

Rescue Cat - Written By Will Snow

Chapter Ten

The next few days followed the same routine. Bill would wake up from a night of deep and dreamless sleep to the alarming sight of Cosmo intently staring at him. He would walk down to the beach after spending time at the gym and enjoy a post-workout smoothie. All that week, his morning beach walk was cold, gray, and misty. Near the end of every walk, he would stare silently out at the ocean's vastness and the world's end for several minutes until the tension in the air was so thick that he felt like his head would explode. He would then return to his home in the hills and work until evening, then watch anime and play with Cosmo until bedtime.

Every day, Bill immersed himself in work. Client calls, e-mails, editing, anything and everything to put the thought of the morning out of his brain. The new routine that brought him so much hope began to lose credibility. What was he thinking by adopting all these ridiculously healthy habits? He didn't care anymore, and there was nobody else to care about it. Cosmo would be gone soon enough, and he would happily revert to his former existence. He thought, why not simply let it go now? There was plenty of work to keep him occupied this evening.

Hours later, Cosmo scrambled upstairs with a feral look in his eyes and immediately pounced on the desk. *"I'm hungry and bored! Come downstairs immediately!"* Bill was unmoved by the display. *"Just go away, Cosmo. I am not in the*

mood to play with you tonight. Go do something else." He reached out to sweep him off the desk, and Cosmo flattened his ears and hissed. "I'm serious, Cosmo. Get lost!" Bill pulled him off his desktop, enduring the sharp scratches to his hands and forearms, and tossed him unceremoniously to the floor. Cosmo cocked his head at Bill and glared at him, "*This is how it is now? So be it!*" He then sulked into the bedroom.

Shortly after that, Bill heard a box being toppled over and the sound of papers being scattered. "What the hell? What are you into now, Cosmo?" He got up angrily from his desk and stormed into the bedroom. What he saw when he entered the room made his heart drop. Cosmo had knocked over a box of files and photos and was lying in a nest of them, with a challenge in his eyes. "Goddammit! This took me forever to organize!" Cosmo haughtily walked by Bill, unimpressed by his rage, and jumped onto the office chair.

Bill hung his head in disbelief and began to sift through the mess. He steeled himself as he sorted through the hospital charts, x-rays, doctor's reports, and medical bills. He tried to organize these files as efficiently and emotionlessly as possible without thinking about them. After gathering them all and arranging them chronologically, he carefully placed them in the box, replaced the lid, and reverently set it in the closet. He then picked up all the photos strewn across the floor and began reorganizing them efficiently. Hundreds of random images from his life before burned his eyes like flashbulbs as he sealed them into an oversized envelope forever.

Afterward, as he sat quietly in the corner with his head in his hands, Cosmo walked in from the office and sat in his lap. Bill stroked his colorful coat and apologized, "I'm so sorry, Cosmo. You were trying to play. I didn't mean to be rough with you. Can you please forgive me?" Cosmo licked Bill's torn hand and began to purr. A long, deep purr rumbled through the center of his body, up through Bill's hands and arms, resonating in his heart and shaking tears loose from his eyes.