

Pas de Chat

By Katherine Nabity

She held her head steady and erect despite the weight of her hair. Her red tresses were tightly secured at the back of her head in a style so classical not even Miss Sholutovich knew who started it. She caught a glimpse of herself in the wall of mirrors three yards across from her. The light in this room had near opaque whiteness to it. It was a mixture of sunlight and florescent bulbs that allowed few shadows to be cast. In the mirror, nearly all that Joanne could see of herself was the dark auburn splotch that was her hair. Her skin was porcelain; unblemished and a color of white that nearly matched gauze of her skirt. She smiled a little to herself as she saw the pirouette in the mirror, merely a blur as she kept her eyes focused out on the audience she had before her today.

Today she would dance her best. It would be the supreme combination of the music and her talent, tempered by many, many years of training. Ever since she was a small girl her parents had taken her to learn how to dance, her daily lessons that would

continue the rest of her career. Joanne could easily imagine that being the rest of her life. Although it mattered little to Joanne, ballet had not been her idea, but her mother's. But Joanne could not remember a time without it. How could she have lived before she had danced? "Like a cat," Miss Sholutovich, her teacher, said of her. Joanne had never thought the comparison did her justice, and she had no doubt at all that she was good at what she did.

Joanne could feel the music as it coursed through her. It was raw and rough. The sadness Prokofiev imbued in the piece... her body changed it, realized it. She moved as she had been trained. "But with feeling, Catochka!" Little cat, Miss Sholutovich called her. "The dance is nothing without feeling! You must be more than a virtuoso!" There was nothing else but the sound of the suite, of Juliet before her fateful meeting of Romeo, not knowing what the sorrow in the music meant. The other dancers, her coach, the head of this ballet company and its senior members, none of them were sitting there now with their own hopes and expectations. This wasn't the culmination of everything she had worked for. This was herself and Prokofiev, dancing together in the glowing room.

At first, she wasn't sure she heard the screams. Even though her eyes were open to the bright, white lighting, she could only see herself weaving from form to form: *allégro*, *saut de basque*, *pas de chat*. These were the patterns she had rehearsed many, many times. But yes, what was that noise, beyond the swell of the music? Screams? What had happened? Joanne willed her body to stop dancing, but something in her kept going. She didn't know what it was that was suddenly a part of her, but it was not quite of her body. It didn't obey as her own muscles did. A panic struck her. She caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror. Was that her? The figure in the mirror was exact,

precise. Its movements were hers, but the feel of them were not. Why was her skin so dark all of a sudden?

Joanne slapped the alarm off after it had already gone off eight times. She banished away the rest of that nightmare with a scrub of her hand across her eyes. She swung her legs off the bed an entire hour later than she intended. Guess I won't be trimming up my hair before work, she thought. The best intentions were never enough. She ran her hand up the back of her neck and regretted she couldn't keep her hair longer. It is easier this way, she thought. No, a second voice interrupted, it's necessary. In the dim light cast by a single low-watt bulb, she selected a pair of too-tight jeans and a tank top from the pile of clothes on the floor. She applied her dark lipstick and darker eye shadow without using a mirror. After tugging on a pair of comfortable boots, she was off to work.

The club throbbed with sounds that Joanne just didn't understand as music. The pounding of drums and reckless guitar playing was often interrupted by some synthetic keyboard noises that didn't resemble any instrument she knew of. Still, that wasn't as bad as when the interlude was filled with machine noises. She ignored it the best she could. It was a hard task when the bass seemed to not only travel in the air as sound waves usually did, but along the ground and up through her body as well.

"I need another job, Trace," she muttered into her partner's ear. The other bartender's leathery features showed mock hurt until his smile hit his eyes.

"You always say that, Jo," he said as he retrieved a bottle of Miller Genuine Draft from the cooler. "You're always back the next day though." That was true. Being here was necessary, as necessary as an alcoholic staying away from a liquor shop. Here, there was no temptation for her.

She and Tracy got along well enough. They had a good rhythm together, hardly ever bumping into each other. Bartending was a simple dance compared to what she was once trained for and had spent the last six years resisting.

Joanne tuned out the music the best she could and concentrated on hearing what was being ordered instead. Not that it took much effort to fill orders. Not many of the club-goers ordered much beyond beer and simple mixed drinks. It was an easy gig.

Joanne looked out over the crowded dance floor. The clientele was eclectic. The regulars were a group of tattooed, pierced, pale twenty-somethings. Despite their paleness and dark-dyed hair, they seemed to be a healthy group. They were generally polite and didn't cause much trouble. A second group wore extreme fashioned clothes and hair of fluorescent colors. They were a bit wilder: a revolving group that seemed to decide after a week or two, and a drunken fight, that this club was no longer cool enough. The third group was even less sparse, more variable. They were your ordinary, average college kids. Their clothes were expensive, their skin tan. Joanne suspected they came to the club for a change of pace. Maybe it was a walk on the wild side for them. Strange how something wild for one was a nine to five for someone else. The college group generally stayed away from the dark-clad regulars and ended up getting into conflicts

with the ravers. What passed for dancing only struck Joanne as bodies undulating occasionally in time with the floor-shaking beat.

"An Angel's Face." Joanne gave a start at the order. It wasn't the usual fare. The man who ordered it was a young, blond, and muscular. By his clean-cut neatness, Joanne suspected a college frat boy. The smile he gave Joanne was different though. It wasn't a leering smile that landed more on her body than her face. It wasn't the stump-the-bartender smirk either. Joanne had gotten that one a lot when she worked at a blues bar near the campus, but not often here. The clientele here was more interested in the music, the noise, and the dancing. Joanne mixed the drink and smiled as she slid it across the counter to the guy who ordered it. He had not looked away from her as she prepared the drink, she knew. He gave her a big tip and a sincere smile. She hoped, perhaps pessimistically, that he wouldn't become a problem.

The club exhausted Joanne. Tonight, she was especially ready for the night to come to an end. It wasn't being on her feet for so many hours. She had lived life on her feet, before and now. It was a combination of so many people being near her and the brutality of the music. In many ways this was the perfect job. By the end of the night, it dulled her every sense. And that, she found, was what she needed. She needed to go home with her hearing cottony in the silence; her own movements made into sharp noises in her ears, while everything else was muffled in winter snow and scarves.

"A Pink Lady." It was the same voice that ordered the Angel's Face. Joanne decided it was meant to be a disarming smile. But still she couldn't see anything

insidious behind his eyes. He seemed genuine and genuinely interested in Joanne. His eyes never left her as she made the drink and he had been watching her from a table near the wall. That was another thing that caused Joanne to wonder about him a bit. The frat boys traveled in packs, usually with good looking sorority girls hovering around their boisterous loudness. He had staked out his table alone, occasionally dancing with a girl or two that asked. Whenever he returned to his table, his attention would return back to Joanne. She was well aware of his gaze without looking his way. Usually she would find such observation unnerving. The feeling of eyes watching her as she moved had once been welcome and even comforting. In recent years, it had become alien and unwanted. His was strangely unobtrusive. Until now, he hadn't ordered any other drinks that she had noticed.

"You have a taste for the exotic," she said raising her eyebrows. She needed to look this drink up and she paged quickly through the mixer's book to find it.

"I guess you could say that," he said. His voice was clear, authoritative. They studied her and Joanne was suddenly aware her heart was beating a little faster, that it was becoming hard to breath without her chest heaving like she was a part of some smutty novel. No, he wasn't trying to stump her with his drink choices. He was just being cute. And flattering? Men had a strange way of doing things, but it worked. It was cute and flattering. Joanne wished he hadn't turned his attentions to her. His eyes were very blue, even in this low light she could tell.

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His eyes were green, Joanne realized. He pulled back from kissing her and she looked up at John's eyes clearly for the first time. She had spent nearly all of her time with him avoiding his eyes. She was wryly amazed that he would still want to sleep with someone that wouldn't meet his eyes. Wasn't that a sign of a psychopath? It wasn't that she didn't want to look at his. She yearned to get lost in them, to simply get lost in him since they had met. Joanne didn't want him to look into her eyes though. She feared what he might find there, and maybe that qualified her as a psychopath after all. It had been more than three years, but the visions of what she had done that day had not dulled in the least. She could still see the reflection in the mirror and the blood on her...hands.

John's lips touched hers again and she urged the thoughts to go. It had been temporary insanity. Isn't that what they called it? Nothing had happened since. John's hands flowed over her body. They were large and strong. They lifted her easily when they danced. She hadn't stepped onto a dance floor until she saw him through the long window of a dance school. He was teaching little kids, sweet in their clumsy earnestness. He was good with them, teaching positions but not correcting every minor thing that was done wrong. At that age, technique was important, but not as important as turning the children on to dancing.

"Don't worry," he sighed when they ended up having dinner together, "Nine out of ten parents will totally ruin it for their kids. So competitive." How had they come to be sitting at the restaurant, both of them eating salads weighted down by meat and eggs and avocados? Joanne didn't have a clue. She must have gone in and talked to him, looked at the studio's schedule, maybe danced some, recalling perfectly her positions even though she hadn't done any practice in so long. Of course he noticed her. If anything she had

become thinner, more muscular in her travels. She had been surprised to see her form in the mirrors, and apprehensive. She had avoided it as she avoided his eyes.

He slipped her blouse off and then his shirt. She had been this naked when dancing, but it was now that she felt her flesh tighten. His lips met her throat, his hands worrying the waistband of her pants. She leaned forward and let her bra-covered breasts press against his chest and her hands wander over his back. Time had compressed for her. She remembered snatches of conversations, but of the weeks they had known each other, she couldn't recall specifics. This could be a one-night stand after the first date and Joanne wouldn't have been able to recall differently.

She did remember dancing. Alone. With John. Not to Prokofiev, but that didn't matter. She danced with grace and precision and despite the thudding of her heart, nothing had happened.

So Joanne let herself slide under the sheets of John's wide bed, naked and slightly cold. He joined her. He was smooth for a man and his hands and tongue coaxed heat into her body. His fingers slid wetly from her and were replaced quickly by something thicker and longer. Joanne moved against him, concentrating on making moves complimentary to his, ones that would give him pleasure. She tried not to think about the changes in her body, a growing heat and an engorgement of every part of her. She kept her eyes open. John moved above her. His face was strangely blank in his ecstasy. His eyes were now the ones not meeting hers. He thrust harder and she was jarred against the mattress. Joanne clutched at his shoulders. She arched her back. The friction of his entire body grinding into hers sent Joanne over the edge.

The sheet fell away from him in a wash of red. Her nails cut through the flesh of his back easier than her fork had sunk through the tofu on the salads she had eaten with him. Something entered his eyes now. His face contorted and Joanne knew it wasn't the pain that caused it. The reflection in his eyes was locked on the body beneath him. Joanne caught a glimpse of her own green cat eyes in his before she dragged her claws across his face and erased John's terror forever.

At slightly after midnight, it slowed down. It was an odd thing, something Joanne had never experienced at other places where she worked. But every night it happened. Tracy called it critical mass time. "They're as saturated as they can get. Now they'll have to sweat it out or piss it out before they're back for more." The bar didn't go dead, but it slowed down considerably. She let her gaze slide past the blond man. He was dancing with a girl in a very short skirt and Joanne was glad. Maybe he would get caught up in her fake red hair and glitter lipstick. Maybe he would take her home tonight.

"Anything wrong, Jo?" Tracy bumped her with his shoulder on the way to the other end of the bar. The movement was totally intentional. Joanne wondered how long she had been staring off into space, or whether Tracy had only said her name once. Grabbing a cloth from the small sink of sudsy water next to the beer spigots, Joanne gave the bar in her immediate area a quick once over. "You seem a little out of sorts," he finished coming back her way.

"Naw, nothing's wrong. Just thinking." Which was mostly the truth. Joanne didn't particularly want to be thinking some of the thoughts that had traveled through her

head. But they were her warnings. They had allowed her to keep "do no harm" as a basic tenant in her life despite her circumstances. Even when the situations she had picked for herself had failed.

"An Orange Blossom." Same voice, same smile.

She ignored him for a moment, filling the order of the guy next to him. It was only for a wine cooler and Joanne was quickly back to where the blond was standing.

"Are you ever going to order something normal?" she smiled at him. She hadn't meant to use that smile. She had meant to act annoyed, put upon. Or had at least meant to be silent. Her heart thudded. She willed him away.

"Are you ever going to ask me to dance?" he countered.

Her face fell a little and she turned to work on the drink. She had known this moment was coming. She had begun to dread it as the night had worn on. What had she been thinking, flirting with him? It didn't matter if she thought he was attractive. It was time keep herself in check and remember what she tried every night to forget happened.

"I don't dance while I'm working."

"Well, when do you get off work?"

"When the music stops."

He frowned a little. He looked hurt. Joanne put down the drink in front of him and didn't look him in the eye.

"You know, I don't mind if you want to..." Tracy didn't finish the sentence. He just gave a slight nod toward the blond guy who had retreated back to his small table.

The redhead in the short skirt and man much larger than the compact blond man had

taken half of it over. They both gave him a smile before leaning back into their own shouted conversation.

Joanne rolled her eyes. Had it all been that obvious? Or had Trace overheard what Joanne had said to him.

"No, I really don't," Joanne brushed past him to grab some orange juice from the refrigerator for a screwdriver.

"Yes, you really do." Tracy said. He took a twenty from a spiky-haired regular and fished some crumpled dollar bills from the cash drawer as change. Joanne could feel her face turn red and her heart speed up a bit, faster than the thundering from the dance floor and the DJ. She managed a tight smile to the gentleman who put his change from the screwdriver into the tip jar. "Listen." Tracy leaned in close to her. She could smell his after-shave. It was something cheep, but not unpleasant and slightly minty. "You're never sick. You're never late. You don't even complain when I shirk you into garbage duty two nights in a row. As long as your back here by last call..." He shrugged. "Go shake your booty or whatever."

Joanne knew he meant well. His eyes twinkled at her. She had never come up with a good excuse for just why she didn't show interest in any of the men, and even the few women, that showed her attention. Tracy hadn't tried to meddle in her life yet. It had taken him longer than most. She gave him a soft smile. This was always inevitable and usually the reason she would decide to move on. Time to change jobs, change cities.

Joanne tried not to think that it would be Tracy here, alone tomorrow. She liked the guy. He looked like he could be an old gold-panning prospector rather than the bartender at an

industrial club. Better to think of him as only a faceless employer. Joanne couldn't even remember the face of the employer she had before Tracy.

With a start, Joanne realized she was standing in front of the blond man. What was lacking was the wide safety of the walnut bar separating them. The girl with the fake red hair was giving Joanne the same kind of disgusted look she would give a stinky street dweller. She turned quickly back to her big friend when Joanne shot her a questioning look. Joanne tried to keep the tremors in her arms and legs under control. She imagined how she must have looked crossing the span from the bar to where the blond man was sitting. A sick feeling developed in her chest at seeing herself in her mind's eye as a zombie with a shuffling gait and blank eyes.

To her surprise, the blond man smiled. He leaned in close to her, getting up from the stool he was sitting on. He smelled of sweat and slightly of motor oil beneath the worn out cleanliness of soap. "Glad to see you changed your mind!"

Joanne only could offer a smile. Her own self-consciousness kept her rooted to the spot before him. Her insides told her to flee. She would not call even more attention to herself by running back to hide behind Tracy.

"Shall we?" he asked. Without pausing for any answer other than yes, he took Joanne's hand and waded through the mass of undulating movement to a slightly clearer spot. At this time of the night, the dance floor was packed. Movements were smaller due to the lack of personal space garnered by any one person. An elbow jabbed Joanne as she stood slightly dumbfounded. This wasn't dancing and she didn't know where to begin even if she were to emulate those around her. The bass picked up. It crashed around the dance floor as those who were moving to it changed slightly to match it. Joanne started

to move, heat spreading through her body. The blond man moved too. He thrust toward her in an effort to including her in a dance Joanne didn't understand, but had gained some sudden instinctual experience of. The lights went dark, pitch black, and an instant later flooded back in startling brightness. The blond man disappeared and reappeared in surreal detail. She could see the veins in his forehead and tiny crinkles around his eyes. He looked older than she had thought him to be. His face and neck were flushed red and slick with sweat.

There was blood, lots of it. She struck the next mirror and the next. She could see the chairs overturned. There were crimson lumps among the folding chairs. Their color was overly vivid in the white light of the dance studio. And amid the shattered glass were fierce green eyes and the claws. Both hers. The shock of it, her strength, the way her body moved. She vomited. The small breakfast she had had hours ago came up in a rush of acid. The burning in her throat finally stopped her frantic dancing. The screams of the audience, of dancers and coaches alike was gone, but Prokofiev still rumbled in the background. It was no longer the piece she had chosen. This was darker. This was Romeo and Tibalt. She ran.

Something inside her led her to a door that opened into a service alley. She ran through the alleyways. How had she survived that day, covered in blood and... She ran from the chairs and the grizzly lumps and the sight of herself in the mirror. The rain that night washed away the gore on her body. She watched in the faint light as wisps of white hair connected by mats of blood fell onto the train tracks below her.

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Joanne could feel searing heat spread through her and knew what was coming. Her body was tuned to the blasts of sounds now. She had never realized how dark the dance floor was when she was working. She prayed that the darkness would help her. Her vision suddenly sharpened. The world around her glowed in tones of gray despite the lighting.

The music changed abruptly from a excruciatingly loud thump into a section of calm syntheticity. In the background Joanne could recognize a sampling of an old Doors song. The small section was weaved into whatever the other composition was. Joanne was familiar with this part, it was played on a regular basis. The crowd seemed to get a kick out of hearing the small familiar tinkle of the piano amidst the chaos of the rest of the music. She was even familiar with the pattern of lights and smoke that went with it.

She tried to push back the changes. They weren't painful. They crossed the threshold of pain and became pure ecstasy. Pain became pleasurable. The lights went dark again and small colorful shapes, moon, stars and triangles, soared around the room reflecting off the smoke that oozed from the edges of the dance floor.

"Control," Joanne whispered to herself.

She felt her nails grow, the bones of her fingers and arms contorting. She twisted wildly in her dance to cover up anything unusual. Joanne looked for some reprieve through the mass of similarly gesticulating people. She balled her hands into fists. Long

claws bit into the flesh of her palms. She didn't feel it. She concentrated on moving further from the blond man. As though there was some sort of preternatural understanding, the crowd shifted in front of her. A path opened. Her breath escaped from her lips. She felt the cartilage of her ears stretch.

A hand on her shoulder stopped her. "Where are you going?"

Joanne half turned. She expected the face of the blond man to show horror, terror at the changes that had occurred. Instead he looked at her with a sort of glee. Joanne felt fear well up past her throat. She struck at him. She kept her fist tight and the claws of her hand cut into her palm until they hit bone. Distantly, she could feel one break off. The blond man reeled at the punch and slammed into a woman dancing behind him.

Joanne fled. Footing in her hard-soled boots was difficult on the sweaty floor. As she had before, she trusted whatever instincts she had to find the best way to escape. The rest room was small and bright, alive with mirrors in thick gold frames. Unlike rest rooms in the movies, it did not have a conveniently placed window to lead her into a dark alley. She felt betrayal shrivel around her heart. She crashed into a stall and locked it behind her. She paced its short length, not sure what else to do, until the thrill in her blood calmed.

"Jo?" It was Tracy's voice. "Joey?" He had never called her that before. There was a timid, light knock on the door.

Joanne wasn't sure how long she had been sitting on the grimy floor. She had wondered why the blond man hadn't come in for her. She strained trying to remember if she knew him. Maybe long ago someone had...gotten away.

"Jo?" This time there was a more alarm in it.

Joanne gathered herself to her feet. She looked down at her hands. They were hers, just hands, though her right hand still had a large cut in the palm. It would heal. She unlocked the stall and went to the door. She ignored the mirrors.

"I'm sorry, Trace. I--." Her voice sounded strange.

"Oh my God, Jo!" She had never heard so much emotion come from Tracy before and it frightened her. "You look terrible!"

"I," Joanne hesitated. Lies did not come easily to her. "I didn't feel well."

"Well, go home, hun." He looked torn as to whether it would be proper to take Joanne into his liver-spotted arms.

"No," she heard herself say. "I need to help you finish up. I need..." She searched Tracy's eyes. How could she say that she didn't want to be alone.

"You sure?" he asked.

Joanne nodded and followed Tracy back to the bar.

The club was strange in regular light. The bar was an entirely different entity without the dark shadows in the corners and the bright, hooded neon lights above the bottles of spirits. The dance floor was plain old black cement without the moving colored shapes of light, the strobes, and the smoke. It smelled dank behind the bar. The odors of faded cigarette smoke and the ozone smell of whatever was used to produce the fog combined with stale sweat and spilt liquor.

Joanne worked on autopilot for the rest of the night. She knew the routine well enough to do it in her sleep. Tracy came in from the back room to restock. This meant it was Joanne's night to take out the trash. Harvey was the janitor and maintenance man, but when it came to taking care of and cleaning up the bar, it was all Joanne and Tracy. She was so numb that she didn't think twice when she gathered the three medium sized plastic bags from behind the bar and relined the cans. She hefted the bags ignoring the dulling pain in her right hand. She paused before she stepped out into the alley. She could hear Tracy and Harvey sharing a joke behind her. Not far away at all. She would only be away from the men a moment.

The alley was damp and rank though Joanne could not remember it being so before. This would be the last time she walked out into this particular alley. She calculated how much money she had in her pocket, in the tip jar, at her apartment. How far would that get her? She would close her account as soon as she got to the next city.

She did not hear the blond man step out from around the corner of the building, but she did notice the movement. Before she could react, the dart stabbed her in the thigh. The tranquilizer worked quickly. Her leg gave out and she fell, taking one of the garbage bags full of plastic cups with her. The blond man lowered the pistol. Joanne tried to scabble backwards, but ice flowed from her leg into her torso and her arms. The blond man paused before coming over to her. For once in her life, Joanne wished the changes would come. Not even a sound would issue from her throat.

"Don't worry, Joanne," the blond man murmured. He stood over her, blocking the night sky and the tops of the broken downtown buildings. "We've always known. We'll help you with your little problem. There's nothing to worry about now."

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"This is Miss Sholutovich, honey," her mother said and touched her gently on the shoulder. "She's the lady I've been telling you about. She wants to see how you dance."

Joanne nodded but didn't say anything. The room was cold and the hairs on her neck and the back of her hands stood on end. It was a bit dark too. Some shadows clung to the walls opposite the practice bar. The woman sitting in a chair with a round seat and an oval back near the piano was older than mother and thinner. The wisps of her white hair were pushed back with a tortoise shell headband and her make-up looked out of place. To Joanne, it looked like the graffiti painted on the stone bridge they had passed under on the long car ride here. Of course, Joanne would not say as much. This day was important to her mother. Joanne knew it had to be important to her as well.

"Your mother tells me you have been taught French school. Please, perform the positions." Her voice was and had an accent that Joanne could only associate with the voices of World War II survivors from a documentary she had seen once.

"Yes, ma'am," Joanne replied. The piano player, a pudgy man who seemed to be sweating despite the temperature, started playing. He played faster than Joanne was used to, but it she kept up. In her mind's eye, she saw a black and white picture as she danced. Joanne had taken it from a box in her parent's room. The woman in the picture was dressed in a leotard, and a slim, strong, handsome-looking man behind her was lifting her at her waist. The woman was Mother, she knew it had to be. She looked beautiful. Joanne has always thought her mother was pretty, but the woman in this picture was the

vision of every princess in every story. It was the only thing Joanne wanted: to be like her mom, to be that woman in that picture.

The music stopped at the exact moment Joanne finished the positions and forms that were asked of her.

"Well, she's just like a little cat, isn't she?" Miss Sholutovich was speaking to the man at the piano. He let out a nervous little laugh. It sounded like a rat gnawing and it made Joanne shiver even more. "Yes," Sholutovich said louder, to her mother this time, "just like a little cat! She will fit in just perfectly!"

Joanne padded over to the fluffy white towel her mother held for her. Mother was beaming at her. Despite ache in the pit of her stomach, Joanne smiled as well. Nothing could be wrong if Mother was this happy.

Joanne woke up in a room filled with sunshine. It was warm on her body. She had lived on the beach once. She had been enamored with the sun and the sand. She made a point of laying at the water's edge every week. Hot sun, gulls... She could always find a place by herself among the rocks.

Slowly, her other senses began to register input. The squawking of the gulls was replaced by a constant beeping. It was softer than an alarm clock. It pulsed in time with her heartbeat. The place smelt of sweet sterility. Like a doctor's office.

Joanne opened her eyes to a paneled drop ceiling. She tried to move her head and couldn't. Out of the corner of her eye she could see the tower of an IV bottle. She panic slightly, knowing that the IV was most likely attached to a vein in the back of her hand.

Her muscles didn't obey. The only product of her struggle was a slight noise in the back of her throat and an increase in the beeping off to one side. Softly beyond the metronome of her heart she could hear music. It wasn't Prokofiev.

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