of Chairman Meow and tries to replace him as the favorite cat in the house.

As I thought up characters, I figured I should create a central antagonist for the screenplay. Although I originally wanted to pursue a plotless narrative, I decided to add a few more conventional Hollywood elements, like a villain, so the screenplay did not become a total chore to read. *L'Avventura* is a great film, but it takes a great deal of patience to sit through, and I figured a screenplay about a talking cat should have some entertainment value as well. So, I created The Nine Cat Gods to serve as a central antagonist for the story. The Nine Cat Gods live in a space station and watch Chairman Meow through a telescope. When Chairman Meow disrespects his owners and acts a bit persnickety, the Cat Gods zap him and turn him into a human to teach a lesson in humility.

When I created the Cat Gods, I drew inspiration from both *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* and *The Dark Crystal*. As a child, I was both terrified and fascinated by the large rubber-suited and animatronic monsters in Jim Henson movies and Super Sentai television programs. If a show had puppets or weird monsters in it, I would plant myself in front of the television and watch, transfixed. I wanted to recreate that childhood feeling of both fear and wonder with the Cat Gods in Diva Cat. I envisioned them as sort of a cross between the Skesis, large bird like creatures from *The Dark Crystal*, and Rita Repulsa from *Power Rangers*. As the central nemesis of the program, Rita Repulsa observes the Power Rangers from a base on the moon. She's also very arrogant, cackles often, and orders around various rubber suited underlings. I adopted her demeanor for the Cat God ruler, Supreme Lord Kittenden. He hassles the lesser Cat Gods, lauds his own genius, cackles, and peers through a telescope, much like Rita Repulsa. Overall, the Cat Gods would look like frightening, anthropomorphic cat creatures with long black claws and teeth. I did not envision CGI, only practical effects for creating these beasts. The thought of seeing these Cat Gods larger than life on the silver screen sent shivers down my spine. I had to write them into my script!

I also decided to throw in a potential love interest to the plot, Linda Linder. A leather jacketed rock and roller, Linda works at a pet store. Chairman Meow meets her once he lands a job taking care of cats. I created Linda to explore Chairman Meow's interest in humans, which fascinated me. Since he's a

transformed cat, Chairman Meow would only find other cats romantically interesting, I thought. So, the romantic subplot with Linda would act as sort of a ruse that led nowhere, much like romances in real life. Linda would become interested in Chairman Meow, but he would reject her because she is human. I found this sub-plot interesting to explore and drew from girls I had dated to create the character of Linda. Generally, the female characters in my screenplays are of the tough, outspoken variety. Since those are the types of girls I know in real life, I can write them better and more easily than someone meeker or more soft spoken.

Continuing that strong feminine streak, I also included a bitter, old landlady, Measles May. She owns the run down house Chairman Meow rents once he becomes a human and ventures into the outside world. She hates cats and spies on Chairman Meow, curious of his odd behavior. I thought including a nosy neighbor would add extra pressure for Chairman Meow as he struggles to live in the human world. I also find most bitter eccentric kooks humorous and endearing.

Another supporting character, Al Reardon, manages the pet store where Chairman Meow works as a human. In the original outline, Al conspires to rip Chairman Meow off financially. The subplot with Al and his shady business dealings would underscore the untrustworthiness of humans and force Chairman Meow to want to return home.

An "evil wizard," Zarzoza, rounds out the cast. I wanted to poke fun at the tropes of the Hollywood three-act structure, so I

had Chairman Meow actively try to find a goal to pursue throughout most of the original outline. He finds a goal in Zarzoza. Although Zarzoza is merely a fortuneteller, Chairman Meow becomes obsessed with him. Zarzoza must know how to reverse the curse of the Cat Gods, Chairman Meow thinks. So, he stalks Zarzoza and digs through his trash, but only ends up empty handed. By trying to force Hollywood-style cause and effect reasoning onto the human world, Chairman Meow solves nothing and lands himself in even worse trouble.

Chapter 6: The Original Outline

Once I had the characters assembled, I constructed a plot to thrust them into. However, before I dove headfirst into writing screenplay pages, I composed a short outline detailing the intricacies of the plot. I prefer to write outlines because they provide a clear direction for the narrative. Often, I spend more time writing an outline than the actual screenplay. I like to nail each scene down in an outline - figure out how they begin and end and bleed into each other. Once all the pieces fall into place, I simply flesh out the outline in script form. Writing a screenplay blind, with no planning, generally leads me to write in circles. The plot shoots off in a myriad of directions, and I keep returning to re-write previous scenes. To save myself the headache, I always write a detailed outline.

My original outline for *Diva Cat in the 21st Century* leaned more heavily toward an alternative narrative structure. Chairman Meow possessed no clear goal. He pursued fruitless relationships, and battled with forces beyond his control. I went for the full blown "realistic" approach to a cat-man in human society. Chairman Meow originally was kind of a dirty, scary, crazed man who lived in and out of a homeless shelter. A woman who works at the homeless shelter, Cynthia Chalmers, provides Chairman Meow with advice and pushes him into the working world. Ultimately, the original outline struck a bleak and depressing tone. Chairman Meow mills about a homeless shelter, works as a dishwasher, and pursues fruitless relationships with humans until he sheds his diva nature.

Satisfied, the Cat Gods restore him to his feline form and he returns to his owner, Megan.

Antonioni might have been proud of this outline, but I thought finding a larger audience for the script might prove difficult. Who would want to watch a bleak depressing film about talking cats? Perhaps, I bit off more than I could chew, combining art-house ambitions with such fun subject matter. The idea still seemed intriguing, but I felt I had written myself into a dead end. So, I handed in my outline, passed *Alternative Poetics* with flying colors, and put *Diva Cat* on the backburner once again until I could figure out a better avenue to pursue for Chairman Meow.

Chapter 7: The First Draft and The Hollywood Compromise

An entire summer passed before I dusted off my *Diva Cat* outline and revisited my feline friend, Chairman Meow. During my second screenwriting workshop, I pitched two ideas. At the time, I was more excited about an alternate dimension adventure story called *Time Twistaz*. It featured a two NJ Transit police, a juggalo and grizzled veteran, falling into a Bermuda Triangle-like void beneath a train station. I never intended to pitch *Diva Cat*, but I pulled it out of the air at the last minute. To my surprise, the class gravitated toward *Diva Cat*. Perhaps, my peers pushed for *Diva Cat* because they had seen the trailer and the outline and wanted me to finally cough up that script. Or they might have been sick of hearing about *Diva Cat* every semester and wanted me to get it out of my system. My professor also wrote children's films, so the thought of a talking cat movie probably appealed to her as well. So, *Diva Cat* it was, and I proceeded to revise my outline.

I made a few significant changes to my original outline before writing the script. Tonally, Chairman Meow became a little less creepy. I ditched the homeless shelter aspect of the narrative, pumped up the Cat Gods as antagonists, and focused more on Chairman Meow trying to survive in the working world ala *Big*. These changes caused my latest draft to lean more toward the Hollywood three-act structure. It was more or less mandatory in screenwriting class, so I figured I might as well adopt the narrative template, but still maintain my own unique style and flourishes.

Chairman Meow possessed two goals in the revised draft. After he changes into a human, he must find a job and support himself in the working world. At the same time, he seeks a way to reverse the curse that transformed him. I kept Chairman Meow in the dark about his transformation to maintain a trace of the existential dread from the original outline. Chairman Meow undergoes a horrible transformation, but he has no idea why or how it occurred until the midpoint of the screenplay. Often in life, events occur for no reason, and nothing one does can change them. Making the transformation seem like a random act to Chairman Meow heightens his anxiety and reflects the feeling of helplessness of modern man. Things happen for no reason,.

Of course, to add a bit more Hollywood flair, I gave the Cat Gods a clear reason for zapping Chairman Meow and turning him into a human. In the beginning of the screenplay, Chairman Meow acts spoiled and rotten. To teach him a lesson in humility, the Cat Gods transform Chairman Meow and force him to work and adapt to human life. By subjecting Chairman Meow to the human world, the Cat Gods hope to strip him of his diva nature. As a more humble cat, he will appreciate his owner, Megan. The script now possessed a frightening and strong villain with clear motivation and goals, like my beloved 80's family classics, and Chairman Meow possessed motivation as well. The more I wrote, the more I tried to strike more of a balance between the art-house and Hollywood. Diva Cat was becoming a more family friendly movie that children could enjoy.

To prepare myself for a more Hollywood influenced screenplay, I wrote coverage for the movie *Big*. I took note of the friend character, Billy, who helps Tom Hanks find a job and an apartment in the big city. I decided to make Doctor Ginormous, Chairman Meow's cat "brother," more like the friend character from *Big*. In the first draft of the screenplay, Doctor Ginormous helps Chairman Meow blend in with humans and find a job. Older and wiser, Doctor Ginormous teaches Chairman Meow about the ups and downs of human society and even helps him find an apartment. Basically, Doctor Ginormous became a shameless rip-off of Billy from *Big*.

When reading the *Big* script, I also studied several plot elements. I noted the amount of time we spend with young Tom Hanks before he finds the Zoltar machine and makes a wish. About 15 pages into *Big*, Zoltar grants the wish, and Tom Hanks wakes up an adult the next morning. Typical for an inciting incident, but it was important to note the rather lengthy, 80's style buildup to the magical transformation. Today, Tom Hanks would become "big" probably a few minutes or so into the film to keep a more impatient, modern audience in seats. Reading the script inspired me to let my feline characters breathe a little in the introduction. My screenwriting professor at the time also placed emphasis on setting up the main character and his world. She showed a clip from *Finding Nemo*, and pointed out the time the film spends setting up Marlin and his family before he loses Nemo. With these Hollywood pointers in mind, I spent the first 15 pages of my screenplay setting up Chairman Meow and his

relationship with Megan, her family, and Doctor Ginormous. At first, I had some reservations about spending so much time with a bunch of talking cats. Would the audience get bored? Would I set them up for a different sort of cute and cuddly kids' movie? I wanted to cut to the chase and show all the fun misadventures Chairman Meow finds himself in as a human. However, I took a cue from *Big* and let the story breathe. By knowing Chairman Meow as a cat, the audience can see the startling effect of his transformation and root for him when he faces conflict in the human world. I wanted the audience to side with Chairman Meow - experience his anxieties and fears first hand. Spending the opening pages building the world of the screenplay helped set up the protagonist and his desires.

Chapter 8: Big Fun

As I continued pumping out pages for *Diva Cat*, I encountered a few problems. One included tone. I love offbeat and darker comedies, like *Heathers*, *Repo Man*, and early John Waters films. So, my writing tends to veer on the more absurd side of comedy. Often when writing *Diva Cat*, I felt there was a struggle between writing a comedy with my own sense of humor and tailoring it for more age appropriate audiences. Although I had toned down the creepiness of Chairman Meow, he converses with cute cats and no longer resides in a homeless shelter, he still indulged in some bizarre activity. He bites the heads off fish and sucks out their guts, cleans himself in public, and urinates in sandboxes. I found all the cat-man antics hilarious, but occasionally my professor and other students seemed less enthused. "Who is the audience for this film?" was a question thrown around in class. Generally, I like writing scripts for myself and people with similar tastes. With *Diva Cat*, I targeted an audience who rented VHS tapes from the library as children and appreciated art films and absurd humor. Of course, this film going demographic seems like a small minority, but one lone stranger loving my film is the greatest achievement I could imagine. Even if I only reach one person riding on the same crazy wavelength, I would feel accomplished. I write movies for people who love film.

Marrying the art-house with Hollywood, the absurd with the sensible, became a tricky balancing act to pull off in the first draft of my screenplay. As I continued writing the script, I encountered new hurdles. "This script isn't fun enough," became

another common complaint. I held fast to the idea of critiquing modern society, exploring the anxiety of the outsider, and painting a picture of existential dread. I wanted to rake Chairman Meow over the coals as a cat-man. In the first draft, the Cat Gods forced Chairman Meow to participate in the drudgery of every day life. When things got too intense, and Chairman Meow sought to back down, the Cat Gods zapped him with lightening or conjured a punker out of clay to "test" Chairman Meow and force him to work. In retrospect, this concept of the Cat Gods "forcing" Chairman Meow to become active seemed a little weak, but I felt determined to depict the misery of the human world in all its awfulness.

To make the script more "fun," the professor and the class wanted me to pursue a plot line about cat whispering. I had included cat whispering as a sort of joke in the first draft outline. Chairman Meow finds a job at a pet store because he's good with cats. He talks to them sometimes, and solves their problems. However, the professor held onto this little glimmer of potential plot and stretched it. What if Chairman Meow became famous using his cat whispering? What if he turned all the cats in the pet store into divas? While I found these ideas a bit intriguing, they drastically undercut my original premise: cat meets world, cat hates world, and cat returns home wiser. If Chairman Meow found success in the human world wouldn't he love it? To satisfy the class, I begrudgingly included the cat whisperer plot line. I still wanted the audience to have fun, after all. To still make life hard on Chairman Meow though, I

tried to steer the script into a rise and fall tale mid-way through writing. Chairman Meow would find success as a cat whisperer, and then lose it all once all the cats become divas. Since Chairman Meow pampers and preens the cats at the pet store, they become as spoiled and rotten as him. His lowest point in the first draft hits when he both blows his chance at cat whispering and realizes he turned all the cats into disobedient divas.

I think the cat whispering plot line became the weakest portion of the first draft. Since I added the cat whispering to the script mid-way through writing it, Chairman Meow's rise and fall from fame never really paid off or felt properly paced. The script introduces the concept of cat whispering late and pays it off too quickly. Chairman Meow appears on live television and blows his big chance, since all the cats he trained became divas. I would either have to eschew the cat whispering or expand upon it in further revisions.

Chapter 9: The Creep Factor

Another big problem with the first draft revolved around the relationship between Chairman Meow and Megan. Both my professor and the class found the interactions between a cat-man and child a little unsettling. For starters, Chairman Meow wakes up as a naked man at the foot of Megan's bed after undergoing his transformation. A scene of a naked man in a 7-year-old's bedroom seemed a bit too explicit for a family audience. Although I wanted to emphasize the shock and horror of the transformation, perhaps it read too harsh. In the first draft, Megan's father screams at a naked Chairman Meow, slaps him with a book, and chases him out of the house. The scene also served to mark a point of no return for Chairman Meow. Megan and her father have identified and associated the human Chairman Meow with a crazed, naked man. Chairman Meow's shocking initiation into the human world thwarts any attempt for him to return home.

After his transformation, Chairman Meow spends a good deal of time learning to talk and walk. His mush mouthed screams and odd gait, which I found hilarious, struck the class as off putting as well. I thought knocking Chairman Meow down a peg, and robbing him of his voice for a few pages, would really show the shock of becoming a human. Losing his voice and motor skills also makes assimilating with the human world much more difficult. Chairman Meow takes some time to adjust to his new human form, and he regains his speech and learns to walk on two legs and balance himself without a tail. However, the struggle to fit into the human world, once again underlined the anxiety and

discomfort of living in the modern society. Chairman Meow, like many overworked and alienated people, felt uncomfortable in his own skin and never quite sensed like he belonged.

Another contested scene involved Chairman Meow meeting with Megan toward the climax of the film. Human and weary of the world, Chairman Meow returns to Megan's house with an armful of tea party supplies. By playing tea party with Megan as a human, Chairman Meow indulges in the one activity he hates most. This shedding of selfishness prompts the Cat Gods to zap Chairman Meow and return him to his cat form. However, while the tea party scene served a purpose, demonstrating Chairman Meow's newfound selflessness, it struck the class as too creepy. Perhaps, a grown, strange man spending time with a girl in her house seemed inappropriate and taught a wrong lesson to children. "If a stranger says he is a cat, you should let him in your home." Chairman Meow also cross-dresses in this scene, wearing a frilly dress. While this detail also demonstrated his newfound humbleness, wanting to please Megan, it could also rub some more conservative viewers the wrong way. I decided to make a note of the specific scenes where the class found Chairman Meow too strange and bizarre, and tone them down in the future.

Chapter 10: Becoming Beyonce

After completing my second screenwriting course in the Fall of 2011, I emerged with a complete first draft of *Diva Cat*. Since I found the experience of writing *Diva Cat* quite taxing, I decided to place it aside and concentrate on other projects. I tackled a kung-fu movie with horror overtones for my next screenwriting class. I felt more comfortable writing an over the top blood splattering, bone smashing action film than a cute and cuddly children's film any day. Writing a new script also allowed me to take my mind off *Diva Cat* and come back to it with a fresh pair of eyes. Months of living in Chairman Meow's world and struggling with a family friendly feature left me creatively drained.

Once I cleared my writing plate of the kung-fu script, I returned to *Diva Cat* once more as my final thesis project. My professor liked *Diva Cat* so much that she offered to pass it onto her manager once I completed a revision. The pressure was on. However, I received a long list of changes and plot suggestions to add to the script for it to stand a fighting chance as a children's film.

I sat down for my thesis committee meeting with a relatively open mind. I knew my script needed work, and I had to remove some more questionable material to make it family friendly. However, the notes I received threw me for a complete loop. Some of the big changes my thesis supervisor and reader suggested included: changing Chairman Meow to a woman, picturing her as played by Beyonce, emphasizing the "love story" between the cat-person and

Megan, building upon the cat whispering angle, making Megan a *Toddlers and Tiaras* style pageant contestant, and eliminating some of the characters. Basically, my thesis committee wanted me to write a completely different movie. I thanked them for their notes and left a bit miffed, unsure of what direction to take the script.

For the next few weeks after my committee meeting, I thought long and hard about a way to address the notes I had received. They eliminated any sort of kitten in existential crisis that I wanted to originally explore and downplayed the outsider struggling against society storyline I had envisioned throughout the drafts. How could I change Chairman Meow to Beyonce and still write a script I found hilarious and worthwhile? The thought of "selling out" disgusted me. "So this is what Hollywood must be like," I would think, stuck in a creative funk. The notes I received from my committee seemed like something a balding executive would give to the writer of *Beverly Hills Chihuahua*, but maybe that was the point. For most of the screenwriting program, I was allowed to work within my own bubble, more or less. Despite my visions of auteurship and making grand films for people like me, I still had to pay the bills. My thesis supervisor made a good point. I could turn *Diva Cat* into a big budget Hollywood script, potentially cash in, and use that money to fund other projects. I thought of more independent artists and directors that followed this formula, and in retrospect, making *Diva Cat* more fun and fancy free did not seem so bad. If Changing Chairman Meow into Beyonce meant

writing another film I actually wanted, then I was on board to chop up *Diva Cat*.

Chapter 11: Back to the Drawing Board

With new notes in hand, I set about devising a new plot for *Diva Cat*. Changing Chairman Meow into a glamorous lady would call for a complete rewrite. I thought long and hard about approaching this new angle. Since I was unfamiliar with most children's films today, I rented *Bolt*, another talking animal movie, and took special note of the dog's relationship with his owner. After Bolt departs on a cross-country journey, I counted the number of times the film cut back to the owner. She only appears in a handful of scenes but each build on her missing her dog and wanting him back. I cribbed a few scenes from *Bolt* to enhance the scenes of Megan missing Chairman Meow. For the second draft, I would escalate the tension of Megan searching for Chairman Meow. She starts off hanging fliers, then scours an adoption booth, and finally visits the pet store to ask the cat whisperer for advice. Also, like *Bolt*, I placed more emphasis on Megan replacing Chairman Meow with another pet. In the second draft, Megan receives a teacup Chihuahua named Tinkerbelle near the second act break. Chairman Meow sees Tinkerbelle, and in his usual stubborn nature would become even more angry and upset with Megan. This scene, like in *Bolt*, would mark the low point for the animal protagonist. Getting replaced by another pet creates much emotional turmoil.

To further educate myself on children's films, I watched *Beverly Hills Chihuahua*. I found the film offensive on many different levels. A sassy, Beverly Hills Chihuahua falls in love with a Latino gardener Chihuahua. The Beverly Hills Chihuahua

also ventures to Mexico for no real reason and meets a lot of Latin stereotypes. Although *Beverly Hills Chihuahua* scraped the lowest common denominator barrel I wanted to avoid at all costs, it had a few shining moments. I took note of the diva-esque nature of the Beverley Hills Chihuahua, Chloe. She begins the film lazing around a mansion with Jamie Lee Curtis, but then quickly falls from a life of privilege after venturing to Mexico. Watching *Beverly Hills Chihuahua* inspired me to amp up the diva qualities of Chairman Meow and track his character arc from spoiled to humble a bit closer. The only fun part of *BHC* came from watching the spoiled Chihuahua lose her doggie couture and complain about the filthy conditions she found herself in, like dogfights and Aztec temples. So, I decided to make Chairman Meow so spoiled, he would become offended by almost everything in the human world.

After brushing up on children's films, I then tackled my next bit note: changing Chairman Meow into a female. According to my thesis committee, a male diva read as confusing and unrelatable. I received a note comparing my first draft of *Diva Cat* to the awful Adam Sandler comedy, *Little Nicky*. Chairman Meow came across as "too weird" and "not enough of a diva." Turning him into a female, apparently, would amp up the divaness of the character and make a cat-person seem less creepy.

I spent a good deal of time thinking of how to best alter Chairman Meow to make him more relatable. By changing him into a female, I feared the script would turn into *Beverly Hills Chihuahua*, reinforce antiquated gender roles, and become less

funny. Beyonce acting like a diva did not seem as humorous to me as a man acting like a diva. In my eyes, a diva playing a diva seemed predictable and one note. The more I thought about a gender change, the more I realized I chose to make Chairman Meow a man because a male acting like a diva plays against type. I find unpredictability in comedy funny. So, if Chairman Meow was to become a woman, she would have to play against diva type. Instead of Beyonce or Nicki Minaj, I pictured more of a Kristen Wiig type in full on over the top spoiled cat-lady mode. I would buy a movie ticket to see a talented comedy actress bite chunks out of a rotisserie chicken, clean herself with her hands, and put down every human that crosses her path. If I changed Chairman Meow to a woman, I also wanted her to become a full-blown diva in the vein of actresses from the 40s and 50s. Bette Davis in *All About Eve* immediately sprang to mind. Not only would Chairman Meow become a lady diva, but she would find most aspects of the human world absolutely disgusting and shocking. Pursuing a gender change from this angle made the concept seem more appealing.

So, I decided to change the male Chairman Meow to the female Sprinkles. If I wanted this script to sell, I might as well follow Hollywood advice. To help ease the transition, I watched a bunch of "classic" diva films. I started with *Showgirls*, which was chock full of over the top diva antics. I especially liked Nomi Malone's line delivery. She basically hissed and spat every line, brimming with feminine rage. I also took note of how Nomi threw hissy fits at every setback. She threw ketchup all over

french fries in a blind rage and danced fierce and ferociously during auditions. I even culled some of Nomi's dance moves for a fashion shoot Sprinkles attends in the second draft of *Diva Cat*.

Sunset Boulevard also exerted much influence on the second draft of *Diva Cat*. I studied the character of Norma Desmond, the washed up movie starlet in the film. I loved how appalled she acted with everything and her over the top speech and mannerisms. Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard* liked to think everything was about her, like Sprinkles in *Diva Cat*. When I wrote Sprinkles into the second draft, I basically pictured Norma Desmond's voice in my head, with a dash of Nomi Malone and her over the top reactions. Basically, to help me write Sprinkles, I pictured Kristen Wiig playing Norma Desmond as a cat-woman.

Chapter 12: New Faces

With the character of Sprinkles nailed down, I set about changing the rest of the script to reflect her. Some characters I changed, cut down, or eschewed completely. The human "love interest" became male. I named him Bradley Milton, a play on Milton Bradley board games, and made him an introvert with a fondness for loud sweaters. I thought transforming the love interest into an introvert would complement Sprinkles' bold and brassy nature quite nicely. During the course of the second draft, Bradley and Sprinkles realize they have feelings for each other because they both hate most humans. While Sprinkles voices her negative opinions, Bradley fumes and stewes.

Since Bradley took the position as love interest, I relegated Linda Linder to a more minor role. In the second draft of the script, Linda runs the pet store where Sprinkles works. Still a loudmouth in a leather jacket, Linda hires Sprinkles for her cat expertise.

I also added Amelia, a mother character for Megan. Some of the notes I received for my rewrite included a mother-daughter conflict. My thesis committee wanted to see Megan as more of a tomboy, with an overbearing drama queen mother. So, I constructed the character of Amelia. She wants Megan to become a beauty queen and forces her to participate in awful *Toddlers and Tiaras* style pageants. However, Megan loves playing in the dirt, watching *Aliens*, and styling her cats' fur into mohawks. Much of the conflict in Megan's home stems from Megan and Amelia fighting over beauty pageant participation.

While I added some new faces to the cast, I also cut some as well. The Nine Cat Gods, one of my personal favorites, vanished to make room for a more streamlined plot. The committee found the Cat Gods too creepy and weird for a children's film, so I axed them and replaced them with a more *Big*-esque setup. Instead of magic Cat Gods transforming Sprinkles into a human, she places a wish on a cat mummy in a museum. In the second draft, Sprinkles wishes she could talk to humans, so she could boss them around and give them a piece of her mind. She sneaks into an Egyptian exhibit at the Natural History Museum and wishes in front of the cat mummy. Upon hearing her wish, the cat mummy's eyes glow red. Sprinkles' wish is granted.

Although I mourned the loss of the Cat Gods, replacing them with a magical mummy helped make Sprinkles a more active character. Since she knows how she transformed in this draft of the script, through the mummy, she can decide to return and reverse her wish. Sprinkles comes across as much more stubborn and diva-esque in the second draft because she actively chooses not to reverse her wish to become human. She loves life as a human at first and uses her new position to climb to the top of the diva ladder. Using a wish granting object also allowed for a strong break at the second act. After Sprinkles blows her chance at stardom and falls down the diva ladder, she wants to reverse her wish. However, when she returns to the museum, she finds the mummy missing. Because of her arrogance, Sprinkles remains trapped in a human form for most of the third act. All seems

lost until Sprinkles and Doctor Ginormous locate the mummy in another museum.

Chapter 13: The Rise and Fall of Sprinkles

The one plot change to the second draft involved Sprinkles and her cat whispering career. In my previous draft, I had included Sprinkles whispering to cats as almost an afterthought at the suggestion of the class. Now that Sprinkles was more of a diva, I thought it felt only natural for her to pursue a path to fame and fortune. Instead of fretting in the human world, like in previous drafts, Sprinkles takes charge and uses her human form to gain celebrity status. She keeps her feline roots secret, but can still communicate with cats. She lands a job at a pet store, helping with feline problems. The main plot line of the second draft followed Sprinkles as she gained more and more clientele at the pet store and helped with their kitten woes. Eventually, celebrities like Brangelina and the Kardashians bring their cats to Sprinkles for sage advice.

Losing the Cat Gods in the second draft left me without clear cut antagonists. So, I decided to make Sprinkles her own worst enemy. She rises to stardom as a cat whisperer and pushes Megan away as a result. By the time the second act break hits, Sprinkles becomes so spoiled and self-centered that she alienates all her friends, both cat and human. Only when she meets her idols, the equally spoiled and snooty Kardashians, does Sprinkles realize the error of her ways. I think Sprinkles sabotaging herself makes her character arc a bit more rewarding as well. By realizing the callousness of her actions, she chooses to change, instead of following the orders of some higher being, like the

Cat Gods. I also found writing her catty attitude more fun to write.

Chapter 14: Reflections

After I finished my second draft of *Diva Cat*, I sat back and wondered if it was still the same script I wanted to write once upon a time in my first semester of grad school. The latest draft seemed much more kid friendly and fun, which I liked, but I had also lost some of my loftier artistic goals throughout the writing process. Nevertheless, I still felt satisfied with my work. I had finally reached a happy medium of artistic compromise. I wrote a more accessible script, but still found it funny and engaging. I might not be the first in line to see the new version of *Diva Cat*, but I would certainly buy a ticket for the matinee. Or at the very least, sneak into the theater.

With more fine tuning, I think I could nail the tone of *Diva Cat* even better. Some scenes still read a little too creepy and weird for a family audience, and I could still find opportunities to slip in some of my own sense of humor. I somehow managed to include both references to *Grey Gardens* and *The French Connection* in the second draft of the script, and I'm sure I'll find other avenues to keep the script interesting for myself. Hopefully, *Diva Cat* will one day influence future filmmakers as much as those dusty VHS tapes influenced me. I can see an excited child popping in *Diva Cat*, soaking in the images with fear and wonder and joy, like I did so long ago.

Appendix A: *Diva Cat* Original Outline

Characters

Chairman Meow – A housecat who loves playing with twine and lazing in the sun. He possesses a persnickety demeanor and only eats tuna or cans of wet Fancy Feast. His child owner, Megan Perkins, adopted him from a pet store when he was three months old. She raised him, with a heaping help from her parents, in her small suburban home. She pampered, played with, and pet Chairman Meow. Since he was domesticated at a very young age, Chairman Meow grew out of touch with his wild roots. He can't climb trees or leap fences. He hates running, detests water, and expects his dinner served on time.

During his time at the Perkins' household, Chairman Meow became fat and lazy and grew to take affection for granted. He likes Megan and her parents, and appreciates their company, but he expects them to dote on his every whim. If Chairman Meow does not get what he desires, he knocks over glasses on the kitchen table or shreds the curtains with his claws. Chairman Meow is quite impatient in his cat life, and believes humans exist to serve him.

One morning, Chairman Meow awakes to discover he has transformed into a human being. Megan sees Meow, as a naked man, lying at the foot of her bed. She screams and chases him out of her room. Exiled from the household, Chairman Meow adopts the name "Joe Normal." He struggles to overcome his diva roots. Alone in the big city, he must feed himself, find a job, and rely on his own wits and strength to get through the day. As Meow grapples with his new, hard working reality, he begins to view human concepts as silly or pointless. Money, employment, and romantic relationships befuddle Chairman Meow. After spending time in the "professional" world, Chairman Meow comes to despise humanity. He renounces his diva ways and learns to love his life as a cat. He longs to return to Megan and is cat brother, Dr. Ginormous.

Megan Perkins – Chairman Meow's eight-year-old owner. She loves Chairman Meow and showers him with affection. Oblivious to his diva demeanor, she sometimes "invites" him to pretend tea parties, gives him baths, and pulls him in her wagon. Chairman Meow sleeps at the foot of Megan's bed. During restless nights, she enjoys petting and singing to Chairman Meow. Sometimes, she treats Chairman Meow like a girl and brushes his poofy hair or paints his nails. Chairman Meow loathes these emasculating activities, but he also likes the attention and pampering he receives.

When Chairman Meow disappears, Megan becomes quite upset. She puts up "Missing Loved Cat" fliers around town and asks her friends and neighbors about any sightings or clues. Megan longs for her cat to return home. She thinks Chairman Meow can do no wrong, and is the perfect pet. When Chairman Meow returns home, she decides to help him undo the human curse of the 9 Cat Gods.

The Nine Cat Gods - Divine cats who oversee the entire feline kingdom. They ensure cats live in harmonious balance with their surroundings. When Chairman Meow oversteps his cat bounds and becomes too persnickety, the Nine Cat Gods transform him into a human. They hope to teach Chairman Meow a lesson about catdom. By thrusting him into the "horrific realm" of adult human life, the nine cat gods force

Chairman Meow to re-evaluate his life as a diva cat. He renounces his persnickety ways and longs to return to his simpler, lackadaisical life.

Linda Linder – A waitress at the diner where Chairman Meow works. She becomes attracted to his persnickety demeanor and unusual behavior, but he has no interest in a relationship with a human woman. Linda makes attempts to connect with Chairman Meow. He plays along, for want of a human friend, but remains slightly distant. If she gets too close, he feels very uncomfortable.

When he feels lonely, Chairman Meow treats Linda like an owner. He lets her stroke his hair and massage his neck, but he never goes physically further. Linda thinks Chairman Meow is really kinky and indulges his cat “fetishes.” Although she appears aloof and distant at the diner, she has a secret “wild side” that occasionally rises to the surface. She believes Chairman Meow to be a “kindred spirit” and introduces him to alcohol and loud rock music. Linda dreams of opening her own cereal bar/hair salon/junk store. She goes to cosmetology school, and sometimes practices hairstyles on Chairman Meow. Although the hairstyles occasionally come out awful, Chairman Meow appreciates the pampering. It reminds him of his days as a cat.

Linda owns her a cat, Eucalyptus. When she discovers Chairman Meow has a special gift of “cat whispering,” she becomes even more attracted to him. She thinks she is sensitive and caring, since he has a soft spot for cats. She even invites him to her apartment to meet her cat.

During a drunken evening, Chairman Meow confesses his past cat life to Linda. At first, she thinks he’s crazy. Linda has a history of unstable ex-boyfriends and she worries about getting hurt again. *That’s just like me*, she thinks, *always falling for the nut job*. But as time passes, and Chairman Meow re-unites with Megan, Linda believes his story.

After the Nine Cat Gods change Chairman Meow into a human, Linda arranges play dates with Megan and brings Eucalyptus along.

Dr. Ginormous – Chairman Meow’s obese “brother.” Dr. Ginormous lived in the Perkins’ household before Megan adopted Chairman Meow. At first, Dr. Ginormous despised Chairman Meow for becoming Megan’s favorite pet. Over time, however, Ginormous and Meow put aside their differences and became friends. Ginormous, as the “head of the household,” sometimes bosses around Chairman Meow or tries to steal his food. The two occasionally scrap over Megan or other petty differences.

Dr. Ginormous visits Chairman Meow in the city from time to time and provides updates on Megan and family life. Dr. Ginormous misses Chairman Meow. However, Ginormous also likes being the new center of attention in the family. Chairman Meow used to be her favorite cat, but since he left, she plays exclusively with Ginormous.

Al Reardon – Chairman Meow’s boss at the diner. Hires Chairman Meow because he has no real concept of money. Al pays Chairman Meow the lowest legal wage possible. At the diner, money is the bottom line. Al has a large family and often worries about making enough to pay for his mortgage and provide for his children. He

warns Chairman Meow to avoid long term ties with any business. “It’ll suck you under and take you for everything you’ve got.”

Measles May – The landlady of Chairman Meow’s apartment. Remains suspicious of Chairman Meow after he moves into the building. Since he lives below her, she sometimes hears him up at odd hours of the night “scampering about.” She would kick him out of the apartment, but she needs the money, and he always finds a way to pay rent on time. She hangs a portrait of her dead husband above the mantle. She owns a little yappy Pomeranian and dislikes cats immensely. After Dr. Ginormous pays one too many visits to Chairman Meow, Measles begins suspecting he is housing a cat.

The “Evil Wizard” Zarzoza – A fortune teller who works next door to the diner. Chairman Meow convinces himself this fortune teller knows how to reverse the human curse. During a séance, the Nine Cat Gods speak through Zarzoza. They tell Chairman Meow about their plan and want him to see the error of his cat ways. The Nine Cat Gods leave Zarzoza without revealing a method of reversing the human curse. Chairman Meow stalks Zarzoza and asks him for advice. In actuality, Zarzoza possesses no psychic powers and feels like a fool when he can’t assist Chairman Meow. Zarzoza, afraid of revealing his fraudulent nature, avoids Chairman Meow until confronted. Zarzoza admits his business is a sham, leaving Meow with no hope of reversing the curse.

Very Rough Outline:

Act I:

Chairman Meow, a fluffy white cat with a sour disposition, rests peacefully on the sofa. His child owner, Megan, arrives home from school. She screams and pulls Chairman Meow off the sofa.

An afternoon of “fun” with Megan and Chairman Meow. She bathes him, cuts his fur, pulls him in a wagon, and jumps on a trampoline with him.

Chairman Meow despises his position as a family pet. He complains to Dr. Ginormous, who loves life as a house cat. Megan always feeds and plays with him and Chairman Meow and provides them with shelter and attention. Dr. Ginormous would much rather live as a house cat, and endure some human shenanigans, than live out in the wild like a street cat or lion. He thinks Chairman Meow does not appreciate the luxuries around him. Chairman Meow calls Megan a monster and drifts off to sleep.

That night, the nine cat gods spy on Chairman Meow when he is sleeping. The head cat, Lord Kittenden, sends a spell to Earth to teach Chairman Meow a lesson in humility.

Inciting Incident: The next morning, Chairman Meow awakes as a human being at the foot of Megan's bed. Megan screams at sight of the naked stranger. Her father barges into the room, chases the "pervert" out of the house, and calls the police. Chairman Meow runs naked down the street. Joggers and other suburbanites stop and stare. He tries to ask a woman for help, but she beats him with a purse. He flees into the woods.

In the woods, Chairman Meow drinks out of a puddle. He sees his reflection and notices he is human. Shocked and horrified, Chairman Meow tries to think of a plan. He has no idea how he transformed and doesn't know how to change back into a cat. Chairman Meow steals some clothes off a line. He tries to strike up conversation with a few passersby on the street and "practices being human." He unsettles most people he encounters.

Chairman Meow becomes hungry and walks into a grocery store. He digs into a rotisserie chicken and pockets a few cans of cat food. A clerk stops Chairman Meow and says he has to pay for the food. He doesn't understand money, and has none, so the clerk calls security. Chairman Meow acts cat-like and hisses at a security guard. He wants to arrest Chairman Meow, but Cynthia Chalmers, intervenes. She feels pity for the "poor, starving homeless man" and escorts him to a homeless shelter, which she helps operate.

At the homeless shelter, Chairman Meow learns more about human life. At first he insists he's a cat, but the workers don't believe him. Even some homeless people think Chairman Meow lost his mind.

Chairman Meow dislikes the food at the shelter. At night, he and another homeless man, Washington, sneak into a field and kill a rabbit. Washington tells Chairman Meow to stop acting so cat-like. People will start thinking he's crazy.

The nine cat gods watch Chairman Meow from outer space. Lord Kittenden will thrust employment onto Chairman Meow to teach him another lesson. Lord Kittenden and Grandmaster Pussums toast with mouse blood.

The next day, Megan begins her search for Chairman Meow. She hangs up fliers around town that read, "Missing Loved Cat." She asks neighbors and other passersby about her cat.

Chairman Meow gives up trying to convince the employees at the shelter of his previous cat life. He agrees to "find a job and better himself."

Chairman Meow begins his search for a job. He looks through classified ads, internet job listings, and inquires at stores. He has no identification, so starting a new life seems difficult.

That night, Dr. Ginormous visits Chairman Meow and warns him about the dangers of human life. “They’ll stab each other in the back for a crust o’ bread!”

Chairman Meow visits a few potential employers, but they’re put off by his unusual disposition. He chases bugs, cleans himself, and falls asleep easily – habits he’s trying to curb.

At a diner, Chairman Meow lands a job as a dishwasher. The manager, Al, hires Chairman Meow because he doesn’t really understand the concept of money and will work for dirt cheap. Linda, a waitress, meets Chairman Meow.

Act II:

After he receives his first paycheck, Chairman Meow leaves the shelter. He rents a basement apartment below a miserly old lady’s house because it’s “down the street from the diner.” He meets Measles May, the landlady. She hates cats and calls them, “The most vile demanding creatures on the face of the earth.” She likes a quiet house, “No loud parties or rock and rolling or breaking down the walls.”

At the diner, Linda chats with Chairman Meow. She pries to see if he has “any women in his life.” He mentions a tabby cat, “but I haven’t seen her in months.” Linda laughs. She thinks he’s joking. She mentions her fondness for cats.

Megan searches the local animal shelter for Chairman Meow. She finds one cat and thinks it’s him. However, the cat does not have the same favorite scratching spot behind his ears, like Chairman Meow.

Dr. Ginormous visits Chairman Meow at the apartment. Ginormous tells Meow about Megan and the family. “She’s always looking out the window and sighing. I think she misses you, man.” Chairman Meow wants to return to his life as a cat. He misses lazing in the sun and frolicking. “I can’t even remember the last time I frolicked.”

Linda asks Chairman Meow out on a date. He doesn’t know what a date is. Linda thinks Chairman Meow is joking again. “You’re so funny!”

Chairman Meow asks Al about dates. He gives Chairman Meow really lousy advice.

Chairman Meow runs into “The Great Zarzoza” a fortune teller who works next door to the diner. Meow asks for a reading. Zarzoza predicts something “very grim” and makes vague allusions to “escaping the past.”

Midpoint: The nine cat gods speak through Zarzoza during a séance. They tell Chairman Meow they want to make him appreciate his life as a cat. Chairman Meow says he regrets his diva ways and wants to return home. He asks about reversing the curse. The nine cat gods leave Zarzoza before Chairman Meow can receive an answer.

At his apartment, Chairman Meow ponders his fortune. What does it all mean? Dr. Ginormous pays another visit. He says Megan is starting to get along without Chairman Meow. "You better hurry and get back home!"

Upstairs, Measles hears Chairman Meow talking to himself. She leaves her apartment and sees Dr. Ginormous exit through a window. She knocks on Chairman Meow's door and confronts him. "Are you keeping a cat in the house? Who are you talking to?" Chairman Meow denies her allegations. Measles says she'll keep a close eye on him. She "doesn't like troublemakers."

Chairman Meow and Linda go on their date. He has no romantic interest in her whatsoever, since she's a human, but she tries to turn on her "charm." The more Linda tries to flirt with Chairman Meow, the more he distances himself. Linda thinks he's playing "hard to get."

During the walk home, cats flock to Chairman Meow. He communicates with them. Linda thinks his cat whispering ability is really cute. She loves cats and has one at her apartment. She asks Chairman Meow if he'd like to meet her cat.

At Linda's apartment, Chairman Meow meets her cat. They get along swimmingly. Linda fixes drinks for herself and Chairman Meow. He never drank alcohol before and grows tipsy quite easily.

Linda makes a pass at Chairman Meow. He backs off, but lets her stroke his hair. It reminds him of being a cat. He confesses he's a cat to Linda, but she's too drunk to really listen. They both fantasize about life as cats.

Chairman Meow kills a shrew in this backyard. He eats it raw. He lazes in the sun and plays with twine – indulging in his past activities. Measles hears "scampering" in the apartment below. She vents to her pushover husband.

At home, Megan plays with Dr. Ginormous. "You're such a good kitty!" She picks up the phone to call another animal shelter about Chairman Meow, but Dr. Ginormous distracts her

At work, Chairman Meow and Linda feed leftover food to the cats in the alley. He hesitates, but brings up his cat past once again. This puts off Linda. She quickly returns to work and wonders why she "always falls for the nut jobs."

Al, feeling pressure from his growing debt, tricks Meow into working more hours for less pay.

Chairman Meow begins stalking Zarzoza. Meow wants to learn more about the Nine Cat Gods and convinces himself that Zarzoza has the answers to communing with them. If Meow can talk to the Cat Gods again, he can reverse the curse. Chairman

Meow plugs the “information” he discovers during the Zarzoza pursuits into some complex conspiracy.

Chairman Meow discovers he doesn’t have enough money to eat. Measles evicts him from the apartment.

Chairman Meow quits his job. He thinks money is totally pointless and makes zero sense. He gives up on becoming a “productive member of society.”

Chairman Meow tries to invite Linda to the pet store, but she declines. She thinks Chairman Meow is “too weird” and feels uncomfortable spending time with a man who thinks he is a cat. Chairman Meow tries to take back what he said about his cat life, but this makes Linda even more upset. He leaves, bitter and confused about their friendship.

Chairman Meow confronts Zarzoza about the Nine Cat Gods. Zarzoza admits he’s a fraud, and the séance was the first time he ever communed with another entity. He has no way of helping Chairman Meow.

Act III:

Chairman Meow returns to the homeless shelter. He finds the situation quite depressing. Cynthia, the director of the shelter, urges Meow to find another job and “get back on his feet.” “When life gives you lemons, squeeze them on a lobster.”

Chairman Meow visits his old home. He tries to explain his predicament to Megan. She feels frightened at first, but he tells her about his favorite scratching spot behind his ears. She tries scratching him and he kicks his leg, just like Chairman Meow the cat. Dr. Ginormous rubs up against Chairman Meow and makes a motion indicating they know each other. Megan believes Chairman Meow.

Megan’s father arrives home from work and catches Chairman Meow in the house again. He and Megan try to explain his past cat life, but the father thinks Chairman Meow is “sick.” Before he can finish his conversation with Megan, Chairman Meow is forced to leave the house.

The next afternoon, Megan meets Chairman Meow in the woods behind her house. She gives him a can of Fancy Feast. He eats it happily and wishes he could return to a cat. Megan asks “Is life as a human so bad?” Chairman Meow renounces his diva ways and delivers a bitter diatribe about human society. If only he could return back to a cat, he would appreciate everything he had.

The Nine Cat Gods watch Chairman Meow and Megan from the Great Cat Hall in outer space. The gods decide Chairman Meow has learned his lesson and reverse the curse.

Chairman Meow returns to his feline form. Megan hugs him.

Appendix B: Diva Cat First Draft Step Outline

1. INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Chairman Meow, a fluffy white cat with a sour disposition, lords over his suburban home. He lazes in the sun, gobbles down heaping helpings of Fancy Feast, and plays with twine.

He endures the smothering affections of his child owner, Megan, who gives him baths, pries him off furniture, and dresses him like a doll.

2. EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Despising his position as a house pet, Chairman Meow vents to his obese cat brother, Doctor Ginormous. "I should be out in the wild, running free! Not eating at fancy dress tea parties like some slave."

Chairman Meow tries to climb up a tree, but he's too fat and lazy to leave the ground.

Ginormous loves and appreciates his pampered life. He scolds Chairman Meow for his spoiled and selfish behavior. "One day, you'll appreciate what you have."

3. INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Megan serves Chairman Meow an "appallingly pedestrian" scoop of dry food for dinner. He gags trying to eat it. Doctor Ginormous isn't as picky. "I'll eat it, if you won't."

4. INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

During a family dinner, Chairman Meow leaps onto the dining room table and steals a flank of steak. Megan chases after Chairman Meow and scolds him for "being really rude." Fed up, Chairman Meow hisses and scratches at Megan. She cries. Chairman Meow wishes his owners would disappear.

5. EXT. GREAT HALL OF CATS - NIGHT

Above the trees, through the clouds, and beyond the stars, THE GREAT HALL OF CATS spins in space.

INT. GREAT HALL OF CATS - NIGHT

The Nine Cat Gods watch a sleeping Chairman Meow from their palace. The gods preserve the balance of feline unity throughout the cosmos, and they consider Chairman Meow a disgraceful example for catkind.

To teach Chairman Meow a lesson in humility, the head cat god,

Supreme Lord Kittenden, sends a magic spell to Earth.

6. INT. MEGAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Chairman Meow awakes as a HUMAN at the foot of Megan's bed. His flea collar chokes him. Megan screams at the sight of the naked stranger. Her father barges into the room, chases the "pervert" from the house, and calls the police.

7. EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Chairman Meow runs naked down the street on all fours. He has difficulty balancing himself without a tail. Joggers and other suburbanites stop and stare. He asks a woman for help, but she beats him with a purse. He flees into. . .

8. EXT. WOODS - DAY

Chairman Meow drinks out of a puddle. He sees his reflection and notices he is human. Doctor Ginormous, still a cat, rushes into the woods and joins Chairman Meow. Shocked, they try to come up with a plan. Chairman Meow has no idea how he transformed and doesn't know how to change back into a cat. He realizes he's on his own for the first time. He decides to live it up!

9. EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

Chairman Meow steals some clothes off a line.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Chairman Meow practices walking on his hind legs and tries to strike up conversation with a few passersby. Since he's not used to speaking English, he mostly hisses and spits unintelligible nonsense. He rubs against a woman's legs and unsettles most people he encounters.

10. MONTAGE

Chairman Meow indulges in some of his favorite activities. He lazes in the sun by a fountain at the park, steals hot dogs off a backyard grill, cleans himself in a busy intersection, and pees in a playground sandbox.

11. EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

As the afternoon progresses, Chairman Meow becomes hungrier and hungrier. He chases a squirrel down the street, but he quickly grows winded and gives up after it scurries up "an especially uninviting" tree.

12. INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Chairman Meow enters a grocery store. He digs into a rotisserie chicken and pockets a few cans of cat food. A clerk stops Chairman Meow and orders him to pay for the food. He doesn't understand the concept of money, and has none, so the clerk calls security. Chairman Meow hisses and swats at the security guard. "I can rip a mouse in half!" His English sounds a bit better (getting used to human vocal cords).

The guard pulls out a can of mace and spays Chairman Meow. A kindhearted woman rushes to his aid. She defends the "poor, starving homeless man," pays for the half-eaten chicken, and scolds the security guard for his "barbarism."

13. EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

The woman escorts Chairman Meow off the premises and explains more about human life. Chairman Meow insists he's a cat. The woman grows concerned. "You're more troubled than I thought!"

14. INT/EXT RICKETY WRECK - DAY

The woman offers to bring Chairman Meow to a homeless shelter and get him some help, but he balks at sharing space with a bunch of "miserable, unwashed peons." The woman drops him off at. . .

15. EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The woman gives Chairman Meow five dollars. He pockets the cash and splits. "Thanks for nothing, lady."

16. EXT. PARK - DAY

Chairman Meow and Dr. Ginormous pour over the classifieds section in a newspaper. Chairman Meow decides to make the best of his situation as a human. "When life gives you lemons, squeeze them on a lobster."

Chairman Meow and Doctor Ginormous have trouble reading the newspaper, so they enlist an old lady feeding pigeons to help them. She reads the classifieds to Chairman Meow. Most of the jobs don't appeal to him. He's pretty lazy and refuses to do much of anything. "Data Entry! How gauche!"

17. EXT. PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

Chairman Meow sleeps inside Rain pours. He shivers and inside covered slide. Thunder cracks. He scowls at the rain.

18. INT. GREAT HALL OF CATS- NIGHT

Supreme Lord Kittenden conducts the thunderstorm. "Maybe this will change his tune." Grandmaster Pussums and High Priestess

Whiskers laugh and toast with mouse blood.

19. EXT. PLAYGROUND - MORNING Chairman Meow, wet and angry, begins his search for a job.

20. MONTAGE

He visits a few potential employers, but they're put off by his unusual disposition. He chases bugs, cleans himself, and falls asleep easily - habits he's trying to curb. He has no identification, so starting a new life seems difficult, and he refuses to do most menial tasks. "If I have to lift anything, count me out."

He calls himself "Joe Normal" during his interviews.

21. EXT. DOWNTOWN CORNER - DAY

Megan begins her search for Chairman Meow. She hangs up fliers that read, "Missing Loved Cat." A picture of her cradling a hissing Chairman Meow, dressed like a baby, adorns the flier. She asks neighbors and other passersby about her cat. Chairman Meow walks right past her, but doesn't notice!

22. INT. PET STORE - DAY

Chairman Meow interviews for a job. The manager, Al, thinks Chairman Meow is "one odd duck." The interview goes terribly, but all the cats at the pet store wail and paw their cages when Chairman Meow leaves.

One employee, Linda Linder, stands up for Chairman Meow. "The cats love him!" She drags Meow back to the store and helps him land the job.

Al hires Chairman Meow because he doesn't understand the concept of money. He thinks seven dollars an hour and free cat supplies is a good deal.

23. INT. THE GREAT HALL OF CATS

The nine cat gods watch Chairman Meow from outer space. He remains as much a diva cat as ever! Time for to break out the big guns. Supreme Lord Kittenden sends the cat gods to Earth to test Chairman Meow.

ACT II

24. INT/EXT APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

After he receives his first paycheck, Chairman Meow rents a basement apartment with a patio for "plenty of light for sunning." He meets Measles, the landlady, who lives on the floor

above him. She doesn't care what Chairman Meow does in the apartment. "You could kill a man and bury him in the crawlspace, smoke, eat trash off the floor. I don't give a damn." Her one request: no pets. She hates cats and considers them "the most vile, demanding creatures on the face of the earth." If she gets the faintest inkling of a cat "pussyfooting around the premises," she'll evict Chairman Meow in a heartbeat.

25. MONTAGE

Chairman Meow and Doctor Ginormous go on a shopping spree. They buy catnip, yarn, fancy meats, most elaborate scratching post / Kitty Hideaway ever constructed.

26. EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET CORNER - DAY

Grandmaster Pussums appears in the form of a beggar and asks Chairman Meow for change. Meow balks and tells Pussums to "get a job." Pussums crumples his begging cup in anger.

27. INT. SUSHI BAR - NIGHT

Chairman Meow sneaks Doctor Ginormous into a sushi bar. He hides in a backpack and pokes his head out to sniff the succulent fish.

A chef prepares sushi at the bar. Doctor Ginormous can't resist the pungent bouquet. He leaps out of the bag, runs across the bar, and snatches the sushi in his mouth.

Customers scream. The chef yells.

Chairman Meow dumps a few platefuls of sushi into his bag and scrambles out of the bar.

28. EXT. DANK ASS ALLEY - NIGHT

Chairman Meow and Doctor Ginormous divide their spoils and chow down.

29. INT. CHAIRMAN MEOW'S APARTMENT - NIGHT Chairman Meow pukes in his toilet. Too much sashimi!

Chairman Meow and Doctor Ginormous snort catnip off a mirror. Doctor Ginormous paws at his reflection.

Chairman Meow tries to climb inside the scratching post/Kitty Hideaway, but he can't fit through the hole.

Doctor Ginormous rides a Roomba around the floor.

"This green paper sure is stupid, but you can have a lot of fun with it!"

Chairman Meow and Doctor videos of lions stalking believe the ruthlessness

30. INT. PET STORE - DAY

Ginormous watch Discovery Channel gazelles. Chairman Meow can't of his ancestors.

Chairman Meow comes to work tired and cranky. He's almost an hour late. Al lectures Chairman Meow about punctuality, but Linda defends him. Al will fire Chairman Meow if he's late again.

Chairman Meow bonds with the cats. He feels a little sad for the caged cats, but gloats over his freedom. He talks to the cats in secret.

Linda introduces Chairman Meow to coffee and loud music. She invites him to a happenin' bar later that night.

31. EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

High Priestess Whiskers disguises herself as a traffic accident victim. She bleeds profusely in the street and crawls toward Chairman Meow, walking home from work, but he barely pays attention to her. "Somebody better call an ambulance!"

Chairman Meow sees Megan's missing cat poster. He pauses and considers it.

32. INT. CHAIRMAN MEOW'S APARTMENT - DAY

Chairman Meow watches a reality show on television. A man from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan performs "stupid human tricks." Chairman Meow can't believe how humans "debase themselves."

He picks up the phone and calls Megan. Her mother answers. Chairman Meow hesitates, then hangs up. "I don't need her, anyway!"

Megan, watching television, asks her Mom who was calling. "Wrong number!"

33. INT. HAPPENIN' BAR - NIGHT

Chairman Meow and Linda go to a bar where a DJ spins old 45s. Linda tries to get Chairman Meow to dance. He's really awkward. "I just started walking a week ago!" He doesn't much care for the taste of alcohol and sticks to water.

Linda notices Chairman Meow's odd behavior, but finds it kind of endearing. She asks about his personal life. He comes up with an impromptu backstory. He's new in town. "I'm from. . . Saskatoon, Saskatchewan?" Linda puts the pieces together.

Chairman Meow acts so weird because he's Canadian.

Linda reveals her dream of opening up her own hair salon/junk store/cereal bar. She's going to cosmetology school and only works at the pet store to "pay the bills." Her fondness for cats helps her put up with "Al's B.S."

She offers to cut Chairman Meow's hair sometime. He thanks her for the offer, but says he'll "think about it."

34. EXT. BAR - NIGHT Chairman Meow and Linda exit the bar.

Supreme Lord Kittenden, disguised as a FOUL DERELICT, snatches Linda's purse. Chairman Meow recovers it by accident/through some act of idiocy.

Lord Kittenden vanishes. Linda smiles at Chairman Meow.

35. INT. GREAT HALL OF CATS

Supreme Lord Kittenden, angry and thwarted, returns to the Hall. He blames the other cat gods for not getting through to Chairman Meow. "It's no wonder the entire cat kingdom is in disrepair! I'm surrounded by idiots!"

One of the cat gods protests. Kittenden zaps him with lightning.

36. INT. CHAIRMAN MEOW'S APARTMENT - MORNING

An alarm clock rings. Chairman Meow, tired and cranky, lurches out of bed. He's become accustomed to a morning routine. . .

37. INT. PET STORE - DAY

Chairman Meow yawns and drinks coffee. He lets some of the cats out of their cages to "stretch their legs." They rub up against Chairman Meow and poke around the shop. Al sees the cats and gets a bit miffed.

Paulie, an ancient parrot with a black tongue, hates Chairman Meow and whistles at him. Chairman Meow struggles to resist the urge to kill/eat Paulie.

Linda says she had a fun time at the bar. She pries to see if there's any women in Chairman Meow's life. He mentions a tabby cat, "but I haven't seen her in months." Linda laughs. She thinks he's joking. She notices the cats meowing and rubbing against Chairman Meow.

38. INT. ANIMAL SHELTER - DAY

Megan searches the local animal shelter for Chairman Meow. She finds one cat and thinks it's him. However, the cat does not have

the same favorite scratching spot behind his ears, like Chairman Meow.

39. INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Doctor Ginormous visits Chairman Meow. Ginormous tells Meow about Megan and the family. "She's always looking out the window and sighing, I think she misses you, man." Chairman Meow pretends to not care about Megan. He shows off his apartment and brags about all the things he can do as a "free cat." He stands on the table, drinks out of the toilet, and scratches up the furniture.

Doctor Ginormous thinks life as a "free cat" is pretty neat. However, he fears Chairman Meow's life is spinning out of control. "Look at yourself! Licking crumbs off your chest and chasing after human women!"

Chairman Meow calls Doctor Ginormous a "downer."

40. INT. PET STORE - DAY

Linda asks Chairman Meow if he wants to check out a "cool new restaurant" with her. She slips and calls it a date. Chairman Meow doesn't know what a date is. Linda thinks Chairman Meow is joking again. "You're so funny!"

Chairman Meow asks Al about dates. He gives Chairman Meow really lousy advice.

Megan enters the pet store and asks Linda if she can put up fliers for her missing cat. Chairman Meow almost runs into Megan, but he turns around and "acts busy." Megan looks at all the cats and becomes really upset. She worries about Chairman Meow and wonders why he ran away. Chairman Meow starts to feel bad for Megan. Linda says she'll let Megan know if her cat turns up.

41. INT. GREAT HALL OF CATS

The Nine Cat Gods watch Chairman Meow from their palace in outer space. "So, he's finally showing some heart!" Supreme Lord Kittenden grabs an earhorn and listens to Chairman Meow's "innermost thoughts." He's considering returning to life as a cat.

MIDPOINT

42. INT. FORTUNE TELLER SHOP - DAY

Chairman Meow visits "The Great Zarzoza." A fortune teller, magician, and "spiritual advisor." In a veiled and convoluted way, Chairman Meow asks about his transformation into a human. "I've felt like a different person recently. . ."

Zarzoza holds a séance to commune with "a higher level of knowledge." Seizing this opportunity, the nine cat gods reveal themselves to Chairman Meow. They speak through Zarzoza. If Chairman Meow truly desires to return to cat form, he must rid himself of his divaness in three days. Chairman Meow scoffs. "Three days! Gimme a break!" Supreme Lord Kittenden casts a thundercloud over Chairman Meow.

43. EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

The thundercloud strikes Chairman Meow all the way back to. . .

44. INT. CHAIRMAN MEOW'S APARTMENT - DAY

He enters, wet and angry. "What do a bunch of cat gods want with me, anyway!" Doctor Ginormous appears in the window. He reveals Megan's parents are considering buying a new cat. "You better hurry and get back home before they replace you!" Chairman Meow balks. "Them? Replace me? Impossible!" His temper flares up. "I'm the best cat there ever was! You should've seen the way Megan was carrying on in the pet store. Crying and moping and crap."

He rips open a can of Fancy Feast and shovels it into his mouth. He no longer enjoys the taste. "I used to love Fancy Feast! What's wrong with me!" Doctor Ginormous tries to use Chairman Meow's anger to motivate him to return to a cat. Instead, Chairman Meow gets mad at Doctor Ginormous and throws Fancy Feast at him. Doctor Ginormous calls Chairman Meow a "jerk."

INT. MEASLES'S APARTMENT - DAY

Upstairs, Measles hears Chairman Meow yelling at himself. She vents to her pushover husband, Larry, but he's too engrossed in an episode of "Stupid Human Tricks" to pay attention to her.

Frustrated, Measles leaves her apartment and noses around. .

EXT. PATIO - DAY

Measles discovers some dead mice and cat toys. She peeps through Chairman Meow's window and sees. . .

INT. CHAIRMAN MEOW'S APARTMENT - DAY

Doctor Ginormous scampers across the kitchen counter. Chairman Meow yells at him.

EXT. PATIO - DAY Measles scowls.

INT. APARTMENT HALL - DAY

Measles bangs on Chairman "Are you keeping a cat in to?"

Meow's door and confronts him. the house? Who are you talking

INT. CHAIRMAN MEOW'S APARTMENT - DAY

Doctor Ginormous devours all cat food in Chairman Meow's bowl, pees on the floor, and leaves. "Call me when you want to come home."

Chairman Meow struggles between yelling at Doctor Ginormous and maintaining a jovial conversation with Measles.

INT. APARTMENT HALL - DAY

Chairman Meow denies he's housing a cat. Measles grabs a clump of black cat hair from Chairman Meow's sweater. She says she'll keep a close eye on him. She doesn't like "troublemakers."

45. INT. PET STORE - DAY

Chairman Meow asks the cats about the Nine Cat Gods. One especially religious cat, a scruffy tabby with a battered ear, tells Chairman Meow about the gods. "They overlook all cats, great and small. And maintain a balance in the cat cosmos." The religious cat chides Chairman Meow for his "heathen attitude."

Chairman Meow decides to "at least try" being good. He disgustedly gives Paulie some seeds and pats a dog on the head. He holds a door open for Linda, carrying a bunch of boxes, and high fives a confused customer.

46. INT. SWANK RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Chairman Meow and Linda go on their date. He has no romantic interest in her whatsoever, since she's a human, but she tries to turn on her "charm." The more Linda tries to flirt with Chairman Meow, the more he distances himself. He tries to act nice, but can't bring himself to return her advances. Linda thinks he's playing "hard to get."

47. EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

During the walk home, alley cats flock to Chairman Meow. He communicates with them. Linda thinks his cat whispering ability is quite becoming. She asks why he hasn't revealed this talent before. He says it's "too embarrassing." "When people see you talking to a cat, they think you're deluded, depraved, or both." Linda loves cats and has one at her apartment. She asks Chairman Meow if he'd like to meet her cat.

48. INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chairman Meow meets Linda's cat. They get along swimmingly. Linda fixes drinks for herself and Chairman Meow. He accepts, trying to

fit in, and grows tipsy quite easily.

Linda makes a pass at Chairman Meow. He backs off, but lets her stroke his hair. It reminds him of being a cat. He confesses he's a cat to Linda, but she's too drunk to really listen. They both fantasize about life as cats. Chairman Meow misses Megan and his old home.

49. EXT. CHAIRMAN MEOW'S PATIO - DAY

Chairman Meow frolics. He corners a mouse, and almost kills it, but he stops himself and lets it go.

He lazes in the sun and plays with twine - indulging in his past activities.

INT. MEASLES'S APARTMENT - DAY

Measles hears "scampering" in the apartment below. She peeps on Chairman Meow with binoculars and vents to her pushover husband.

50. INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - DAY

At home, Megan plays with Doctor Ginormous. "You're such a good kitty!" She picks up a phone to call another animal shelter about Chairman Meow, but Doctor Ginormous distracts her. Doctor Ginormous starts to like the sole attention he receives. Maybe life is better without Chairman Meow.

51. INT. PET STORE - DAY

Chairman Meow and Linda feed the caged animals. When they get to the cats, he hesitates, but reveals his past once again. This puts off Linda. She quickly steps outside for her break and wonders why she "always falls for the nut jobs."

INT. PET STORE - OFFICE - DAY

Al, fearing pressure from growing debt, tricks Chairman Meow into working more hours for less pay.

52. INT. CHAIRMAN MEOW'S APARTMENT - DAY

Measles, citing a long list of cat visitors and activities, evicts Chairman Meow from the apartment. She throws down a bunch of "snapshots" she took of Chairman Meow acting like a cat and meeting with Doctor Ginormous.

53. INT. PET STORE - DAY

Chairman Meow tries to invite Linda on another date, but she declines. She thinks Chairman Meow is "too weird" and feels uncomfortable spending time with a man who thinks he is a cat.

Chairman Meow tries to take back what he said about his cat life, but this makes Linda even more upset. He leaves, bitter and confused about their friendship.

54. INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Megan's parents surprise her with a new pet, a goldfish. She sighs and taps at the bowl. "I can't play with you."

Doctor Ginormous sits at the tea party table and meows. He's ready to play.

55. INT. PET STORE - OFFICE - DAY

Chairman Meow confronts Al about his measly paycheck. Al denies paying Meow less and harps on him for letting the cats run around the store. Chairman Meow says its "cruel and unusual" to keep them locked up in cages. Al and Chairman Meow get in a fight. Chairman Meow lets all the animals loose. They run amok. A python slithers after Al. Chairman Meow leaves the pet store.

56. INT. GAS STATION - DAY

Chairman Meow tries to buy some beef jerky, but discovers he two dollars to his name. He flips out at the cashier.

57. EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Chairman Meow trudges down the street. He scowls at a well dressed man heading to work.

A cat meows. It's a stray hiding behind a garbage can. "Got any food, Mister? I live in this garbage can. I've been waiting for someone to throw something out all day!"

Chairman Meow asks why the cat lives in filth. "My owner didn't want me."

58. EXT. PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

Chairman Meow shivers in a covered slide on the playground. Thunder cracks. He scowls at the rain.

59. INT. GREAT HALL OF CATS - NIGHT

Supreme Lord Kittenden laughs and conducts the storm from space. Grandmaster Pussums listens to Chairman Meow's innermost thoughts. He thinks money, dating, and human behavior make zero sense. He gives up on becoming a "productive member of society" and longs to return to cat form.

ACT III

60. EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET CORNER - DAY

Chairman Meow begs for change on the sidewalk. Passersby ignore him. He crumples his change cup in anger.

61. EXT. BUSY INTERSECTION - DAY

Chairman Meow tries washing windshields for money, but he can't handle using a spray bottle.

62. EXT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Chairman Meow visits his old home. He hesitates, but decides to enter.

INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - DAY

He tries to explain his predicament to Megan. She feels frightened at first, but he tells her about his favorite scratching spot behind his ears. She tries scratching him and he kicks his leg, just like Chairman Meow the cat.

Dr. Ginormous rubs up against Chairman Meow and makes a motion indicating they know each other. Megan believes Chairman Meow.

However, Megan thinks Chairman Meow used to act like a "real jerk." Doctor Ginormous never scratches her and always wants to play. "Why didn't you come here sooner? I was so worried about you!" Megan feels hurt that Chairman Meow chose to live in the human world instead of come home.

Megan's father arrives home from work and catches Chairman Meow in the house. He and Megan try to explain his past cat life, but the father thinks Chairman Meow is "sick." Before Meow can explain, the father calls the police. Meow flees from the home.

63. EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

The next afternoon, Chairman Meow waits for Megan outside of school. Megan will take Chairman Meow back if he can be a "good cat."

64. EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY Chairman Meow shakes his can of change in the street.

He tries to help an old lady carry groceries, but she thinks he only wants money and hurries to her car.

He attempts to help people a few more times and fails miserably.

Chairman Meow sees a frilly dress in a thrift store window. He looks at his cup of panhandling quarters.

65. EXT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Chairman Meow knocks on Megan's window and shows her the frilly dress. He invites her to a tea party in the woods.

66. EXT. WOODS - LATER

Chairman Meow, Megan, and Doctor Ginormous have a tea party on a blanket. Meow plays along. He dislikes the tea party at first, but starts to have a bit of fun.

Chairman Meow renounces his diva ways and delivers a bitter diatribe about human society. If only he could return back to a cat, he would appreciate everything he had!

67. INT. GREAT HALL OF CATS

The Nine Cat Gods watch Chairman Meow and Megan from outer space. High Priestess Whiskers feels sorry for Chairman Meow. "Hasn't he suffered enough?" Supreme Lord Kittenden still thinks Chairman Meow hasn't learned his lesson. Kittenden argues with High Priestess Whiskers. She reverses the spell on Chairman Meow and banishes Kittenden to Earth. "He's a sadist who delights in the misfortune of other felines!"

68. EXT. WOODS - DAY Chairman Meow returns to his feline form. Megan hugs him.

69. EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Supreme Lord Kittenden arrives on Earth as an average housecat. An angry dog chases him up a tree.

70. EXT. WOODS - DAY

Megan offers to clip on Chairman Meow's jewel encrusted collar, but he turns his nose up in disgust.

71. INT. GREAT HALL OF CATS

The eight cat gods laugh. "Once a diva cat, always a diva cat!"

Appendix C: Second Draft Notes E-mailed to Thesis Supervisor

Hey Cindy!

I spent some time thinking about all the notes and made some big changes. The male Chairman Meow is now the female Sprinkles. Instead of Beyonce though, I picture Sprinkles being more of an Amy Adams or Kristen Wiig type of character. I think it's funnier if an actor is playing this role slightly against type, instead of just a diva being a diva (in the case of Beyonce).

Sprinkles' new goal is to become as rich and famous as the Kardashians. She decides to use cat whispering as an avenue for fame.

Sprinkles becomes a cat whisperer to the stars, and her lowest point in the script (ACT II Break) occurs when she meets the Kardashians in real life and talks to their cat. Sprinkles realizes the Kardashians are horrible people and finds she has become a selfish and like them.

The Cat Gods are replaced with a cat mummy in a Natural History Museum. Sprinkles makes a wish on it and changes into a human. Now, she wishes to talk to humans so she can boss them around and give them a piece of her mind.

I also spent a lot of time watching some old school diva movies. I thought the script would be a lot funnier if I push the diva levels to the extreme! Like Sprinkles is self-obsessed and completely offended by everything for the whole movie. Some model characters were Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard*, Nomi Malone in *Showgirls*, and Margo in *All About Eve*.

I've attached the revised outline, if you want to sneak a peek at it. Any thoughts or suggestions? I'm going to pump this draft out in the next month!

- Pat

Appendix D: Diva Cat Second Draft Outline

Reel 1 – Enter the Diva

MEGAN PERKINS, a whirlwind of childhood mania and clashing patterns, celebrates her 8th birthday in her backyard. Only one friend from school shows up, much to the despair of AMELIA PERKINS (30s), who sent invitations to all of Megan's classmates. Amelia, pushes her daughter to sing at the party, but Megan refuses. Amelia decides to sing instead, embarrassing Megan. DONALD PERKINS (30s), the nerdy father, interrupts the fiasco – time for presents!

Megan gets some disappointing, girly gifts: dolls, an Easy Bake Oven. What she REALLY wanted was a bike and a dog. Amelia hands Megan her last gift. It rattles. What could it be? Excited, Megan tears open the package to reveal. . . a fluffy white cat! TA-DA! How disappointing. . .

Megan tries to make the best of her new cat. She drags Sprinkles down the street on a leash, butchers her pristine, white fur, and jumps with her on a trampoline. Megan also likes to play space marines with her cats and throws dirt clumps at them. Sprinkles despises such an unglamorous lifestyle; she's meant for bigger and better things! Instead of some "child's plaything," Sprinkles sees herself as a cat to the stars. She longs to eat caviar out of crystal saucers, lounge in the sun on a velvet pillow, and wear the finest in kitty couture. DOCTOR GINORMOUS, Sprinkle's obese and sage cat "brother," warns Sprinkles to appreciate what she has. He loves life with Megan. "I've got a roof over my head, a bed to sleep on, and all the cat food I can eat!" Sprinkles dismisses Doctor Ginormous as a plebian imbecile. She watches *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, and dreams of a diva lifestyle. The Kardashians even own a pampered, prissy cat.

Megan warms up to Sprinkles. "She's like a mini dog!" Short on friends and attached to her pets, Megan smuggles Sprinkles along on a school trip to the Natural History Museum. "It'll be so much fun!" Suffocating in Megan's backpack, Sprinkles escapes and scrambles through the museum. Megan chases after Sprinkles, corners her, and yells "Bad Kitty!" Sprinkles, perturbed by Megan's domineering nature, growls and scratches her across the nose. The teacher catches up with Megan and chastises her for bringing a pet along on the class trip.

As the teacher scolds Megan, Sprinkles slips away into the Egyptian exhibit. She spies hieroglyphics of Egyptians worshipping cats, carvings of cat gods, and even a mummified cat! "Those Egyptians really knew how to live!" Exasperated, Sprinkles wishes she could talk to humans, so she can boss them around and give them a piece of her mind! Megan grabs Sprinkles and stuffs her into a knapsack just as she finishes making her wish. The cat mummy's eyes glow red.

At home, Megan squeezes Sprinkles into an embarrassing, gauche onesie and reads a bedtime story. Sprinkles drifts off to sleep in an angry huff.

Inciting Incident – Sprinkles wakes up as a human.

Reel 2: “Gotta Fit In!”

The next morning, Sprinkles awakes to Megan screaming. Sprinkles chokes on her flea collar and struggles to move in her tight and tearing onesie. She catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror and notices she’s human! Amelia, shocked, beats Sprinkles and chases her out of the house. “I’m calling the police!” On the suburban street, a fierce bulldog chases Sprinkles and tears off her onsie. Shocked passersby gawk and gape at the sight of this strange woman hissing and running on all fours.

Sprinkles escapes into a forest. Police sirens wail in the distance. Sprinkles studies her reflection in a pool of water. She looks similar to her cat-self – long, luxurious hair, high born features – except human, more vulnerable. Doctor Ginormous bounds through the forest. He sniffs Sprinkles’ butt and recognizes her. Neither Sprinkles or Doctor Ginormous know how she changed, but she’s definitely human. Doctor Ginormous tells Sprinkles to blend in – act human. She’s excited to finally speak and boss around humans. “All the things I’ve wanted to say!” Doctor Ginormous leaves Sprinkles to attend to a, presumably distressed, Megan. Sprinkles doesn’t care about Doctor Ginormous or Megan. “Good riddance!”

Sprinkles attempts to blend into human society, but finds difficulty stifling her more animal urges, like chasing birds and sleeping in the sun. She hoards the finest meat and cat accessories at a Wegman’s grocery store, but a troubled teenage clerk stops her on the way to the parking lot. She needs cash money to pay for the groceries. Sprinkles sasses the troubled teenage clerk and mauls an overeager security guard before high tailing it out of the parking lot with her loot.

Sprinkles and Doctor Ginormous, munching on blood sausagfe, scheme to earn cash money. Since Sprinkles must blend in with humans, she might as well hunt for a job and find a luxury high rise in the “City of Lights,” Hoboken, New Jersey. Doctor Ginormous suggests visiting the cat mummy in the museum. Perhaps, the wrapped cadaver can return Sprinkles to her feline form. “Forget that!” Sprinkles huffs. She loves her life as a human and refuses to become a “pathetic slave” in that “prison” called Megan’s house. Not only will Sprinkles assimilate with human society, she will ascend to the upper echelon of the diva ranks and become even more famous than the Kardashians on “that glowing box called television.”

Perturbed, Sprinkles and Doctor Ginormous conspire to find a job.

Sprinkles searches for a job, but she’s too much of a diva to perform even the most menial tasks. She answers a craigslist ad for a fashion model, but the photographer proves a “total amateur!” She tries to bump her way into a televised news report on the street, but the crew won’t give her the time of day. The train into New York City costs \$20, so cash-strapped Sprinkles can’t even venture there to seek her fame and fortune!

As Sprinkles and Doctor Ginormous traipse about town, they draw the attention of local stray cats and other “riff raff and ne’re do wells of the feline kingdom.” They sense Sprinkles is a cat and ask her for help: food, a home, belly rubs. MILTON BRADLEY (20s), an introverted pet store employee, notices the cats following Sprinkles down the street. Milton and LINDA LINDER (30s), the owner, drag Sprinkles into the pet store and discover her cat whispering abilities. Sprinkles hates talking to cats, but reluctantly accepts the pet store position. “A job is a job.”

ACT I BREAK

Sprinkles enters the working world and begins her assimilation into human society.

ACT II

Reel 3 - Clawing to the Top

On the street, Megan drags a red wagon loaded with fliers that read, “Missing Loved Cat!” A picture of Sprinkles, dressed like a confused and angry baby doll, adorns the flier. Megan hangs up fliers and asks passersby if they’ve seen Sprinkles.

Sprinkles gets into an argument with a cat at the pet store. An ugly sweater lady, towing her own kitten, overhears Sprinkles and asks her for advice. Sprinkles offers some condescending remarks, which help the kitten. The ugly sweater lady, ecstatic, thanks Sprinkles and vows to tell everyone about her marvelous cat whispering.

Sprinkles conspires with Doctor Ginormous to use cat whispering as a path to fame and fortune. NEW GOAL.

At home, Megan frets over Sprinkles. No one has called Megan about the fliers! Amelia tries to cheer Megan up. “Practice your dance routine!” Megan hates all the Toddlers & Tiaras stuff, but she doesn’t have the heart to tell her mom. Megan confides in Doctor Ginormous while cutting his fur.

More curious customers trickle into the pet store with their troubled cats. Sprinkles raps with them and solves their feline woes. Cash money floods into the store. Linda and Milton Bradley count bills.

Milton Bradley eyes Sprinkles as she sasses out a Salty Sailor who leaves his cat alone on a boat. Milton hits on Sprinkles, but she rebuffs him. She’s more interested in counting her money than going on a date.

Sprinkles throws around her new money with Doctor Ginormous. They splurge on catnip, really expensive sushi, and rent a fancy apartment. The landlady, Measles May, hates cats and will kick Sprinkles out if she houses one.

While shopping with Amelia at the mall, Megan sneaks off to the pet adoption booth. She sees a cat that looks like Sprinkles – white, fluffy, and regal. Megan plays with the new cat, but it hisses and scratches her. Amelia finds Megan and scolds her for bailing out on mother-daughter fashion time. She drags Megan, forlorn, away from the booth. “Maybe you can get your ears pierced!”

Sprinkles and Doctor Ginormous eat tons of Fancy Feast® in the apartment and watch *Josie and the Pussycats*. “Dream life!” Doctor Ginormous asks Sprinkles if she misses the old life with Megan. “No way!” Sprinkles balks; she loves life as a “free cat.”

At the pet store, more curious customers flood in, demanding a tired and cranky Sprinkles talk to their cats. Cash money flies (in 3-D). A photographer flashes a “rather unflattering” photo of Sprinkles combing a cat’s unruly, matted fur. Gauche! But at least it’s publicity.

Megan, decked in an uncomfortable, frilly dress, and Doctor Ginormous see the photo of Sprinkles “The Cat Whisperer” in the newspaper. Megan decides to ask the cat whisperer to help find her cat, Sprinkles.

Reel 4 – YOLO

Brangelina, hip to the latest trends, bring in their poor, mistreated kitten. A starstruck Sprinkles offers sage cat advice, and gives Angelina Jolie hair tips, winning the couple’s favor.

Smitten, Milton Bradley asks Sprinkles on a date. She accepts just to get him off her back.

On the date, Sprinkles and Milton Bradley find out they both dislike other people, but in different ways. She’s sassy diva, and he’s an angry introvert. Milton thinks Sprinkles acts really weird, noting her cat-like behavior. She drinks milk at a bar and grooms herself quite often. Sprinkles says she’s from Canada.

Megan and Doctor Ginormous visit Sprinkles at the pet store. Megan hands Sprinkles a “Missing Loved Cat!” flier and asks for help finding her cat. Sprinkles, startled and a little angry, tells Megan her lousy cat probably doesn’t care about her. Hurt, Megan leaves the pet store in tears.

Linda thinks Sprinkles was way too harsh on Megan. “You have to treat customers better!” Milton Bradley asks Sprinkles on another date, but in a tizzy, she takes a rain check.

At her luxury condo, Sprinkles vents in her jacuzzi. She tells herself she doesn’t miss Megan! Brangelina calls up Sprinkles on her bedazzled cell phone. They’ve told all their Hollywood friends about the cat whispering. Even the Kardashians want to fly out to New Jersey to see the famous Sprinkles! Brangelina invite Sprinkles to an exclusive celebrity party in New York City.

Midpoint

Sprinkles begins missing Megan, but decides to pursue her Diva Dreams.

Reel 5 – Bad Cattitude

Sprinkles prepares for the star-studded gala. Milton Bradley escorts her as a date.

At the party, Sprinkles hob knobs with some elite social climbers. She becomes a bit disillusioned by all their backstabbing and empty flattery, though. She treats Milton Bradley rudely and finds him embarrassing. “You’re cramping my style!”

Sprinkles bumps into the Kardashians, but they’re too busy to talk to her. Sprinkles, fuming, watches the Kardashians leave the party. Close, but no cigar!

At his apartment, Milton Bradley vents about Sprinkles to his cat. “I thought we had something!”

At the party, an out-of-touch, big wig television producer offers Sprinkles her very own Cat Whispering reality show. “It’ll be like the Dog Whisperer, but with cats!” Sprinkles takes his card and says she’ll “Think it over. . . “

Back at the condo, Sprinkles conspires with Doctor Ginormous. “This could be my big break!” Measles overhears meowing.

Megan’s mom urges her to sign up for the school talent show. Megan worries. “They’ll all laugh at me!”

A television crew arrives at Linda Linder’s pet store. They tear it apart to make room for wiring, lights, etc. Linda, furious, confronts Sprinkles about the camera crew. Sprinkles laughs and tells off Linda. “I’m running the show now, sister!”

Reel 6 – Humans! How Gauche!

Sprinkles pampers and preens for her television show. Her first guest: The Kardashians and their cat, Escapade.

Linda and Milton Bradley commiserate about Sprinkles. Linda and Milton fall for each other, united by their hatred of Sprinkles.

Megan’s mom doesn’t understand why she’s so upset. Megan says she misses Sprinkles. Megan’s mom tries to explain nicely that Sprinkles isn’t coming back, which upsets Megan.

Sprinkles meets with the Kardashians on her television show, but they’re genuinely horrible people in real life. They treat their cat poorly and feel it’s taking away from “Kim’s time.” Sprinkles, disgusted, defends the poor cat and tells off the Kardashians. The argument escalates into a full blown fight between Sprinkles and the Kardashians.

Shocked former customers of the pet store watch Sprinkles blow her chance on television.

Sprinkles wins her tussle with the Kardashians and storms off set. She stumbles upon Linda Linder and Milton Bradley kissing. Sprinkles yells in frustration and storms out of the pet store, leaving a confused camera crew and bruised Kardashians behind.

Megan and Doctor Ginormous watch the show in horror. Amelia bought Megan a present to cheer her up. Surprise! It's a teacup Chihuahua! It yips and wears a fluffy hot pink boa. Amelia already planned a perfect act for the Chihuahua, too! Megan, disappointed, tries to play with the Chihuahua, but it growls at her. Amelia plays "Party in the U.S.A." on a boombox and tries to get Megan to dance with the Chihuahua.

ACT II BREAK

Reel 7 – Trail of Tears

Sprinkles, sobbing, returns to the Natural History Museum, but the cat mummy exhibit has moved! All hope is lost!

Measles kicks Sprinkles out of her luxury condo after discovering cat hair in the jacuzzi filter. Measles also has snapshots of Sprinkles and Doctor Ginormous chasing butterflies and lazing in the sun. No pets allowed!

Sprinkles seeks help from Linda Linder and Milton Bradley, but they've had enough of her diva ways. All the cats in the pets store act like divas and won't listen. The Linda fires Sprinkles.

With no other option, Sprinkles sobs and sashays home to plead Megan for forgiveness. Sprinkles sees Megan practicing her dance routine with the teacup Chihuahua and leaves, despondent. Doctor Ginormous spots Sprinkles and tries to explain the situation, but Sprinkles remains stubborn and won't listen. "I get the picture!"

Sprinkles scrawls a letter in broken English to Megan begging for forgiveness. "The strange water" called tears drips onto the paper. Sprinkles explains her transformation in the letter

Megan and Doctor Ginormous see a commercial for a new mummy exhibit. Amelia hands Megan the letter. "Whoever wrote this really needs to work on their handwriting."

Sprinkles cries herself to sleep under a bush. Thunder! Sprinkles gets muddy and gross, which makes her cry even harder.

The next morning, Megan and her mom leave for the talent show. Sprinkles wakes up and spots them leaving. She talks to a stray cat, who motivates Sprinkles to chase after her human. Sprinkles doesn't need some old cat mummy, the stray says. "True change comes from within!"

Reel 8 – “Once a Diva, Always a Diva!”

Megan embarrasses herself at the school talent show, performing an awkward *Toddlers and Tiaras* style routine with the teacup Chihuahua. It snarls in its pink boa and acts really mean.

Sprinkles shows up in the middle of the routine. She pushes the teacup Chihuahua offstage and joins Megan’s performance. Sprinkles performs some elaborate diva style act (TBD) that only a cat-human as sassy and flamboyant as herself could manage. (This will be set up earlier as well).

Sprinkles and Megan finish the act. Sprinkles explains her transformation to Megan, but she pulls out the letter and says she knows. Sprinkles hugs Megan and waits turn back into a human. Nothing happens. Sprinkles, furious, vents. “I did all that for nothing?” What happened to change coming from the inside!” Doctor Ginormous meows and puts his paw on

Sprinkles, Megan, and her confused mom hustle to the new museum housing the cat mummy. Security chases after them, since Doctor Ginormous and the teacup Chihuahua scamper into the museum. Sprinkles reaches the cat mummy just in time and makes a wish. She transforms into her old, feline self! All is right with the world.

At home, Sprinkles and Doctor Ginormous play space marines with Megan. She’s still too rough, but Sprinkles is happy to be home. The human world was an awful place! Megan tries to clip on a garish new collar, but sprinkles turns up her nose. “Once a diva, always a diva!”