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Memoir

### Calm

*Flip*

My nana loves garage sales. My childhood experiences with her consisted of endless drives around rich neighborhoods searching for the perfect sale. Sometimes we would be lucky and find the words ESTATE SALE printed largely on the neon sign. It was one of those lucky days that I became acquainted with my soul mate. Flip was a small light grey ball of fur with darker stripes and a small orange dot atop her head that resembled the mole that sits in the center my forehead; we were meant for each other. I had never seen kittens at a garage sale before and I have yet to see such a sight again. I still don't know exactly how or why I was allowed to take home this cat, my father was never a fan of them, but this was the beginning of a strong kinship. We did everything together and I was absolutely obsessed with my new best friend. She never got annoyed of my endless attention and she licked me, constantly, reassuring her love. We grew up together and bonded further; Flip was my soulmate. She would always sleep on the pillow next to me and curl up on the couch, purring, while I watched TV petting her; soothing us both. This would continue on until July 2014.

Flip was not a particularly active cat and it was no surprise that years of lounging around the house led to serious weight gain. She was so fat that she couldn't reach her backside to clean, leading to her fur matting in the back. We'd cut them off, but they would just grow back. The only solution seemed to be daily bathing, and I was committed to taking care of my best friend

**Commented [RB1]:** I used italic names to separate the vignettes.

**Commented [RB2]:** I didn't indent because I really didn't want to make individual paragraphs from within each vignette, but it was suggested to me as an edit from a teacher, so I did it and my compromise was no indentation.

**Commented [RB3]:** Throughout this piece I really worked on creating rich descriptions to help paint a picture in the reader's mind.

**Commented [RB4]:** I refer to all of my relationships with my pets in the form of "human terms" I guess. I did this because I have very distinct and different relationships with all of my pets and they are all different things to me. Flip was the best thing ever and it was truly just us against the world; a soulmate.

forever if it meant clean fur. It was this day in July that I began the daily cleaning routine. I grabbed my favorite shampoo and conditioner and ran the water until I felt a lukewarm stream run across my hand. I picked up my best friend and set her into the utility sink that sat in the garage. She was noticeably scared, and she was never one to freak out during baths, but today she was acting different. She began to cough, and my dad asked if I put her head underwater—*of course not*. My father pulled her out and set her on the ground to recover where she kept coughing and throwing up. She crawled into a beam of light and I ran away. I was in absolute shock. *Did I kill her? Did I get water in her mouth? I was just trying to clean her. This is all my fault.*

**Commented [RB5]:** I also used italics to represent my thoughts to myself within the vignettes.

My father came to me later as I hid under my blankets crying. He had done some research and it appeared Flip had suffered from a heart attack due to her obesity. I went out to see her lifeless body basking in the sun one last time. *I smiled between tears, at least she smelt amazing.* I kissed her small orange dot and took her collar before leaving my father to bury her under my favorite tree. My parents reassured me that “it wasn’t my fault” and I was “just speeding up the inevitable”, but I still to this day feel responsible for my best friend’s death. I never got to say goodbye or hear her purr one last time. There was so much left for us and I had to mess it up. I cared too much, she looked fine; matted fur and all. She didn’t need a bath. *Why did I do that?* I wore that collar as a bracelet until the plastic buckle crumbled between my fingers. It now lays near me every night; a constant reminder of my best friend

**Commented [RB6]:** I still distinctly remember the smell of the cucumber melon shampoo on her. It has stuck with me for so many years, so it was very important that I mentioned it.

*PigPen*

*My parents’ friends, amidst an affair, found time to steal their neighbor’s kittens whenever possible because of the way they were treated.* One particular grey little kitten was offered to me in the wake of Flip’s untimely death. It took some convincing, but my parents finally agreed

**Commented [RB7]:** This sentence is very chaotic and a little mysterious with no further explanation on the affair, but I made this way to represent PigPen because she is chaotic and mysterious. We don’t know exactly where she came from and she causes trouble all the time. The sentence is also a little funny, representing PigPen as well.

warning me that this new cat would be nothing like Flip; Flip was an anomaly of a cat that showed me affection and constantly let me pet her. I disregarded this warning because I was ready to fill that cat shaped hole in my heart. PigPen has silky soft grey fur with piercing yellow eyes. She is a beautiful, skinny, simple cat that has a few issues. PigPen was taken from her mother too early, so every night to soothe herself before bed she sucks on her own nipples; imitating what she missed from her mother. We tried to get her to stop, but it was no use. She also is constantly chewing at herself and even goes as far as to draw blood. We are not truly certain as to what is going on with her and my parents are not about to spend money to find out. PigPen is constantly running away from me and never purrs unless it's on her terms. She is a typical self-centered cat and it was a tough learning curve trying to get used to it, but now as I look upon her behavior, I find small pieces of affection that I hold close.

Whenever I go on walks and she is outside, PigPen will follow me a few steps behind.

Sometimes she will stop and turn back before I have reached my destination, but other times she follows me all the way. She did this one day as I walked to a friend's house and when this friend woke up, in her own home, the next morning PigPen was there sleeping on her stomach. PigPen also had what appeared to be a magic sense for when I was sad because whenever I found myself down or crying in my room, she would be there comforting me as she rubbed her body against my legs. Although she acted like she didn't care about me in public, when it came down to it, she was always there for me meowing and cuddling me.

PigPen was not my soulmate by any means, but she is someone I care for deeply. Rain or shine I leave my window open, so that in the middle of the night after her late adventures she can come inside and snuggle up next to me. She chews up my homework frequently and leaves muddy paw

**Commented [RB8]:** This process did help me reflect on the fact that my cat does indeed like me at least a little. I feel very unloved by PigPen more often than not and it gets me down but reflecting on these great memories helps remind me she does care.

**Commented [RB9]:** PigPen is that one friend that is too tough to show their emotions and can be an ass sometimes, but you know deep down they care through their actions.

prints across my white sheets, but she is still my go-to snuggle buddy at the end of the day. The nights I have spent without her reveal the uncomfortableness of sleeping alone.

### *Egor & BooBoo*

Egor and BooBoo are the two best dogs anyone could ask for. I had spent summer after summer asking my parents for a dog and they had finally agreed to look. I took them to this popular no-kill shelter which had a line out the door upon our arrival. We picked out a few dogs that matched our criteria: okay with other animals, okay with small children, and at least two-years old. As the line shortened more and more, dogs were crossed off our list as they were adopted ahead of us. When it seemed as though all hope was lost, the woman in charge called our names. My father was puzzled because he thought all our options had been adopted, but I had one last trick up my sleeve. My father was never a fan of small dogs, but I also knew he was my number one fan. As my mom says, "I've got my dad wrapped around my finger". So, I put Egor and BooBoo on our list in hopes of at least meeting a dog. Egor and BooBoo are a chihuahua Shiba Inu brother and sister duo who fit all of our criteria. The woman led us to a room where we would meet the two dogs. She gave the rules and little about them before saying "now you're going to meet these two and just fall in love, so be prepared". She put Egor and BooBoo down to meet us. BooBoo ran straight to me and Egor to my brother and we never let go. It took my dad a few days to really fall in love, but when he did, he was infatuated with the little ones. BooBoo is the love of my life. I wish that I could spend every second with her and have seriously considered buying her a service dog vest for that purpose. She is my best friend. When I am with her, everything bad just wags away her energetic tail. She doesn't enjoy long walks and loves to lounge around, so she is a breeze to take care of. I spend most summer days alone laying on the couch with her snoring next to me. I have the best conversations with her, and my days are

**Commented [RB10]:** This is an actual quote from my mother, and I knew I had to use in this piece because it is the best way to sum up how I got away with adopting two small dogs instead of one big one.

**Commented [RB11]:** Another close to exact quote that just sets the scene for how cute loveable these dogs are. They used to be the shelter spokesdogs before adopted them.

**Commented [RB12]:** BooBoo is my love. We spend so much time together and love to snuggle with her. She is a great listener and loves to lounge around just like me.

always brightened by her endless, affectionate licks. I had always thought myself a cat person until I found these two little chihuahuas.

**Commented [RB13]:** I cannot speak enough to the benefits of having a dog or animal with you, especially when you live alone. They are just amazing company and genuinely make my day better. It is so important to have animal and to adopt animals..... Moral of the story dorms should allow pets or have like communal dog on each floor.

I had always pictured myself as an independent soul who didn't need to rely on anything or anyone, but that vision has changed. Living out of state and truly on my own, I have realized that I need companionship. As much as alone time is relaxing, I feel more relaxed when I'm there sitting with someone near. It's calming. I can sleep with my mind at ease when one of my pets is curled up next to me but sleeping alone is an anxious nightmare. Although I would love to be okay on my own, I'm truly happier with a little fur ball by my side.

**Commented [RB14]:** I did not think that one of the hardest parts about going away would be missing my pets, yet here I am a second year and still crying over the fact that I can't have BooBoo in my dorm room.

**Commented [RB15]:** I wrote this piece as sort of an exercise to help me cope with missing my pets back home. They are a huge part of my life and it is really hard not seeing them all the time. This piece made me laugh and cry while I was writing it, but it was so fun to reflect on my childhood pets.