

Sometimes

He would wait impatiently for her to come home. With every footstep in the hall, he stirred. Her schedule was unpredictable and used to intimidate him, but over time has increased his ability to anticipate satisfaction. It was an ambitious feeling he was unaware he enjoyed.

Sometimes he'd stand at the top of the stairs and announce her arrival. Other times he'd lie languorously on the bed, soft, inviting and waiting.

Sometimes she'd go straight to the kitchen and ignore this diorama of intimacy he had created, but the times she went straight to him, even before he called her name, was a source of pleasure so great, so deep; it almost made him laugh.

He was not a laugher, though. Never had been. He showed his pleasure in other ways.

He was also not a crier. He had other ways to show his displeasure as well.

She was all too aware of his mischievous unpleasantries and it seemed to him, went to great efforts to make sure he wasn't disappointed. If only the same could be said for her efforts to make him happy.

She was unaware of the difference.

One day she left her purse on the corner of the couch where he usually napped. As much as he tried not to be, he was all too aware of it. He attempted to consider it a natural part of his habitat, but it was so completely hers that he felt guilty for looking at, moving it and even more so when he tried to use it for a pillow. Defeated by her presence, he slept on the floor.

Sometimes it seemed to him that he was just another furnishing in the house. A useless decoration to adorn the walls or a handsome piece to show off to her friends. Her friends treated him with respect, at least. Too many of his friends had stories.

Sometimes they'd pretend to be a normal couple. They'd sprawl on the couch and watch scary movies together. Sometimes it felt normal. But when she would get up to get a snack, instead of asking him to pause the movie, or coming back to ask that endearing question, "What did I miss?", she would sit back down with her popcorn and rewind the movie as if she had been the only person in the room.

Sometimes he'd come in from outside, yell her name and run playfully to the bed as if she had nothing better to do. Most times, she did.

Sometimes she'd feel his suspicious stares from the opposite end of the couch. He didn't mean to give them; if you had asked, he'd say he didn't. He'd say he was fine, but he wasn't. She had come home late again and he had to wait for his supper. He considers himself an independent being. She wishes he'd learn to feed himself.

He knew it bothered her, but sometimes he couldn't help it. He'd crawl into the bathroom as if on hands and knees and peer shyly over the curb of the tub. He recognized her hard day at work, and didn't want to disturb her, but he'd been alone all day.

Sometimes she'd be grateful for his attentions and reach over with a loving touch.

Sometimes she'd tell him, 'Not now.'

Sometimes she'd ignore him completely.

Sometimes in the middle of the night she'd wake to feel his soft touch on the gentle inner skin of her elbow. Sometimes, feeling affectionate, she'd pet his fur-covered belly and fall back asleep to the soundtrack of his purr.

Sometimes.

Most times she'd be annoyed with being woken up. She'd roll over and go back to sleep.

The end.