

## Bobby Fischer

“Momma, Momma, Momma!” Renesmee dashed into the cottage hollering. It was the spring after her first birthday and she’d just come home from the reservation school accompanied by Jacob, who flicked his tail at us and then returned to the woods with Quil and Embry.

Nessie flew across the room and landed on her mother’s lap. **Can I have a kitty? Can I, Momma?** she asked with her palm on her mother’s throat. Bella glanced at me from where she was sitting by the fireplace reading Edith Wharton’s House of Mirth. No, I hadn’t seen that coming.

Uncle Emmett said to name him “Pussy,” Nessie went on silently, ‘cuz he’s a pussycat. Bella raised her eyebrows at me.

“Did he now?” she replied. “I’ll have to have a talk with Uncle Emmett about that. What brought all this on?”

Embry said Tabatha had babies and we could come to his house to see them after school. The white one climbed out of the box and sat on my lap. He likes me, Momma, and I like him too. He has a black star on top of his head. **Can I have him, Momma?**

“There’s a lot of responsibility that comes with having a pet, Renesmee. Are you sure that you’re ready to take care of it?”

Yes, yes, yes! I can play with him and give him water and hunt with him. I smiled at that from across the room. I could imagine Nessie snatching mice out from under ferns and forest salal to feed to her cat. Emmett had taught her how to catch flies in midair, shake them inside her fist, and release them to watch how they fly around erratically like they’re drunk.

“Do you remember when we went hunting and Daddy helped you catch a mountain lion?” Bella asked.

*Yes, I do. That was funner than Roosevelt deer.*

*“We say ‘more fun,’ rather than ‘funner,” Bella told her. “It’s an exception to the rule.” Renesmee nodded, filing the information away as she always did. Then Bella continued, “Well, house cats are related to mountain lions and their blood smells very similar.”*

*It does?*

*“Yes. A kitty might make you thirsty.”*

*You mean like Grandpa and Sue?*

*“Yes, except that you don’t drink human blood anymore and you do drink mountain lion sometimes.”*

*“That’s true,” Nessie said aloud, thoughtfully. “I don’t think I would drink it if it was my kitty, though.”*

*“Did your Momma ever tell you that she never had much luck with pets?” I asked her. Nessie looked at Bella.*

*You didn’t?*

*“No, darling. Grandpa Charlie and Grandma Renee let me have a goldfish, but he died because I gave him too much food.”*

*What did you do then?*

*“Grandpa Charlie flushed Goldie down the toilet and got me Goldie 2.”*

*What happened to him?*

*“He died too because I didn’t clean his bowl right.” Bella didn’t mention how she killed Goldie 3. “That’s something you have to consider if you get a pet. They don’t live very long and it’s sad when they die.”*

*How long?*

*"Hmm, well, a cat that lives for fifteen years is a very old cat. He might only live ten or twelve years, or if he gets hurt or has a disease, he could die after only three or four years. There's no way to know."*

***Could I ask Aunt Alice?***

*"Yes, you could do that. She might not know, though."*

***Renesmee considered that for a second. Would you flush my kitty down the toilet if he dies?***

*I suppressed a smile. "No sweetheart," Bella told her. "We only do that with little fish. Usually, people bury their pets when they die."*

***In the ground?***

*"Yes, that way they decompose and feed plants that grow in the soil, and those plants feed animals and people. It's the cycle of nature. Everything gets recycled."*

***Oh. May I have him if I promise to bury him when he dies?***

*Bella punted. "Why don't you ask your Daddy what he thinks?" Renesmee hopped off Bella's lap. I held out my arms and she flew straight into them.*

***Daddy, can I have him?***

*"Is it a girl or a boy kitten?"*

***Embry says he's a boy.***

*"A boy," I repeated for Bella's sake. "Well, I can't think of any good reason why you shouldn't have a kitten if you want one, but let's think of a better name."*

***Better than Pussy?***

*“Yes. Better than Pussy. Uncle Emmett was teasing you. Pussy is short for pussycat, which is fine, but it is also used as a naughty word sometimes, so when you call your kitty, people will laugh.”*

*Renesmee whispered into my ear, “Like jackass is a donkey?”*

*“Yes, exactly like that.”*

*“Uncle Jasper said I could call him Kaspar.”*

*“You mean like ‘Casper the Friendly Ghost?’ Because he’s a white kitty?”*

*“A ghost? No, like Garry Kasparov. He’s the best chess player in the world.”*

*I chuckled at the coincidence. Jasper probably had never heard of ‘Casper the Friendly Ghost.’ Or Caspar Weinberger—the buffoonish 1980s Secretary of Defense—for that matter. The cat’s black “toupee” would resemble the incongruously coal black hair on Weinberger’s overly dyed, seventy-year-old head.*

*“Uncle Emmett said if I didn’t like Pussy, I should call him Pat McGroin because it works for a boy or a girl, but I don’t know who that is.” Bella covered her mouth to keep from laughing.*

*“Uncle Emmett was teasing you again,” I told her. “Maybe you don’t want to listen to his suggestions anymore.”*

*“Aunt Rose said since he has a black star on his head, I could call him Target, but Aunt Alice didn’t like that. She said to call him Barneys or Saks, but I don’t really like any of those names. They’re weird.”*

*“What name do you like?” Bella asked.*

*“Well, Kaspar is nice, but I like Bobby Fischer,” Renesmee answered. “He was the youngest chess grandmaster ever. I’m going to name him Bobby Fischer, Bob for short.”*

*“Bob the Cat,” I commented, chuckling. “That’s a great name, Nessie. When did Embry say you could get Bob?”*

*“I can see him every day if I want, but I can’t bring him home until he’s big enough. Embry said his momma has to teach him how to bury his poops and other cat stuff.”*

*“That sounds like a good idea,” Bella said, smiling. “Did you tell Nana and Poppop?”*

*“No. Come with me! Daddy too!”*

*We took Renesmee’s hands between us and jogged to the big house, jumping in tandem over the river. When we got close, Nessie broke free and sprinted toward the kitchen door.*

*“I’m getting a kitty! I’m getting a kitty!” Renesmee shouted as she ran to find her Nana.*

*“Are we going to regret this?” Bella wondered.*

*“I hope not,” I replied. “Jacob might, though. She’s just told Esme that she can’t wait to show Bob to Fred.” Bella laughed.*

*She wasn’t laughing ten months later when Renesmee came racing out of the garage shrieking, “Bobby Fischer had kitties!” “Bobby Fischer had kitties!”*

*Edward*

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