**The Very Last One and Only Highly Endangered Mountain Lion in Pennsylvania**

20-minute excerpt for Musical Café of

A full-length musical comedy

Book and lyrics by Greg Beattie

Music by Greg Beattie and Jon Kull

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CAST (in order of appearance) Hitchhiker …………………………..……………………………………………*(tenor)*

Chorus 3 Vultures (also play 2 Reporters and Cameraman)………………. *(baritone, tenor, alto)*

Lester………..………......................................*An aging, bedraggled, preferably malnour-ished-looking mountain lion (baritone/tenor)* Stank………………………….……………….......*An empathetic female skunk (soprano)*

Hunter/Governor…………….……………*A rich, elderly, redneck, narcissistic politician*

Jack………………………………..…………………….…………. *A bad dog (baritone)*

Johnnie and Susie…………………………………………………. *Generic innocent kids* Fred Fairfellow….………………………..*A young, handsome, upright staffer to the Governor (tenor)*

Jane Goody-Goody………………………*A zoologist in her 30’s who is slightly autistic (soprano)*

Shirley Staffer…...…………….……......*The Governor’s long-suffering gal Friday, middle-aged, pantsuited (alto)*

Billy Jean………………………………..*A loner and independent thinker, particularly for a goat. Also, a lesbian* *(alto)*

Curtis….......…………………………….*An articulate housecat, addicted to daytime TV. Channels Frasier via Dr. Phil, with a touch of Jeff Goldblum* (*baritone)*

Waitress

Woman-on-the-street

Derelict-on-the-street

Senator 1

Senator 2

Police Captain

Governor’s Honor Guard…………………………………………*An old feeble volunteer*

Judge

Louise………………………………………………..*Lester’s domineering wife (mezzo)*

**TIME**:

Present

**PLACE:**

The western woods of Pennsylvania.

Downtown Harrisburg.

**Musical Numbers**

Act One

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | Circle of Life Parody..…………………..…………….Hitchhiker/Chorus | I-1-1 |  |
| 2. | Road Kill ………………………….……..……………….Lester/Vultures | I-1-3 |  |
| 3. | “Your Dest . . .” …………..………………………………… Lester/Stank | I-2-3 |  |
| 4. | Please Don’t Eat Me ……………………..…………………..Stank/Lester | I-2-7 |  |
| 5. | Bad Dog ………………………………..……………………………..Jack | I-3-2 |  |
| 6. | Just the Facts……………………………………………………. Reporters | I-4-2 |  |
| 7. | Me, Me, Me………………………………….…………..……….Governor | I-5-1 |  |
| 8. | Follow the Leader………………………………….……Chorus/Governor | I-7-2 |  |
| 9.  10.  11. | I’ll Say What’s In My Heart………………………….…………Jane/Fred  Intervention……………………………………………….………Animals  Oh Harrisburg!..........……………………...…………………Lester/Curtis | I-8-2  I-11-3  I-15-1 |  |

Act Two

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 12.  13. | I Miss You My Wife……………………..………………..………Lester  That’s What Friends Are For....…….…...…Stank/Billy Jean/Jack/Curtis | II-1-3  II-1-4 |  |
| 14. | To Get Ahead………..……..…………………… Shirley/Fred/Governor | II-2-2 |  |
| 15. | Ya Think?………………………...………………..………..Shirley/Jane | II-3-1 |  |
| 16. | Run Away………………………………….……………………..Chorus | II-5-3 |  |
| 17. | Ya Think? Reprise…………………………….……………….Jane/Fred | II-5-7 |  |
| 18. | I Miss You My Wife/Ya Think? Reprise ......… Jane/Fred/Lester/Louise | II-8-2 |  |
| 19. | Roar Again………………………..…………………………... Ensemble | II-8-4 |  |

**ACT ONE**

# Scene 2.

A forest in western Pennsylvania. STANK THE SKUNK enters and looks around a thicket.

STANK

(friendly)

Nice place. Anybody home? Hmmm.

(sniffs underarms and winces)

Phew! Whoever lives here must have smelled me coming. I bet it’s a nice, friendly bunny or groundhog. What I wouldn’t give for a visit with a nice, friendly . . .

(Offstage, two gunshots; LESTER comes running up, flops down next to her, tired of running. SHE’s surprised and skeptical.)

Mountain lion???

(STANK looks suspiciously at him. LESTER just lies there with his tongue out, breathing hard. SHE proceeds cautiously.)

Hello there. I’m Stank.

LESTER

(still panting, wheezing)

Hi. Lester here.

STANK

Do you notice anything peculiar--a disgusting stench that would gag a buzzard, for example?

LESTER

No.

STANK

Really?

LESTER

Really. I’m old. Among my many other ailments, I have asthma, hay fever and sinusitis—I can’t smell a thing.

STANK

Oh, what a shame. I am very sorry.

(STANK celebrates with a little booty-shake dance; thumbs up to audience).

What brings you to these parts? I don’t think I’ve ever seen a mountain lion around here before.

LESTER

You probably haven’t. I’m pretty sure I’m the very last one in Pennsylvania.

STANK

Wow. The very last one? Doesn’t that make you endangered?

LESTER

No, what makes me endangered is that hunter that’s been on my trail for days.

STANK

Those guys really tick me off—tromping through our woods, shooting at everything that moves, breaking up little families. Say, where’s your family?

(LESTER looks away, wistful.)

STANK

Uh oh--did I touch a raw nerve?

LESTER

No no, it’s nice to have someone to talk to about it. My father was a noble, majestic lion, but when I was just a cub, he was shot by a hunter. On his deathbed he looked up at me and said

(comic two hairball coughs, growly gurgle, silence)

STANK

Uhhh okaaay.

LESTER

Oh, let me translate-- (**3. Your Destiny** in deep, reverb-heavy Dad voice)

LESTER MY SON, MY TIME IS DONE

AND I’LL SOON LEAVE THIS LIFE SO DEAR

BUT BEFORE I GO THERE ARE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

SO COME HERE

(Lester as himself approaches)

AND COME HEAR

(LESTER as himself)

I—I just did, Dad. . .

(Dad voice)

No, I mean come here and come hear, you know, *hear*.

(cups his ear)

(LESTER as himself)

Oh got it! Uh, please continue . . .

(Dad voice)

WATCH FOR HUNTERS AND STAY SAFE

DON’T LET THOSE BASTARDS BURY YA

FOR YOU’RE THE LAST OF THE LIONS WITH FINE-HAIRED MANES

WHO HAIL FROM THE MAINLINE AREA

STANK

So you’re from the fine mane mainline lion line?

LESTER

Right.

STANK

Please go on.

(Dad voice)

NOW SON, YOU SHOULD KNOW OF THE OTHER GREAT PRIDE

THAT WILL PLAY A BIG ROLE IN YOUR FATE

THEIR MANES ARE QUITE PLAIN AND THEY COME FROM PAINE MOUNTAIN

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STATE

STANK

And they are the plain mane Paine Mountain mountain lion line?

LESTER

On the nose.

STANK

OK, proceed.

(Dad voice)

YOU MUST FIND AND WED THE LAST OF THE PLAIN . . .

well, that other kind

AND CONTINUE OUR PROUD TRADITION BY LEAVING SOME HEIRS BEHIND.

STANK

So I suppose they would be known as the fine-and-plain-mane mainline/Paine Mountain mountain lion line?

LESTER

Bingo.

STANK

Gotcha. Maestro?

LESTER

(Dad voice)

NOW I’M FEELING TIRED AND ALMOST EXPIRED

AND I THINK I’M GETTING A CHILL

BUT SWEAR TO ME SON THAT YOU WILL DO

WHATEVER IT TAKES TO FULFILL

your dest . . . your dest . . . your  . . .

(two hairball coughs, growly gurgle, silence).

(normal voice)

Well, I swore to my father I would do as he said, and I found that lioness--my beautiful wife. She was magnificent-- smart, fast, and totally in charge.

STANK

A real cougar . . .

LESTER

No, a little younger than me actually. But when we married, the very next day she was out hunting and never came back. So every day, I get up and head down the road, hoping that one day she’ll turn up so that we can fulfill our dest. . .our dest . . . our

(two hairball coughs, growly gurgle, silence).

STANK

You must be so lonely without her. I know about lonely.

LESTER

How’s that?

STANK

Well, let’s just say it’s a little hard to make friends when they don’t want to come within 20 yards of you. All I want is someone I can be close to, someone who likes me for who I am on the inside—I’d give anything for a real friend . . .

LESTER

I already like you for who you are on the inside.

STANK

I hope you’re referring to my spirit and not my protein and fat content!

LESTER

No really, I could use a real friend too.

But I’d better be going—that hunter will be back.

STANK

But where are you gonna go?

LESTER

I don’t know—I’ve just got to find a way to get things back—my dignity, my wife, my roar.

STANK

Ya know, I’ve got a distant cousin—a house cat actually—who could help you. Curtis is even fluent in human. How about I take you to see him? We can look out for each other along the way.

LESTER

Hey thanks--it’d be nice to have a little squirt around.

STANK

(They lock arms.)

Let’s go, friend!

# Scene 3.

In the woods, late at night. A dog pen with “Beware--Bad Dog” painted on it, a dark farmhouse window in the background. LESTER and STANK enter and come upon the pen. Inside the pen, JACK is barking excitedly.

LESTER

SHHHHH. Quiet for cryin’ out loud.

JACK

(angry)

Ruff ruff ruff ruff ruff

(light goes on in farmhouse window)

LESTER

Please, listen to me. Just shut up for a second.

JACK

But you’re the biggest cat I ever saw. And what is that smell?

STANK

Uh, that would be me.

JACK

You’re both weird.

(barks again)

STANK

(to Lester)

What are we gonna do?

LESTER

(to Stank)

Use psychology. Watch.

(to Jack)

You look like one baaaad dog. Wouldn’t want to mess with you.

JACK

(abruptly stops barking)

Really? You think so? I was going for ferocious.

LESTER

You mean all that racket was just an act?

JACK

Pretty good, huh? (sniff) Yeah, I’ve done some acting--community theater, mostly—-played Snoopy in A Charlie Brown Christmas last season . . .

(does the C.B. Christmas dance)

LESTER

Tell you what, if I let you out, will you be quiet and let us pass?

JACK

You’d do that? For me?

LESTER

Of course.

(swats at lock, it falls off and JACK comes out)

STANK

Lester . . .

LESTER

You don’t seem like such a bad guy.

JACK

Well, in the interest of full disclosure, I’ve got a confession to make. (**5. Bad Dog**)

TO TELL THE TRUTH I’M MISUNDERSTOODNEVER HAD A THING AGAINST DOING GOODBUT WHEN I SEE A FULL MOON, I CAN’T STOP HOWLINGOR A TASTY LITTLE POODLE, I CAN’T KEEP FROM GROWLING

I SPENT A YEAR OF HARD TIME HERE IN THIS PENAND YOU KNOW IN DOG YEARS, THAT’S SEVEN TO TENI’M BUSTIN’ OUT BUT IT SURE IS A CRIMESO MANY HYDRANTS SO LITTLE TIME

CAUSE I’M A BAD DOG AND I CAN’T CHANGEAIN’T NO OINTMENT FOR THIS KIND OF MANGEIF IT ITCHES I SCRATCH, IF IT TICKLES I KICKIF IT SMELLS I SNIFF, IF IT’S NASTY I LICKCAUSE I’M A BAD, BAD DOG.

STANK

I don’t know Lester—he sounds like a loose cannon to me.

LESTER

Honestly Stank—-howling and growling, abusing fire hydrants, licking nasty things, not exactly capital offenses--and he feels bad about them! I think he’s OK, and if he gets out of line we’ve got my jaws and claws and your, uh, chemical weapons to fall back on.

I ONCE TOOK A TRY AT OBEDIENCE SCHOOLBUT I MUST HAVE BROKEN SOME CARDINAL RULEWHILE THE OTHER DOGS WERE LEARNIN’ TO SIT UP AND BEGI WAS GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE INSTRUCTOR’S LEG

Bad dog!—just trying to be friendly

AIN’T NO OINTMENT FOR THIS KIND OF MANGEIF IT ITCHES I SCRATCH, IF IT TICKLES I KICKIF IT SMELLS I SNIFF, IF IT’S NASTY I LICKCAUSE I’M A BAD, BAD, BAD, BAD, BAD DOG.

LESTER

You know, good or bad, we could use a dog to help us--we’re looking for a cat.

JACK

Hey, chasing cats is my specialty.

STANK

No, no, we’re locating, not chasing.

JACK

Locating, chasing, whatever--if it’s a cat you’re after, I’m your man. And I definitely owe you one for letting me out. And I gotta get away before they put me back in that pen. But you’ve been warned, I can be mighty bad at times.

LESTER

We need the help--we’ll take our chances. But remember, we sleep by day and travel at night, and no attacking humans or animals—there’s nothing more likely to get me hung up on someone’s wall.

# Scene 4.

Roadside with playground. JACK, LESTER and STANK are hiding in the thicket while a boy and girl are playing in the playground.

JACK

I’m tired of just hiding here—I ain’t afraid of nobody.

LESTER

Now Jack, you know I can’t just walk around wherever I want in broad daylight.

JACK

No, but I can! Those kids are disturbing my sleep, and it‘s been a long time since I chased one up a tree.

STANK

Get back here—and don’t you hurt those children!

JACK

I’m gonna do what I’m gonna do.

LESTER

Jack, sit. Jack, sit!

(JACK heads toward KIDS.)

STANK

Apparently, he doesn’t know “Jack sit.”

(JACK jumps out and barks ferociously. KIDS face him and scream continuously.)

LESTER

I’ve got to stop him!

(LESTER jumps out of bushes after Jack. KIDS stop screaming at Jack, stare at Lester for 2 beats—then scream continuously and run offstage. Lights down briefly. JACK, STANK and LESTER exit, VULTURES, as REPORTERS and CAMERAMAN, and KIDS enter. A hotdog and souvenir stand is now set up nearby.)

CAMERAMAN

(pushing the kids)

Not ovuh theah--let’s get a shot ovuh heah by the bushes where the lion tried to kill you.

REPORTER 1

So Johnnie--did you think you would die fust, or your sister would die fust?

JOHNNIE

Ummm . . .

REPORTER 2

Which was bigguh and sharpuh, the lion’s teeth or its claws?

SUSIE

I didn’t really . . .

REPORTER 1

How would you react if the lion jumped out of these bushes right now?

JOHNNIE

Uh . . .

(The KIDS stare at each other for 2 beats, then scream continuously and run offstage)

REPORTER 1

What a tragedy--these kids wuh completely terrorized by that vicious lion, unable to speak. We’ll be reportin’ back every ow-ah on the ow-ah with a Live Five lion terror update!

(**6. Just The Facts**)

REPORTERS

WHEN THERE’S NEWS IN THE AIR

JUST SIT BACK IN YOUR CHAIRAND WE WILL TAKE CARE OF THE RESTWE’LL GET THE STORYUPLIFTING OR GORYEVEN IF WE HAVE TO PUT STONES ON THEIR CHEST

JUST THE FACTS--THAT’S ALL WE ASKSORRY IF WE APPEAR RUTHLESSBUT A REPORTER WITH RUTH DOESN’T GET TO THE TRUTHAND WE JUST DON’T WANT TO LOOK TOOTHLESS

JUST THE FACTS--THAT’S OUR ONLY TASKAND THOUGH WE MAY SEEM A BIT ROUGHALL THAT WE’RE DOIN’ IS QUALITY INTERVIEWIN’AND IF SOMEONE GETS DESTROYED --GEE THAT’S TOUGH.

(walk in circle snapping fingers)

I KNOWS THE NEWSGOT A NOSE FOR THE NEWSAND NO ONE KNOWS THE NEWSLIKE I DO

WHEN SOME KIDS SEE A LION

WE’LL GET THEM CRYIN’

AND SCARED THEY ARE DYIN’ JUST FOR YOU

THE NEWS WE DELIVER

WILL LEAVE YOU A’QUIVER

WHETHER OR NOT IT’S THE SLIGHTEST BIT TRUE

JUST THE FACTS--UNEMBELLISHEDWITH JUST A LITTLE MUSTARD AND RELISH

(spills whole jar on hot dog)

WE’LL FIND OUT WHO HAS BLOOD STAINS ON THEIR SLACKS

(pours catsup on pants of passerby, snaps picture)

GETTING JUST THE FACTS

AND IF SOMEONE SHOULD BURST INTO TEARS BECAUSE OF OUR ATTACKSOR IF UNDER THE STRESS OF OUR PRIME-TIME DURESS SOMEBODY SIMPLY CRACKS

OH THANK HEAVEN THERE’LL BE FILM AT ELEVENDISTORTING--CONTORTING--REPORTING JUST THE FACTS.

Scene 7

Governor’s sheep ranch. SHIRLEY approaches Governor.

SHIRLEY

Governor sir, I’ve started working on that speech you asked me to write--the one about that mountain lion. I thought you could score some points with the environmentalists by helping that poor lion . . .

GOVERNOR

Hold on there, Shirley. I’m telling you, that lion is a menace--probably a rapist and a murderer. We should never have let him in the state.

SHIRLEY

Uh, I think his type was here first, sir.

GOVERNOR

Irrelevant. He’s a threat to the sheep on my ranch resort, he’s a threat to my grandkids, he’s a threat to every citizen of this great state. Do you have children Shirley?

SHIRLEY

No sir.

GOVERNOR

How about unborn children, ‘cause they’re actually even more important.

SHIRLEY

Uh nope.

GOVERNOR

Well if you did, he’d be a big threat to them.

SHIRLEY

Yes sir, I understand--a threat.

GOVERNOR

I’m not sure you do. The bigger a threat he is, or seems to be, the more nicely I recover in the polls when I mobilize forces to destroy him.

SHIRLEY

That’s interesting sir, but I met this zoologist today who says the mountain lion isn't usually a threat at all unless its normal food supply and environment are disrupted.

GOVERNOR

Fake news, Shirley. Saving one pathetic mountain lion won’t get anybody to the polls. But when I get done scaring people’s pants off with lion horror stories, they would march off to war for me if I asked them to. You just watch—I’ve already got these sheep terrified, and it didn’t take a lion.

(whistles to the sheep, they march over. **8. Follow The Leader**)

SHEEP/CHORUS

FOLLOW THE LEADER WHEREVER HE MAY LEAD USSWALLOW WHATEVER THE LEADER TRIES TO FEED USNO MATTER WHAT HE DOES TO US HE’LL ALWAYS GET OUR VOTESCAUSE HE SAYS THAT HE CAN SAVE US FROM THOSE SCARY LOOKING GOATS

GOVERNOR

Goats have goatees! They make weird cheese! Goats aren’t on the level!

They’re not the same as you! They’re not as tame as you! They have horns like the devil!!!

SHEEP/CHORUS

b-o-o-o-o!

GOVERNOR

To paraphrase another famous leader, there is nothing but fear and fear itself! To protect you, I’m going to have to step up the fleecings to twice a year, cancel school lunches for your kids, and send a good number of you off to, uh, fight for your freedom. Now although many of you won’t return—well, all of you actually—you’ll know that you have been part of a heroic effort to protect my, um, our way of life, a life you can be sure your children and your children’s children will also have the privilege to protect!

SHEEP/CHORUS

Hora-a-a-a-y!!!

SO WE’LL FOLLOW THE LEADER WHEN HE SAYS THAT WE MUST TRUST HIMDON’T THINK OR QUESTION, THAT’S OUR CREED AND CUSTOMHE SHARES OUR VALUES, TO BE WARM, AND SO WELL-FED AND FAT! STICK WITH HIM AND YOU’LL BE PLUMP

GOVERNOR

I’ll make sure of that!

SHEEP/CHORUS

SO FOLLOW THE LEADER JUST LIKE HE LIKES TO SAYFOLLOW THE LEADER AND YOU’LL NEVER GO ASTRAY.

(SHEEP/CHORUS exit under slaughterhouse sign; GOVERNOR and SHIRLEY exit alongside them.)

STANK

(to the audience)

Well, in the following weeks, some amazing things happened to Lester and his friends. I’d tell you all about it, but I have a feeling it might be made into a musical someday, and I wouldn’t want to spoil it for ya’. Let’s just say that at the end of the day, the governor’s plot was foiled, his sheep ranch was converted to a permanent sanctuary and snack bar for Lester, and Lester was reunited with his long-lost wife, who was about to deliver their first cub. And last but not least, he finally found his long-missing roar.

(19. **Roar Again.**)

STANK

EVERYBODY HAS A TIME WHEN THEY JUST CAN’T FIND THE FEELING

CURTIS

THEY LOSE THEIR GROOVES, FORGET THEIR MOVES, THEY JUST DON’T FEEL APPEALING

STANK

BUT THERE’S A WAY TO SAVE THE DAY AND HAPP’LY END YOUR FABLE

CURTIS

STAND UP STRAIGHT LET YOUR CHEST INFLATE AND SOON YOU WILL BE ABLE

ALL

TO FIND YOUR ROAR AGAIN

MAKE IT RATTLE THE FLOOR AGAIN

A SHINING STAR IS WHAT YOU ARE, SO SAY IT PROUD

IT’S LIKE ARTILLERY SHELLS

BUT WITH SEV’RAL MORE DECIBELS

IT’S NOT JUST NOISE, IT’S YOUR OWN VOICE, SO SAY IT LOUD

LOUISE

WHEN YOU’RE DOWN AND YOU LOOK AROUND AND ALL YOU’VE GOT IS LONELY

JACK

YOU MIGHT GET BLUE WAH! WAH! BOO! HOO! AND WHINE ALL BITCH-AND-MOANLY

BILLIE JEAN

BUT IF YOU’RE THERE, DON’T DESPAIR, YOUR LUCK IS BOUND TO CHANGE

FRED

DON’T BE SCARED JUST BE PREPARED TO FIND YOUR PITCH AND RANGE

ALL

AND GET YOUR ROAR AGAIN

IF YOU GOTTA GO TO OREGON

OR ALL THE WAY TO OUTER TIMBUKTU

DON’T LET IT HIDE INSIDE

DON’T BE HIDIN’ YOUR PRIDE INSIDE

BOTH FAR AND NEAR MAKE SURE THEY HEAR THE BEST IN YOU

FEMALES

WISE FOLK SAY WHAT MATTERS MOST IS WHAT LIES IN YOUR HEART

MALES

THEY’RE ONLY OFF BY AN INCH OR TWO--THE LUNGS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PART

ALL

TO FIND YOUR ROAR AGAIN

DON’T GO GENTLE LIKE AL GORE BACK THEN

A SHINING STAR IS WHAT YOU ARE, SAY IT ONCE MORE

IT IS THE BEST OF ROARS

BECAUSE THAT ROAR OF YOURS

STANK

IS THE ROAR YOU’RE FAMOUS FOR

LESTER

A ROAR NONE CAN IGNORE

SHIRLEY

YOU’LL NEVER BE A BORE

JACK

YOU WON’T NEED ONE THING MORE

STANK

YOU’LL FEEL RICH EVEN IF YOU’RE POOR

ALL

IT’S NOT JUST NOISE, IT’S YOUR OWN VOICE,

SO GO AND FIND YOUR ROAR!

(LESTER roars)

CURTAIN