

"THE DOLPHIN AND THE CAT"

by

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THE DOLPHIN AND THE CAT

FADE IN:

HALF MOON MARKET. EXT. SUNSET

MEDIUM SHOT from twenty feet inland looking directly out to sea. THE CAMERA NEVER MOVES.

B.G. The sun is minutes from touching the horizon and is starting to turn a steel-blue sea into ripples of orange, blurring distant vision, despite the calm water and cloudless sky. Centered in front of the lower curve of the sun is a DARK DOT. The dot appears stationary.

F.G. The "coast" is a concrete slab and cut off to a short cliff twenty feet away. Occasionally, WE HEAR ocean waves and WE SEE spray fly into view from behind the concrete slab. In the FAR LEFT, embedded in the concrete, stands a few inches of rusty plumbing pipe. This concrete is the foundation of what was once a Merkan house.

In the FAR RIGHT, almost entirely OS, is the edge of a wooden table with a random collection of bottles and bowls. Occasionally, WE SEE the elbow, shoulder or foot of a furry creature, moving around on two legs behind it. We never see the entire animal.

CONTINUOUS O.S. WE HEAR sounds of an open air market. Distant voices call out names of various species of deep water fish. WE HEAR the muttering of a thin crowd, laughing of children, etc.

CONTINUOUS Other occasional shoppers cross in front of the chairs. This is the side of a common market road.

Slightly offset of CENTER are two wooden beach chairs with short leg-rests and short seat-backs. The right chair is empty. DOLPHIN relaxes in the left chair, her extra long tail and fins bent at the "knees" like a woman slightly curling her legs to the side in elegance. Her fins rest against the armrests like hands. Her overly long dolphin head rests against the back of the chair, shaded with a large-brimmed, floppy sun hat. She wears no other clothing. Her long dolphin mouth hangs open. She looks asleep.

TO THE LEFT of her chair sits a black wine bottle from which sticks a skinny copper pipe, four feet long and

angled toward her. Leaning against THE RIGHT of her chair is a beheaded broom handle. On the ground between the chairs is a pile of wet, rotten fishing net. A wooden crate sits on the ground in front of her fins, half-full of dead fish.

From the LEFT, WE SEE a scrimshaw cross the screen. A large dog with misshapen face is tethered to the scrimshaw like a horse. The passengers are a pair of large squirrels, cuddling and chatting incoherently low. A baby squirrel sits on the scrimshaw bar excited to watching their destination. Another baby squirrel is giggling and playing as it dangles free from the back of the scrimshaw. Just before the scrimshaw leaves view to the right, the second baby squirrel falls to the ground with a yelp and scrambles back to its tiny feet and scurries to run after its parents.

As the scrimshaw exits to the right, CAT strolls up from O.S. right. She walks on two feet and stops to look out to sea at the dot. Her "arms" hang at her sides like a human. She is either tremendously tall for a cat or DOLPHIN is tremendously small for a dolphin; they are about the same size. CAT is wearing a simple sleeveless sundress of unbleached cotton.

Dolphin notices her company and turns her head.

DOLPHIN

Whatchya starin at?

CAT

They's sum'n floatin out there.

Dolphin's neck doesn't turn well. She struggles to flop her upper body over one armrest to see. Her hat blocks the view of the dark spot on the horizon. She flops back to sit upright again. The splotch is slightly larger, almost unnoticeably, than it was a when the scene began.

DOLPHIN

Prolly just more Merkan junk. There's so much junk floatin out there there's a spot where it all collects in the current. Almost enough to make its own dang continent. A whole dang continent of floatin garbage. You'd think it'd all sink sooner or later.

CAT
(ignoring the comment)
Ain't seen you since Febary, girl. Where's
you been?

DOLPHIN
Up north. I's gettin old. I can't handle
the heat down here no more. It's getting
hot. Too hot. Too hot! How can you stand
it with all that frikkin fur?

CAT
Then whatchyou doin sittin in the dang
sun?

Dolphin gestures to the crate of dead fish with her tail.

DOLPHIN
Sellin fish. Want some?

CAT
(noses over)
I would, baby, but I ain't got no coin.

DOLPHIN
(interested)
You still got your thumbs?

The fingers and thumbs of Cat's paws are longer than usual,
but they are still paws. Cat lifts her hands enough to
wiggle a pair of opposable thumbs as if verifying she still
has them.

CAT
Yeah, dey's still attached.

Dolphin bends over the armrest to point her snout down at
the rotten pile of netting.

DOLPHIN
Tell you what. You mend up my net and I'll
give you some fish for it.

CAT
You's got yourself a deal.

Cat reaches down between the chairs and picks up the wad
that is a fishing net. She unravels it like a blanket,
reviewing the holes, and sits down in the other chair. Her
shoulder often blocks the distant splotch on the horizon as

her arms move to work.

The splotch is slowly getting larger and now has a vague shape.

CAT

So whatchyou been up to?

Dolphin leans over the left armrest to close her mouth around the end of the copper pipe, sucks a drink of wine and sits back again.

DOLPHIN

I hate men.

Cat flashes a sharp-toothed smile of humor but continues to review the damage of the net, settles back in the chair starts to tie the netting back together with deft, clawed fingers.

CAT

Whatchyou try to date this time?

DOLPHIN

A stork-breed.

Cat spits a short laugh.

DOLPHIN

(defensive)

He's a sailor. Works a fishing boat outta Reeka. So he was always at sea. Got these beautiful wing feathers too. White and gray, like sea storm. So, I figure, he's ocean/land breed. I'm an ocean/land breed. Why not? Right?

CAT

You ain't no land breed, girl, of no way shape or form. And you sure as heyell ain't no bird breed, neither.

DOLPHIN

I gotta come to the surface to breathe just like you do. Just cuz I can hold my breath longer—

Dolphin's words cut short when a shopper, a very large bobcat walking on four legs, strolls up from O.S. right to peak into her crate.

DOLPHIN
(to Bobcat)
Three copper a piece.

BOBCAT
Dey's already dead.

DOLPHIN
Well, yeah. I give 'em a quick and
painless. Wouldn't be proper if I didn't.
Wouldn't be proper to let 'em suffocate.
Just wouldn't be proper!

BOBCAT
One copper a piece since dey's already
dead.

Dolphin sips her wine and sits back comfortably, gazing
elsewhere.

DOLPHIN
Have a nice day.

BOBCAT
(motions to sunset with chin)
Market closes in a couple. These ain't
gonna keep 'til morrow. You get caught
wastin all dis, you's busted for murder.

DOLPHIN
(daring)
You think they's brudders gonna leap outta
da sea and file charges at court? Look.
You want fish, three copper a piece or go
gets them yourself. Da sea's right back
there. Have a nice swim.

Dolphin gazes away again, ignoring him. She rolls her eyes
as he continues to argue.

BOBCAT
Don't take no blood family to file charges
no more. Da cops demselves'll bust ya for
it deze days.

Dolphin turns to the broom handle and gets a good grip on
it with her long mouth. She lifts the handle perpendicular
towards Cat and carefully lifts it over Cat's head.

DOLPHIN

'shcuse me.

Cat ducks to let the stick go by and continues her work to tie together shredded pieces of net. When Cat ducks, WE SEE the distant splotch a moment, now the silhouette shape of a ship's bow, now mid-distance. Dolphin holds the broom stick level in front of Cat's lap and gets a good grip on it with her teeth, pausing there.

BOBCAT

(cont.)

Dere's cops all over da place. Whatchyou say I go ask 'em-

Dolphin fast swings the broom stick from one side to the other, whapping the bobcat hard on the shoulder. Bobcat yelps and jumps O.S. right.

Dolphin carefully moves the stick back around and sets in place where it was so she can pick it up again if need be. Cat ducks so it can pass without needing to glance to see it coming. When she ducks, the ship is larger still and still dead center in front of the now half-set sun.

DOLPHIN

(sips wine and sighs)

All men are animals.

CAT

(lightly)

Some just make better pets. (beat) So what's the story with this stork breed? The sex had to've been a trick.

DOLPHIN

(exasperated)

He was workin when we met. Had a job on a fishin boat and sellin in the Reeka markets. He could sail in and dive for a shark if he wanted to. Good at it too. Always impressed me when they can go fishin without ever getting in the water. Don't make no sense. No sense. No sense at all.

During Dolphin's monologue, the ship is now close enough for parts of it to be in view despite the bodies and chairs still in front of it. It is thin with a tall, sharp bow. WE

SEE we are so low and the bow is so tall that it blocks most of the view of the super structure. It is now apparent that it is coming steadily closer.

DOLPHIN
(cont.)

But then he got lazy. Ain't sure why. He was eatin his catch and mine. Next thing I know, belly's swellin like he's preggos and, suddenly, his wings can't lift his ass of the ground to save his life. So he's fired from da boat cuz now he can't fish neither. So he starts eatin' my catch without catching any of his own no more, gets fatter, now his wings are sagging, draggin on the ground like a frikkin cape, belly hanging out like he swallowed a watermelon. When I gots to leavin, you know what he says to me? Do you know what that man said to me? I still don't frikking believe it what that man said to me!

WE SEE the next strolling shoppers cross from O.S. right, pause their feet to look at the approaching ship, and turn to dash O.S. right again.

CAT
(wisely)
What'd he say?

Cat holds up the net to see the holes now closed up with hand ties, checks it fully and leans over the chair to return it to place.

The ship is close enough to start looming behind them, taller than their heads, but Cat doesn't see it yet.

DOLPHIN
(insulted)

He say's he's just depressed! He told me he'd be more happier if he got back on a ship, but since he can't get a job without flying, it'll do if I just gave him da sex more often, then he'd be up and about more, lose some weight, get back in the sky, get back to work. But now, since he can't fly no more, I's gotta be on top, he says. (squeals and flops her fins against

the armrests) Do you have any idea how hard it is to fuck from the top on land!? Watchyou think, I'm some kinda mermaid that sprouts legs when I dry?! Ain't like I can straddle his ass!

Cat grins to that and gets out of the chair enough to poke her head into the crate.

CAT

How many can I have?

DOLPHIN

Oh, fuck it, take all you want. Thanks for fixin my net. So then? When I's leavin? Yknow what he says to me? Do you know what that man said? He says he's gonna get back on a boat and he's gonna catch me for supper.

As Cat gathers an armload of fish from the crate, she catches sight of what WE SEE is a US Navy Warship looming over their heads and steadily approaching from directly behind them, the bow is now O.S. above. Cat finishes to gather her current handful and dashes O.S. right. Dolphin doesn't notice due to her ranting.

DOLPHIN

Says he's gonna have a sushi feast wit his shipmates, he says. Sushi! Can you believe it! Bastard don't even got the decency to cook my ass first!

Ship's hull continues to approach an now hull blocks the dimming sunshine from side to side. WE SEE straight down the bowline, solid iron hull with one anchor missing, the other giant anchor tied firm to its locker port.

Dolphin swigs her wine straw again, oblivious.

DOLPHIN

(mutters)

Get back on a boat. Hmpf! In his condition? Bullshit. Ain't no one gonna hire him wit a watermelon gut. He get better luck somebody shovin a ship right up his ass.

Ship's bow hits the concrete slab with a BANG and continues to cut through the old, cracked slab. Dolphin reacts to the

noise, flopping over the chair to look behind her only to turn eyes up to the bow looming over her head and incidentally rolls onto the concrete in front of it all.

Dolphin yelps, rolls fast to her belly, and "swims" the concrete deck to scramble O.S. left. Concrete slab crumbles away and splashes into the sea. The chairs are parted and pushed away by hull. The crate of fish disappears over the side. The hull continues to cut through old concrete, slowing, The nose is so close all that WE SEE is the curve of metal that creates the bow's 'blade'. Rusting rivets that still hold the hull together are now the size of silver dollars. WE HEAR the groan of metal against concrete slow. WE HEAR the splash and kerplunk of concrete chunks and chairs fall into the ocean. The metal bow slows to a stop just before the metal bow is about to hit the CAMERA LENS.

DOLPHIN
(O.S. timidly)
Yikes.

FADE OUT:

THE END