

CAGE OF FURRY

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT - A two-story family home in a decent neighborhood.

The afternoon sun is bright and welcoming. Children race around, playing different games.

SUPERIMPOSE: Saturday

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

In this upstairs bedroom, shy and quiet PETER THOMPSON, 7, stares blankly out of his open window.

The envious look of jealousy glazes over his eyes.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I always wanted to go outside. But  
I knew the outsiders just wouldn't  
accept me. I was never like them.

Peter closes the window, crawling onto his bed. He sighs and looks over at --

A HAMSTER CAGE.

Inside the cage is the cutest little critter -- no bigger than the palm of your hand and covered with a thin, brown coat of fur.

PETER

Hey, Bernard.

Peter watches as BERNARD, the hamster, crawls to the edge of the cage and begins to climb the horizontal bars. He falls off moments later in his attempt to escape.

PETER (cont'd)

I know how you feel, buddy.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Peter! Time for lunch!

Peter jumps off of his bed and runs out of the room.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I always wanted a friend. Staring  
at blank walls all day was so  
boring. You get incredibly lonely.

(CONTINUED)

We move slowly through the room. We begin to hear a distant SQUEAKING, like metal against metal.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)  
But I never would've imagined I  
would regret getting a *friend*.  
Because when I finally got one, he  
tried to destroy everything I  
loved.

We QUICKLY ZOOM IN on the hamster cage, where Bernard is running on his HAMSTER WHEEL, staring directly at us!

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)  
My name is Bernard. I'm a hamster,  
and this is my story.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

MOM, 30ish, is in front of the kitchen table. She puts down two plates as Peter comes rushing in.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
It was a Saturday afternoon when  
the decision was made. I heard the  
conversation that was happening  
downstairs. For that one instant, I  
was so happy. In a couple of hours,  
I would have a friend.

Peter nearly runs into the kitchen table as he tries to take a seat.

MOM  
Whoa. Slow down there, champ.

PETER  
What's for lunch?

MOM  
Bologna sandwiches.

PETER  
That's it?

MOM  
Well I'm sorry, Mr. Culinary  
Expert. I didn't know you had a  
preference.

(CONTINUED)

PETER

Why can't we have something else?  
Let's go to Burger King!

MOM

Sorry, champ. Money's tight, and  
I'm working with what I've got. Now  
eat.

Peter takes a bite of his sandwich. He quickly puts it down  
and wipes his lip.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Getting Mom to approve of the  
friend was a different story. She  
wasn't so easy to convince, but  
Peter, as usual, didn't know when  
to quit.

PETER

Oh, Mom, I have to tell you  
something!

MOM

Can I guess?

PETER

No. You're old. You'll take too  
long.

MOM

Geez. OK then.

PETER

OK, so I was upstairs with Bernard,  
and I was thinking...

Peter stops, building anticipation.

He suddenly jumps up and shouts:

PETER (cont'd)

WE SHOULD GET HIM A FRIEND!

MOM

No.

Peter can almost hear the shattering of glass. He slumps  
back down in his seat.

PETER

But Mom --

(CONTINUED)

MOM

One hamster is enough. Why don't you go outside and make some real friends?

A pause. Peter looks down, embarrassed.

MOM (cont'd)

I'm sure Bernard loves it up there by himself. He's not like you and me. He gets peace and quiet whenever he wants.

PETER

But how can you know for sure? I bet you *FIVE MILLION DOLLARS* he wants a friend!

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Peter was right.

MOM

I said no.

PETER

How can I change your mind?

MOM

You can't.

PETER

But that's not fair.

MOM

Life's not fair.

PETER

So it's only *unfair* that we get another hamster.

MOM

How is that?

PETER

If life isn't fair, then that would mean we could get another hamster because you don't want one.

Mom LAUGHS. It's a clever argument.

MOM

We'll see.

(CONTINUED)

PETER  
Today!?

MOM  
After you eat.

PETER  
Really?

MOM  
Sheesh, yes, now sit down. I should  
have named you Aneurysm.

PETER  
What does that mean?

MOM  
It's what you are.

PETER  
Lucky me!

Peter lifts his sandwich again and takes another bite,  
completely content with the way things turned out.

INT. PET STORE - DAY - LATER ON

The pet store is aligned with the usual stuff: cages of  
birds, white mice, and - of course - hamsters.

Dogs are BARKING, cats are MEOWING, birds are CHIRPING. It's  
a very chaotic scene.

Mom and Peter are hovering over the hamster cages, looking  
at all of the different critters inside.

MOM  
See any you like?

PETER  
Don't rush this, Mom! This process  
takes time.

MOM  
It's a hamster, champ. They're all  
the same.

PETER  
No, Mom! It's Bernard's friend! We  
have to find him a good one.

(CONTINUED)

MOM

Pick one soon or you're not getting any.

PETER

(abruptly)

I want this one.

Peter points. We follow his finger to--

A TAN HAMSTER, larger than the others, and distinguishable because of its BLACK STRIPE running down its back.

MOM

Are you sure that's the one you want?

PETER

Absolutely positive!

MOM

Good. Then let's get it.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - LITTLE LATER

The bedroom door suddenly opens. Peter steps in carrying a SMALL CARDBOARD BOX. The box is full of air holes. You can guess what's inside.

PETER

Look what I've got for you, Bernard!

Peter opens the box, pulling out

--THE HAMSTER.

Peter opens the cage.

PETER

Say hello to your new friend--

Peter sets the hamster inside and closes the door.

PETER

ANEURYSM!

INSIDE THE CAGE:

Aneurysm's body seem to pulse as it sits unmoving. Bernard backs away from him.

BACK TO SCENE

(CONTINUED)

Peter yawns and throws the pet box away in a nearby trash can.

PETER (cont'd)  
Don't worry, Bernard. You'll get to know each other real good and be best friends.

Peter walks away, closing the bedroom door.

INT. HAMSTER CAGE - CONTINUOUS

Bernard moves slowly to Aneurysm, unsure of what to do.

Suddenly, Bernard TALKS!

BERNARD  
Uh -- hi --

The new guy talks right back, spiteful and MALEVOLENT.

ANEURYSM  
Shut your mouth, Cottonball.

BERNARD  
It's Bernard, actually.

ANEURYSM  
I said shut it!

Aneurysm moves throughout the cage, surveying the size of the cage and the bedroom itself.

ANEURYSM (cont'd)  
Nice place you got here.

BERNARD  
The boy's name is Peter. He's a good kid.

ANEURYSM  
And I bet you two are bestest pals!

BERNARD  
I'm his pet. He's good to me, and I'm good to him.

ANEURYSM  
You hamster slaves are so pathetic.

BERNARD  
Slaves?

(CONTINUED)



ANEURYSM

They keep you locked up like a prisoner. You said yourself that you're good to him, and he keeps you here anyway.

BERNARD

Peter knows what is best for me. And he'll do the same for you.

ANEURYSM

No. I'm getting out of here. And when I do, I'm going to get Peter and his mother back. They'll never do this to another hamster again because --

Aneurysm turns, its BLACK EYES piercing into Bernard's.

ANEURYSM (cont'd)

I'm going to *kill* them.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peter is asleep in his bed, slightly SNORING.

There is a small frame of MOONLIGHT coming in through the window, just enough to highlight --

THE HAMSTER CAGE.

INT. HAMSTER CAGE - CONTINUOUS

Bernard is cuddled in the corner, ASLEEP, buried underneath the wood chips.

He begins to hear the GRINDING SOUND coming from the door.

Aneurysm is gnawing on the thin metal, using his SHARP TEETH to slowly slice away layers of the bar.

Bernard stands up, completely shaken.

BERNARD

What are you doing!?

ANEURYSM

I'm getting out of here. Everyone's asleep. It's perfect timing.

(CONTINUED)

BERNARD

I can't let you do this! Peter is  
my best friend - my *only* friend!

A pause.

Aneurysm turns. His eyes are soulless.

ANEURYSM

Then you can suffer the same fate.

Aneurysm suddenly ATTACKS!

Bernard is knocked against the hamster wheel as it topples  
over, RATTLING.

Bernard and Aneurysm roll across the cage in a fierce  
battle, trying to bite each other.

Bernard kicks and claws, pushing Aneurysm away.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Peter slowly wakes up. He lifts out of bed, seeing his two  
pets in a fight to the finish.

PETER

BERNARD! NO!

Peter hops out of bed, grabbing the cage. He begins to shake  
it, trying to confuse them, not exactly sure what to do.

Peter opens the cage and reaches his fragile hand inside.

INT. HAMSTER CAGE - NIGHT

Peter's hand graces across the two furious critters, just as  
Bernard LASHES, mouth agape --

His teeth sink into Peter's thumb. Peter YELPS, pulling his  
arm away instinctively.

PETER (cont'd)

OUCH! BERNARD! STOP IT!

Peter reaches back in, grabbing Bernard, pulling him in with  
one forceful tug.

The fight ends.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bernard is carried from the cage.

PETER

I can't believe you, Bernard! You started a fight with your new friend the first night!

Peter is clueless to the real motive.

Peter pulls out the PET BOX from the trash bin. He opens it up and places Bernard inside, closing the lid.

PETER (cont'd)

Now you stay in here until you can control yourself. You could've really hurt Aneurysm. And you hurt me.

Peter looks at his injured thumb. A small drop of blood streams across his palm.

Peter sets the pet box on the nightstand.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: SUNDAY

Mom and Peter are formally dressed. Mom helps Peter with his tie.

MOM

You do this wrong every Sunday.

PETER

Why do we have to dress like this for church, anyway? Jesus always has a bath robe on.

MOM

Hold still. We're gonna be late if you don't stop fussing.

PETER

Mom, my hamsters started fighting last night.

MOM

They were probably just playing around or --

(CONTINUED)

PETER  
Bernard bit me.

Peter shows his thumb.

MOM  
What happened, honey?

PETER  
Exactly what I just said.

MOM  
Did you pet him too hard or something?

PETER  
No. Bernard and Aneurysm were fighting, and when I tried to pull them apart, Bernard bit my thumb off!

MOM  
Well, he didn't bite it off. But it's a nasty cut. It looks like it's starting to heal already, which is good.  
(beat)  
Go get your shoes. We're going to be late.

INT. HAMSTER CAGE - CONTINUOUS

Aneurysm continues to gnaw on the cheap metal. It begins to contort when --

SNAP! The metal breaks in half.

The cage door FALLS OPEN.

INT. PET BOX - CONTINUOUS

It's dark, but we can just see Bernard by the holes in the wall. Light shines through them, creating a swiss cheese effect.

Bernard listens as he hears the hamster's MANIACAL CACKLING.

ANEURYSM (O.S.)  
You shouldn't have interfered, Bernard. Do you know what's going to happen? It's a very simple plan,  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANEURYSM (O.S.) (cont'd)  
really. I'm going to sneak into  
Mom's purse. When she's driving  
little Peter to school tomorrow  
morning, I'm going to climb onto  
the brake pedal. She won't be able  
to stop. And before she can do  
anything --

Aneurysm suddenly approaches the Pet Box on the same  
nightstand. He presses his eye against one of the holes and  
peers in.

ANEURYSM  
Little Peter and Mommy will be no  
more.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mom and Peter enter.

PETER  
I am NEVER going to a party after  
church with you ever again!

MOM  
OK, I'm sorry, it went a little  
longer than expected.

PETER  
Three hours longer!

MOM  
I saw some old friends, and I  
didn't want to be rude, so I had to  
chat. Besides, you got to sit with  
that cute Mary Ellen White, didn't  
you?

Mom approaches the kitchen table. She sets her purse on it  
as her and Peter head for the stairs.

Suddenly, Aneurysm SCURRIES across the table, his small feet  
TAPPING against the wood.

Aneurysm crawls onto the purse and climbs inside.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: MONDAY

Peter wakes up. The morning wind blows his curtains. He takes a moment to admire the morning sun through the OPEN WINDOW.

Then he glances over to his hamster cage. SILENCE.

Peter stands up and peers into the cage. He doesn't see Aneurysm anywhere.

PETER

Aneurysm?

The cage appears to be empty.

Suddenly, Mom enters.

MOM

Get ready for school, Peter. You're gonna be late.

PETER

You always say I'm gonna be late for everything!

MOM

Move it, champ!

PETER

Mom, I don't see Aneurysm anywhere.

MOM

He's probably buried underneath all the wood chips. Don't worry about it. Get your stinky butt in the shower.

Peter reluctantly exits.

As soon as the bedroom door closes --

THWAP!

The small lid to the PET BOX opens as the box topples over. Bernard steps out, ready to save the day.

BERNARD

Come on, Bernard. It's time to save your family!

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - LITTLE LATER

Peter grabs his book bag and straps it over his shoulder.

PETER  
(mockingly)  
*Come on, Mom, we're gonna be late!*

MOM  
Alright, Wise Guy. I'm coming.

As Mom is about to leave with Peter --

MOM (cont'd)  
Hang on. I forgot my purse.

Mom grabs her purse, following her son.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mom and Peter rush to the driveway. Peter runs to the car and opens the back door. He hops inside.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bernard crawls across Peter's bed, reaching the OPEN WINDOW overlooking the front yard.

Bernard sees Peter and Mom about to leave.

Bernard looks down. Below him is a ten foot drop. His only chance of surviving the fall is --

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mom opens the car door and gets inside.

MOM  
Put your seatbelt on now, before  
you forget!

In the BACKGROUND, something suddenly lands in --

THE BIRD BATH. A large SPLASH mists against the house. Mom and Peter don't even notice.

Bernard crawls out of the water, looking like a sewer rat.

(CONTINUED)

BERNARD

No! Don't go!

Bernard climbs over the bird bath, toppling over the edge and falling two feet to the grass below.

INT. MOM'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Mom SHUTS the car door.

MOM

You got everything you need?

PETER

(from the backseat)

All set.

MOM

Homework? Snack? All that good stuff?

PETER

Yes, Mom. Let's go.

MOM

I've never seen you so anxious to get to school before.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Bernard SCRAMS across the grassy front lawn, desperate to reach the car.

He JUMPS over the water hose as he finally reaches the DRIVEWAY.

BERNARD

PETERRR!!!

INT. MOM'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Mom tosses her purse into the backseat. Seconds later, she looks dumbfounded.

MOM

Hey champ, can you hand me my purse?

(CONTINUED)



PETER  
You just threw it back here.

MOM  
I know. Your idiot parental unit  
forgot to get the keys.

Peter grabs the bag and hands it forward. Mom retrieves it and opens it up.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Bernard has finally reached the car. He scratches at the front tire.

BERNARD  
How am I gonna get up there?

Bernard runs to the back of the car.

INT. MOM'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Mom reaches her hand inside the bag --

PETER  
OH MY GOD!! MOM!!

Mom JUMPS, pulling her hand back.

MOM  
Jesus Christ! What!?

PETER  
Look!

Peter points to her purse.

The bottom of the bag is COVERED IN BLOOD.

Mom studies it for a moment. She looks inside.

MOM  
Oh my God... eww...

Mom reaches into the purse.

She pulls out a GRISLY SIGHT.

It's Aneurysm, gruesomely IMPALED on Mom's car keys.

(CONTINUED)

MOM (cont'd)  
Honey, don't look...

Peter's eyes grow wide.

Mom opens the car door and tosses the dead hamster out the car, hanging onto her slightly bloody car keys. The lifeless critter lands with a THUD in the front yard.

PETER  
Was that -- ?

MOM  
Yeah. It was your hamster, honey.

PETER  
What happened!?

MOM  
It must've been from when I threw the purse back there. Poor little guy. He must've got out of his cage last night.

PETER  
I told you I didn't see him this morning!

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Bernard listens closely to Mom and Peter's conversation, looking at the dead hamster in the grass.

His family is alive.

The enemy is dead.

*He's won!*

MOM (O.S.)  
You gonna be okay, champ?

PETER (O.S.)  
I guess so.

MOM (O.S.)  
Don't worry. We'll get you another one after school.

FADE OUT