

FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - DAY

NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD

RAUL, mid thirties, clean cut family man wears slacks and clean pressed short sleeve shirt, stands in front of,

JAKE, late forties, stubble face, wears cruddy jeans and a tank top bulging at the belly and over his belt.

FRONT SCREEN DOOR OF HOUSE

A hefty Doberman snarls and barks ferociously at Raul from behind the door. Not a friendly dog. Much like his owner Jake.

FRONT YARD

Raul eyes the dog. He shifts his stare back to Jake.

RAUL

I'd mind you to keep your dog on
your own property.

Jake turns his attention to the screen door and to his dog with a satisfied grin.

JAKE

BRUISER has done nothing wrong. You
people around here are nothing but
cry babies.

Raul throws Jake a determined stare.

Bruiser's vicious snarls echo through the quiet air.

RAUL

There's a leach law in this town.
You know what that means?

(MORE)

RAUL (CONT'D)

Keep your dog under control. Not
rooming around.

Jake shoots Raul a sarcastic glare. He pulls a cigar out of his pocket, lights it and puffs out a cloud of smoke in Raul's direction.

JAKE

Yeah, yeah. Right. Whatever.

Raul watches as Bruiser tries to rip the door down to get at him. Raul walks away.

INT. SPLIT LEVEL HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

LOUISE, early thirties, wears a bright flowered stitched blouse and shorts, loads dinnerware in an automatic dishwasher and stares at Carrie.

SUDDENLY

CARRIE (6) tomboy pixie girl, races into the kitchen excited.

CARRIE

Mommy, Miss Blacky got another
squirrel. You should've seen it.
Them squirrels don't stand a chance
with her. She's like a girl lion.

Louise frowns at Carrie. She stops loading the dish washer.

LOUISE

That cat's going to hurt somebody.
She's too wild.

CARRIE

She don't hurt no one. Only other
animals that come in our yard.

Louise studies Carrie's serious frown.

LOUISE

Honey, I'm afraid she's going to
scratch your baby brother.

Carrie pouts and tramps back out the door.

CARRIE (O.S.)

No she won't. She's a good cat.

Louise shakes her head and continues to load more dishes.

EXT./INT. SPLIT LEVEL HOUSE, OPEN CARPORT - DAY

MISS BLACKY a feisty large cat with shiny smooth black fur stalks a small ball tied to a string.

Carrie holds the other end of the string.

CARRIE

Come on Miss Blacky. Get it.

Miss Blacky jumps up and pounces on the ball.

Carrie giggles.

HOUSE DOOR TO CARPORT

MISHA, a tiny infant boy, bounces in his stroller from inside the closed screen door. He stares out into the carport wide eyed as he watches Miss Blacky.

INT. SPLIT LEVEL HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is brightly lit by a chandelier hanging from the ceiling over the center of the table.

Carrie sits at the table. Her face is buried in a big bright colorful children's book. The title on the cover reads, 'BIG CATS OF AFRICA'.

Raul sits at the other end. He studies papers with charts and graphs spread out in front of him.

Louise enters the room. She walks over to Raul and places her hands on his shoulders.

LOUISE

Misha is sound asleep.

Raul glances up at Louise with a smile.

RAUL

Little guy was worn out today.

Louise smiles at Carrie.

LOUISE

Studying hard honey?

Carrie lifts her head up with a big bright smile.

CARRIE

Yes mommy. It's about girl lions.

LOUISE

For being a good girl, we're buying you a cute little puppy.

CARRIE

Really? Why Mommy?

Raul lifts his eyebrows and turns to Louise with a questioning stare.

RAUL

Nice idea. What about Miss Blacky?

Louise turns back to Raul.

LOUISE

I think we could find Miss Blacky a good home.

Carrie slams the book closed and stares cross at her mother.

CARRIE

No mommy. This is Miss Blacky's home. She doesn't want to live anywhere else.

Raul watches Carrie.

RAUL

Sweetheart. Your mother is right.
Miss Blacky might accidentally hurt
your baby brother. You don't want
that do you?

Tears flood Carries eyes.

CARRIE

You can't take her away. We're her
only family.

Carrie's tears trickle down her face.

LOUISE

I'm sorry honey. We have to look
out for both of your safety.

RAUL

Calm down Carrie. No one's going to
take her away.

Carrie gives Raul a long sad stare.

CARRIE

Daddy. You said you don't like
cats. But you said you liked Miss
Blacky. Didn't you?

RAUL

I'll admit, she's an unusual cat.

Carrie wipes her tears with her hands.

Louise smiles at Carrie.

LOUISE

Aunt Sylvia is coming to visit
tomorrow. She hasn't seen you since
you were a baby.

Carrie's face brightens with a smile.

CARRIE

I know Ant Sylvia will like Miss
Blacky.

Carrie opens her book and sticks her head back in it.

Louise stares at Carrie wide eyed.

INT. SPLIT LEVEL HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Misha bounces excited in his stroller at the screen door. He
stares out the door while banging the metal of the screen
door with the stroller.

KITCHEN COUNTER

Louise pours steaming coffee in two coffee mugs. She carries
the mugs to the kitchen table where,

AUNT SYLVIA (40's) wears old fashion dress draped to her
ankles and a kind hearted smile and disposition, sits at the
table. Sylvia gently lifts one of the mugs from Louise.

Louise sits next to Sylvia.

LOUISE

It's so good to see you Sylvia. How
long has it been?

AUNT SYLVIA

I've been anxious to stop by for
the longest time.

A small dog's BARK carries in from outside.

Louise turns to the door, then back to Aunt Sylvia with a
delighted grin.

LOUISE

When did you get that little
poodle?

AUNT SYLVIA

Last month. I couldn't resist. He was sitting there all by himself in the pet store, looking so cute. His eyes were saying, 'Take me home.'

LOUISE

He's adorable.

The bark continues to echo into the house. Louise stares at the door and frowns.

SUDDENLY

Carrie storms into the kitchen, barely misses bumping Misha's stroller.

CARRIE

Mommy, ant Sylvia's dog is teasing Miss Blacky.

Aunt Sylvia opens her arms out to Carrie with a cheery smile.

SYLVIA

You're getting to be such a pretty girl. Come here darling. It's been so long since you've seen your Aunt Sylvia.

Carrie strides over to Sylvia with a bashful grin.

Suddenly the dog YIPS, SQUEALS, and WHIMPERS.

Carrie shifts her eyes to the door and takes a step away from Aunt Sylvia.

Misha cries. Louise stands. She picks Misha up out of the stroller and turns to Aunt Sylvia.

LOUISE

What happened?

Sylvia stands and strolls over to the door.

SYLVIA

Benji! Come here my little darling!

Carrie walks away from the table with her head held down.

Sylvia rushes out the door, allowing the screen door to fling against the house.

Louise glances at Carrie with a frown.

Sylvia's cry carries into the kitchen.

SYLVIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
My goodness. My sweet little
Benji's hurt.

Sylvia rushes back in grieved to the point of tears.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
Benji's cute little nose is
bleeding. I've got to get him to a
vet.

Louise studies Sylvia and turns to Carrie annoyed.

Carrie looks away.

CARRIE
It wasn't Miss Blacky's fault.
Benji was teasing her.

Louise stares hard at Carrie.

Carrie tramps out of the room.

INT. SPLIT LEVEL HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Raul relaxes on a recliner chair reading a magazine to himself.

Carrie quietly fiddles with a toy tiger. She lifts her head just enough to see,

Louise lumbers in the room with a stern stare.

Raul looks up at her.

RAUL

I see you settled Misha down. What was wrong?

Carrie lowers her head and continues to fiddle with her toy, trying to seem invisible.

Louise stares hard at Carrie than turns to Raul.

LOUISE

That cat upset him when she attacked Sylvia's little dog today.

Carrie lifts her head with a pout.

CARRIE

It was Benji's fault.

Louise glances at Carrie and shakes her head then turns back to Raul.

LOUISE

Raul I want that cat out of here. Before she does real harm.

Tears stream down Carrie's face. Her grip tightens around the toy tiger.

CARRIE

No! I won't let you.

LOUISE

Carrie. That cat goes.

Carrie stands up defensive.

CARRIE

Daddy don't. She'll die without us.

Raul stares at Carrie with a smile.

RAUL

Sweetheart, we'll find Miss Blacky a good home. She'll be fine. You'll have more fun with a puppy.

Carrie's face is wet and dripping with tears. She trembles. Her breathing is choppy.

CARRIE

I don't want a dog. I want Miss
Blacky.

Carrie coughs from her sobs. She storms out of the room tossing her toy tiger to the floor.

Louise glances at Raul feeling sorry for Carrie, but steadfast.

RAUL

Okay. When I get home tomorrow
evening I'll take Miss Blacky to
the animal shelter.

Louise turns to the direction Carrie left. Her expression softens.

EXT. SPLIT LEVEL HOUSE, OPEN CARPORT - DAY

Misha sits in his baby carriage chewing on a soft rattle, a few feet from the short flight of concrete steps leading to the screen door.

FRONT YARD -

Jake's dog Bruiser sniffs his way into the yard past the driveway entrance. Bruiser lifts his head. He catches sight of,

CARPORT -

Misha gawks at Bruiser unsure what the dog is. He is more curious than afraid.

SCREEN DOOR -

Louise lumbers out. A horrified expression crosses her face when she sees,

Bruiser now just inside the carport. He snarls at Misha and Louise, showing his large fangs.

Louise inches to the carriage and grabs hold of it, pulling it back cautiously.

Bruiser's bark grows more vicious, saliva shoots from his mouth.

Misha cries. Bruiser snarls louder. With each bark his teeth click.

Louise picks up a broom against the house close to the screen door. She holds the broom ready to strike the dog.

Bruiser backs up a few steps past the edge of the carport where the roof overhangs. Bruiser's growls grow deeper.

Louise grabs the handle of the carriage. She pulls it back to her and to the steps of the screen door.

Bruiser paces back to the edge of the carport.

Louise's hands tremble as she struggles to lift the carriage up the short flight of concrete steps.

Bruiser arches back and ready to lung at the carriage.

CARPORT ROOF

Suddenly Miss Blacky leaps from the roof, down onto the back of Bruiser's neck. She wraps herself around his neck sinking her teeth and claws into him.

Bruiser lets out a screaming YIP! He charges around the house trying to throw Miss Blacky off. But the cat will not release her hold.

Bruiser slams his body against the corner rail of the carport. Miss Blacky clings to his neck.

Bruiser tires, crying with loud WHIMPERS. Miss Blacky forces Bruiser down like a lioness bringing down an African buffalo.

Bruiser's body becomes lifeless. Miss Blacky finally releases her hold.

Miss Blacky limps by the carport, stops and stares at, Louise holds Misha in her arms. Tears well up in her eyes. Miss Blacky limps away.

Misha reaches his little hands out to Miss Blacky.

I/E. SPLIT LEVEL HOUSE, OPEN CARPORT - EVENING

The sun descends as it increasingly grows dark.

Raul lumbers out from the screen door and down the concrete steps.

Louise follows with Misha in her arms. She turns and places her hand to her mouth nearly in tears as she sees,

Carrie holds Miss Blacky in her arms. The big cat lays motionless, eyes partly open. It takes most of Carrie's strength to hold Miss Blacky up.

Blood is pooled on Miss Blacky's body near her thigh.

Tears flood Carrie's eyes. She stares at Raul.

CARRIE

Daddy Miss Blacky's hurt bad.

Louise turns to Raul.

LOUISE

We've got to get her to a vet.

Raul stares at Louise.

RAUL

Okay.

LOUISE

I'll call Sue to look after Misha.

CARRIE

(pleading)

Mommy we gotta get Miss Blacky
fixed fast.

Carrie's arms begin to fail her from the big cat's weight.

Raul gently takes Miss Blacky from Carrie's arms. Miss Blacky slowly lifts her head up at Raul.

RAUL

She looks to be in pretty bad
shape.

Louise shuts the screen door and turns to Carrie.

LOUISE

I'll take Misha with us.

Carrie runs out of the carport and to,

THE CAR

Carrie pulls the back door open. A cat carrier sits on the seat. She pulls it out and tosses it to the side.

CARRIE

You don't need that for Miss Blacky
daddy. She'll be good.

Raul carries Miss Blacky to the open car door.

INT. VETERINARIAN HOSPITAL, WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Carrie sits in a chair, her chin propped with her hands.

Raul sits next to Louise and stares concerned at Carrie.

Misha sits on Louise's lap. Louise stares at the door with a sign that reads,

ANIMAL OPERATING ROOM

SUDDENLY

A young woman VETERINARIAN enters the room.

Carrie jumps up out of her seat.

CARRIE

Will Miss Blacky live?

Louise listens anxiously.

The Veterinarian smiles at Carrie.

VETERINARIAN

She'll be fine. Miss Blacky just
needed a few stitches.

CARRIE

Can I see her now?

Misha flaps his arms wild with a big open smile.

FADE TO:

I/E. SPLIT LEVEL HOUSE, OPEN CARPORT - DAY

Misha giggles and flaps his hands in his stroller.

Miss Blacky lays off to the side, watching.

FADE OUT.

THE END.