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Professor Winter
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As Told To Assignment

This was 1978 or 1979. I was in like seventh or eighth grade. Mom and my sister Liz and I drove from Ohio down to Florida to visit my grandma and Aunt Sally. It must have been March break or something. We always had a two-week break, so it was like two days down, seven days there, two days back. My sister was somehow meeting men along the way, and we were eating dinner with strangers, staying at shitty Super-Eight type motels.

Sally was pretty, and I thought she was hilarious. She was impeccably made-up. She would do her makeup for an hour before we went anywhere. My grandma, she was also beautifully dressed, tons of jewelry, designer clothes. They were very jovial. They loved to party. They had lots of friends who would always have them out partying.

My aunt and my grandmother lived in a double-wide mobile home, but it was nice. It sounds hard to believe but it was actually like going into a house. It had two halves, with bedrooms on both sides, which is unusual for a mobile home. It was a nice community, it was actually beautiful. It was like little mobile homes, and everyone had carports. There was a pool that we would always go to.

It was really nice, until they let the cats take over.

They only had about 25 cats at that point. When you walked in, it was this overwhelming smell of cat. You would leave a glass of ice water out in the kitchen, and you would lift it up and it was just coated in cat hair. My sister was allergic to cats, too, so that caused a small problem.

Aunt Sally and Grandma both loved cat-collecting. And they both believed each other's lies about how they got the cats. Sally would say things to us like, "and then a boy just drove by and threw a cat at me, and I caught it in my arms." Or when she was in Ohio, with another cat, she said she went outside and his little paws were frozen in the snow, and she used a hair dryer and got his paws out, and then she just kept him. It was always these elaborate tales that you couldn't prove or disprove.

Sally called them her "fur-babies." They all had names. Names like Fuzz, Furball, Angel, Snowball, stupid names like that. One of them was named Megan, if you can imagine. I think that was one of the ones that she "cat-sat" for and the person never came and picked her up.

So we got there and I was kind of sad that I had to sleep on this pullout couch. Every night, I had to pull out my bed, which was coated in cat fur, because they would be on it all the time. The cats were on me all night long, they would run around my bed. They didn't love when I would spray them at night with water.

One day, I put the bed back together. The whole day we could hear meowing, but we couldn't tell where it was coming from. I opened the bed up that night, apparently I didn't know it, but I had shut a cat inside of it, and this cat was inside this pull out bed for the whole day. Sally got so mad at me, and I was like, "I can't keep track! There's like, 25 cats, just roaming through here!"