

NOTES

It has been said that if we simply have the courage to pursue them, all of our dreams can come true! This is especially true of young entrepreneurs, who, each summer, revive the American Dream by setting up lemonade stands and cutting lawns in the hopes of making a little money during their summer vacation. In the following humorous play, Tanika and Taylor, two siblings in an economically repressed suburb, try desperately to raise funds by putting on a neighborhood talent show in their front yard. This short play may be performed by two females or a female (Tanika) and male (Taylor) and be entered in either Duo Interpretation, Duet Acting, or may be performed by a single performer and entered in Humorous Interpretation. This play is perfect for competitions, because the 'audience' literally becomes the *actual* 'audience' watching the amateur talent show being performed by Tanika and Taylor; therefore, it is important that the two performers really interact with the audience, as though the audience itself is sitting on beach towels in their front yard. It is also important that the audience believe Tanika and Taylor are talking directly offstage to their mother and father, as well as various neighborhood friends in the audience, throughout the performance. This is a high-energy comedy—perfect for those who have always dreamed of putting on their *own* talent show in front of an audience of family and friends!

Tanika: (*Addressing the audience*) Hi, everybody! As y'all know, I'm Tanika, and this is Taylor.

Taylor: (*Talking out of side of mouth*) Tanika, they know who we are!

Tanika: Taylor, we are no longer their neighbors, 'Tanika and Taylor,' right now. Okaaaaay??? Okay! We are *performers!* Soon-to-be SUPER FAMOUS! Okaaaaay? Okay!

Taylor: Famous??

Tanika: (*Back to audience*) And we just want to welcome all of you to our First Annual Neighborhood Talent Show.

Taylor: We gonna kill it, y'all!

Tanika: Now, y'all may be asking yourselves, "Why are Tanika and Taylor putting on a 'talent show' in their front yard?"

Taylor: (*Having already forgotten*) Why ARE we putting on this show, 'Nika?

Tanika: (*Correcting Taylor*) Taylor, my stage name is TA-nika, not just 'Nika. Okay? Okay! And we are putting on this amazing SHOW...because it's SUMMER!

Taylor: So...

Tanika: And we want to have FUN!

Taylor: So...

Tanika: And we don't have anything to have fun WITH!

Taylor: So...

Tanika: And Mama said if we want a bunch of cool summer stuff... like a De-Lux backyard swimming pool from Walmart then we're going to have to raise the money ourselves.

Taylor: (*Remembering*) Oh, yeah...'cause Daddy got laid off from the slaughter house.

Tanika and Taylor's First Annual Neighborhood Talent Show

By KaShunda Uzoma and Juliet Davis

Tanika: He DID, y'all. Daddy was chopping off the head of a cow, and his boss came over and said they're talking about how people are going to have to stop eating so many hamburgers. *(Beat)* So he has to let his people go!

Taylor: *(Laughs)* Tanika, you sound like Moses.

Tanika: Look. I pay attention in Sunday school, okaaaaay? Okay...

Taylor: You sure do. *(To audience)* And until Daddy finds a new job, Tanika and I don't get an allowance, which means no cool, fun, summer things...

Tanika: And it's SUMMER, SOOOOO—Thank you all for coming to our show!

END OF TEASER

Tanika: Now, y'all probably want to know what kind of fun things Taylor and I are going to BUY with all the money we raise from our First Annual Neighborhood Talent Show. Tell 'em, Taylor!

Taylor: Sure, thing, Sis! First, we're gonna buy a swimming pool.

Tanika: *(To Sydney in the audience)* I KNOW there's a community pool three blocks away, Sydney! BUT—that water is YELLOW! And I don't think the water in swimming pools should be YELLOW! Okay?? Okay!!

Taylor: *(As if Sydney just responded)* No, Sydney, you are WRONG! It was NOT a bunch of kids who spilt their lemonades into the pool!

Tanika: No, it was NOT!

Taylor: That's just what that lifeguard SAID, so we wouldn't tell our parents and they'd call the city and shut the pool down.

Tanika: BUT!!! If we have our OWN pool in the backyard, we can control the purity and cleanliness of the water IN the pool, and we might even invite some of you to come over and swim.

Taylor: *(To Willy)* No, not YOU, Willy! We saw you swimming in the community swimming pool when it was at its most SUN-SHINY yellow!

Tanika: *(To Shelby)* What Shelby? NOOOO, we haven't decided if we we're going to get an inflatable pool or a plastic pool yet.

Taylor: But it will have CLEAN water and be REEEAALLLYYY FUN!

Tanika: Speaking of fun, I think it's time to START...our First Annual Neighborhood Talent Show! So, what do you say, Friends? Are you ready for an awesome first guest? *(Making a drum roll sound on their legs)* Making her talent show debut...right here in our very own front yard...is our hysterically funny cat, Chloe!! *(To Taylor)* Taylor, would you get Chloe for us? *(Back to audience)* Now, as Taylor gets Chloe, you should know, our cat was given to us by our Daddy, who found it down at the Slaughter House about six months before he got laid off. *(To Davey)* And NO, DAVEY! He didn't save it from being KILLED! Okay??? Okay. *(To all of the audience)* There was just a bunch of stray cats hanging around their trash bins out in back. The cats would go there, because of all the blood and guts from all the dead cows Daddy and his co-workers DID kill. Okay? Okay! *(Noticing Taylor found Chloe)* Oh, look, here she is! *(Taylor stands behind Tanika and sticks one arm around Tanika's body and uses the hand to lip-sync and say, 'Meow' at appropriate times in the routine)*

So, Chloe, I understand you just started school this past year. What was your favorite subject?

Taylor: *(As cat)* Meow—

Tanika: *(Finishing the word quickly)* —sic! Did you guys hear that? Y'all, Chloe said 'music!' That's cool, Chloe, because I like music, too! What's your favorite song? *(Bending down toward hand, as if Chloe is whispering the title to her)* Three Blind Mice??? That's a classic! And cats like MICE, so I'll bet you sang that one with FEELING! So, Chloe, you're so smart. What do you like to read?

Taylor: *(As cat)* Meow—

Tanika: *(Finishing the word quickly)* —*spaper!* Wow, what a coincidence! Our parents like to read the newspaper, too. Especially Daddy. He reads the *Want Ads* every day now, since he's out of work. He practically hogs the paper—which, by the way, is something ELSE he used to kill at the slaughter house. Cows AND pigs! So, Chloe, I heard you went on a school field trip. Can you tell us where you went?

Taylor: *(As cat)* Meow—

Tanika: *(Finishing the word quickly)* —*seum!* The *museum?* That's *purr*-fect! Well, thanks for dropping by as a guest at our First Annual Neighborhood Talent Show, Chloe! *(The arm/hand is retracted, as if putting Chloe down)* Doesn't Chloe have a great *purr*-sonality, folks?

Taylor: Hey, Tanika, Daddy's about to pull out of the garage!

Tanika: Quick! Move Terrell's bike!

Taylor: Daddy! Stop! Let me get Terrell's bike out of the driveway first!!

Tanika: Whew, that was a close one.

Taylor: Bye, Daddy! *(To audience)* He's got a job interview today.

Tanika: But he's not going to have to kill things at this job.

Taylor: No, he's just going to have to lie to people a lot.

Tanika: He's got an interview to work for a state Congressman. Daddy said politicians are just a bunch of liars, so he'll probably have to lie, too, if he gets that job. Good luck, Daddy! *(As if trying to hear what Daddy is saying from his rolled down car window)* What, Daddy? *(Beat)* No, we're just putting on a show to raise money for a backyard swimming pool. Okay, we love you!

Taylor: Hey, Daddy!! Can you bring us back some KFC on the way home? Mama said she's tired of cooking!

Tanika: I want Original recipe!

Taylor: I want extra crispy!

Both: Thanks, Daddy! *(Alternating their goodbyes and good wishes)* Bye! We love you! Get that job, Daddy!

Tanika: Yeah, get that job, so we don't have to do a *Second* Annual Neighborhood Talent Show!

Taylor: Most of y'all know...but for those of you who DON'T...that was our Daddy.

Tanika: Okay, now for our second act, we're gonna do a dance, because this IS a talent show, and talent shows always have DANCING! So, come on Taylor, let's bust out some MOVES!