

Mary's Cat

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It's a miracle, how Cat came to us. My sister Mary saw it first; she said 'My God!' and picked it up all big and white and held it real tight against her heart. It is her cat, she feeds it and sleeps with it every night, but I play with it too. Mother and my kid brother Adam were already gone when Cat came, so they never saw it. In the beginning there were seven of us: our family of four, Tom who used to be my friend, his mother, and his grampa. Now we are only six, and that if you count Cat and Jesse too, as if they were people. Both Cat and Grampa have white hair, and they both sit high on the water tank as if that was their throne. Every time I eat Grampa calls me to his throne and kicks me in the head for stealing food. It's a lie, I never steal, it's Mary's fault, she steals the food for me. When the mothers, that is, my mother and Teacher who is Tom's mother, ran things they gave equal shares to every one. Grampa has another system: only he and Tom get food, they give Mary whatever they want out of their shares, and she gives some of hers to me and to Cat. So I do not eat a lot, except when Mary steals for me. It makes Grampa mad to see me eat. He says, 'come here, Jude'; I come to his throne and he kicks me in the head. It's not fair, Mary steals for Cat, too, but Grandpa never kicks it when it eats. The cellar is locked, we locked it after my mother and Adam were finished so it's a mystery how Cat got in. Mary said 'My God!' and here it was, a big white miracle of a cat. Before the war Mary made miracles and had songs and gifts for me, she was the best in the whole world, my sister Mary. I think she is not working miracles now because she is busy being pregnant with Jesse, so she only steals food from Grampa. Jesse is the baby Mary is about to have, which is a miracle, too: Now that Adam is gone Jesse is our only hope. Without Jesse we'll starve to death, but that is not going to happen, for Jesse will soon be born, he will learn to walk, then he will go out, find food, and save us.

It was my kid brother Adam who kept us alive after our two families entered the cellar. Only kids can go out for food, the smart bombs leave children alone. My mother told me that a smart bomb homes on body heat and a small child does not generate enough heat for it to sense. She said the enemy did not want to waste its bombs on cats and dogs so they made smart bombs that do not go off unless there

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is enough body heat for them to smell. The big bombs turned our city into a heap of rubble, then came tiny smart bombs that sniff the grownups and kill them off one by one. A tiny bomb sails on in the blue sky patiently waiting for its man to come out, then it dives and blows him up to smithereens. No matter how fast you run, the bomb chases after you and blows you up. Those bombs are smarter than people, but not smart enough to tell a child from a cat.

Adam killed Mother. He yelled, so it's his fault. When the grownups die it's a direct hit, no yelling and no remains, the smart bomb spreads the man thin on the walls. But Adam was a child, someone else's bomb got him. It's not fair, to be punished for someone else. He yelled and my mother came out for him, and then a bomb came for her and they were both finished. So perhaps it's her fault, she killed Adam, she was grownup enough for a smart bomb to sniff out and blow up. Adam searched houses and brought us all the food we needed but we are running low now, so we wait for Jesse to be born. I think Mother is to blame, it is her fault I shall starve to death, she shouldn't have taken Tom's family in, with their Grampa who gives me no food at all. It is hard to figure out whose fault everything is.

Tom says it's a year since my mother died and a month since Grampa killed his, but that is probably wrong, Tom is no good with numbers, never had the brains for it. Before the war I always helped him with his homework even though his mother was our school teacher. We were friends, Tom and I, always together, slept at each other's house and had our toys in common, that is why my mother took his family in with us. Now that boy, my friend Tom, is no more, instead there came to be a youth with a thin moustache and low voice who plays with Grampa doing things to Mary, it does not stop them she is now pregnant.

I need to help Mary bring up Jesse when the time comes for him to be born, that is why I could not help Teacher. It's Grampa's fault, not mine, he should not have killed Teacher. Grampa sits on the water tank like a king, half naked, pistol in hand, limp dick hanging out, dividing food between himself and Tom; he gives Cat nothing but lets Mary give it some of hers, she says it's not its fault. For her food Grampa makes her suck him off. He tells her she should be thankful for his milk, the proteins he feeds her. He mocks her and calls her Monster of Notre Dame. Tom holds her legs apart when grampa puts his dick into her, but it always falls out and Mary has to take it in her mouth. Grampa promised Tom that after he makes it he will let Tom do it to her, but I think that will never happen, for Grampa cannot get it up at

all, so I don't know how Jesse got into her, maybe it's a miracle.

Grampa is Tom's father's father. Teacher, Tom's mother, was screaming at him every time he was doing it to Mary and told Tom not to help him, but they paid her no attention. Several times, at night, Teacher whispered in my ear that I should get Grampa's pistol and shoot him dead, but I said 'No' and she called me a Yellow Fink. I didn't want Grampa dead, for then Teacher would start classes again for us children as she did when my mother was in charge. Also, without Grampa Tom and Mary may be a couple, team together with his mother, and throw me out. I am big now, enough for the smart bombs to come for me, and of no use to them. It's better that they all keep hating each other as they do now, so I can sit back and watch how Grampa and Tom do it to Monster of Notre Dame, with Teacher trying to get in between and screaming her head off. It's the only show I get now that TV is dead. OK, it is my fault. I am a traitor to Teacher and Mary. But why should I not be a traitor? I am not Mother, I am not Teacher, and I did not start this war, and Mary would soon die anyway, rape or no rape. I am not even sure that Monster of Notre Dame is still my sister Mary. Before the war Mary, full of grapes, would come and put them one by one in my mouth; they were deliciously cold and wet, those grapes, and I would say, it's hail, Mary, that you are feeding me. It is her fault, then: she should have worked a miracle to stop the war.

I warned Teacher that the water tank Grampa sits and sleeps on is like a drum, it booms when you touch it, but she would not listen to me. She went for him at night anyway, the tank bellowed and he shot her dead. I suppose she gave up on me and tried to kill him by herself, so it is my fault again. It is also my fault that Mother and Adam died; had I gone out to fetch Adam the bombs might have spared me, I was smaller than mom. Yet perhaps not, a smart bomb might have smelled me then. Who knows? And how do I know Teacher went to kill Grampa that night? She might have crawled there to screw him, perhaps she wanted to show him she is better than Mary. She wanted Grampa and his gun all to herself, start a family with him, take all the food that's left for them and for Tom her son, and throw me and Mary out to the bombs, we are not their kin. Is that fair, to throw out a pregnant blind girl, a Monster of Notre Dame with festering wounds and putrid pus for a face? Is it right to kick her out of her own home for the smart bombs to come and paste her on the ruins? Is that what Teacher is supposed to do? Before the war I was Teacher's pet and best student but I don't care she is dead, we shall all starve to death, even Grampa, even that silly Monster of Notre dame, that dumb pregnant

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girl with no eyes and face bloated with stinking pus who forgives all. I was going to tell you how it happened: when Cat appeared out of nowhere she picked it up, held it to her heart and just as she said 'My God!' it scratched her, stuck its claws right into her eyeballs and took them out with lots of blood and phlegm, that is how she went blind. Her face rots where Cat scratched her, we have nothing to put on it. It all happened a long time ago. Then Mary forgave Cat and they became friends. Mary sleeps with Cat every night now, she embraces it and it licks the blood off of her dead eyes.