

Vignette on Good

Joe was taken aback to hear his cat had been mauled by a horse. Tweetums had survived, but only because Ms. Harisinghani had saved him from the swollen purple gums gnawing on Tweetums through the wrought-iron fence that surrounded her yard.

Standing idly at attention in his doorway, Joe thought of the just-bloomed orchid that Tweetums had savagely incorporated the day before, and maybe he deserved his mastication a little.

Ms. Harisinghani held out a large Star Market paper bag—gently twitching—and Joe looked in upon an orchid colored cat. He looked back up at Ms. Harisinghani who was apologizing profusely:

I will punish Posy; I will spank Posy; I will bury Posy while she sleeps and leave only her nostrils above ground for a week. Her tears matched her dress: delicate, and a little see-through. Joe looked away, his eyes drawn back to the slowly dampening brown paper bag with a brown-blue star.

Why don't you come in, he mumbled apologetically to the bag as he flapped lamely with it toward his kitchen. Ms. Harisinghani's eyes weren't on the bag. They were on Joe.

Okay, she smiled, perhaps we could decide how to punish the pony over a cup of coffee. Feeling out of breath, Joe closed the tight New England air out behind them. The walls were covered in black ink cat-footprint batik art. The windows were crowded with viny flowers. Tweetums was set on the coffee table and left to recover.