

Think Before Getting a Pet

List of Characters

Setting

Sally a little girl
Sam a little boy
Pandora a big snake
Polly a parrot (Scarlett Macaw or change wording in script)
Guinea Pig (optional—see notes on Guinea pig in script)

SALLY: Hi, Sam. What are you doing here?
SAM: I'm spending my birthday money.
SALLY: Wow, that's really exciting. What are you going to get?
SAM: I'm thinking about a Burmese Python.
SALLY: Wow that's big responsibility.
SAM: Restonsitility?
SALLY: Responsibility. Do you know what that means?
SAM: Of course I know what restonsituity means.
SALLY: RE-SPON-SI-BIL-ITY.
SAM: That's what I said...Resconsitility.
SALLY: Whatever. As long as you know what it MEANS.
SAM: Ummm, sure I do. It's uh when you...umm...well you already know so I don't need to tell you.
SALLY: That's what I thought. Responsibility means that you have a duty to do something. In this case, it's an obligation, a promise, to care for an animal. That's means giving the animal everything he needs to survive—food, water, shelter, a clean living space, exercise, and lots of love.
SAM: I'm getting a snake. They don't need exercise.
SALLY: Sure they do. They need room to stretch and constrict their muscles, branches to climb, and rocks to scratch their skin on when they are shedding.
SAM: SHEDDING??
SALLY: Yes, they shed their skin as they grow.
SAM: Cooooo!!!!
SALLY: Sam, didn't you look up anything about the animal you are planning to get so you know what you need to do? Libraries have all sorts of books and the Internet has lots of information too.
SAM: What's there to know? You put a snake in an aquarium and watch him grow.
PANDORA: And grow we will, Sssssam.
SAM: Who said that Sally?
SALLY: It came from over there (points to side of stage)
SALLY and SAM: (Walk over to voice.)
SAM: Hellooooo? (said hesitantly as he looks around)
PANDORA: (Slinks up from bottom of stage) Ssssssalutationsssss.
SAM: YIKES!
SALLY: Wow!
PANDORA: Sssssally issss very wissssse.

SALLY: Thank you. (said smugly)

SAM: Great, don't make her head any bigger than it already is. She already thinks she knows everything.

PANDORA: You should lisssten to your friend.

SAM: She's a girl. What does she know about snakes?

SALLY: I read a book about them at the library. (To snake) What's your name?

PANDORA: Pandora. I'm a Burmesssse Python.

SAM: You are? But you are huge. The ones over there are so much smaller.

PANDORA: They are jusssst babiessss. They will grow too. You ssssee Burmesssse Pythonssss can grow up to 15 ft long and weigh 65 lbssss

SAM: That's a lot of ssssnake, I mean snake.

PANDORA: Yesssss. Most people don't realize how big we get. They get us when we are babiessss, and when we grow too much, and they can't handle ussss, they get rid of ussss. Ssssome think zoosss will take ussss, but there are too many ssssnakes and not enough sssspace in zoossss. Ssssome are jusssst turned loosssse and those get in trouble or die of the cold. The resssst end up in shelterssss, where they rarely find homessss. No one wantssss a big ssssnake like me.

SALLY: How did you get here.

PANDORA: My former human left me outssssside the pet sssstore door. The owner wasss nice enough to warm me up and keep me. I almosst died because I didn't have a heater all night long.

SALLY: That's so sad. I'm sorry you went through that. People really should think more about the animals they take into their homes.

POLLY: (comes on stage left--opposite side of stage) SQUAWK!! That's right! People should think; people should think.

SAM: Wow, that's a pretty bird.

SALLY and SAM: (walk toward bird)

SALLY: She's a Scarlett Macaw.

POLLY: Pretty bird, pretty bird.

SAM: How do you know all this stuff?

SALLY: I read a lot.

POLLY: Squawk! Polly wants an apple; Polly wants an apple.

SAM: She's sooooo coool. Maybe I'll get a Macaw instead. They don't get as big as a Burmese Python. (looks over his shoulder at Pandora who rises up behind him and then exits the stage.)

SALLY: No they don't, but they live up to 100 years. Where will you be in a hundred years?

SAM: A hundred years? I'm not even sure what I'm doing tomorrow!

POLLY: What are you doing? What are you doing?

SALLY: Well, making a commitment to an animal means that you are promising to care for that animal for life.

SAM: Yeah, but 100 years? Who can make that kind of commitment?

POLLY: Make a commitment. Make a commitment.

SALLY: Exactly, so maybe these kinds of birds shouldn't be pets at all.

SAM: Wow, I didn't know this picking a pet stuff was so complicated.

SALLY: There's a lot to think about when you are making a commitment to a living thing. That's why you should start out small and with an animal that doesn't have as long of a life expectancy.

SAM: Doesn't have a long what?

SALLY: Life expectancy. How long something will live.

POLLY: How long do you live. How long do you live.

SAM: Well, how am I supposed to know that.

SALLY: (Starts to speak)

SAM: Wait, I know. The library (said a little sassy)

SALLY: Yup. That's where I learned that horses live 20 – 25 years, cats live 14-20 years, dogs live 10 – 20 years, parakeets live 6 – 12 years, and fish live 2-3 years.

SAM: Wow, you are a walking library with endless information.

SALLY: Thank you.

SAM: It's kind of annoying.

SALLY: Humph, you're just jealous.

SAM: What about hamsters and mice? You didn't mention them.

SALLY: They live about 2 -3 years, but you have to remember they are nocturnal animals.

SAM: I don't care what religion they are.

SALLY: No silly. Nocturnal means they sleep during the day and are awake at night.

SAM: I knew that.

SALLY: So if you get a hamster or mouse, most of the time when you are awake, they will be asleep and when you are sleeping—they are awake.

SAM: Oh, that explains why my friend's hamster runs on that wheel of his all night. It's more annoying than you, well maybe---that continuous squeak, squeak, squeak, as that wheel turns and turns all night long. I don't think I want that in my room.

SALLY: Well, then maybe you should consider a parakeet or a guinea pig.

SAM: A PIG!!!

SALLY: (Sighs) A GUINEA pig. Look over here.

SALLY and SAM: (walk stage right)

GUINEA PIG: (Guinea pig squeals come from off stage or you can have a guinea pig puppet (stuffed animal on a rod will do) come on stage)

SAM: Awww. How cute. They talk to you with little squeals. I think this one likes me. (pet guinea pig or just reaches down as if reaching into a cage)

GUINEA PIG: (makes squeals and rumbling "happy sounds")

SALLY: Guinea pigs are a great first pet. They live around 6 -8 years. They are big enough to handle easily; they are usually very friendly, and they talk and get excited when you come into the room.

SAM: I really like these guys. What kind of care do they need?

SALLY: Well, what kind of care do all animals need?

SAM: Is this a test?

SALLY: Kind of. If you can't answer the question, maybe you shouldn't get a pet today.

(If you want audience participation, this is a good time to ask the audience for help. You should have a narrator type person out front to direct the kids a little or it could end up getting noisy)

SAM: All right, all right. I can do this. Let's see...they need FOOD.

SALLY: Good! What else.

SAM: Ummmm, water?

SALLY: Yup, there's more.

SAM: A clean living space with a house.

SALLY: Very good. And what else?

SAM: Umm, ummm, I know, I know. Don't tell me. Oh yeah, exercise. Wait how do you exercise a guinea pig?

SALLY: You can let him run around a room while you are watching him. They also make big plastic balls that are designed to put the animal in and let them run around the room. Always supervise exercising activities.

SAM: (Looks puzzled –cock head to one side—scratch head if hands connected to rods)

SALLY: That means watch him.

SAM: I knew that.

SALLY: You forgot one very important thing that animals need.

SAM: I didn't forget it, I was saving the best for last. Animals need lots of love.

SALLY: And that doesn't mean giving them a great big hug.

SAM: Aw, why not. That's showing love.

SALLY: Some animals get scared and don't like to be restrained that much.

SAM: Everyone likes hugs.

SALLY: Oh, Really?

SAM: Sure.

SALLY: O.K. then. Come here, let me give you a great big hug.

SAM: Ewww. No Way!

SALLY: Come on, you said everyone likes hugs. (starts heading towards Sam around with arms stretched out towards him.)

SAM: Yuck, get away. (Backs away from Sally.) Don't you dare.

SALLY: Just one little hug. Come on you said it yourself...EVERYONE likes hugs.

SAM: Agggghhhh! (Sam runs from Sally)

SALLY: (Chasing Sam) Come on, I want to hug you, and squeeze you, and love you all over.

POLLY: Give him a hug. Give him a hug.

GUINEA PIG: (Squeals repeatedly)

PANDORA: (Enters stage) I'll give him a hug. Come here Ssssssam.

SAM: YIKES!!! O.K. O.K. I get it! Not EVERYone likes hugs. Especially from a python. Isn't that how you kill your meals?

PANDORA: Why yessssss, it issssss. Do you want that hug now?

POLLY: Give him a hug. Give him a hug.

GUINEA PIG: (Squeals)

SAM: No thank you. (Animals all quiet down)

SALLY: So hugs aren't always such a good thing, huh Sam?

SAM: You've made your point. Can I pick out an animal now. I still have birthday money to spend.

SALLY: Do you promise to take good care of whatever animal you get?

SAM: Yes.

POLLY: It's a promise, it's a promise.

SALLY: Do you promise to keep the animal's cage clean?

SAM: Yes.

POLLY: It's a promise. It's a promise.

SALLY: Do you promise give the animal food and water every day?

SAM: Yes.

POLLY: It's a promise. It's a promise.

SALLY: Do you promise to take this responsibility serious?

SAM: I promise to take this re-spons-i-bil-ity serious.

SALLY: Yea! You said it right.

SAM: Of course, I did. I always knew how. Um, I was just tricking you earlier.

SALLY: Sure, you were Sam. So which animal do you want?

SAM: I think I like this guinea pig over here. (reaches into cage or pets guinea pig)

SALLY: And he really likes you. Let's go find your Dad and see what he says.

SAM: Mom will be relieved. She didn't like the idea of a snake in the house.

PANDORA: Ssssssmart Mom. Ssssssome animalssss shouldn't be kept assss petssss.

SAM: I know that now. Thanks everyone for helping me see that this is really a big responsibility and that I should only make a commitment to an animal that I will be able to keep.

SALLY: A guinea pig will be perfect. You'll have time to take care of it before and after school and in between soccer practices and games. You have a lot going on in life, so you want to make sure you have time to commit to an animal.

SAM: Yeah, Mom already said we are too busy for a dog. She said it wasn't fair to leave one alone so much.

PANDORA: Your mother ISSSS very wissse.

SAM: Yeah, I know, but don't tell her I said so.

SALLY: Oh, Sam, there's your Dad. (Points off stage.)

SAM: Hey, Dad. (runs off stage)

SALLY: Bye everyone.

PANDORA: Sssso long Sssssally.

POLLY: Bye bye Sally, Bye bye Sally.

PANDORA: Thanksss for being ssssuch a good friend to the animalssss. You can do a lot to teach otherssss. Keep up the good work and sssspread the word about how much resssponssibility and commitment it takessss to have an animal share your life.

SALLY: Thanks Pandora I will. (to audience) And you guys can do the same, by telling all your friends about what you learned today. BYE! (Exits) (Polly hopes off stage.) (Pandora slithers down off stage.)

