

The Nine Lives Of Lucky The Cat

Music and Lyrics
MATTHEW GANDOLFO

Book and Lyrics
STANLEY BARBER

“The Nine Lives of Lucky the Cat” takes place in a single location: The mind and memory of Lucky the Cat. As the action of the play is ultimately a recollection, locations are merely suggested through lighting, and properties are few. As the audience is seated, the bare stage is visible. A yellow ball is at center.

No. 1 “Overture”

House lights fade, followed by stage dimming to a single spot on a yellow ball. A growing intensity, then blackout. Lights restore almost immediately on LUCKY, a cat. He has a small suitcase in each hand. He is about to step upon the large yellow ball.

LUCKY: I found a scroll made of parchment. And on it was written: “Find Me.” And it was signed: “Your Mother. Your Father. Find Me.” This is where it all begins. Do I have what I need? *(holding up a small suitcase in his right hand)* Here are my hopes. *(holding up a small suitcase in his left hand)* Here are my fears. Who will catch me when I fall from the sky?

FEMALE ONE appears, as MAMA CAT.

MAMA CAT: I will.

MALE ONE appears, as PAPA CAT.

PAPA CAT: So will I.

LUCKY: All right, here I come!

LUCKY takes a step on the ball.

No. 2 “They’re Coming”

The stage is alive with movement and light.

ENSEMBLE: THEY’RE COMING, THEY’RE COMING
HURRY NOW I’LL TELL YOU HOW
THEY’RE COMING, THEY’RE COMING
HURRY NOW I’LL TELL YOU HOW
THE MAMA CAT IS ALMOST THERE
MAMA CAT IS ALMOST THERE!

*LUCKY rolls the ball to PAPA CAT, who ceremoniously hands the ball to
MAMA CAT. LUCKY stands aside and watches all.*

ENSEMBLE: THEY’RE COMING, THEY’RE COMING
HURRY NOW I’LL TELL YOU HOW
THEY’RE COMING, THEY’RE COMING
HURRY NOW I’LL TELL YOU HOW
THE MAMA CAT IS ALMOST THERE
MAMA CAT IS ALMOST THERE!

*MAMA CAT lies on her side, the yellow ball at her belly. The ENSEMBLE
moves close to her.*

ENSEMBLE: I CAN HEAR IT IN HER VOICE
SEE IT IN HER EYES, FEEL IT IN THE AIR.
MAMA & PAPA: THEY’RE COMING, THEY’RE COMING...
ENSEMBLE: I CAN HEAR IT IN HER VOICE
SEE IT IN HER EYES, FEEL IT EVERYWHERE.
MAMA & PAPA: THEY’RE COMING, THEY’RE COMING...
ENSEMBLE: MAMA CAT SHE’S ALMOST THERE
MAMA CAT IS ALMOST THERE!

THE MIRACLE, MIRACLE
IT'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN, OH
THE MIRACLE, MIRACLE
IT'S ABOUT TO START, YOU KNOW
THE MAMA CAT, MAMA CAT
SHE'S GROWN SO FAT. MAMA CAT.
SHE'S GROWN SO VERY BIG AND FAT

FEMALE 1: WHAT KIND OF MIRACLE IS THAT?

ENSEMBLE: THEY'RE COMING, THEY'RE COMING
FEMALE 2: MUST YOU REALLY CRY IT NOW?
ENSEMBLE: THEY'RE COMING, THEY'RE COMING
FEMALE 2: SHE WANTS IT VERY QUIET NOW!

ENSEMBLE: THE MAMA CAT!
FEMALE 2: SHHH!
ENSEMBLE: MAMA CAT!
FEMALE 2: SHH! SHH!
ENSEMBLE: MAMA CAT!
FEMALE 2: SHHH!
ENSEMBLE: MAMA CAT...
MAMA CAT IS ALMOST THERE!
THE MAMA CAT IS ALMOST WHERE?

FEMALE 1: WHERE IS TOM?

LIGHT appears on PAPA CAT, asleep to one side.

FEMALE 2: TOM'S OVER THERE, WELL FED
AND NOW HE'S SLEEPING IN THE CLOVER.

LUCKY crosses to PAPA CAT, smiling and remembering.

FEMALE 1&2: THAT TERRIBLE TOM.
 TOM DOESN'T CARE. HE SAID ...

PAPA CAT: *(stretching and yawning)*
 WAKE ME WHEN IT'S OVER.

QUARTET: JUST LIKE A MAN—JUST LIKE A MAN
 JUST LIKE A MAN—JUST LIKE A MAN
 JUST LIKE A—JUST LIKE A MAN!

PAPA CAT crosses to MAMA CAT.

PAPA CAT: IN NINE WEEKS TIME SHE'S GROWN SO ROUND
 SHE SLEEPS AND PURRS AND CURLS UP TIGHT
 IN A CORNER OF THE HOUSE SHE HAS FOUND
 A QUIET PLACE, A WARM DARK SPACE
 TO AWAIT THE HAPPY SOUND

PAPA CAT nuzzles MAMA CAT tenderly, comforting her.

QUARTET: OF NEW LIFE
PAPA CAT: NOW SHE'S BREATHING RATHER FUNNY
QUARTET: NEW LIFE
PAPA CAT: AND SHE'S PURRING VERY STRANGE
QUARTET: NEW LIFE
PAPA CAT: SHE'S AWAITING THEIR ARRIVAL
 WHILE DREAMING OF THEIR NAMES!

MAMA CAT stands, legs apart, lifting the ball high above her. One by one, FIVE KITTENS crawl out from between her legs as PAPA CAT nudges each encouragingly. LUCKY, no longer an observer, is the last to emerge. Seeing light for the first time, the FIVE KITTENS (LILLY ANN, LUCKY, JACK, FRAN and GUS) open their eyes and cling to each other as they are enveloped in the arms of MAMA CAT and PAPA CAT.

ENSEMBLE: THEY'RE HERE! KITTENS!
 THEY'RE HERE! KITTENS!

QUARTET: THEY'RE COMING, THEY'RE COMING
 HURRY NOW I'LL TELL YOU HOW
 THEY'RE COMING THEY'RE COMING
 HURRY NOW I'LL TELL YOU HOW

ENSEMBLE: THE KITTENS ARE FINALLY HERE!

Blackout.

No. 3. "Where Am I?"

Lights restore on LILLY ANN, LUCKY, JACK, FRAN and GUS curled up at center. MAMA CAT and PAPA CAT withdraw. Each in his turn, the FIVE KITTENS awake, stretch and look about. LUCKY, alone, takes a step forward.

LUCKY: NOW WHAT?
 LIFE'S BEGUN
 THIS IS WHERE
 I'M STARTING FROM
 NOW WHAT?
 THIS IS MY FIRST DAY.
 SO MUCH YET TO LEARN
 ALL I WANNA DO IS FIND MY WAY

 WHERE AM I? WHEN DID I?
 WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

LILLY & FRAN: WHERE AM I?

LUCKY: WHY?

LILLY & FRAN: WHEN DID I?

ALL THREE: WHO ARE YOU?
 IT'S ALL SO NEW.

GUS & JACK: WHERE AM I? WHEN DID I?

LUCKY, LILLY,
& FRAN: HOW DID I GET HERE AND WHY?

GUS, & JACK: WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

LUCKY: WHERE AM I?

GUS & JACK: WHY?

LILLY & FRAN: WHEN DID I?

FIVE KITTENS: WHO ARE YOU?
IT'S ALL SO NEW.

No. 4 "This Is Your Beginning"

MAMA CAT and PAPA CAT turn toward FIVE KITTENS, who are now facing upstage. MAMA CAT moves toward them.

MAMA CAT: THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING
THIS IS WHERE YOU START
THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING
THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING
ON THE JOURNEY OF YOUR HEART
THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING

TAKE A LOOK AROUND
AT ALL THE WONDERS TO BE FOUND
TAKE IN EVERY FEELING
EVERY SIGHT AND EVERY SOUND
AS YOU GO ON
AS LIFE GOES ON

PAPA CAT approaches FIVE KITTENS.

PAPA CAT: THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING
THIS IS WHERE YOU START

THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING
THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING
YOU'RE A WORK OF ART
AND YOU'RE JUST BEGINNING!

TREES ARE THERE TO CLIMB
AND EVERY LEAP IS YOURS TO MAKE
SHOULD YOU STUMBLE DON'T GIVE UP
BUT LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKE

MAMA CAT: THERE'S SO MUCH TO SEE
PAPA CAT: THERE'S SO MUCH TO DO
MAMA CAT: THERE'S SO MUCH TO BE
BOTH: SO MUCH TO GO THROUGH
AS YOU GO ON.
AS LIFE GOES ON.

THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING
COME AND HOLD MY HAND
I AM HERE TO GUIDE YOU
THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING
AND UNTIL YOU LEARN TO STAND
I'LL BE RIGHT BESIDE YOU
NOW GO ON.
LIFE GOES ON.

LAUGH BY LAUGH AND TEAR BY TEAR
AND JOY BY JOY AND FEAR BY FEAR
AND DREAM BY TRUTH BY HOPE BY CARE
BY WISH BY PRAYER

ALL: BY PRAYER!

THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING
THIS IS WHERE YOU START

THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING
THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING
ON THE JOURNEY OF YOUR HEART
THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING

MAMA & PAPA: NOW GO ON
FIVE KITTENS: TAKE A LOOK AROUND
AT ALL THE WONDERS TO BE FOUND
MAMA & PAPA: LIFE GOES ON
FIVE KITTENS: TAKE IN EVERY FEELING
EVERY SIGHT AND EVERY SOUND

MAMA & PAPA: I PROMISE YOU
THE WORLD WILL TURN
THE STARS STILL SHINE
THE SUN WILL BURN
YOU'LL BE FINE
NOW GO ON!

FIVE KITTENS: THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING
THIS IS WHERE YOU START
THIS IS YOUR BEGINNING!

A light isolates LUCKY.

LUCKY: Now what?

Blackout.

No. 5 "The Five of Us"

Lights up on LILLY ANN, LUCKY, JACK, FRAN and GUS, with yellow ball.

FIVE KITTENS: THERE'S ONLY ONE THING
FOR A KITTEN TO DO

ON A DAY LIKE TODAY
THAT'S PLAY!

The FIVE KITTENS run about the stage, throwing the ball to each other in a game of catch. GUS catches the ball, stops, and points to an unseen tree.

GUS: THERE'S A TREE OVER THERE
 WITH BRANCHES HANGING DOWN
 WAITING FOR ME TO CLIMB!

GUS tosses the ball to FRAN. Throughout the following, LUCKY follows the others, tentative and cautious.

FRAN: THERE'S A SPOOL OF WOOL
 YELLOW, GREEN AND BROWN
 WAITING FOR ME TO UNWIND!

FRAN tosses the ball to JACK.

JACK: OH, MY IS THAT A MOUSE
 SCURRYING ALONG
 THAT I COULD CHASE AFTER?
LILLY ANN: IS THAT A MOUSE?
 HURRYING ALONG?
 THAT I CAN RUN FASTER THAN!
FRAN & LILLY: OH, MISTER MOUSE WOULD YOU LIKE
 TO STAY AND PLAY WITH ME?

FIVE KITTENS begin a simple dance, passing the ball from each to each. LUCKY has trouble keeping up.

FIVE KITTENS: WON'TCHA COME SAY HELLO
 AND PLAY WITH US
 LILLY ANN, LUCKY, JACK, FRAN AND GUS
 US KITTENS

WON'TCHA COME SAY HELLO
AND PLAY WITH US
LILLY ANN, LUCKY, JACK, FRAN AND GUS
US KITTENS?
OH, I SEE. HE GOT SCARED
AND RAN AWAY FROM ME.

A dog barks.

GUS: WHAT IS THAT SOUND?
FRAN: WHAT IS THAT SOUND?
FIVE KITTENS: WHAT IS THAT SOUND?
IS THAT A DOG BARKING?
DO I NEED TO RUN AWAY,
OR CAN I STAY AND PLAY?

*GUS, with ball under his arm, bravely steps forward and addresses the
unseen dog.*

GUS: HELLO, MISTER DOGGIE
MY NAME IS GUS.
THERE IS SOMETHING IMPORTANT
I'D LIKE TO DISCUSS.
IT'S ABOUT THIS FENCE AROUND YOUR YARD.

FIVE KITTENS: MAY WE COME IN?
WE WANNA RUN AND JUMP AND CLIMB
WE WANNA RUN AND JUMP AND CLIMB
WITHOUT A FEAR!

More barking.

GUS: I'M SORRY MISTER DOG
SAY THAT AGAIN.
I'M SORRY MISTER DOGGIE

I DON'T UNDERSTAND

FIVE KITTENS: WE DON'T SPEAK THE SAME WAY
WE DON'T SPEAK THE SAME WAY
AT ALL!

GUS: MAYBE WE CAN COME THROUGH YOUR FENCE
AND THEN WE CAN RUN AND JUMP AND CLIMB

LILLY & FRAN: WE CAN RUN AND JUMP AND CLIMB

JACK & LUCKY: WE CAN RUN AND JUMP AND CLIMB

FIVE KITTENS: ALL DAY TOGETHER AS FRIENDS
AND THEN, OH NO...

Barking.

GUS: I'M SORRY MISTER DOGGIE
HE'S NOT SOMEONE WHO
WANTS TO PLAY WITH US!

GUS places yellow ball DL. LILLY ANN looks up, thrilled.

LILLY ANN: I SEE A BIRD IN A TREE!

LILLY & FRAN: A BIRD IN A TREE

FIVE KITTENS: OH, MISTER BIRD PLEASE PLAY WITH ME!

As earlier, FIVE KITTENS begin a simple dance. LUCKY is mesmerized by the bird throughout.

WON'TCHA COME SAY HELLO
AND PLAY WITH US
LILLY ANN, LUCKY, JACK, FRAN AND GUS
US KITTENS
WON'TCHA COME SAY HELLO
AND PLAY WITH US
LILLY ANN, LUCKY, JACK, FRAN AND GUS

US KITTENS?

WON'TCHA COME ON DOWN AND PLAY
OH WON'TCHA COME ON DOWN AND PLAY
PLEASE DON'T FLY AWAY
OH BIRDIE COME ON DOWN AND
HE FLEW AWAY!

LILLY ANN, FRAN, JACK and GUS slow to a freeze. LUCKY crosses DL, drawn to the bird who has landed on the yellow ball. As LUCKY cautiously approaches, the bird flies to a tree limb, high above. LUCKY kneels next to the ball, looking up in wonder.

LUCKY: LITTLE BIRDIE WAY UP THERE,
DO YOU TRAVEL VERY FAR?
DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING?
LITTLE FRIEND UP IN THE AIR!
I WONDER WHO YOU ARE
ARE YOU OLD OR ARE YOU STILL GROWING?

THE WORLD MUST SEEM TO BE
SO MUCH BIGGER THAN YOU
'CAUSE IT SEEMS SO MUCH
BIGGER THAN ME

IS THAT WHY YOU FLY ON THE BREEZE?
AND REST IN A NEST HIGH IN THE TREES?
IS IT TO FEEL A LITTLE BIGGER—
A LITTLE LESS FRIGHTENED?

LUCKY slowly lifts the ball above his head, arms outstretched, toward the bird.

LITTLE BIRDIE TELL ME PLEASE.

Lights restore, LUCKY tosses the ball to the others, and joins their play.

LILLY, JACK, FRAN & GUS:

LOOKS LIKE IT'S JUS' THE FIVE OF US
LILLY ANN, LUCKY, JACK, FRAN AND GUS,
US KITTENS.

WHO'S GONNA COME AND PLAY WITH US?
LILLY ANN, LUCKY, JACK, FRAN AND GUS
US KITTENS!

IF THE MOUSE WOULDN'T PLAY
AND THEN THE DOG MADE A FUSS
AND THEN THE BIRD FLEW AWAY
WHO'S GONNA PLAY WITH US?

LUCKY, again in possession of the yellow ball, runs back to the tree spotted earlier.

LUCKY: THERE'S A TREE OVER THERE
 WITH BRANCHES HANGING DOWN!

Blackout.

School bells rings. Lights up on TEACHER. LILLY ANN, LUCKY, JACK, FRAN and GUS sit on the floor, as students, with their backs to the audience.

TEACHER: All right, class. Vocabulary time! I will say the word, and you will spell and define it for the class. Does everyone understand?

KITTENS: *(standing and facing audience)* Yes, Miss Kittatinny.

No. 06 "Vocabulary"

TEACHER: The first word is "catalyst." Anyone? Raise your hand. Yes?