

Archaeopteryx

A ten minute play

By Evan Spreen

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Characters:

Cooper - M (60's) A tired cop.

Libby - F (19ish) A teenage girl in her pajamas.

Percival - M or F (immortal) An archaeopteryx. The voice should be like a demented furby. Could be voiced by the actor playing Cooper. Possibly a hand puppet also puppeted by Cooper.

Setting:

2019. A police interrogation room in Durango,

CO. **Notes:**

Archaeopteryx Pronunciation - ar-kee-OP-ter-ix

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LIBBY sits at a small table
expectantly. COOPER enters and
sits with a folder and a cup of
coffee.

COOPER

Hi there, Olivia. I'm Officer Greg Cooper. How ya doin?

LIBBY

It's Libby.

COOPER

Says right here on your license that your name is Olivia
Birchman. So, How about we stick with Olivia on account
that this is all going down on the official record, sound
good? - Why don't you walk me through everything that's
happened tonight, Olivia? From the beginning, if ya will.

LIBBY

I already told your buddy, I was at the emergency vet
clinic off of Jefferson and--

COOPER

The one next to the Pizza Palace?

LIBBY

Yeah. That one. I was sitting there waiting to find out if
my dog was gonna be okay, minding my own business, when you
guys pull up, sirens blaring, and toss me in the back of a
squad car. No one read me my rights. No one explained
anything. Sergeant Dave just throws me in the backseat and

doesn't say a word.

COOPER

Can I get you a water? How about a Coke or something?

LIBBY

No! I've been sitting in this room for two and a half hours! I want to see my dog!

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COOPER

He's here. He's here. He's in the next room.

LIBBY

Why won't anyone tell me what's happening?

COOPER

Now, cool it. Let's all just relax.

LIBBY

What's going on with my dog?

COOPER

We are in the middle of-- what you'd call a developing situation. We pulled you in nice and quiet-like, so hopefully, we can keep this off the news at nine. The laws as we know 'em don't really cover something like this--

LIBBY

Something like what?

COOPER

Your dog.

LIBBY

Percival.

COOPER

Percy. Okay. Can you tell me his breed?

LIBBY

I dunno. He's a mix.

COOPER

A mix of what exactly?

LIBBY

... dogs. He's part chihuahua. Maybe some terrier, too?

COOPER

We called in a couple of exotic animal experts. And honestly, they're all just as stumped as I am. I was surprised we even found an amateur herpetologist on a Thursday night.

LIBBY

My dog doesn't have herpes. He just ate some grapes.

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COOPER

The veterinary assistant who was on call lost three fingers. He's on the record as saying: "Expletive, expletive lizard bird ate my expletive fingers."

LIBBY

My dog attacked him? My dog that weighs all of 4 pounds?

COOPER

Fellas in the ER now. I've got some guys looking for his other finger. But there's no news on that front.

LIBBY

Is my dog okay?

COOPER

Animal control is here, park ranger, and two guys from the zoo. They're with him now.

LIBBY

I want to see my dog! Nothing I've done is illegal. You have no reason to keep me here! I know my rights!!

COOPER

Now, simmer down, Olivia. You aren't in trouble. We haven't charged you with anything. We're all just trying to wrap our heads around how you got hold of an extremely dangerous animal.

LIBBY

My chihuahua mix. My extremely dangerous... chihuahua mix.

COOPER

How did you come into possession of this animal?

LIBBY

I got him at a kennel downtown.

COOPER

You need a permit for exotic pets in Colorado.

LIBBY

He's not exotic. He's just a dog. He's a rescue!

COOPER

The guys from the zoo had no clue. But, the park ranger;
his name is Jeff - Jeff Holcomb.

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5.

His father owns the hotel up on Fifth. He had the best
guess as to what your Percy actually is. You see, he said
he saw something similar at an exhibit up at the nature
center. I finally found a picture of it online. Had to
look up the pronunciation.

LIBBY

(reading phone)

Archa Ropter Rix.

COOPER

Archaeopteryx.

LIBBY

That's a dinosaur. You think my dog is a dinosaur.

COOPER

We aren't sure what to think.

LIBBY

You are literally sitting there accusing me of keeping
a dinosaur as a pet. This is unbelievable.

COOPER

I've never seen a Chihuahua with lizard fangs and
buzzard wings.

LIBBY

What? Are you on drugs? WHAT? No. It's clear this is some kind of prank, and a bunch of guys are gonna pop out in a minute and laugh at me, but-- like-- my dog ate a grape, and let me remind you that grapes are extremely toxic to dogs and he didn't even see a vet as far as I know and if anything happens to Percival, I swear to god--

COOPER

Dogs can have a couple grapes. I think you might be overreacting.

LIBBY

(Overreacting)

I'M NOT OVERREACTING!

COOPER

Why don't you sit back down, Olivia.

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LIBBY

(calmer)

I want to see my dog, man.

COOPER

I am doin' the best I can. I don't want to keep you here all night. I'm not some big scary lawman out to kidnap little girl's dogs. I want to help you. But I can't do that unless you help me by telling me what this animal really is and where you got him. We don't know how to handle something this dangerous. We can't even identify it correctly. Sometimes, the station gets the odd Bigfoot call, but we usually just send a few guys out to scare off a bear or a drunk fella in a fur coat.

LIBBY

Do you have any pets, Officer Cooper?

COOPER

I have a cat. Muffin.

LIBBY

And if I locked you in a room, made you wait a couple hours, and then I came in and told you that your cat--

COOPER

Muffin.

LIBBY

That Muffin - is a jellyfish. A dangerous renegade jellyfish. What would your reaction be?

COOPER

Well, I suppose I'd be apt to disagree with you.

LIBBY

EXACTLY! Can you see my point?

COOPER

But my muffin's no jellyfish, and I ain't never seen a chihuahua like your Percy.

LIBBY

(sarcasm)

Wow. What an incredible argument you make. I'm sure you'll be up for a promotion soon with ace detective work like that.

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COOPER

I read an article recently about some guys in Sweden who were fixin' to clone a Woolly Mammoth.

LIBBY

Okay. You are accusing a teenage girl of illegal cloning. Okay. That's what's happening.

COOPER

Article mentioned that it's become commonplace these days. You can clone your pet pretty darn easily if you have some hair. You can even get a kit for it online. I can't imagine doing it, though. I don't know if I could figure out the instructions. And then it just wouldn't be the same, ya know? Maybe Muffin number two would resent me for it. Do you think he'd know somehow? He might be normal at first. But one day, he'd be in the kitchen eating some tuna, and then BAM! Something would click inside him, and he'd know

that his entire existence was based on my selfish desire to replicate the original. I'd be responsible. In a way, I'd be Muffin's God. I mean, Muffin number two's God. I don't know if I could handle that responsibility. (beat) Anyway, the way I see it, you ordered one of those home-order cloning kits, then you broke into a museum, stole a fossil, and now you have your very own pet dinosaur.

LIBBY

(beat) What?

COOPER

Listen, I know it seems like I'm grasping at straws here...

LIBBY

That's not even how cloning works. You need a mother of a similar species. The cloning kits they sell online just have a couple of test tubes, so you can collect some of your dog's hair and send it back to them. Then, they use the DNA sequence to impregnate a dog of a similar breed.

Theoretically, you could do the same thing with a woolly mammoth and an elephant. But no one's done it yet because of the ethical implications of bringing an animal back from extinction.

COOPER

Sounds like you know an awful lot about it.

LIBBY

Okay, you got me, Cooper! I'm running a highly illegal clone research lab funded in part by the Swedish government.

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We got bored with the woolly mammoths, so the next logical step is to open a great big theme park full of dinosaurs, and when they start eating the guests, we'll tell them we thought they were chihuahuas. Plausible deniability.

COOPER

Can you say that again slower? I've gotta write it all down.

LIBBY

Wait, wait, I'll do you one better. Here's what really happened - I crash-landed my Time Machine out in the woods without realizing I had a stowaway in the form of a dinosaur who steals said Time Machine and proceeds to travel back to the 1950s and predictably falls in love with my mom and now my grandpa is a Pterodactyl.

COOPER

I'm not sure that's how grandpas work.

LIBBY

Oh, here's one. I'm a witch. I'm a spooky, spooky witch. And my dog? He's a shapeshifting demon chihuahua summoned from the darkest depths of the collective nightmares of a hundred thousand orphans. We're harvesting the power of the moon in order to make the earth turn backward, and then all the skeletons are gonna come out, and it's gonna be real heckin' spooky.

COOPER

You're really testing me here, Olivia. Fine! Hold on, let me go get him then!

Cooper exits.

COOPER (O.S.)

No, Jeff. Just hand me the carrier. He won't get out. Yes, it's OK! I'm gonna show her!

Cooper re-enters holding a small dog carrier that has been duct taped excessively.

COOPER

Now you look me in the eyes and tell me that's a chihuahua!

9.

9.

PERCIVAL

Libbbee. Let me out Libbee. I am hunger, Libbee. Soon the planets shall align, libbeeee. We must break the final seal. Liiiiiibbbbbbeeeeeeee. For grandpaaa. For my son, Grandpa. And all the skeletonnnns. Let me out liiiiiiibebee. We have plausible deniability Libbeeeeeee.

Libby leaps forward and opens the
crate as PERCIVAL, a cheap
dinosaur puppet, hops out and
attacks Cooper.

COOPER

What the hell!? He can talk!? Aaaaaaaahhhhh!!

Percival bites Cooper's neck, and
he collapses to the floor,
covered in blood.

COOPER

Wait! Which one was true!?

LIBBY

I think you were right. You aren't ready to be a god.

COOPER

Which story was true, Olivia?

LIBBY

My name - is Libby.

PERCIVAL

Libeeeeeeee.

LIBBY

And this is my dog. Percival.

PERCIVAL

Awoof.

END PLAY