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Category: Humor

Award: Gold Key

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“Oh, bless the holy,” she did the religious motion, “Cat,” our teacher chanted, with each and every one of us doing the same pose: hands covering our eyes, our heads bent down to the floor, and our legs squatting. We repeated what the teacher said in small, respectful whispers.

“Who created us from our head to toes,” she hummed, touching the tip of her head, and then bending down to touch each and every one of their toes, or at least as close to as she could with shoes on.

We copied.

“Oh, bless our Creator, The All Mighty, The Holy One, The Good, The Lord of The Felines, The Divine One. Bless Him, so that He may bless us.” She took a deep, faithful breath as we repeated the chant, I heard Abigail stumble a little over her words, how unfortunate she did not remember them very well, she always messed up the names.

“Amen,” she whispered, and so did we.

We held a moment of silence, letting the prayer ripple through the air.

The teacher’s eyes flicked open, and clasped her hands in delight, “now that we’ve done that, let’s learn some math!”

“Um, excuse me,” Abigail called out, “why do we pray to the,” she did the religious motion of clapping the back of her hands together and then spinning her arm around for her hand to land on her elbow, before she allowed herself to say, “Cat, if we have not proof of the,” she did the religious motion again, “Cat’s existence?”

The classroom exploded in gasps at the outrageous comment! The blasphemy! In the corner of my eye, I swear I saw a kid faint at the monstrosity of a question; how dare anyone question the holiness of the Cat?

I scoffed at the remark, closed my eyes, and sent a prayer to the, surely offended, Cat, to teach a lesson to this non-believer.

The teacher babbled, unsure of what to say, “you may always go to the temple and ask for His advice-”

Abigail scoffed, “please, even babies know that those are just special effects, smoke, and mirrors. Why would an all-powerful god need that?”

The teacher glared at her, “Abigail Black! Get out of my classroom!”

She rolled her eyes, and without another word, stomped out of the room.

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At lunch, I sat with my friends Jackson, Lilly, Lia, and Mia. Many people have asked me if I liked Jackson as much more than a friend, but I’ve had to explain to them that he was already dating Lilly. Many people disapproved, but I thought they were cute together.

I peered over to the neighboring table. I saw Abigail sitting alone, mourning over her lunch.

“Serves her right for questioning the,” he did the religious motion, “Cat. Hope someone puts her in her place,” Jackson growled, holding Lilly’s hand.

“Do you think they’ll send her to the... um... the...” I took a deep breath before saying the word that everyone feared the most, “Pit?”

“Hopefully,” Mia laughed with a sneer on her face.

I turned to see two religious figures march to our table. My friends and I bowed our heads, “blessings to the holy,” we did the religious motion, “Cat,” we greeted.

“You five have been assigned to a task in honor of the,” they both did the religious motion, “Cat.”

“Come with us,” commanded the other.

We got up and followed them. They led us into an office. It was dark, giving the vibe of one of those interrogation rooms from a spy movie. Before us, there was an old, wooden desk, it seemed about to fall. Above it, there was a dim lamp hanging from the ceiling, hardly able to hold on. The room smelled of rotten fish. The first religious official sat down, hardly noticing the smell – or so I thought from the look on his face, stern and focused.

As the second religious official closed the door, the first began his speech, “you five have been selected to take on a task that may seem of great difficulty.”

“Anything for the,” she did the religious motion, “Cat,” smiled Mia.

Both officials grinned sinisterly, “you see,” continued the second, “there is a...” his voice lowered to a whisper, “non-believer in your school.”

My friends and I muttered under our breaths, cursing that person. How dare they! How could someone not trust Hisdivinity?! His wonder?! His power?!

“To prove your devotion to the,” they both did the religious motion, “Cat, you must send this non-believer... to the Pit.”

Lia saluted, “we shall prove our loyalty to the All Mighty One!”

Jackson, Lilly, and Mia all did the same in a military unison and then left me alone with the officials and my thoughts. My step uncle had gone to the Pit. My aunt said she could hear his screams from a mile away, even while burying her head under countless pillows to muffle the sound. Sure, Abigail was a fool, but did she truly deserve that fate?

“Will you take on the task?” the voice of the first official echoed.

I looked up from my thoughts, “He chose you for this job to prove yourself. I would not take that lightly.”

The Cat did not believe I had faith in Him? What had I done to displease Him? I prayed every morning, right before class, and every night. I had kept each of His holidays, I had not sinned. Never once had I questioned Him!

So why was he questioning me?

“Do you take this task?” he asked again. I gave the strongest solute I could muster and marched out of the room.

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The plan to get Abigail to the room was beyond simple. We called her saying we felt bad about her sitting alone and wanted her to cine over to hang out. Since she clearly did not see the religious officials, she obliviously agreed.

Then came the next phase of our plan. As she approached the door, Jackson snuck up from behind and threw a bag over her head. In her shock and surprise, Mia and I were able to act quickly and bind her hands with rope while Lia and Lilly tightly tied her feet.

Now, all we had to do was drag.

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As we reached the Pit, rain began to pour, filling the ground, and making it muddy.

Jackson ripped the bag from her face. Abigail let out a gasp followed by heavy breaths. Her eyes were filled with panic. She seemed to be in so much pain, her eyes were wet-

Sympathy for a non-believer? No wonder the Cat has been testing my faith.

I must prove myself.

I stepped in front of her, her eyes meeting mine, begging for help-

Prove yourself.

“Abigail Black, you have proven to be disloyal to the,” my friends and I did the religious motion, “Cat.” I pulled out the paper that had been delivered to me by the religious officials and began to read off it, “like all those sentenced to the Pit, you have one final chance to prove yourself to the,” I did the religious motion, “Cat. You must bless all His names.”

Abigail looked up and thought back to our class, “Oh bless the All Mighty One, The Creator... uh... oh! The Holy One... the... the... Lord of the Felines...” I could tell she was struggling, she always struggled with the names, it was as though this was designed for her, it was her weakness, “and... and... The Divine one! Bless Him so that He may bless us!” She giggled in delight, tears stopped streaming from her eyes, thankful for her life more than ever.

I wanted to jump in joy for her, to celebrate that no one would go to the pit tonight...

But I had to prove myself.

How dare I think about celebrating with a non-believer?

I shook my head, getting rid of my sinful thoughts, “Abigail Black, I am afraid you have offended The Good. You missed one.”

Her face fell, drained of all its hope.

“Now you shall join those you are loyal to! The enemy of the,” we all did the religious motion, “Cat! Oh, and they are very hungry.”

My friends and I pushed the screaming, kicking, Abigail forward and threw her into Pit, where she fell down, down, down, until she landed on the floor with a loud thud.

She peeled herself off the ground, cradling the arm she landed on.

There was a growl.

Then more joined in.

I watched.

I guess I pleased the Cat after all.

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I gasped, waking up from my trance.

“Do you accept this task?”

This is what they had told me to do.

I looked up at him.

Was I really being doubted?

Was the vision I had truly necessary to behold?

I gave them both a solute and left.

But I was not going to send Abigail to the Pit.

Here was my plan. What was the point of sending Abigail to the Pit? That wouldn't help in any way, she would just be dead! No one would learn! So, I meet the Cat in person! He was in the temple, but when people asked, but when people asked for advice, she was right about the smoke and mirrors.

No. I needed to give her concrete evidence.

I went home, dressed in all black, gave my prayers, and ran to the temple, which, thank the Cat, was only a mile away.

I skipped the entrance and walked behind the temple. It seemed like the back of an amusement park. I saw two guards covering something... an entrance! It was small, but I knew I could fit through. I grabbed a small stone and threw it into the metal trash can. The noise rang across the air, and just as I hoped, the guards dashed to it urgently.

This was my chance!

I dashed to the entrance and slid through the small door face-first. I realized this hallway was designed for a creature much smaller than me. As I dragged myself through the corridor, I saw walls of gold, sprinkled with diamonds and rubies. I noticed the hallway get steeper and steeper until I saw an opening and crawled into it. I stretched in the space of an enormous room with

the same walls. Before me, there was a huge red mattress. On top of it, slept a small, ginger Cat.

Oh, the Holy One.

I was staring at the Cat!

I bowed my head and crouched down, "Oh holy," I did the religious motion, "Cat! I have come to prove to a non-believer of your existence! I-"

The Cat blinked and yawned, "I'm sorry, who are you?"

"You don't know me?" I felt a wave of disappointment wash over me. The Divine One knew all of His children.

"Oh wait, I forgot, people think I am God and stuff."

My eyes widened, "What do you mean, 'think?'"

The Cat rubbed His eyes, "m'kay, so, before, I was just a normal Cat, right? Then one day, I asked my human if I could take a nap and before I knew it, he was telling everyone I was like Jesus or something like that."

"But wait, how come I have never known of a time before everyone believed in the," I stopped myself from doing this religious motion, "cat?"

"You're what, twelve?" he asked, examining me.

"Thirteen," I corrected.

"Then this was all established about a year before you were born."

"Oh," was all that came out of me.

"But to be honest, this kind of sucks."

"Why? Everyone loves you," I asked.

"Because it is lonely," he cried, "ever since my human died, I've had no one to talk to! I just want a human and to be a normal cat again! My name is Oscar for goodness' sake! How am I supposed to play God?!"

There was a moment of silence until my thoughts turned into words, "I could be your human. I would let you take naps all the time. I think I would be a good friend."

Oscar looked up, "Really thank you! I can't believe this is happening!" And so, he hopped on to my shoulder and we strolled out of the temple.

Looks like the religious officials were wrong.

I guess I pleased the Cat after all.