

23 December 2019.

2.17 pm.

A date, and a time, that will be forever etched in my memory.

I share such memories in a 39a/27D fashion, and in the hope that any patrons of The Caff not interested in them will pass by, feeling no need to leave a mess in their wake.

It's just not very fucking Catmas.

I was putting the final touches to *A Catmas Tail*, snipping a superfluous word here, introducing a superfluous word there, as is my wont, essentially trying to make something already quite brilliant just that little bit more so.

Like a lion, I have my pride.

A Catmas Tail was as good as complete, or as bad as complete, depending on how you view these things, but events have very much taken over.

Events of such magnitude, I have to recount those, rather than present my fictional original tail. Uplifting though it was.

I try not to have my tail uplifting too often, exposing as it does my pencil sharpener, and there I bloody go already, digressing when I am barely even out of the starting blocks.

Anyhoo, events have decreed that my uplifting tail, into which a great deal of energy had already been expended, converted from Dreamies into the pressing of keys, will remain unseen.

A result of life, not so much imitating art, as overtaking it.

As it so often does.

I was on the sofa, minding my own business, licking my ahem, pondering those little changes that could transform *A Catmas Tail* from the mere Dickensian to something loftier, Cattian even. *Scoobian*, as scholars may one day come to say.

I trust it has been noted that I have for a long time desisted from undertaking the aheming of my ahem in The Caff, or from even making reference to any such actions, but it is an everyday fact of life for me, for any cat, and in relating these events I have to say it as it is.

I was on the sofa, engaged as alluded to, carrying out essential maintenance, pondering some final edits to the shoo-in for the Cat Booker prize, when I heard the handle turn and the front door open.

That gave me a start.

It couldn't be Chocolate, bless him, back to Garston? After all these weeks? Could it?

It would be so lovely to see him. Awkward, though.

Awks, as the kittens these days say, if he were to ask after the weed he'd secreted in Smartie. A stash dislodged, as purr everything else in the Noddy car, when it was tipped onto its side.

What could I say? A dog ate it? The big boys took it and ran away? The truth, that I tried some to calm my paws after a bloodbath in The Caff, and found it rather moreish?

Or an alternative truth?

Always plenty of those to go around, it seems. All the rage these days.

That I know nothing of it, and it must have still been in Smartie when the salvage company took it away? Only a few days ago, too.

Rotten luck, Chocs, old chap.

All of these thoughts rushed through my mind, though, primarily, those thoughts focused on the wonderful possibility that I might be seeing Chocolate again. And at Catmas too. Any horrible misunderstandings, any herbal misunderstandings, could be ironed out later. An exchange of Dreamies and we'd be sound.

"ScooooooobeEEEEEE ..." a voice called out.

Oh my days. Oh my fuckness. My ears shot up so fast I thought they were going to leave my head altogether.

I belted to the front door, got there so fast, the "beEEEEEE" in Scooby still hung, tangible, in the air.

CanaryBlue stood leaning against the wall, all grins and crutches.

What have you done with my beautiful magnolia, he asked, turning stony-faced at the crisp plain white of the hallway.

I had never heard it called that, always 'mangolia'.

There was a silence, a beat or two, and CB roared with laughter.

At that moment, as his face relaxed into its earlier grin, I knew, in time, that we would be able to put the previous unpleasantness behind us.

Did I push him down the stairs?

CanaryBlue and I *entangled*.

I looked at him. He at me.

Tears shot from my eyes. Then my legs went.

Imaginings of FattyMa and Fifty-course Felix's reunion with **Lily34** flashed through my mind as I passed out.

I came round to the unique and unmistakable sound of a tub of Chicken & Cheese Temptations being shaken.

Not Dreamies then. This wasn't the moment to tell CanaryBlue of **starrock** and of Dreamies.

I have no idea for how long I was out. When I regained consciousness, he had moved to the sofa, and was sitting just where I had been, however long earlier it had been. Rattling Temptations.

I made for his lap, and ate them from his hand. After sandpapering away the last crumbs, I rolled onto my back for him to rub my tummy.

Revelling in the familiar scent, I leant my neck back, better to look up at him, to take comfort in his repeating words, filling my ears and my heart.

Coming from him, words that meant so much.

"You **are** a good girl Scooby, you **are** a good girl," he whispered, over and over, gently stroking my tum.

Heaven.

Oh what a Catmas it is going to be!

It has been the most wonderful everestest Catmas Eve Eve, and these last few hours have, without doubt, been the happiest of my time on this earth. The happiest of any of my times on this earth.

To love and be loved.

All the tea in China is worth less.

It is obvious to me already that CanaryBlue's hours are all over the place (fish!), and I am glad, while he has been asleep, to have had the opportunity to dash off these few words and to share my wonderful news with you.

My discarded opus matters not. There will be more opi, more opuses, more 'Oh Pusses' along. Like buses, there will always be another along in a minute.

Unless of course you live in the country, where missing the one bus a week can be a real trial.

'Haters are always gonna hate', but I take comfort in knowing that there will be those in The Caff pleased for me, taking delight in the knowledge that I am back in CanaryBlue's safe paws. I tease him often. I know they're hands really.

I can hear him stirring now, and want to be by his side when he wakes, something that always cheered him. I feel a very strong need to be there, to take him whatever he wants. My word, he has done enough for me.

He has been in and out of sleep all afternoon, and most of the evening too. I wonder he is turning into a cat. Transmogrifying.

Just prior to his latest slumber, he asked me to pass on that he will be along at some point, once he has settled back in; there are people he would like to thank for the way in which they have looked after me since his presumed demise. I am of course extremely grateful and indebted to those wonderful souls too.

There is, understandably, much for us both to talk about.

Not least, of and about a very authentic-looking, but evidently-fake, Coroner's Report, and, in the same vein, of and about the 'solicitor' who delivered it to me at Flat 2.

But all of that can wait.

For now, I'm just beside myself to have the mad old git back home again.

Happy cat.

And a happy Catmas to all. I hope it's the best you've ever had.

Bradley bless you all.

Bradley, my god, is CB's also, and most cats' too.

If you have your own god, then I hope whoever that is – whether a he, a she, or a prefer not to say – looks upon you kindly, and brings to you all that you could possibly wish upon yourself.

Do one thing today, this Catmas Eve, if nothing else.

For your sake, if no one else's.

Do as my god would. And hopefully yours too.

Share some love. Throw it around like it's going out of fashion.

Scooby xx