

The Adventures of Penny & Paws

"Jumping Through Hoops!"



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"Jumping Through Hoops!"

“Guess what, Paws!” Penny exclaimed as she burst into the dining room. “The circus is coming!”

At the table, Paws lowered the local newspaper and moved his reading glasses down his nose to get a clearer look at his best friend.

“Is that why you’re dressed in that strange outfit?” Paws asked.

Penny removed a black top hat and bowed, her black cape flowing behind her. To Paws’ surprise, a small stuffed bunny fell from the hat onto the floor. This furry surprise made the dog’s fur stand on end, and he almost growled.

“It’s not real,” Paws muttered to himself. “Calm down, it’s not real; it’s only a toy.”

Paws made a mental note of this so he could chew on it later. “So you’re going to be a magician?” the dog asked as he picked a piece of kibble off his bowl and tossed it into his mouth.

Penny pulled a wand out of her cloak and waved it around before hitting a button on the end, making a bouquet of flowers appear in its place. “Ta-da!” she exclaimed happily. “I’ve decided we’re going to put on a magic show in the front yard to make enough money to go to the circus!”



Paws washed down his kibble with some coffee and dabbed at his lips with a napkin. "Penny, you're a genius!" he replied before jumping from his chair. "Can I be your assistant?"

"You sure can!" Penny exclaimed. "I know the perfect magic trick for you!"

"As long as it's not sawing me in half," the dog said. "I just returned from the vet and don't want to go back anytime soon."

"Well, there goes that idea!" Penny joked.

"I know the perfect trick," Paws stated. "It always gets me a treat."

"Rolling over and playing dead isn't magic," Penny explained. "That's just for funzies because you're so fuzzy and cute."

"I can't deny that," Paws chuckled. "And it always gets me a belly rub."

"Follow me!" Penny said raising a finger into the air. "I have a surprise for you!"



Outside of their house, just before the sidewalk, stood a small stand with a sign that read “Magic Show: 25 Cents.”

“Whoa,” Paws said as he approached it. “Where did this come from?”

“Grandpa Joe built it and dropped it off this morning,” Penny said. “He wanted to make a treehouse for us but heard about my new career decision and opted to make us a booth instead.”

While Paws was admiring the display, he noticed all the magic show props. “I see the disappearing ball, the deck of cards, and the rabbit in the hat, but what are these big hoops for? Are they part of the magic act?”

“I’m not sure,” Penny said. “But Grandpa says that if you want to run a small business in this town, you must jump through many hoops.”

“I don’t think that’s what Grandpa meant,” Paws chuckled. “I think he was saying there’s a lot of red tape.”

“But we’re out of red tape,” Penny said, looking flustered. “We may have some clear tape in the garage.”

Paws slapped his forehead. “No, no. He wasn’t talking about actual hoops OR red tape,” he tried to explain. “He was trying to explain how working with government offices can...”



“So, you don’t want to jump through these hoops with me?” Penny interrupted.

“I didn’t say that!” Paws exclaimed before taking a running leap through a hoop Penny held up. “This is fun!”

After they took turns leaping through the hoops, a few kids from the neighborhood decided to stop by and watch the show.

“Step right up, folks, and place a quarter in the jar!” Penny called out. “The show is about to begin!”

The children gave their money, set themselves down, and waited with bated breath as Penny pulled one of their quarters from the jar and held it in the air. “For my first trick, I’ll need my trusty assistant, Paws, to lend me an ear because I’m going to make this coin... disappear!”

As Penny reached out toward her dog’s ear, an unknown voice shouted from behind the children, “Stop the show!”

Penny and Paws froze, along with the children, and they saw two figures on the sidewalk. One was a dapperly dressed fox, who was as tall as Penny, and next to him was a mole whose clothes were messy from climbing out of a dirt hole.



“Who are you?” Penny asked. “Have you come to see some magic?”

“Not exactly,” the fox said as he switched his monocle from the left eye to the right in order to inspect the stand. “My name is Cooper T. Featherpik the Third, and this is my dutiful assistant, Dibbley Sodmirth. We work for the city, ensuring local businesses are properly licensed.”

“It’s okay,” Penny said happily, before grabbing one of the hoops. “We made sure to jump through the hoops Grandpa Joe told us about.”

Paws did a facepaw and shook his head.

Cooper and Dibbley chuckled. “I’m afraid you do not understand. Your grandfather referred to the rules and regulations of opening a business.”

“Yes,” Dibbley agreed. “Here, I’ll show you.”

With a bit of strain from the effort, the mole reached into his coat and pulled out an incredibly thick book. Paper notes fell out as he held it open for Penny and Paws to see.

“See here,” Dibbley explained in his nasally voice. “On page 237, article b178, graph 76, line b12, under column 7QR, it plainly states that any person wishing to become a magician must have 247 hours of apprentice training and pay various fees to become legally licensed.”



“That’s amazing!” Penny said.

“What is?” Cooper asked. “The amount of professionalism the local authorities require?”

“No,” Penny answered. “How that giant book fit in Mr. Sodmirth’s coat!”

Cooper ignored Penny’s observation and handed her a slip of paper. “What is this?” the girl asked.

“It’s a cease and desist order,” the fox stated bluntly.

“Without the proper licensing, you’ll have to shut down your magic stand.”

“This is absurd,” Paws harumphed, pulling out a magnifying glass to look over the book. “Hey, look at the fine print. It says the law was written and supported by Big Magic!”

Dibley quickly pulled the book away and stuffed it back inside his coat. Once again, it didn’t look like anything was there.

“Maybe Mr. Sodmirth works for Big Magic,” Penny whispered to Paws. “Did you see how that book has disappeared!”

Cooper and Dibley gave the group a tip of their hats and left. The children waiting in the audience reached back into the jar and sadly removed their quarters before walking away.



“There go our customers,” Penny said sadly. “And our trip to the circus!”

“Now, what are we going to do to make money?” Paws muttered to himself as he paced back and forth. “It has to be circus-themed and hard to regulate.”

“We better not clown around,” Penny said. “The circus starts tonight, and we don’t want to miss out!”

“That’s it!” Paws proclaimed, jumping up and down. “Let’s do just that, clown around!”

Penny smiled because she knew Paws had the best ideas. “This I’ve got to hear!” she said.

“Let’s make a face-painting booth and do everyone in fun clown makeup,” the dog cheered. “There can’t be any laws against that!”

The girl and the dog high-fived before running to the house to get the proper supplies. Twenty minutes later, they had repainted the booth to read, “Clown Face Painting: 25 Cents.”

It wasn’t long before the girl from magic show came back and, once again, dropped her quarter in the jar. The two boys from earlier also came back as Penny finished painting the girl’s face. “Now I’m ready to be part of the show,” the girl cheered. “Maybe they’ll let me drive the clown car!”



“Ahem,” came a familiar-sounding voice. “Not without a license!”

They all turned to look. Cooper and Dibbley were back.

“Oh, I think she was only joking,” Paws stated. “She’s just a little girl; she’s not old enough to drive.”

“We know that,” Cooper said, rolling his eyes. “We meant what you and Penny are doing with the face paint. The regulation rulebooks for clowning around are quite thick. Show them, Dibbley.”

The mole reached into his jacket again and pulled out an even thicker book. It was labeled Clown World Rules & Regulations. Dibbley flipped through the pages before stopping to read out loud. “On page 495, on sidebar 3, paragraph 2, and even demonstrated with a cream pie chart, it clearly states that anyone looking to do clown face paint must have over 410 hours in apprenticeship training. Oh, and pass a surprisingly hard face painting exam.”

“Wow,” Penny said. “This clown stuff is serious business!”

Penny and Paws watched again as the mole slipped the large book inside his coat. “Permits to begin training are available at the Rules and Regulations Office,” Cooper said. “There will be a sizable fee, of course; just come see me when you’re ready to pay.”



The fox and mole turned around and headed down the sidewalk. “How are we supposed to pay for a permit if we can’t do anything to make money in the first place?” Penny asked Paws in frustration while crossing her arms. “Now, what do we do?!”

“Well,” Paws began. “They say when the world gives you lemons, you make some lemonade!”

“I don’t see any lemons,” Penny stated while looking around. “Did somebody drop some off?”

Paws slapped his head with his paw. “No, silly. That’s just a figure of speech. But it gave me an idea! Let’s turn the booth into a lemonade stand!”

Penny loved the idea and shook Paws’ paw. “You got a deal, partner! And I bet there are no hoops to jump through for that. Every kid opens a lemonade stand!”

“We better fetch some lemonade quick,” Paws stated. “It’s getting warm out!”

Paws wagged his tail as they went into the house to make a few pitchers of lemonade and put them in the fridge. Then, the duo ran back out and repainted their stand.

Penny and Paws celebrated a job well done by bringing out the lemonade and pouring themselves a glass. By this time, the sun was at its brightest.



“It sure is getting hot outside,” Paws said, wiping his brow. “This lemonade sure is hitting the spot.”

Penny agreed. “This stuff is going to sell like hotcakes!” She added more ice to the pitcher.

“Shhh, Penny, that could be our next idea,” Paws whispered before one of his ears perked up. “Wait, did you hear something?”

The girl and dog looked around before noticing something moving under the big shade tree. “Look!” Paws shouted, “It’s Dibbley! He’s been spying on us!”

The dog was right. The mole’s head was sticking out from the ground. He had been watching them through a pair of binoculars. Penny and Paws ran over to him. Dibbley looked up at them with a sheepish grin. He was covered in dirt with a half-chewed bone resting on his head. “I was looking for that!” Paws exclaimed, grabbing it and giving it a sniff.

Dibbley set down his binoculars, put on his glasses, and looked up at the duo. “Are you two doing what I think you’re doing?” he asked.

“Ugh,” Penny stated, rolling her eyes. “Don’t tell me lemonade stands are regulated too!”

“Actually, it may not matter anymore,” Dibbley sighed. “Cooper and I might be out of a job. The Rules & Regulations Office is losing money.”



“What? How?” Paws exclaimed.

“It sure is hot out,” the mole stated. “For a glass of lemonade, I’ll tell you what happened.”

Penny and Paws each grabbed one of the mole’s arms and helped pull him from the ground. When they walked over to the booth, there were already the two boys and girl who had been there earlier. In line behind them was someone they didn’t expect. It was Cooper T. Featherpik the Third, wearing dark sunglasses, a baseball cap and a fake mustache!

“Hello, Mr. Featherpik!” Penny laughed. I’m sorry, sir, but that’s an awful disguise!”

The fox sighed and explained. “It is getting hot outside, and I didn’t think you’d want to sell me any lemonade after all the hassle I gave you earlier.”

“You were just doing your job,” Paws said. “We were frustrated, but a free market has a way of working things out.”

“I think you’re right, Paws,” the fox sighed as he dropped a quarter into the jar. “It turns out when you overregulate, it hurts the economy! We had good intentions, but I guess we got a little carried away. Now there are no new businesses opening, and the others are cutting jobs because they can’t afford to comply with all the rules. I guess it makes it too expensive to operate.”



“No jobs, no circus,” Penny sighed. “This is quite a pickle!”

Paws pondered their puzzling predicament. “Aha!” the pondering pooch exclaimed. “I have an idea!”

“I think I know what you’re thinking, Paws,” Penny said. “Let me grab the hoops.”

“Sorry, Penny,” Paws replied. “But keep that thought for later. Everyone, please gather around me!”

After a brief huddle, everyone cheered. Cooper ran down the sidewalk with Dibbley waddling not far behind. “It sure must be hard to run with those books of regulations weighing him down,” Penny observed.

“It would be hard for anyone,” Paws agreed.

A short time later, Cooper and Dibbley returned with a smile on both of their faces. “Paws, you’re a genius!” Cooper cheered. “The Rules and Regulations Office has decided to loosen regulations to welcome new businesses! Our jobs are now safe, with fewer rules to follow!”

Dibbley reached into his coat and pulled out a much smaller book. “This is so much better on my back!”

“To celebrate, I’ve purchased circus tickets for everyone!” Cooper said, tossing handfuls into the air. “Now we can all go have some fun!”



Everyone cheered and celebrated by letting Paws paint everyone's faces while Penny entertained them with a magic show. "Alright, gang," Penny began. "Let's quit clowning around and head to the circus!"

"Are you sure there are no more hoops?" Paws asked Cooper.

"Only flaming ones with tigers jumping through them!" Cooper laughed.

"I can dig that!" Dibley added as he joined everyone on the sidewalk.

"I hope this isn't a flea circus," Paws stated as he joined everyone on their way to the big top.



Paws Joke Kennel

Q: What do you call a cowardly dog?

A: A golden retrieater.

Q: Why did the dog run off with a stick?

A: He found it quite fetching.

Q: Why did the lemon go out with the prune?

A: It couldn't find a date.

Q: Why was the lemon by himself?

A: Because the banana split!

Q: What do you call a dog that can do magic tricks?

A: A labracadabrador.

Q: How many magicians does it take to do magic?

A: Just one will do the trick.

Q: Did you hear about the magic tractor?

A: It went down the road and turned into a field.

Q: How do fleas travel from place to place?

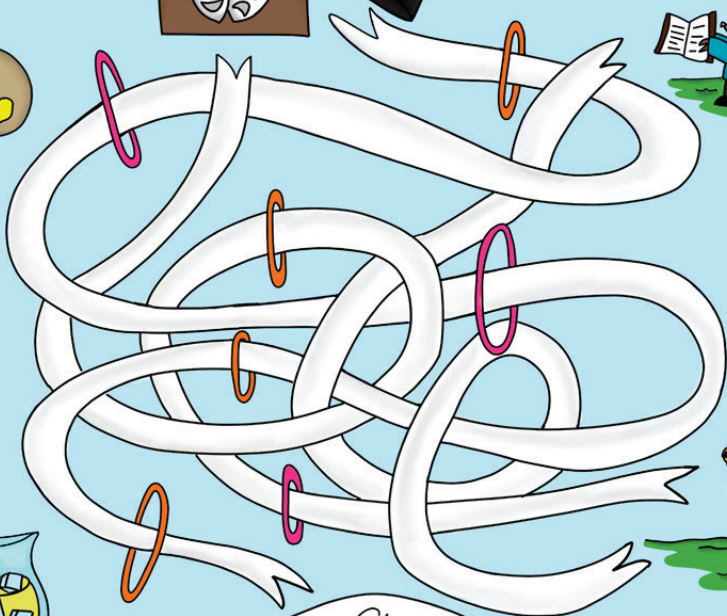
A: By itch-hiking!

Q: What's a dog's favorite instrument?

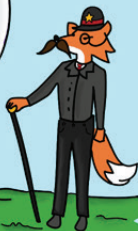
A: A trombone!



Penny & Paws Adventure Maze



The Circus





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