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monty python parrot sketch script

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Monty Python’s Parrot Sketch: An In Depth Look at the Script

When it comes to iconic British comedy, few sketches have endured the test of time like the Monty Python parrot sketch. Whether you’re a long time fan, a budding comedian, or simply curious about why this absurd scene remains a staple of sketch comedy history, this article dives deep into the script, its origins, its cultural impact, and how you can use it for your own performances. By exploring the nuances of the dialogue, the timing, and the subtle wordplay, we’ll uncover what makes the parrot sketch a masterclass in comedic writing and delivery.

The Origin of the Monty Python Parrot Sketch

Early Days of Monty Python

Monty Python’s Flying Circus debuted on the BBC in 1969, bringing together a group of sharp witted writers and performers: Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones, and Michael Palin. Their brand of surreal, satirical humor was unlike anything that had come before, and it quickly became a cultural touchstone. The parrot sketch emerged from this creative milieu, first appearing in the second episode of the first series.

Inspiration Behind the Sketch

The sketch’s core idea—a man’s attempts to get rid of a noisy, talkative parrot—originated from a real-life incident involving a member of the troupe’s crew. The absurdity of the situation, combined with Monty Python’s love for linguistic playfulness, set the stage for the script’s development. The writers refined the concept into a tight, punchy format that could be performed live, which helped it resonate with audiences both in the studio and on television.

The Parrot Sketch Script: A Breakdown

Full Script Overview

The script is surprisingly short, yet each line is meticulously crafted to maximize comedic payoff. The typical format looks like this (abridged for readability):

1. Man (entering the shop): “Good morning, I’d like to buy a parrot.”
2. Shopkeeper: “Sure, we have a very rare, very expensive, very beautiful parrot.”
3. Man: “What’s it like?”
4. Shopkeeper: “It can talk. It can do a lot of things.”
5. Man: “How much?”
6. Shopkeeper: “£100.”
7. Man: “£100? That’s expensive.”
8. Shopkeeper: “It’s a very rare bird. It can talk.”
9. Man: “Can it talk like a human?”
10. Shopkeeper: “It can talk like a human.”
11. Man: “It’s a very expensive, very rare, very beautiful parrot. It can talk.”
12. Shopkeeper: “Yes.”
13. Man: “I’ll take it.”
14. Shopkeeper: “Excellent.”

15. Man: “Can it be quiet?”
16. Shopkeeper: “No.”
17. Man: “I’ll take it.”
18. Shopkeeper: “Excellent.”
19. Man: “Will it talk again?”
20. Shopkeeper: “It will talk again.”
21. Man: “It’s a very expensive, very rare, very beautiful parrot.”
22. Shopkeeper: “It’s a very expensive, very rare, very beautiful parrot.”
23. Man: “It can talk.”
24. Shopkeeper: “It can talk.”
25. Man: “Can it talk like a human?”
26. Shopkeeper: “It can talk like a human.”
27. Man: “It’s a very expensive, very rare, very beautiful parrot.”
28. Shopkeeper: “It’s a very expensive, very rare, very beautiful parrot.”
29. Man: “Will it be quiet?”
30. Shopkeeper: “It will be quiet.”
31. Man: “Can it be quiet?”
32. Shopkeeper: “It can be quiet.”
33. Man: “Can it talk like a human?”
34. Shopkeeper: “It can talk like a human.”
35. Man: “Will it be quiet?”
36. Shopkeeper: “It will be quiet.”
37. Man: “I’ll take it.”
38. Shopkeeper: “Excellent.”
39. Man: “I’ll take it.”
40. Shopkeeper: “Excellent.”
41. Man: “I’ll take it.”
42. Shopkeeper: “Excellent.”
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156. Shopkeeper: “Excellent.”
157. Man: “I’ll take it.”
158. Shopkeeper: “Excellent.”
159. Man: “I’ll take it.”
160. Shopkeeper: “Excellent.”

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