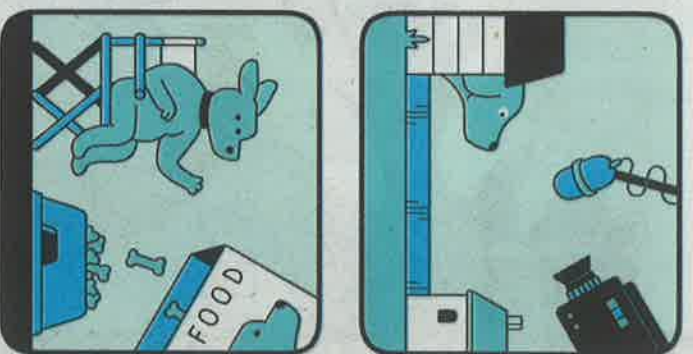
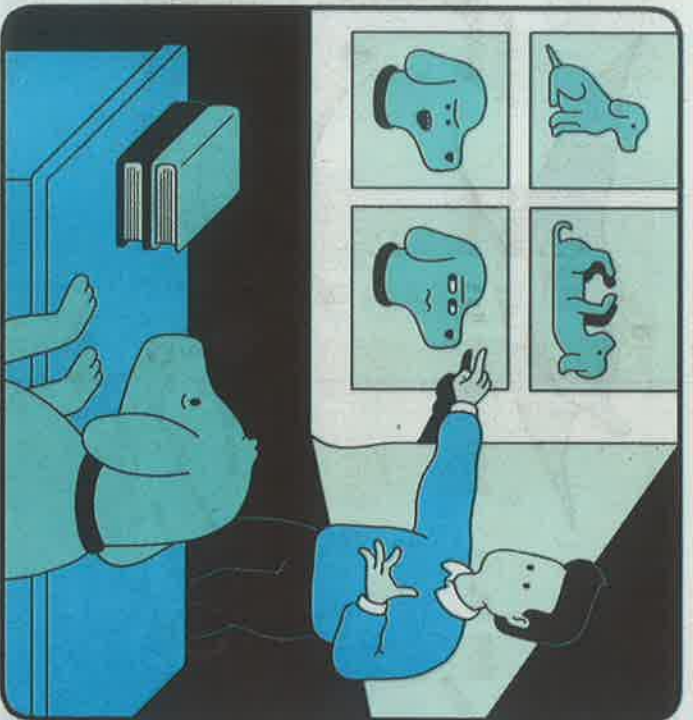
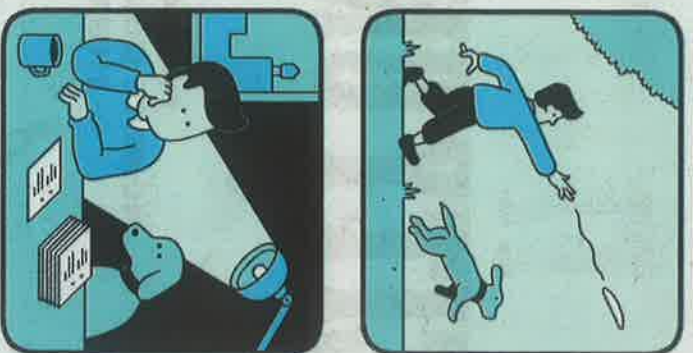




# Arts



## HOW A HOLLYWOOD TRAINER

# TURNS ANIMALS INTO ACTORS

BY CHELSEA LEU

**DAVID ALLSBERRY** was the kind of kid who would make friends based on their pets. "I used to visit my friends' houses even when they weren't there," he says, "and ask, 'Can I play with the dog anyway?'" He's now the co-owner of Animals for Hollywood, a company that specializes in training cats and dogs for the big screen, contributing fuzzy actors to movies and TV shows including "Pirates of the Caribbean," "Cats & Dogs," "Teen Wolf" and "Pup Star." After reading a script, Allsberry and his team have three or four months to prepare a chosen cat or dog for its leading role. "The 'it' factor they talk about in human actors? It exists in animals as well," Allsberry says. "Some of them just have charisma, a presence, an energy." It takes a lot of work to mold a novice into a Hollywood star in just a few months.

**1 Forge a bond.** "Even before you start training," Allsberry says, "you're looking to make a connection." That first month is all about getting to know the animals. That means hours spent going for walks, playing and figuring out how they see the world. What kinds of treats and toys do they like? How do they feel about strangers? "When you start the training process," he says, "you want them on your side."

their marks," Allsberry says. The secret? Time, repetition, treats and plenty of praise.

**2 Teach it the basics.** There are about 12 fundamental tricks every dog or cat actor should know, including sitting, lying down, barking or meowing on cue and getting from Point A to Point B. "Even movie animals need to hit

**3 Get it camera-ready.** After the basics, the animals learn more complicated tricks that involve two trainers or other animal actors. Trainers introduce fake cameras and microphones so the animals will be familiar with the commotion of a movie set, and they'll go to the park to get used to performing on cue around others. If a movie calls for a dog in a scene at a train station, Allsberry says, they'll take their actor to a local metro stop.

**4 Do your homework.** "If I don't know what's going on," Allsberry

says, "I can't tell my animal what to do." During filming, trainers need to understand the script, what the director wants, what tone the scene calls for — and then relay that information to the animal actor. For a high-energy scene, a trainer might pump up an animal beforehand by acting excited, giving it pep talks and having it spin in a circle.

**5 Be conscious of its needs.** On set, the animals look to the trainers for cues and support. Allsberry once had to encourage a nervous young dog to bow on camera, a process that took 45 minutes. "I just had to keep feeding him so much positive energy, and afterward I felt like I was ready to collapse," he says. The animal is the star: "Treat it like one!"

# THE BIRD AWARDS



## 5 OF THE MOST FANTASTIC FEATHERED ARTISTS

BY MARA GRUNBAUM

**THEY SING!** They dance! They dress in many colors and styles! Birds are born artists. Male birds, especially, use their talents to attract mates. "It's pretty much all driven by the fact that it impresses the females," says Nicholas Block, a scientist who studies birds (called an ornithologist). So we decided to search for the best of the best in Birdland. We asked nine ornithologists to

slide. Block says, "Even without music, these dance moves would impress anyone."

**2. MOST STIRRING SINGER:** The Cuban Solitaire Ornithologists love birds they grew up hearing, which made this category competitive. The winner, the Cuban solitaire, has a strange, layered call that sounds like a singing "Star Wars" droid. Solitaires make complex

rainbow of trinkets. It tastefully organizes them by type into a beautiful array.

**4. MOST EXTRAORDINARY ACTOR:** The Superb Lyrebird Birds like parrots can copy sounds they hear. But our panel agreed that Australia's superb lyrebird has them beat. "We're talking about a bird that can imitate a chain saw," says the ornithologist Wesley Hochachka.

## ★ HOW ANIMAL ACTORS GET THEIR GIGS ★

BY NATHAN MATTISE

WHEN A FILM or TV show wants to work with Millie Bobby Brown ("Stranger Things") or Lupita Nyong'o ("Black Panther"), the process starts with a call to the actor's talent agent. Agents typically make sure that parts are right for actors and help negotiate things like pay. And when producers want to work with actors that walk on four legs or are covered in fur, everything also starts with a call to an agent — an animal-talent agent.

"Someone will call and say, 'We want a dog to stand on a fire escape, and go down on rollerblades, and then do cartwheels when they hit the ground' — we just have to find the right dog for that," says Todd Evans, an animal handler at Dawn Animal Agency in New York. That may be a slight exaggeration, but Dawn does have dogs that can skateboard and surf. The agency has represented thousands of animal actors in show business over the last 50 years. It typically has access to more than 500 at any time, both big (bears, ostriches) and small (frogs, cockroaches). As an agency, Dawn makes sure

## WHICH ANIMALS ARE DEADLIEST TO HUMANS?

- A) SHARKS
- B) SNAKES
- C) MOSQUITOES
- D) SPIDERS



## BOOK

### REVIEWS

#### BY KIDS, FOR KIDS

**A GREAT BOOK** is one that stays with you after you read it. You think about it, you talk about it, you may even read it again. But a great book about an animal — you might carry that one around in your heart forever. *Maria Russo*



#### THE ONE AND ONLY IVAN

By Katherine Applegate

Ivan is a gorilla living in a mall's animal exhibit. He's alone, and he wants to go out, but he's stuck in captivity. Eventually an elephant named Ruby comes into the exhibit, and she becomes his friend. In the end Ivan and Ruby have new homes in a better place, a zoo where they have room to roam around and be with animals of their own kind. But during the middle of the book, when Ruby is taken away first and they are separated, it was very emotional for me. It's half sad and half happy. The book is fiction, but you find out it's really based on a true story. I like that kind of book. *Rose Lorenzo Lupo-Colonna, 11, Cleveland*



#### PALE MALE: CITIZEN HAWK OF NEW YORK CITY

By Janet Schimman

Pale Male is a red-tailed hawk. He and his mate made a nest on the side of a fancy apartment building, and the people there wanted to get rid of them because of the poop and the carcasses of dead squirrels and mice that he brought. They wanted to chase him away, and they tried to move his nest. But that's illegal, and so there was a parade of people saying, "Bring back the nest!" Pale Male became a national treasure. He kept coming back to that spot. You can still see his nest. It really showed me how all animals have feelings. A lot of people think animal habitats are not that important, but I think it's really cool how Pale Male stood his ground. *Nathan Schulhoff, 10, Brooklyn*



#### CRAIG & FRED (Young Reader's Edition)

By Craig Grossi

This is a true story. It's about a man named Craig who is a Marine and goes