

NINE LIVES

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FADE IN:

INT. HALLWAY IN APARTMENT BLOCK - EVENING

SAM MITCHELL (40) Clumsy sort of guy. Nice manner about him. He arrives home clutching brown grocery bags. Comes across a cat roaming around in the hallway outside his apartment.

SAM

Hey there...what are you doing out here all on your own? Come here buddy...come here...here kitty kitty...

Sam puts down his groceries and picks up the cat. Suddenly he hears a voice from inside the neighbour's apartment. The door is ajar. MRS JAKLOWSKI (80) Sam's neighbour. Widow and partially sighted. Lonely. Relies heavily on Sam.

MRS.JAKLOWSKI

Caspar....Caspar...where's my boy?

SAM

Mrs.Jaklowski? Hello? Mrs. Jaklowski are you in here?

Sam walks into the dimly lit apartment and towards the sitting room where he can hear the elderly voice of his neighbour.

SAM (CONT'D)

Mrs.Jaklowski? It's me Sam - don't worry it's just me. I think I've got your cat.

An elderly lady appears - slightly startled - and looks around to find Sam's voice. She clearly has sight issues.

MRS.JAKLOWSKI

Sam? Is that you dear?

SAM

Yes it's just me. Don't worry Mrs.Jaklowski, I'm here. Is this your cat? I found him wandering around on his own out there.

Sam approaches Mrs.Jaklowski and takes her hand in a reassuring manner.

MRS.JAKLOWSKI

Oh thank goodness - yes this is Caspar.

(MORE)

MRS.JAKLOWSKI (CONT'D)

I got him a few days ago for company since Norman passed. I couldn't find him. He hardly does that meow thing...(chuckles)

SAM

He sure is a fine looking cat. Beautiful colour coat - I love his two white paws. Well, do you need anything else Mrs.Jaklowski?

Sam gently places the cat in Mrs.Jaklowski's arms.

MRS.JAKLOWSKI

Thank you Sam. You're ever so kind to me. Good night.

SAM

Good night Mrs.Jaklowski. You take care of yourselves now.

Sam turns to leave the flat and starts to walk away.

MRS.JAKLOWSKI

Oh Sam...actually there is one thing I was meaning to ask you dear.

Sam stops and turns to camera.

SAM

Sure thing - what is it?

MRS.JAKLOWSKI

The doctors want me to stay in hospital to monitor this glaucoma. I was wondering if you might look after Caspar for me?

SAM

It would be an honour. When do you go in?

MRS.JAKLOWSKI

On Friday until Saturday evening. Thank you so much - you're the only person I really trust with my boy.

SAM

No problem Mrs.Jaklowski. I will pick him up on Friday morning before I go to work. See you then.

CUT TO:

INT.SAM'S APARTMENT - FRIDAY MORNING

Sam leaves his apartment closing the door slowly while talking to the cat at the door. The cat watches him leave.

SAM

OK Caspar - see you later. Don't worry buddy, you won't be lonely in here, OK? We'll share a last supper together tonight. Bye Caspar.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY IN APARTMENT BLOCK - FRIDAY EVENING

Sam is laden down with groceries and fumbles to find his keys to open the door. A can of cat food falls out of the bag. He slowly enters his apartment.

SAM

Caspar...hey buddy...I'm home...I got you some yummy food.
Caspar...Caspar...where are you at buddy?

The cat doesn't appear as Sam calls for him. Sam goes looking around the apartment. Caspar is nowhere to be seen. Sam notices the curtains blowing against an open top window.

SAM (CONT'D)

Caspar? Caspar! Fuck...fuck...Caspar!
Oh Jesus Christ fuck...are you kidding me ...Fuck shit shit...

Sam panics and calls his friend (former love interest) MARGO (32). Their relationship didn't work out. We never know why.

MARGO

H-H-he-hello?

SAM

Margo! It's me. I need you to come over now. I've got an emergency. Please...Jesus...fuck...please can you come over now?

MARGO

Jesus Christ Sam. It's fucking midnight. What's wrong with you?

SAM

Please just get over here now. It's the cat - it's gone. Vanished.

MARGO

You don't have a fucking cat Sam.
Jesus...look I've been through this
with you. I like you just as a...

SAM

No! Jesus Christ - Margo! Don't
flatter yourself. It's my
neighbour's cat - you know the
blind old lady from next door?
Mrs.Jaklowski. I'm supposed to be
looking after it.

MARGO

Fuck me - this is like a scene from
some shitty movie Sam!?! Scene one:
Lost cat - found cat! The End. OK I
will be there in 10.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE STREET - LATE EVENING

Camera from above, Margo and Sam looking at a cat (mainly
just fur - clearly an animal) in the middle of the street
completely flattened. The street is very badly lit.

SAM

Fuck. Why does this have to happen
to me?

MARGO

Yep - that's dead alright. Not even
my med school training will save
this little guy. Used up his ninth
life right there...

SAM

It's not funny Margo. How the
actual fuck am I'm going to explain
this to Mrs.Jaklowski???

MARGO

"Hi there. Sorry. I let your cat go
play in the road."

Sam talks to himself and ignores Margo's sarcasm. Formulates
a plan to solve his dilemma.

SAM

OK think Sam..think..I need a cat
before tomorrow evening...

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

I'm going to replace it - that's what I'll do. And she'll never know.

MARGO

Have you completely lost your mind? She'll know! God Sam...you're so screwed.

SAM

Mrs.Jaklowski can barely see anymore. She can just make out shapes. It's the only solution I got. Will you help me?

CUT TO:

INT.CAT RESCUE CENTRE - SATURDAY MORNING

Sam and Margo walk past various cats in glass cubicles being shown by the rescue worker.

RESCUE WORKER

So...let me get this right...You want a blueish / grey cat, with two white paws...mid to long hair...

MARGO

Yep - got any like that?

RESCUE WORKER

You're being very specific Miss...we're just a Rescue Centre.

SAM

It doesn't have to be precisely that colour. We just need a dark coloured cat. Today. Like now.

Sam turns to Margo and whispers under his breath.

SAM (CONT'D)

Jesus Margo....she's blind. She won't know. It just needs to meow and be hairy...ish.

RESCUE WORKER

Well in that case...

CUT TO:

INT.MRS. JAKLOWSKI'S FRONT DOOR - SATURDAY EVENING

Sam knocks on his neighbour's door. A home carer answers it.

CARER

Oh hello - you must be Sam. And you...must be Caspar! I've not met you before. Come in, come in. Mrs.Jaklowski is just in the sitting room. She's a bit groggy but that's the medication. Has Caspar been much of a bother Sam?

SAM

Hi there. Thanks. Oh no...he's been no problem. Really (pauses)...cooperative.

CARER

Mrs.Jaklowski...look who's back! Caspar!

MRS.JAKLOWSKI

Caspar! My darling boy! Oh I've missed you so much. Is Sam here?

SAM

Hey Mrs.Jaklowski - yes I'm here. Welcome home.

MRS.JAKLOWSKI

Thank you so much Sam. I knew I could trust you with him. I hope he wasn't a nuisance. Would you like to stay for supper?

Sam clasps his hands in a nervous manner.

SAM

That's very kind Mrs.Jaklowski, but I'm expecting a friend over tonight. I'll see you around. Bye everyone - bye kitty-cat.

Sam turns and leaves the apartment. The camera stays on Mrs.Jacklowski and Gloria both stroking Caspar.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S SITTING ROOM - SAME EVENING

Sam is sat watching TV (Cat documentary). He is in his boxer shorts, socks and T-shirt. He's drinking a glass of milk.

Feet up on the coffee table. Milk spills on his hand. He licks it. The doorbell rings.

SAM

Coming! One sec...

Almost like a startled cat - Sam leaps up off the sofa and sprints to the door.

DELIVERY GUY

Mr.Mitchell! Nice to see you again sir. Here it is. Please sign just here. Sorry for the delay.

SAM

Thank you. No problem - hey...Better late than never right? Right? (wry smile)

Sam carefully takes a large box wrapped in brown paper. His eyes show his excitement. He's clearly been waiting for this to arrive. He closes the door with his foot while cradling the box with both hands firmly, adding his chin for extra support.

CUT TO:

INT. LONG CORRIDOR GOING TOWARDS A DOOR - LATE EVENING

Camera follows Sam down a dark grimy corridor. Peeling wallpaper the space looks quite sinister. We see him from behind, camera tracking his white socks and bare hairy legs. MUSIC builds - something classical possibly.

CUT TO:

INT. A ROOM WE'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE - LATE EVENING

The camera follows Sam into an opulent room - but we never see the full reveal until the end. Sam stops centre of frame - we now see an entire room full of different taxidermy cats in glass boxes - of every variety. All these stuffed cats have been lovingly positioned. One space remains blank in the exhibition space. Sam holds up the latest addition outstretched in front of him: a stuffed blueish / grey cat with two white paws in a glass box.

SAM

Finally. We are complete.

FADE TO BLACK