

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

by

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Shooting Script

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- 1 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 1
- Lamplight shines on a RECORD as wrinkled hands turn it to check for dust. A gush of breath blows a HAIR from the record.
- The record is placed on an old RECORD PLAYER - the needle is lifted and delicately hovered over the record. The needle connects with the record and it begins to spin.
- An upbeat '60s pop song (reference: The Turtles' 'Happy Together') plays. N.B.: this tune plays over all of Ms Crow's opening scenes.
- CUT TO:
- 2 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT 2
- A marigold gloved hand scrubs at the '80s vinyl with a CLOTH. The floor is being given the waxing of its life.
- MS CROW (75) - looks older than her years, clad in well-worn, but neatly pressed, smart clothing - pauses in her polishing and squints critically at the gleaming floor.
- She looks around at the immaculate room - nods, satisfied. The GLOVES make a snapping noise as she pulls them off.
- CUT TO:
- 3 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT 3
- A grubby, trembling hand reaches out to a wall, barely lit by a nearby street lamp. The tinkle of a stream of piss, and a huge sigh of relief.
- GARY (25) - lanky, terrible skin, clothes have seen better days - leans heavily against the wall, swaying giddily.
- The tinkle tails off. He shakes himself, zips up and weaves unsteadily down the lamplit street.
- CUT TO:
- 4 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 4
- Ms Crow swishes through the room - catches sight of a FRAMED PICTURE on the wall and stops. She adjusts the frame by a fraction - resumes her journey to the door.
- CUT TO:

5 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 5

She walks up to the front door - draws the BOLT back, unhooks the CHAIN, turns the KEY in the lock and places it neatly on the hall TABLE.

CUT TO:

6 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT. 6

Ms Crow walks back into the room - frowns and stops - adjusts the framed picture back to the way it was. Nods - better.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT 7

Gary meanders down a row of identical terraced houses, humming a tune to himself, clearly out of it.

A CAT ambles across the road and trots ahead of him.

GARY
Jay-Z? That you?

Gary squints blearily at the Cat - quickens his pace, makes mouse-like squeaking noises to get the Cat's attention.

GARY (CONT'D)
Psst Jayzee! Here Jayzee-ka!

Spooked, the Cat darts under a gate in the low wall ahead, up to the house and through the cat flap. Gary trudges up to the gate - pushes it open and stumbles through.

GARY (CONT'D)
That was quick. Home sweet home.

Gary makes it to the door and bends down - almost falling over - to the cat flap.

GARY (CONT'D)
(calling through)
I'll come and feed you in a minute!

Gary straightens, rubbing his bleary eyes with a fist.

CUT TO:

8 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT 8

Water gushes from a tap into a hot bath, steam rises.

Ms Crow fumbles at the base of an ELECTRIC CANDLE - finally succeeds in turning it on.

She places it next to a CROWD OF ELECTRIC CANDLES around one end of the bath.

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

A squeaking sound as Ms Crow turns off the tap.

She puts her hand into the water to test the temperature, nods and takes it out. The dripping from her wet hand echoes in the silent, tiled room.

Hands towelled dry, she folds the TOWEL up neatly and replaces it on the towel rail.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT 9

Gary fumbles in his trouser pockets, searching. No luck. He checks his jacket pockets - one of them jangles - his hand emerges triumphant, and he holds the KEYS aloft.

He tries first one key, then the other in the lock. Neither of them will turn.

He holds his keys up to the light, puzzled.

He puts one of the keys back in the lock, leans into the door and twists the handle - almost falls in as the door opens.

CUT TO:

10 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 10

O.S., the clatter of keys thrown onto the hall table. The quiet thunk! of the door closing.

Gary lopes into the room.

GARY

Come on, then, Jay-zee. Come to daddy-

Gary slips on the newly waxed floor - falls - smacks his head on the floor - passes out.

CUT TO:

11 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT 11

An orderly line of small PILLS sits on the edge of the bath.

Ms Crow shakes the last few pills out of the BOTTLE and places them neatly next to their fellows. She puts the bottle on the side. The label reads: 'SLEEPING TABLETS'.

She surveys the luxurious bath. She is peaceful, calm. Still fully dressed in her smartest outfit, she steps into the bath - there's a THUD! from downstairs. Ms Crow freezes.

She looks towards the doorway, waiting, listening. Nothing.

A plaintive meow sounds from downstairs.

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

Ms Crow hesitates - splashes back out of the bath.

CUT TO:

12

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT.

12

MS CROW (O.S.)

Mr Darcy? Have you done something
silly?

Ms Crow appears in the doorway - and gasps.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Oh my -!

Ms Crow clutches the doorframe, breathing hard at the shock.

Gary lies unconscious on the floor, muddy footprints leading
from the hallway.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

You're not Mr Darcy.

Shock begins to give way to fear. Ms Crow slowly turns and
staggers back through the doorway.

Behind her, Gary's fingers twitch.

CUT TO:

13

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

13

A cosy, tidy living room, complete with ARMCHAIRS, SOFA, a
FOOT STOOL, stone fireplace. Tucked away at the back of the
END TABLE next to an armchair is a LANDLINE PHONE.

Ms Crow eyes the phone fearfully, white knuckled fists
kneading the back of the armchair, deep, shaky breaths as she
vies for control over her rising panic. She closes her eyes,
concentrates on her breathing. BEAT.

Her breathing begins to ease. She opens her eyes, her gaze
immediately locks back on the phone. She needs to psyche
herself up for this.

MS CROW

Right. It's simple. You pick up the
phone. 999. Say "Police, please",
like they do in the films. And just
tell them. Easy. Isn't it, Monty?

She speaks to someone on the sofa. We can't see them.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Right you are. Here goes.

Ms Crow walks up to the phone - holds her visibly shaking
hand out above it - hesitates - withdraws the hand.

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Oh -! what if they want me to go to the station? I'll have to make a statement, like they do on the television. I can't do that!

She wrings her hands and paces past the fireplace, grows increasingly agitated.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Oh Monty, what should I do?!

By the fireplace, a shrine-like nook houses the record player and a neat pile of '60s RECORDS, a collection of SPIRIT BOTTLES and fancy GLASSES. An old PHOTO of a young man hangs on the wall overlooking them.

Ms Crow spots a BOTTLE OF WHISKY. She's tempted. She looks apprehensively from phone, to door, to whisky - decides.

Ms Crow grabs the bottle and a glass, sits down in her armchair and pours herself a large measure. She glances guiltily off to the side.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Don't look at me like that, I'll have a drink and then I'll be able to do it. I know it's not usual for a Monday night, but neither is finding a strange man conked out on my freshly waxed vinyl. So. Here's to Dutch courage.

She takes a swig - grimaces - sighs with relief.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

(false bravado)

Oh that's better. How about you, Monty? How are your nerves, eh? You hate strangers in the house - look at what you did to poor Louise, and she was only coming in to give you some biscuits.

She takes another generous sip and puts the glass down.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Come here. Come on. Let's have a cuddle.

The Cat saunters up and jumps onto her lap. Ms Crow strokes the Cat lovingly, kisses its fur. She begins to relax.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

What a fright, eh? Don't you worry, whoever he is, he's out for the count.

(MORE)

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

MS CROW (CONT'D)

He could be dead, for all I know.
Wasn't exactly in a hurry to check
his pulse, I must say.

She muses distantly, absentmindedly stroking the purring Cat.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Made such a mess of my lovely
vinyl. And everything was looking
so perfect for after. People just
have to come along and scupper your
plans, don't they? Hmm? You, Mr
Monty Darcy, are much better
company.

The Cat jumps off her lap. She takes another drink, musing.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Do you think he's a drunk? Smells
like a drunk. Been down at the pub,
I shouldn't wonder. But on a Monday
night? Can't have been many people
there.

Ms Crow gets up and wanders over to look out of the window.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Nope. They're all closed up. No
free music or laughter tonight.

Ms Crow's face darkens - she shakes herself back into the
present.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Right. Let's get to it, then. The
sooner he's out of here, the sooner
I can get on.

Ms Crow drains the rest of her glass as she strides back to
the end table - puts the glass down decisively. She flexes
her hands and - before she has time to think - snatches up
the phone.

She is poised to dial '999' when a thought strikes her. The
blood drains from her face.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

What if he's dead? Actually dead?
In my kitchen. They might think I
had something to do with it. They
could lock me up.

Ms Crow stares at the phone in horror, holds it out at arm's
length as if it might bite.

The Cat meows loudly. Ms Crow turns on him.

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

MS CROW (CONT'D)
(furiously defensive)
Don't you start! It may seem silly
to you, no one suspects you of
anything if you're cute and fluffy!

The Cat gives her a wide-eyed look. Ms Crow relents slightly.

MS CROW (CONT'D)
You'd be an overnight success on
'social media'. It's everywhere you
look, Netbox this, Chatflix that.
But you answer me this: if it's
really that easy and everyone's so
'connected' nowadays, how come I'm
still here on my own? Eh?

From O.S.: rustling and groaning. Ms Crow jumps a mile.

MS CROW (CONT'D)
What was that? Quick, Monty, hide!

Ms Crow shoos the Cat away. He shoots off. She rushes to hide
behind the protruding wall of the nook, groaning as she
kneels down.

From O.S.: coughing and retching.

Ms Crow pokes her head out from behind the wall.

MS CROW (CONT'D)
(incensed)
Hey! You better not be vomiting on
my vinyl in there!

The retching stops abruptly - as if he's heard. Ms Crow puts
her hand over her mouth, shocked - what has she done?
SILENCE.

Ms Crow listens hard. From O.S.: dragging, scraping sounds.
Heavy, slow footsteps approach. Ms Crow ducks back down.

Gary clomps in unsteadily, rubbing his head in confused pain.
He stops, looks about - spots Ms Crow's feet poking out.

GARY
Hello?

Frozen with terror, Ms Crow doesn't move.

GARY (CONT'D)
'Scuse me, can you tell me where I
am, please? I went home, but I've
woken up somewhere else.

Ms Crow frowns - what fresh madness is this?

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

GARY (CONT'D)

Please, are you the mistress of the house, like?

Ms Crow sits up like a shot.

MS CROW

How dare you! I'm mistress to no one!

Ms Crow struggles to get up. Gary reaches out a helping hand. Ms Crow flinches away, retreats backwards to the fireplace.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Get off! I warn you, I'm armed and more than prepared to use my weapon.

At the fireplace, Ms Crow feels behind her for a weapon.

GARY

What weapon? What are you talking about, mate?

Ms Crow steps forward, angered anew.

MS CROW

I am not your 'mate'! All you need to know is you have got the wrong house. I am not the defenceless old lady you thought I was.

GARY

Woah, hold up, lady - you think I'm going to hurt you?

MS CROW

(patronisingly)

Quite frankly, I don't know what to think. But I do know you're breaking and entering-

GARY

[IN] The door was open.

MS CROW

Don't interrupt. And - and you're also - drunk and disorderly! So - you can go.

Gary looks utterly confused, rubs his aching head.

GARY

What? I'm not drunk.

MS CROW

Ha! And I'm the Queen of India!

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

GARY

I was on juice all night with the footie. Man I must be having a bad dream or summat. Are you even, like, real?

Gary reaches out to poke her. She tries to lift the stool as a barrier, but her back cracks.

MS CROW

Ow!

Ms Crow doubles over in pain, dropping the stool.

GARY

Are you alright?

MS CROW

Hardly!

Gary attempts to move round the chair towards her.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

You take one more step, and I'll set Monty on you!

Gary stops in his tracks, curious.

GARY

Who's Monty?

MS CROW

My...pet.

GARY

Oh yeah, what is he?

Ms Crow casts about for inspiration.

MS CROW

A dog - Alsatian.

GARY

Aw I love dogs.

MS CROW

Well not this one, you won't.

GARY

Prefer cats though. You seen my cat?

MS CROW

If my Monty gets to you, he'll - why would I have seen your cat?

GARY

I think he came in here just now.

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

MS CROW

I find that highly unlikely. I don't allow strange cats in my house.

Ms Crow edges round to her armchair, taking care to keep Gary in view.

GARY

Well he was the spit of him. You got a cat?

MS CROW

What is this, the Spanish pet Inquisition? I don't know who you think you are, but I'd like you to leave.

She tries to sit down in her chair - stifles a cry of pain.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Ah!

Gary weaves up and puts a supportive hand on her shoulder.

GARY

You alright, Miss?

MS CROW

Get your filthy hands off me! And it's Ms Crow to you.

GARY

Gary.

Gary holds out a trembling hand for a handshake. Ms Crow merely looks at it disdainfully.

MS CROW

Well, Gareth, kindly let me be before you do any more damage.

GARY

Oh - no, see it's Gary? All me mates call me Gary, so you can.

BEAT. Ms Crow gives him a quelling look.

GARY (CONT'D)

I can help you with your back. Me nan had sciatica, and I used to give her a weekly massage, so I know what to do.

She considers him suspiciously - but she's tempted.

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

MS CROW

What a preposterous idea! How do I know you won't throttle me when my back's turned?

GARY

Wow you got a dark mind there. Give you a testimonial if you like. Me nan used to call me Good Grip Gary.

MS CROW

Really?

GARY

For the knots, like. You need a good handle on 'em if you're gonna beat them.

MS CROW

Do you now?

GARY

Come on, Miss- Ms Crow, give me a chance to make it up to you. I feel terrible barging in your home, causing you distress and that.

MS CROW

You know how you can make it up to me?

GARY

How?

MS CROW

You can clean my kitchen floor of your filthy mess, and then you can leave this house and never come back.

GARY

But - I can't leave you suffering like this. The least I can do is fetch you some painkillers. Where do you keep 'em, in your bog?

MS CROW

Excuse me! I think you'll find I don't have a 'bog', I have a back patio.

GARY

No, I mean your toilet, like.

MS CROW

Oh. Well that's upstairs, like any half civilised bathroom.

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

GARY

Great stuff. Bathroom cabinet,
yeah?

Gary bobs purposefully towards the door. Horror dawns for Ms Crow - he'll see the pills!

MS CROW

No! You mustn't!

GARY

Why not? Look, I'm not leaving
until you're feeling better. End
of.

MS CROW

Very well. You can try your
massage.

Gary beams and cracks his knuckles.

GARY

You won't regret it, Ms Crow.

MS CROW

Only five minutes, and then I want
you out. Understood?

GARY

Sure.

Gary nods eagerly. Ms Crow reluctantly turns her back to him. Beaming, Gary starts to massage her back very gently. She winces, but bears it with good grace.

GARY (CONT'D)

Funny what you thought I meant
about the bog. I'm a gardener, so
I'd choose a bog over a back patio
any day.

MS CROW

Indeed.

GARY

No competition. Life gets a better
chance in mud than stone.

Ms Crow shifts uncomfortably.

GARY (CONT'D)

So do you have a cat? I love cats
even more than dogs. In my dream
life, I'd have a Russian Blue.

MS CROW

Gareth, do you always talk this
much, and this repetitively?

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

GARY

Just trying to be friendly, like.
You know what we need right now? A
cuppa and a jammie dodger.

MS CROW

Wh- at half past ten on a Monday
night?! I've never heard of
anything so ridiculous.

GARY

It's just what you do, isn't it?
When you make new friends.

MS CROW

Well, I - I don't know about that.

GARY

Why not? If you'll 'scuse me
asking, Ms.

MS CROW

I...am a bit out of practice, to tell
the truth. Not accustomed
to...conversation.

GARY

I know the feeling. The state that
social media's got us into, it's
disgraceful. No one knows how to
behave in company anymore. God I'm
thirsty, mind if I grab myself a
drink?

MS CROW

Social media? I thought it was
meant to be a good thing. Everyone
always says so.

Gary scoffs.

GARY

Nah, it's all bollocks. S'just
rubbish, I mean here's me and you,
in the real world, having an actual
real life conversation. That's
gotta be what it's all about,
right?

MS CROW

Do you really think so?

GARY

Abso-bloody-lutely.

Ms Crow ponders deeply. Gary puts his hand to his head,
fighting off a wave of giddiness - licks his dry lips.

GARY (CONT'D)

You know, I wasn't kidding about that drink. Even a glass of water. I'm dead parched.

MS CROW

You know what?

GARY

What?

MS CROW

I think this was fate. You being here, stopping my plans tonight.

GARY

(thickly)

Aw sorry, I - have I stopped you going out?

Ms Crow chuckles wryly.

MS CROW

Does it look like I ever go out?

GARY

I dunno, you could have a charming old gentleman waiting to sweep you off your feet.

MS CROW

Ha! Not likely. But then - in a sense, yes.

Gary pauses, tries to steady himself against the armchair.

GARY

In...a sense?

Ms Crow nods slowly, miles away. As she talks, Gary breaks out in a violent sweat and his breathing becomes erratic.

MS CROW

My Gerald. He liked being called Gerry. Bit like you, Gareth. Sometimes I think I see him. Out there, waiting...and I wonder - I don't know if he'll wait forever. So you see, before you came along, I was thinking perhaps it's time. Time to make the trip over. But perhaps I was wrong. And that's why you're here.

She waits for a reply. Nothing.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Gareth?

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

Gary stumbles away from the chair, disorientated. Ms Crow turns, wincing. Gary's hand scrabbles for his trouser pocket. He suddenly falls to the floor and starts fitting.

The floor shakes with Gary's spasms and the record player needle jumps - falls onto the edge of the record - crackles.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Gareth!

Ms Crow gets up and hobbles over as fast as her back will allow - tries to hold him down, but he's too strong for her.

She checks his pockets, frantic - takes out an INSULIN PEN.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Wh-where do I-?

Ms Crow lifts Gary's top, but before she can do anything he stops fitting and lies still.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Gareth? Gareth, can you hear me?

She checks his pulse, shakes him. Nothing. He's out cold.

MS CROW (CONT'D)

Oh my...wake up, talk to me. Gary, please. I don't know what to do!

Ms Crow scrabbles to her feet, back pain forgotten. She looks desperately around - spots the phone. She gulps. BEAT.

A meowing sound. Ms Crow looks round to see the Cat standing by the door, staring at her. Ms Crow's jaw sets - she knows what to do.

She walks resolutely up to the phone - manages to pick it up. Trembling, she dials 999, and puts the phone to her ear.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

Hello, emergency service operator, which service do you require?

SILENCE. Ms Crow is paralysed with fear.

OPERATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hello? Is anybody there?

Ms Crow opens her mouth but no words come out. BEAT.

OPERATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Ambulance, Fire or Police, which do you require?

MS CROW

A-ambulance. Please.

WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN

OPERATOR (O.S.)
Connecting you now.

Ms Crow lets out a huge breath. She kneels down beside Gary and tentatively puts her hand on his.

In the corner, the record spins away: the same song as at the beginning (reference: The Turtles' 'Happy Together') plays us out.

The record, whirling round and round. Full circle.

THE END