

4 Cats, Ink writing sample: We Met at Starbucks: a love story

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4 Cats, Ink offers services in ghostwriting, grant writing, editing, proofreading, and copywriting.

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We Met at Starbucks: A Love Story

Sample chapters

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Chapter 2

Returning Home: He Said...

My house looked familiar and foreign at the same time. I had let myself in hours, perhaps even minutes, after my soon-to-be ex-wife drove away in her U-Haul, traveling east. After three months of exile, I felt conflicting emotions of triumph and trepidation about moving back into the home we had shared together for seven years.

I walked around the quiet house to take a mental inventory of its contents. Some rooms looked exactly as I remembered them with furniture and decorations left untouched. Other rooms were completely empty and devoid of furnishings. I remembered the day we sat around the dining room table with a yellow notepad and made the list of “her” stuff and “my” stuff—the same dining room table that was by then traveling hundreds of miles east on I-70 at sixty-five miles per hour.

Everything seemed to be in order in the kitchen, and then I saw it: our wedding unity candle left on top of a cabinet where it had sat on display for years. My heart quailed and my stomach deflated. “Why would she leave *that*?” I thought to myself. On the other hand, why would she *want* it? The hope for love in marriage it represented no longer existed, replaced instead by the disappointment of two people who had grown irreconcilably apart.

I grabbed the candle with trembling hands to impulsively throw it away, but the waste can under the sink was missing—probably also traveling east on I-70—so instead I placed the

white cylinder gingerly on the countertop. After examining it for several minutes, I lifted it again and stripped the ribbons, beads, and the placard of sentimental words off the wax. They came off easily, and the candle was then just another candle, devoid of symbolism but still useful. It would burn brightly in my living room for many months to come.

I visited the master bedroom last, and it was completely bare.

My feelings during the divorce process remained neutral, and I could not shed a tear during those months of separation. However, seeing that empty bedroom gave me a kicked-in-the-stomach feeling as badly as seeing the unity candle. I sat on the floor of that empty bedroom and cried for the first time. “What am I going to do, now?” I asked myself repeatedly.

As I sat there on the floor hugging myself with a hollow, empty feeling of mourning deep in my gut, one of my cats entered the room. Kyle, an empathetic, overweight grey tabby walked into the room and sat several feet away from me. The cats! Where had they been? Probably sleeping the afternoon away in the basement. (I got the house and the cats; she took her dog and the retirement fund.)

Kyle is famous for just sitting and watching you with a blank, expressionless stare. “Hello! Where is Maggie?” I asked Kyle as he sat and watched me from a short distance. In response, he flopped onto the floor and rolled over onto his back with what sounded to me like a sigh of relief, as if to say, “The big, scary dog finally left!” He continued to look at me with a blank expression and examined me carefully—upside down—like he was thinking, “Who are you, by the way?”

(I found Maggie later that evening, a shy female who hid in the basement for several days, perhaps waiting to convince herself the big, scary dog was never coming back.)

I survived that day, and the days to follow. That first day returning home was the only time I felt uncomfortable in that house. I made a new life there myself with the help of a live-in roommate, the two cats—and some cool new bachelor furniture.

Life was good.

Chapter 3

Leaving Home: She Said...

I unlocked the series of deadbolts to our Washington Heights apartment, feeling like a thief entering the home that was no longer mine. My soon-to-be-ex-husband had agreed to vacate the premises for several hours while I retrieved my last few personal items. Most of the things we deemed to be “mine” when we divvied up our lives a few weeks previously were halfway to Colorado and my parents’ basement.

I would be subletting a room in a fellow actor’s apartment for the summer and then back on the road with a new tour in the fall. Basically, I was homeless.

“Hello?” I called out as I tip-toed into the apartment. No answer. I glanced around the living room, taking note of the rearrangement of his half of the furniture. My items had been boxed up and neatly left in plain sight. However, I passed them by and took one more walk through what was supposed to be our dream apartment in New York City. Spot—his cat now—stared at me accusingly from the sofa.

Guilt and remorse squeezed my heart as I toured the apartment: cluttered shelves of music; the large, white desk we had made out of a door; the bass viol propped up in the corner; the slim hallway of a kitchen—spacious by New York standards; the tiny bathroom we had planned several times to remodel but never did. Suddenly, I was hit square in the face by the fact that there was no more “we.” How long would it take me to stop referring to myself in the plural?

I could no longer invade his home. I raced back down the long, creaky, wooden hallway, picked up my box, and flew out the door, stopping only to carefully lock all deadbolts.

Tears leaked unceasingly from the corners of my eyes as I took the ancient elevator to the first floor and escaped into the warm summer air. I hid my face from the doorman, who was confused by my evasive response to his chipper wave. Every step I took toward the A Train was a mixture of relief and regret, a painful shedding of my previous life.

On the long subway ride to my temporary room in Queens, I rested my aching head against the box on my lap. Now I was grieving, but transformation was coming. A glimmer of hope churned in my belly. Monumental changes were at that moment shaking my life apart. I had no idea how they were laying the groundwork for a future I could never have imagined.

