

The Last Cat

by

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"THE LAST CAT"

FADE IN:

INT. PRISON CELL

A WOMAN in a featureless coverall sleeps on concrete floor. There's a barcode tattooed on the back of her neck.

The cell walls are vaguely futuristic, but the light is glaringly white. It could be midnight as easily as noon.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL

A portable music player and its headphones, a futuristic iPod, just sitting on the floor.

She wakes up, and that's the first thing she sees. Her eyes widen; what the hell?

She picks it up, turns it over, its presence clearly blowing her mind. Suddenly:

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

What's that?

She FREAKS, spins, rises to a crouch. There's a ventilation grill three feet up the wall, which she backs away from.

WOMAN

What the--

MAN (O.S.)

Whoa! It's OK!

WOMAN

That cell was empty when I went to sleep.

MAN (O.S.)

They brought me in last night.

She casts a suspicious look at the grate, but what can he do to her from the next cell? She turns her attention back to the iPod.

MAN (O.S.)

So what's it like here?

INT. HIS CELL

The MAN's cell is just like hers, and he's clad just like she is, an identical barcode. He sits, still but intense, listening her through the mirror-image ventilation grill.

WOMAN (O.S.)
It's horrible.

INTERCUT CELLS AS NEEDED

She continues to examine the iPod.

WOMAN
Let's just say that if they found
out I had any contraband...

She puts one of the headphones in one ear and hits power on
the iPod when FOOTSTEPS ECHO in the hallway.

WOMAN
Shit.

MAN
What?

She scrambles to hide the music player.

WOMAN
You're about to meet Horrible
Numero Un--

There's a BEEP and the door to her cell opens...

THE GUY COMING THROUGH THE DOOR (O.S.)
(cruel)
Dinnertime, sweetl--

...just before she gets it stashed. Standing there, a GUARD,
a pistol on his belt, holding a bowl of slop. He sees the
music player and his face turns to storm clouds.

GUARD
What. Is that.

He throws the bowl to the ground and grabs her wrist,
wresting the iPod from her hand.

GUARD
On your belly!

She rolls over submissively, lacing her hands behind her
head. She clearly knows the drill. He examines the device.

GUARD
How did you get this?

She remains silent.

GUARD
How did you get this?

She says nothing.

GUARD
 Should I beat an answer out of you?

Silence.

GUARD
Should I?

WOMAN
 I'm sorry. I don't know where it
 came from.

Guard reaches for a BATON on his belt, but his communicator
 CHIRPS. He touches it irritably, to silence it.

GUARD
 (a threat)
 Looks like your beating will wait
 until breakfast.

He kicks her food bowl, spraying slop.

GUARD
 Enjoy your dinner.

He exits, the door BEEPS behind him, locking. After a moment:

MAN (O.S.)
 What does he have against you?

WOMAN
 Nothing he doesn't have against
 everyone else in this place.
 Everybody else on the planet,
 probably.

A moment of silence.

WOMAN
 Even so, I need him.

MAN (O.S.)
 Why?

WOMAN
 Because the only thing that can get
 you out early is a good
 recommendation. And he writes them.

She leans back against the wall, lets her chin fall. Silence from the cell next door.

FADE TO:

INT. HALLWAY

The door to her cell has a placard: "MEYERS, JILL."

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. HER CELL

Jill lies on her back, in a different position, some time later, regarding the ceiling. After a long beat of silence:

MAN (O.S.)

Why are you here? In prison, I mean? What did you do?

JILL

Who are you?

MAN

I am who I am.

Her silence says, "Fuck you, I don't play that game."

MAN

Call me Isaac.

JILL

Well, Isaac, I'm here for harboring a fugitive from justice.

She says "justice" with great bitterness and sarcasm.

ISAAC

Someone dangerous?

JILL

A cat.

He's stunned into silence.

JILL

You remember when the Virus got into the cats, then made the jump to people?

ISAAC
 ("oh yeah, I remember...")
 And the Government created a
 biological agent to target
 felines...

JILL
 I'm immune to the Virus. I was a
 veterinarian, so I could keep her
 away from the agent.

INT. VETERINARY OFFICES - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Jill -- dressed in a lab coat, perhaps a bit younger -- takes
 a cover off a pet carrier, removes the cat inside, strokes it
 in her lap. She smiles, happy.

JILL (V.O.)
 I was supposed to let them kill the
 last cat, in the world? Why? What
 good--

INT. HER CELL

She cuts herself off in mid-rant, wrought.

ISAAC (O.S.)
 What?

INT. VETERINARY OFFICES - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

On a different day, Jill shows the cat to a CURIOUS FRIEND,
 who reaches for the cat to pet it, apparently pleased.

JILL (V.O.)
 Anyway, they found her, and killed
 her, just like the rest.

As soon as Jill's back is turned, Friend's eyes narrow toward
 the cat, and her face turns hard.

INT. HER CELL

ISAAC
 Was it hard?

JILL
 What?

ISAAC
 When they killed your cat.

INT. KILLING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A GOVERNMENT VETERINARIAN, clad frighteningly, has the cat laid out on the table below him. The rest of the room is full of dead animals and slick surfaces, easy to clean.

ISAAC (V.O.)
(apologetic)
You don't have to answer.

We see him reach down toward the cat, and reach for a needle attached to medical tubing.

JILL (V.O.)
It was horrible.

INT. HER CELL

JILL
(a beat, then, angry:)
How do you live with yourself after you exterminate a whole species?

INT. HIS CELL

He remains intent, but largely expressionless.

JILL (O.S.)
You know what I said to myself, the whole time I was hiding her?

CUT TO:

INT. HER CELL

JILL
"They will only get them if we let them. They will get them if we let them."

ISAAC
Them?

JILL
The government. Get the cats. I thought you could stand up to them. That bad people can only do bad things if people let them.

ISAAC
But that's not how it is.

JILL
 (bitter, and how)
 No. It's not.

Silence.

ISAAC
 What would you have done? In the
 Government's place?

JILL
 No one has the right to wipe out a
 whole species.

ISAAC
 No one?

JILL
No one.

A beat of silence. She rolls over and closes her eyes.

FADE TO BLACK.

The sound of a CLOCK TICKING... and a MEOW...

FADE IN:

INT. HER CELL

She's asleep, as we saw her at the beginning.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL

Her cat, sitting where the iPod was. She wakes up and
 SHRIEKS, but quickly recovers her wits.

ISAAC (O.S.)
 What is it?

JILL
 I'm going crazy.

INT. HIS CELL

He presses his face up against the grill.

INT. HER CELL

ISAAC (O.S.)
 Is that a cat?

JILL

My cat.

She picks it up. Tears well in her eyes.

JILL

(to the cat)

How are you, girl?

(to Isaac)

I'm losing my mind.

No response from him. She continues to pet the cat.

JILL

I'm losing my mind.

(crescendo to shout)

Why the hell, am I losing my mind
now?!

(quiet again, to Isaac)

I mean, either I'm losing my mind,
or if the guard comes back and I
have, you know...

(she indicates the cat)

She pets the cat in silence for a moment. Then, FOOTSTEPS in the hallway. She nods her head, resigned, as though the guard's approach was inevitable.

The door to her cell BEEPS, swings open. The guard, with a bowl of slop... that LIMPLY FALLS FROM HIS FINGERS when he sees her, and it.

ISAAC (O.S.)

(to guard, shouting from
his cell)

Go easy on her!

The guard just boggles.

ISAAC (O.S.)

Neither of them are hurting anyone!

Guard LUNGES for the cat.

INT. HALLWAY

We see the guard disappear into the cell. We hear the cat HISS, the guard CURSE, but no objection from Jill.

ISAAC (O.S.)

Have some mercy, for Chrissa--

After a moment, he re-appears, HEAVES the cat down the hall.

INT. HER CELL

She's sitting as we saw her (but no cat, obviously).

ISAAC (O.S.)
(shouting to the guard)
Come on! She doesn't deserve--

The guard stands in the doorway, draws his pistol, aims it down the hall.

ON HER

BLAM!

Jill just sits there. Just nodding to herself, resigned.

ISAAC (O.S.)
(genuinely sad)
They didn't deserve that.

Guard fixes an evil eye on Jill.

GUARD
No parole. Rot here forever, and
see if I care.

He takes a step backward, and SLAMS the door on her.

INT. HIS CELL

JILL (O.S.)
I think I was wrong.

ISAAC
About what?

JILL (O.S.)
His species. I'd wipe it out in a
second.

Off Isaac.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. HER CELL

She's sleeping on the floor.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL

Isaac, sitting in the corner, the picture of composure.

She wakes up, see him, and her eyes fly wide, but she makes no sound.

ISAAC

It's done. I'm sorry.

JILL

(a warning to him:)
If I scream, so help me, that guard
will be here so fast--

ISAAC

I'm afraid not.

JILL

What do you m--? Who the hell--?
(full-on scream:)
HELP! HELP ME! HELP!

He makes no move to stop her. Seeing this, she stops.

ISAAC

I came here to judge you.

JILL

To judge me?

ISAAC

Your species. As your technology
matures, you're colonizing space.
Which -- although you haven't
realized it yet -- is quite full
already.

He takes a breath, then continues.

ISAAC

I think that you could have
redeemed your species, Jill. I
really think you might have. But
your captor tipped the scales the
other way. I'm sure you can see
why.

JILL

(apprehension)
Meaning...?

ISAAC

I'm sorry.

JILL
Meaning...?

ISAAC
I'm afraid you're the last.
(melancholy)
The last cat.

Begin FLARING.

JILL
The last cat?

Continue flaring, WHITENING EVERYTHING.

JILL
What does that mean? You killed the
guard? So what? He deserved--

ISAAC
They're all dead, Jill. Every human
but you. You're the very last cat.
Because you were right. You can't
exterminate an entire species.

ALL THE WAY TO WHITE, NOW.

ISAAC (O.S.)
You can't kill the last cat.

THE END.