

Cat And Mouse

The sequence of events from that fateful night seemed like a puzzle with jagged ends - ones that scrape the skin with unpleasant relief. How could such sharp uncertainty of both the and future stem from memories so out of focus? The beer hazed things a bit, but beneath that was something else. It was as if Burt's subconscious had placed a fuzzy filter over his memory to help him avoid facing the truth. He was a monster, but when you are surrounded by monsters, perhaps you just become desensitized to your own reflection.

While that night seemed to escape Burt, to Janet, it was as clear as day. The facts she laid down in the courtroom seemed so concrete that the jury could touch them or even demolish them with a sledgehammer if they so choose to. Burt hoped that, somehow, her testimony would shatter like a glass floor beneath her - that some divine intervention would mislead her version of events as fictional fake news.

It seemed unfair to Burt that something he could not himself remember could threaten his future. At the ripe age of 56, he risked losing any sense of advancement. What a waste. How could *she* do this to *him*?!

Even though Burt didn't remember much of that night, there were certain remembrances he could taste like sweet cream curdling sour in his thin, tight mouth.

There was groping... lots and lots of that. As he played the offense to pull her in, her defensive fight or flight fueled his sense of power, and he laughed. Wasn't it a game after all? He couldn't imagine a world where Janet could ever possibly turn down his advances. Men like Burt didn't lose games. They were the game makers and the game changers.

The offense did come in time. He remembered Janet trying to push Burt away with weak strokes of her arms, like a miniscule mouse trying to fight off a cat. Women knew their place. They knew they were prey. This meager attempt to fight him off was all a part of the chase. It made Janet more appetizing to him. She had to have known.

That was about all he recollected. It was enough to know that it was her fault. As a judge, Burt was accustomed to tipping the scale of justice in the way he saw most balanced, and he was lucky. He was a man, and in a man's world, the gravitational force of 'he said' outweighs countless 'she said.' The cats continue to hunt the mice, yet the mice continue to elect the cat as their overlords. Who better to rule than he who destroys?