

Pussycat, Pussycat

by

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INT. ROOM NURSING HOME - DAY

The room is black.

A spot of light fades up and illuminates a gray ceiling.

The light grows until the entire ceiling is illuminated.

Faded pictures cover the wall, a collage of females from young age to adult.

A hand pats the top of a bed in several places trying to find something.

Feet appear at the side of the bed, then arms, and hands again.

A yellow striped cat lies upside down on the floor. It is stiff, unmoving.

The hands grasp the cat. Its eyes open, and then there's a mournful meow.

The hands pick up the cat and set it on a table.

The cat purrs, licks itself.

An elderly woman pets it, coos to it; the cat purrs in return, bends its head down like it's licking its fur.

The woman strains as if listening for some barely perceptible music floating in the sea of sounds only she can hear.

She turns to the window with its drawn curtains. Rain beats against it. Her eyes grow wide.

The cat meows again. Distracted, the woman turns from the window, opens a drawer in a night stand, and pulls out a treat. When she holds it in front of the cat's face, it meows.

The woman shoves the treat in the cat's mouth. It meows. The food drops to the floor where there's a pile of similar treats.

The woman turns away from it.

The cat purrs and its eyes close, and the cat is stiff again.

The woman snaps to attention and listens.

She hears footsteps in the hall.

She grabs the cat, and it meows loudly. The woman holds its mouth shut and shoves it under the bed where it purrs.

The woman closes her eyes and holds her breath.

The room gets dark.

The footsteps get closer. The woman starts to breathe heavily.

A swath of light goes across the floor and settles on the crack under the door.

The door opens.

The woman pulls the covers up to her chin.

The room grows dark again.

Footsteps come across the room toward her. Her eyes open a crack. A figure stands by her bed. He's a blur of white.

The woman curls up in a ball and huddles under the covers.

MAN'S VOICE

You can't hide and you sure can't
run.

Lights blinks out again.

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

It's shower day. Won't that be fun?

Cat screeches. Woman opens her eyes.

The white blur kicks at the bed.

The woman jumps, sits up.

Her cat hisses.

The white thing puts a pitcher on the table next to her.

She grabs it, flings the water at him. He is so close; she can't miss.

He grabs her wrists and some of the liquid falls on her.

She holds her face like the water burns.

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Later. Better be careful or I'll
drown you.

The white thing moves away from her.

Lights again.

A little of the water is left in the pitcher.

She dumps it out on the floor, and it sizzles through the wood.

She sighs and falls back on the bed. Then she gasps, drops to her knees, and frantically searches for her cat.

She drags it from under the bed and weeps.

She hugs the cat close to herself and rocks back and forth on the bed. Lights in the room dim to black.

INT. ROOM NURSING HOME - DAY

Darkness

A spot of light fades up and illuminates a gray ceiling.

The light grows until the entire ceiling is illuminated.

A hand pats the top of a bed in several places trying to find something.

It touches the yellow cat's tale and lifts it up.

Light comes up in the room to full.

The woman hugs the cat close. The cat growls and hisses. Its legs kick.

The woman sees a tray of food on a table beside her bed.

She puts her cat on the table and puts a cup of water up to its mouth. The cat stands frozen.

The woman throws the cup against the door. The foam cup bounces off the door and hits the floor.

The woman strokes the cat which purrs.

The woman stands, tiptoes cautiously, to the cup and stomps it. Water splatters against the door.

She looks at the door and then scrambles back to her bed and dives under the cover.

The room is black again.

From the darkness, a meow.

As light slowly seeps through the room, the woman pulls the cover off her head and sits up.

She sees the tray again. She studies it and then picks up a plastic fork. She stabs a piece of egg and puts it in her mouth. She sucks on it for a few seconds like it's some kind of hard candy and then spits it out.

She tears off a piece of biscuit. Black strands of hair twist around her finger.

The cat opens its mouth and meows.

The woman sniggles just a little and holds the piece of biscuit next to the cat's face, and the cat closes its mouth and hisses.

The woman stares at the biscuit, and then she sees something crawling on it: a maggot.

She throws the biscuit on the floor and then one, two, three more maggots crawl from it.

All of the food, eggs, biscuits, gravy, starts to move as more maggots appear.

The woman swipes the food tray off into the floor.

Maggots squirm everywhere, and she jumps up and starts stepping on them. Small pools of pus-white maggot remains smear the floor.

She slips and almost falls.

Her eyes widen, and she stomps, stomps, stomps toward the door. When she gets to it, she growls and throws up the bird.

She goes back across the floor: stomp, stomp, stomp, and sits on her bed.

She gets another cat treat and shoves it in the cat's face. It drops to the floor beside a puddle of puss.

The woman lies on her bed, grabs the cat, and squeezes it tight. She sniffles and then cries.

INT. ROOM NURSING HOME - DAY

The woman sits up quickly, startled.

She strains to hear something, but it's raining again, and she can barely hear it. She pulls the window shades shut.

At first the noise is faint, but then it gets gradually louder: crying from a little girl.

The woman squeezes her cat, rocks back and forth on the bed.

The room goes black, but the spings on the bed groan in rhythm to the rocking.

The girl's crying gets louder.

GIRL (O.C.)
I want my mama!

Lights flip back on.

The woman sits up straight.

GIRL (O.C.) (CONT'D)
I want my mama.

Still cuddling her cat, the woman stands.

She tiptoes toward the door; the light dims.

She stops. The lights go back up.

She tiptoes toward the door; the lights dim.

She stops.

Her cat meows.

She straightens, her shoulders back, and she saunters toward the door. When she touches the doorhandle. It's like a switch has turned the lights off. It's dark in the room.

The doorknob turns.

As the door opens, a crack of light shines through. The wider the door opens the more light comes in.

Water drips from the ceiling onto her head. When she looks up in the dark, water drips into her eyes. She wipes her face and pulls down a red hand.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The woman steps through the door, and it's all black again except for a faint light coming from a room at the end of the hallway.

She carefully crosses the hall with her hands in front of her, and then she touches the wall on the opposite side of her room.

Using the wall as kind of a guide so she doesn't fall, she shuffles toward the light.

As she gets nearer to the room, the lights in the hall gradually begin to glow like the lights that used to be in old ballparks that took a while to warm.

Water drips steadily from the ceiling.

As the light increases, her shuffles turn to strides.

The weeping gets louder as she moves down the hallway, and finally she comes to the door.

She cautiously opens it and steps into a fairly cheerful room with windows on one side where the sun streams in.

The woman hears the weeping and realizes it's outside in the room.

The bright day fades; the woman hesitates just inside the door, but then hears the rumble of thunder.

INT. SMALL ROOM - DAY

She hurries through the room toward the windows with sunlight streaming from them.

She goes to the outside door and walks through it.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

She finds a little girl crying on the porch.

She hugs a black and white stuffed cat.

The woman smiles and sits beside her.

The little girl rests her head on her shoulder, and the woman puts her arm around her.

A sprinkler system comes on, and the water begins to make a slow circle.

A police car and an old Ford Taurus pull up in the parking lot.

The little girl cowers against the old woman and starts crying.

A police officer, a middle-aged woman, steps out of her cruiser and stands against her car.

The water from the sprinkler system hits the girl and woman full. The little girl whimpers.

A man dressed in a black suit with a white shirt and gray tie walks up to them.

The water passes by.

He pulls a small camera out of his pocket and takes a picture of them and then he walks toward them.

He hands the old woman a card that says: Walter Black, DFS caseworker, on it.

The child clings to the old woman; the caseworker takes the little girl's arm and tries to pry her from the old woman.

The door opens behind them, and when the old woman looks to see who it is, a male nurse frowns and walks toward her.

In her own fear, her grip loosens on the girl, and the DFS worker jerks the little girl away.

The stuffed cat drops to the ground as the worker and the police officer pick the struggling and kicking little girl up and carry her toward the cruiser.

She looks back at the old woman with such hatred in her eyes, the woman flinches.

A soft meow catches the old woman's attention.

She sees the cat lying on the ground and starts for it, but The nurse grabs her.

The cruiser door slams shut, and the old woman kind of wilts in the arms of the nurse.

The sprinkler's water hits her again.

She mewls like a cat as the two vehicles speed away.

INT. ROOM NURSING HOME - DAY

The room is black.

A spot of light fades up and illuminates a gray ceiling.

The light grows until the entire ceiling is illuminated.

Rain spatters against the curtained window.

A cat meows.

The woman smiles as the cat licks her face. She giggles a little.

Then the cat goes to the foot of her bed and rubs up against her bare toes that stick out from the cover.

Then it jumps happily off the bed and walks toward the door.

The woman jumps up out of bed and follows the cat out into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The hallway is cheerful. Lights pour in the windows spaced every ten feet or so down the hallway.

The woman smiles

The cat meows enthusiastically.

She looks up the hall and sees a handful of workers.

They go up and down the hallway faster than normal, like a film that runs at two times the normal speed.

She hears the hyped-up voices squeaking like chipmunks, covers her ears, and tiptoes away.

All of the workers disappear behind several doors, their voices softening until the chattering vanishes.

She hurries away, strides toward the door at the end of the hallway.

She pauses at the doorway and looks up the hallway. The squeaking chitters get louder so she hurries the door.

INT. SMALL ROOM - DAY

She walks toward the windows with the sunlight streaming through it and goes through the door.

EXT. A PARK - DAY

She stands on the porch and takes a deep breath. The sun shines brightly and there's a cool breeze that ruffles her hair a little.

She giggles and walks off the porch into the grass.

A family, a man, woman, a boy of about ten, and a girl of about six, the same one in the earlier scene, sit at a picnic table.

The old woman sits at the end of the long table. All of them except the girl smile.

The boy waves his hand in front of the girl's face, and she blinks. Then he grabs her pony tail and tugs it. The girl does nothing.

Then he grabs two cookies that are on her plate, jumps up, and runs away.

The dad chuckles, but the mom frowns.

The girl turns and knocks a bottle of water over. It spills on the picnic table and flows over it and through the cracks.

The dad jumps to his feet and glares at the girl.

Mom motions the girl to leave the table and the girl reluctantly stands.

Happy yells of children come from a place close by.

When the girl stands and walks slowly from the table, the mom and dad lean close together, their lips moving in a heated discussion, but the old woman hears nothing.

She follows the girl, but stops after a few feet.

A rivers murmurs near by, and the old woman hurries toward it.

When she gets there, she sees a black and white cat lounging in the sun.

A little dog barks and nips at her tail. The cat hisses and runs away.

Laughter rings out from the water.

The dog turns back toward the water where the little boy stands about waist deep. He yaps once and runs after the cat.

The little girl sits in shallow water and hugs herself. She shivers a little and looks up at her brother who laughs at her.

The old woman sits in the sand and closes her eyes. She leans back and lets the sun warm her face. She sighs with contentment.

Suddenly water splashes all over her and she scrambles back from the water.

The boy stands in the water and laughs.

The girl covers her face when he splashes her again. Then he starts splashing water so viciously in her face that she coughs and sputters.

The girl covers her eyes as best as she can and reaches into the shallow water.

The boy is so enthusiastically splashing her that he doesn't notice her swift movement in grabbing a rock about the size of a golf ball and chucking it at him.

It hits him in the head, and the boy staggers backward.

The old woman laughs, but cuts it off when she sees the look on the boys face. She moves, but he is quicker. He grabs the little girl and yanks her forward by her ponytail.

She falls face first, and the water cuts off her scream.

He drags her into deeper water; she tries to raise her head to breathe, coughs and spits out dirty water.

The boys shoves her head under and drags her farther out. The girl struggles and breaks free.

The old woman walks through the water. The rocks hurt her feet, and she cries out.

Now, the girl is on her back, and the boy reaches for her. Before he can touch her, she kicks him in the face.

Blood from his nose gushes out.

She tries to crawl, swim, and scramble away from him, but the rocks hurt her feet. A current captures her and knocks her down; the boy grabs her.

The old woman hears a voice shouting

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
What the fuck is going on here.

The boy slings the girl into the current and it sweeps her away.

The old woman tries to follow, but the boy sees her and furiously splashes water in her face until she sputters and coughs.

When it stops, she can see the man from the table grab the little girl by her ponytail and drag her from the current.

He's furious, and he pulls her from the water and up the bank by her ponytail. She stumbles and falls, but he lifts her up by the pony tail.

She struggles to keep her feet under her as he walks her back toward the house.

The sun has gone behind the clouds, and thunder rumbles.

The old woman moves swiftly for an old woman, and she runs up to the man. He sees her coming, stops, and waits. The little girl gets away, falls to the ground, and cries.

The old woman stands in front of him.

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
What the fuck do you want?

She slaps him hard across the face.

He laughs and punches her as hard as he can in the eye. She staggers back and crumples to the ground.

She lies still.

The clouds rumble and rain begins to fall.

The old woman sniffles but she doesn't cry. She wipes rain out of her face and stumbles up the porch.

SMALL ROOM - DAY

The room is black.

A spot of light fades up and illuminates a gray ceiling.

The light grows until the entire ceiling is illuminated.

The old woman looks around. She's sitting in a shower. She notices dirt, grime, blood, and feces staining the bottom of the shower.

She gags, touches her eye and winces.

A jet of water hits her in the face.

She hears water in another shower close by.

OLD MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)
No. No. Please no more.

Gurgling and coughing punctuate his wimpers.

Another jet of water hits the old woman in the face.

She stands angrily and tries the shower door handle. It's locked.

She grabs her chair and hits the shower door which breaks open. The water and waste stream through the bottom.

The old woman steps out, hands grab her,

OLD WOMAN
Fuck you.

A nurse jabs her in the arm.

She sinks to the floor.

MAN'S VOICE
When is this bitch going to die?

INT. ROOM NURSING HOME - DAY

The room is black.

A spot of light fades up and illuminates a gray ceiling.

The light grows until the entire ceiling is illuminated.

Faded pictures cover the wall, a collage of females from young age to adult.

A hand pats the top of a bed in several places trying to find something.

Feet appear at the side of the bed, then arms, and hands again.

The old woman gets down on her hands and knees and looks under the bed. Her eyes grow wide.

She glances toward the door and sees feet.

She scrambles to her feet and drops on the bed.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

A little girl, the same one from the previous scenes sits at a table.

The father looks at her.

INTERCUT - NURSING HOME/DINING ROOM

The old woman sees an orderly standing at her door. He's hiding something behind his back.

The father looks down a hallway and motions for someone to come.

The orderly reveal that he's holding her cat. The old lady whimpers.

The boy steps into the dining room. He struggles to hold a fish tank -- the black and white cat inside

The orderly pulls a trash bag out of his pocket.

The father looks at the little girl.

MAN'S VOICE

It's time you started to cooperate.

The orderly opens the trash bag.

ORDERLY

Eat your breakfast like a good girl.

The father goes to the sink and fills a pitcher up with water.

MAN'S VOICE

I don't want anymore trouble from you. Do you understand me?

He pours the pitcher of water in the fish tank. The cat hisses and spits.

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I think you need to eat some of your eggs.

The orderly drops the cat in the trash bag.

ORDERLY

I don't want any more messes from you. You'll eat your food.

The woman/girl lurch forward to stand.

MAN/ORDERLY (O.C.)
Don't move.

The woman/girl freezes.

The father pours more water in the fish tank.

The orderly twists the top of the trash bag closed.

WOMAN/GIRL (O.C.)
She can't breathe.

The orderly opens the bag back up.

The father stops pouring water into the tank.

MAN'S VOICE
Eat some of your biscuit.

The girl hesitates.

The orderly starts to tie the bag.

ORDERLY
Don't argue with me.

The father nods to the boy who takes the fish tank with the still hissing cat away.

MAN'S VOICE
Now ...

The orderly grabs the door knob.

ORDERLY
If you ever want to see this cat again.

The old woman picks up a biscuit.

The father shakes his finger at the girl.

MAN'S VOICE
You'll do what I tell you to. Or else

ORDERLY
I'll smother

MAN'S VOICE
Drown

ORDERLY/MAN'S VOICE
This damn thing. And you can spend
the rest of your life alone.

The father leaves the dining room.

The orderly goes out the door.

The old woman meows.

The little girl hisses.

INT. ROOM NURSING HOME - DAY

Darkness

A spot of light fades up and illuminates a gray ceiling.

The light grows until the entire ceiling is illuminated.

A hand pats the top of a bed in several places trying to find something.

It touches the yellow cat's tale and lift it up.

Light comes up in the room to full.

The woman hugs the cat close. The cat meows and licks her face.

She cries as she rocks the cat back and forth.

She stops and looks at the window. The sun pours through it.
She closes her eyes and relishes its warmth.

The doorknob turns.

She smiles.

The cat hisses.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

The little girl sits at her table and cuts a piece of ham.

The boy comes in through the door.

GIRL
I want my cat back.

BOY
Is that right?

The girl's face wrinkles, and she's almost ready to cry.

GIRL
I've been good.

BOY
Yes, you have.

GIRL
Then give her back to me.

BOY
Come here. I have to tell you a
secret.

The girl hesitates.

BOY (CONT'D)
It's about your cat.

The girl gets down from her chair and shuffles toward him.

He motions for her to come closer.

Her hands are in the pocket of a loose fitting dress.

He holds his hand to his mouth in the "come close enough to
hear me tell my secret" position.

She leans toward him.

BOY (CONT'D)
I took your cat.

Tears begin to fill the girl's eye.

BOY (CONT'D)
And put it in a trash bag.

The girls starts breathing hard.

BOY (CONT'D)
And threw it in the river.

The girl's hand flies from her dress so fast that the boy
doesn't even see the knife before she drives it into his
face.

INT. ROOM NURSING HOME - DAY

Bright light streams through the woman's room.

The orderly stands at the door.

ORDERLY

You've been a good girl, but I want
to warn you.

He points at the cat.

ORDERLY (CONT'D)

The next time you won't see that
thing ever again.

The cat hisses.

The woman looks up at him and smiles. Then she flips him the
bird.

ORDERLY (CONT'D)

You bitch.

He walks toward her.

The cat screams. She tosses it straight at his face.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

The little girl runs out the door and into the arms of the
old lady.

She sobs as the woman holds her and strokes her hair like
she's petting a cat.

INT. ROOM NURSING HOME - DA

The woman steps over the man lying on the floor. Blood pools
under his face.

She reaches for the door, and the room falls into darkness.

She pauses and breathes deeply, steels herself, and turns the
doorknob.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hallway is dark, so the woman huddles against the wall.

She takes one sideways step, pauses.

She takes another one. Her fingers reach behind her so that
she can touch the walls.

She takes another step. The wall is now a door.

She sighs in relief. The fluorescent lights overhead flicker and give off a feeble light.

The woman grabs the doorknob and turns around.

She tries the doorknob. It's locked.

She whimpers a little, turns with her back to the wall again.

Footsteps come farther up the hall past her room.

She drops to her knees, puts her hands against the wall, and crawls as quickly as she can. When she feels the next door, she stands blindly and grabs the doorknob.

The door knob won't move.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Check her room.

She drops to the floor on her knees, and stifles a sob by covering her mouth

WOMANS VOICE (O.S.)
I don't trust her.

The woman reaches out to her left and can't find the wall.

The overhead lights pop once and then go out.

The woman staggers to her feet, lunges forward, trips and falls hard on the floor.

A loud noise, almost reverberating in her head of someone turning a doorknob and a door screaming open.

The woman begins to crawl as quickly as she can.

She bumps head first into a cart, again sobs in terror.

She grabs the bottom of it and tries to roll it away, but it doesn't move.

She pushes it and it topples over with a large crash.

The woman lurches to her feet and staggers down the hall.

Far, far away, she sees a pinprick of light, and she hurries toward it

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Oh, shit, what's she done?

WOMANS VOICE (O.S.)
We can't let her get away.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
I see her.

The door slams shut; the noise of it causing the woman to stumble forward as if she's been pushed.

She sprawls on the floor and bangs her head.

Footsteps drawing near.

Again she stands and hobbles a few steps.

Footsteps getting closer.

She walks. Her stride gets stronger.

WOMANS VOICE
Stop her.

Voice closer.

The woman walks a few feet and gets steadier. She sees the light closer to her.

She runs.

A man in a white coat steps out of a room; she barrels into him and knocks him against the wall.

WHITE COAT MAN'S VOICE
Holy shit.

The woman runs faster and faster.

The footsteps grow softer.

The light is almost upon her, but she suddenly is tripped by someone standing in the shadows of the hall.

She tumbles and rolls and then stops.

WHITE COAT MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
You can't get away from us.

MAN'S VOICE
You know it.

WOMANS VOICE
Let's go back to your room.

The woman breathes heavily as she tries to suck in oxygen. She wheezes and coughs.

She reaches out and starts to push herself up but her hand hits air and she falls hard on her chin.

She sits up, her hands sneak slowly behind her.

There is no floor behind her.

She scoots sideways until she touches a wall.

Then she rises slowly from the floor like a cat does when it rises from a nap.

She stands there and looks into a big black chasm. Far, far below, she sees another pinprick of light.

WHITE COAT MAN'S VOICE
Come on now; let's go back to your
room.

He steps toward her, and when she smiles, he chuckles.

WHITE COAT MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Way to be a good girl.

The woman takes one more look at the black abyss beside her and the tiny light so far away.

The light gets bigger, like a sun. She looks again.

Green trees, flowers, the murmurs of a stream, children laughing.

White coat man is almost within her grasp, and she laughs.

Then, She flips him off and laughs even louder.

When he reaches for her, she takes one step back. The darkness swallows her.

Her laughter fades as she falls farther and farther into the light.

INT. ROOM NURSING HOME - DAT

A young nurse comes into the room. She goes to a closet and pulls the few clothes there off the hangars and stuffs them in a bag.

She goes to a sink; there is no bathroom in the room and swipes off the soap, cosmetics, and lotions in the bag also.

As she's tying the bag, she looks up and sees the pictures hanging on the wall.

As the nurse is leaving, another woman comes in.

The nurse nods at the woman and hurries away.

As she goes out the door there's a meow.

The young woman looks around in confusion.

There's another meow, and she smiles.

She starts for the nightstand next to the bed, but the pictures catch her eye.

YOUNG WOMANS

Aw.

One is of a young woman and a child, no more than five sitting together on a porch, the woman with her arm around the child.

She opens her purse and slips this one in her pocket book. The others she takes down one by one and slips them in a side pocket.

She smiles a little bit, and goes through a drawer in the nightstand and finds a yellow cat which has seen better days. Stains soil its fur. When she sets the cat down on the nightstand, it falls over.

She pets the cat and sets it on a stripped pillow on a stripped bed.

Another picture catches her eye; she looks at it, smiles again, and picks it up.

With the purse in one hand and the cat in the other, the young woman leaves.

INT. FUNERAL HOME CHAPEL - DAY

A casket is at the front of the room.

The woman lies in it.

Bright sunlight streams through the stained glass windows that line one side of the room.

A mortician in a black suit, walks up to it.

He glances at a table near the casket.

A huge corkboard with pictures tacked on it stands on it. All of them are the girls and women who have been in the script.

In the center of the collage is one picture of the old woman sitting at a table with a smile on her face and holding a yellow cat.

She sits behind a birthday cake with a big 85 candle on it.

Two nurses stand behind her.

A plaque reads: Adrienne Charon, Born July 13, 1933; Died December 12, 2021.

On each side of the casket is one flower arrangement. One says: Big River Residential Care Facility.

The other say. "Will love you forever." But it has no name on it.

The young woman carrying a bag ambles into the room and walks up to the flowers.

She smiles and nods her head. Then she glances at the old woman.

The mortician smiles at her, but then his face clouds in confusion as the young woman pulls a yellow stuffed cat from the bag and puts it in the casket.

When he realizes it isn't real, he chuckles and closes the lid.

Water from a sprinkler splashes one of the windows.

As the two of them walk away, they don't hear the muffled meow.