

THE NINE TALES OF JINX

WRITER: CERISE DE GELDER

E-MAIL: cerisedegelder@live.com.au

CHARACTERS:

JINX: A male cat, older than Scamp.

SCAMP: A younger cat than Jinx, can be male or female.

(Jinx stands centre stage singing to the moon in a fairly average voice. As he does Scamp enters behind him.)

JINX: “Memory, all alone in the moonlight,
I can smile at the old days, I was beautiful then.
I remember the time I knew what happiness was...”

SCAMP: Oh, God. I’ve died and gone to hell!

(Jinx turns to look at him and hisses.)

Sorry...no offence. Just not an Andrew Lloyd Webber fan.

JINX: What kind of cat doesn’t like Andrew Lloyd Weber?

SCAMP: I’m Scamp.

JINX: Jinx. And you’re half right.

SCAMP: Ay?

JINX: You’re dead, but you’re in heaven.

SCAMP: *(Laughing)* You been on the catnip, mate?

JINX: Nup. Welcome to pussy heaven, sunshine.

(Scamp looks confused.)

Don’t you remember anything? A fatal accident? A chronic illness?

SCAMP: Last I remember I was drifting off to sleep. Mmmmm, it was so warm!

JINX: Warm? Where?

SCAMP: Y'know. In that big...moving thing.

JINX: Moving thing?

SCAMP: Yeah. It was sitting in the driveway outside the humans' house and it's front bit was open. So I snuck in and found a comfy spot. Next thing I know, the lid closes and I thought, nice of them to give me some privacy.

JINX: You twit.

SCAMP: What?

JINX: You were sleeping in the engine of a car!

SCAMP: So?

JINX: Do you know how many pieces your body's probably in by now?

(Pause)

SCAMP: Oh, shit.

(Jinx laughs.)

Oh, crap. I'm dead!

JINX: Don't sweat it.

SCAMP: Don't sweat it! I'm dead! I'm too young to die – I'm only two years old! In the prime of my life!

JINX: Kid, kid, calm down. Haven't you heard?

SCAMP: Heard what?

JINX: About the nine lives thing? Cats? Nine lives? Ringing any bells?

SCAMP: Isn't that a myth?

JINX: I'm living proof. Well, I'm not living now, but I will be soon.

SCAMP: What are you up to?

JINX: Nothing! It's the absolute truth.

SCAMP: No, I mean what life are you up to?

JINX: Oh. My next one's nine.

SCAMP: Your last life?

JINX: Yep.

SCAMP: Y'mean...you've died eight times?

JINX: Yep.

SCAMP: Boy...you must be really stupid!

JINX: Hey!

SCAMP: How could a cat die eight times? I mean, one mistake when you're young, sure. A couple of accidents maybe, an illness here or there. But eight times!

JINX: You live long enough you're bound to die. It's the law of averages, numbskull. It'll happen to you one day. It happens to everyone. Nobody lives forever.

SCAMP: So...did you ever die of old age?

JINX: What?

SCAMP: Y'know, after a long life, twelve or thirteen years, just drifted off peacefully on Granny's lap?

JINX: Well...no. But it wasn't stupidity. It was bad luck.

SCAMP: Oh, right.

JINX: I was unlucky, okay. It happens. Take my first death. I'm skipping around with the missus as happy as Larry one day when this old tosser comes along. Listen, he says...

SCAMP
(As Noah): The Lord has spoken to me and told me that the rains will come.

JINX: Rain! There's not a cloud in the sky! That weather bureau haven't got a clue.

SCAMP:
(Noah) Forty days and forty nights will it rain.

JINX: Oh well, we need the rain – it's good for the garden.

- SCAMP:
(Noah) You and your partner will come with me on my boat and you will be saved.
- JINX: Me and the missus in a confined space for forty days – you gotta be kidding! We’d tear each other apart before the week was out. Besides I hate boats. What if it leaks?
- SCAMP:
(Noah) I need two of each kind of animal in creation to begin the new world. Come with me, or face the wrath of God.
- JINX: Eek! Two dogs, two goats, two horses! No thanks – count me out.
- SCAMP: So, what happened?
- JINX: The old fart was right, wasn’t he. Forty days of nothing but rain. The place was sailing.
- SCAMP: And you refused to go!
- JINX: Well, actually the wife talked me into it so we joined the queue.
- SCAMP: So you *did* go.
- JINX: No, well I killed one of the rats, so he kicked us off and found another couple.
- SCAMP: You idiot!
- JINX: Well, why put rats in a line next to cats? The man was a dickhead!
- (Pause)
- SCAMP: So, what about your next life?
- JINX: There you go – more back luck. I was an Egyptian cat.
- SCAMP: But they were revered!
- JINX: I was! My master was the mighty pharaoh, King Tutentouchinkittenbottom.
- (Scamp looks sceptical.)
- Hey, I said mighty, not world-renowned. So there I am, living the high life – servants, food laid on, lap of luxury.
- SCAMP: What happened?

JINX: Well, the fool went and died, didn't he! So his physician comes to me and he says...

SCAMP

(as Pharoah's

Physician): The king has died and all his worldly possessions will be buried with him in a magnificent tomb.

JINX: Great! Listen, did he say anything in his will about providing for his favourite pet? He absolutely adored me y'know. We were inseparable. I'm sure he'd like me to be well cared for.

SCAMP

(Physician): You will be mummified.

JINX: Sorry, doc, no can do. Last time I looked I was all male – no kittens for this little black cat.

SCAMP

(Physician): You will follow your master to the next life.

JINX: The next...wait, you don't mean...But, but I like *this* life. And we weren't really that close. I mean, I could learn to love the next king just as much. Maybe more. Actually he was a pretty rotten master, when I think about it. He hated me, you could even say. Often said he wouldn't ever want to be buried with me. Nup, didn't want this scrawny cat following him into the next world, no way...

SCAMP: They killed you?

JINX: Ancient Egyptian bastards!

SCAMP: I guess that's unlucky.

JINX: Yeah well, wait'll you hear who my next owner was!

SCAMP

(As witch): Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.
Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the caldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blindworm's sting
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,
For a charm of pow'rful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

JINX: Oh, great.

SCAMP
(Witch): Aah, my pretty pussy. You will be my constant companion as we scour and scourge the land of shadows, withering the minds of men and casting the hideous parasite of terror deep into the tiny hearts of innocent children. I will endow you with the mystical power of second sight and search your emerald eyes for the evil I seek when the full foul moon rides high in a black and festering sky...

JINX: (*Gulps*) Gee...thanks.

SCAMP: So, did you stay with her long?

JINX: Nah, I fell off her broomstick the first night we scoured the land of shadows.

SCAMP: Sure you didn't jump?

JINX: Have you ever tried balancing four furry feet on a broomstick, flying forty feet up through a windstorm?

SCAMP: Not lately.

JINX: Silly old bag should have endowed me with paws made of blue tac.

SCAMP: And then?

JINX: And then...ah, yes. The King of Siam.

SCAMP: You were a Siamese cat?

JINX: For a short time. Until *she* came.

SCAMP: She?

JINX: Anna, the English trollop.

JINX:
(As King of Siam): You will teaching my one hundred and six children and all wives who be in king's favour to learn knowledge and all good things western.

SCAMP(As Anna): I will endeavour to do my best, your majesty. But there is one thing I simply cannot tolerate if I'm to proceed.

JINX

(King): Cannot! What right have you to *not* do anything in palace of King of Siam?

SCAMP

(Anna): My little boy is allergic to cats. They must go, I'm afraid, or I shall be leaving on the very next boat to England.

JINX

(King): Cats! What cats?

SCAMP

(Anna): I have noticed several cats roaming the palace since my arrival.

JINX

(King): Cats! I have thought them to be children! That explaining bad manners, disrespect and hairy complexions, etcetera, etcetera. Cats will go!

JINX:

So we went.

SCAMP:

He kicked you out?

JINX:

He cooked us up.

SCAMP:

What!

JINX:

I was fried into a delectable plate of steaming Siamese dim sims.

SCAMP:

Eeeuw!

JINX:

The English bitch scoffed three and her snivelling brat had six. Wasn't allergic to me then, was he.

SCAMP:

Now I know you're lying.

JINX:

It's true! On bad nights I can still smell the soy sauce.

SCAMP:

How could you know that if you were dead?

JINX:

Okay, okay, I'm stretching the truth a little.

SCAMP:

So we don't have nine lives. I knew it.

JINX:

No, that part's true. It's just that we come back as the same cat each time.

SCAMP:

How can I come back when my body's in five pieces?

JINX: I don't know how it works, I just know it does. One minute you're in trouble, the next you're here, and the next you're back there, and the humans are exclaiming how lucky and tough and agile you are.

SCAMP: Wow.

(Pause)

Well, that's good. I like my neighbourhood. And my humans treat me well.

JINX: When they're not shutting you in the engine of their car and ripping you to shreds.

(Pause)

SCAMP: So, how did you really die all those times?

JINX: Stupidity.

(They both laugh.)

I remember my first death like it was yesterday. I was about your age when I saw this magnificent bird fly into an empty building. She was green and yellow and red and I was mesmerised. She kept flying up and up, higher and higher, and I followed her through rooms and up stairwells, and just as I'd catch up she'd fly away. Finally she stopped on a window sill and very, very slowly I got closer and closer, and I pounced...

SCAMP: Did you catch her?

JINX: *(Shaking his head)* Fell fifteen storeys and went splat. But hey, now I know what it's like to fly...for a few seconds, anyway. And then I got hit by a car, caught in a clothes drier, got cancer, fell out of a tree, burned in a house fire, ate some poisonous bait, and fell off a boat and drowned.

SCAMP: Wow, you've had some eventful lives...and deaths.

JINX: I was too adventurous – always looking for trouble. But I'm gonna settle down not. It's my last chance and this time I've found true love.

SCAMP: Really?

JINX: Yep. I even died for her.

SCAMP: You're kidding.

JINX: Some mongrel cat from the next block tried to go her and I fought him off. Unfortunately, I suffered a fatal wound in the process.

SCAMP: Is she okay?

JINX: He won't be back soon. But I will and I can't wait. This time I'm gonna drift off peacefully on a granny's lap. Or better still on Barbara's lap. That's her name – Barbara.

SCAMP: Hey, Jinx?

JINX: Yeah?

SCAMP: You sure about all those deaths.

JINX: Yeah, why?

SCAMP: Cos, I counted nine.

JINX: Nine! *(Laughs)* Nah, there was the bird in the building, the car...*(he thinks to himself and counts on his fingers. Slowly it dawns on him.)*

Oh, crap.

SCAMP: Sorry, mate.

JINX: *(With false bravado)* Hey, don't sweat it, kid. Geez, I'm twelve years old. I was getting tired anyway.

SCAMP: But your true love...

JINX: She'll come to me eventually. Nine times, to be exact. I'll be waiting.

SCAMP: I think I have to go now. I feel kinda strange.

JINX: Hey, Scamp?

SCAMP: Yeah?

JINX: If you happen to come across a black Persian called Barbara, could you tell her...

(Pause)

Just tell her I'm waiting. And I'd do it again if I had to. Tell her that.

SCAMP: Sure.

(Pause)

Seeya, Jinx.

(Scamp exits. Jinx sighs and starts to sing again.)

“Memory, all alone in the moonlight,
I can smile at the old days...”

What’s wrong with kids these days? Andrew Lloyd Webber rocks!

END