



## COLLECTIVE GROUPINGS OF ANIMALS

by Rachael Carnes

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Collective Groupings of Animals

A Play.

By Rachael Carnes

CHARACTERS

REESE  
CASEY

(Can be played by any actor.)

SETTING

A train.

TIME

Now.

*On a train in a tunnel. We've been here a while.*

*CASEY and REESE notice a passenger in the audience, sleeping.*

CASEY

I think he's a seven:  
Has that enthusiastic look about him.

REESE

He's an eight.  
Can't you just feel the intensity?

CASEY

What are you?

REESE

I'm a two.  
We're helpful people.  
Do you need a snack?

CASEY

I'm not hungry.

REESE

I have these pretzels and this fruit-flavored seltzer.  
The pretzels might have broken.  
I can't tell.  
Do they sound broken?  
Even if they are broken, they'll still taste good. All going to the same place!  
And this seltzer is warm but you can have it. Here!  
Let me open those pretzels for you.

When did packaging become so —

CASEY

I said I'm not hungry.

REESE

Oh.

CASEY

And I'm not thirsty.

REESE

Are you a four?

I'm not a four.

CASEY

Okay.

REESE

No one wants to be a four!

CASEY

It's just you seem like maybe you have a dark energy.

REESE

I'm not a goblin!  
I just don't like people.

CASEY

I don't like people either.

REESE

Like hell you don't.  
I've seen your ukulele!

CASEY

I like people but they exhaust me.

REESE

That's normal.

CASEY

I'm not living up to my own expectations: I am helpful. I am kind. I do things. I give!

REESE

Do you feel better around inert things like houseplants?

CASEY

I have a ficus at home that provides a huge sense of emotional safety.

REESE

That's important. Bedrock.

CASEY

I can't take risks if I don't have support!  
My plant is there for me.  
My plant senses and responds to my needs.

REESE

CASEY

You need oxygen!

REESE

A sense of belonging!  
Sunlight. I need to —

*The passenger in the audience stirs.*

CASEY

He's waking up! Some wake up slowly. Not our champion!

REESE

He looks like a three. We need a three around here.

CASEY

Look at him: All bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

REESE

My mom used to say that!  
Cereal in the morning. Cartoon moose and spray starch.  
Polyester collars and action figures and my mom singing:  
“Good morning! Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed!”

CASEY

Where did you grow up?

*The passenger is fully awake now. They acknowledge him:*

REESE

Hi.

CASEY

Hello.

REESE

Did you sleep well?  
Any dreams?  
Do you have that weird sleepy taste in your mouth?

CASEY

He's not a baby.  
It's not your job to coddle him!

REESE

I just thought that before the —