

Cat Butt Christmas

by

Rob Herzog

Chicago, Illinois  
robherzog@hotmail.com

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

One unadorned artificial Christmas tree. Two newlyweds. A half dozen Rubbermaid bins full of ornaments and bric-a-brac.

The couple: JESS and DOMINIC, hipsters, late 20s.

She pops a container lid.

JESS

Ready to check out these ornaments?

DOMINIC

Yeah. Go on. Let's see.

From her first bin she pulls an ornament resembling an Oscar Mayer bacon slice. Glued to the top: a tiny Santa hat.

JESS

Found this one last year.

Dominic nods. Pretty cool.

Onto the tree it goes.

Reaching deeper into her bin, Jess snags three beauties:

- A balsa wood replica of Burt Reynolds circa 1977.
- A hollowed out pinecone with a scuba-clad baby inside.
- A glass eye that's been repurposed as an ornament.

JESS

This is an actual glass eye, but it was never inside anyone's head. That's what the seller told me.

Dominic scratches his nose.

JESS

Should it stay in the bin?

DOMINIC

No. Hang it. It's uniquely cheery.

JESS

Let me show you my favorite.

She rummages through the bin and pulls out...something.

JESS

Behold: The cat butt.

Dominic struggles to make sense of what he sees.

It's a ceramic cat ornament, but the cat's head has been replaced. A second tail extends where its head should be.

Tail in the front. Torso. Tail in back. Four legs. No head.

Painted under both tails: big pink buttocks. Two cat rear-ends for the price of one.

DOMINIC

Is it coming or going?

JESS

You get to hang it.

Her light brown eyes gleam with whimsy.

JESS

And there's something else: The cat butt ornament is magic.

DOMINIC

Yeah?

He searches.

DOMINIC

What do you mean? Like hitting the trifecta at Santa Anita?

JESS

No, not that. You'll have to see for yourself. Cat butt magic manifests in unpredictable ways.

Jess hands over the cat, points out a prime spot to hang it.

Averting his eyes from the dual anuses, Dominic sets the cat on the tree.

JESS

We should put up some of your ornaments now.

He sheepishly assesses the shabby cardboard box at his feet.

DOMINIC

Mine are a little boring. They're from my mom's basement.

JESS  
Heirlooms matter most.

He fishes out a red ornament: plain as plain can be.  
Jess hangs it just to the side of the dual-assed cat.

JESS  
I love it.

She assesses the tree.

JESS  
Everyone overlooks a moment like  
this.

Her wavy hair brushes her collar.

JESS  
It's the first time we've mingled  
our ornaments.

A raised eyebrow from Dominic.

JESS  
Your ornaments and my ornaments are  
becoming our ornaments. Nobody ever  
mentions how significant that is.  
It's not in any newlywed handbook.

Dominic watches her, a little mesmerized.

DOMINIC  
Should we take a picture?

JESS  
No. Just note it for what it is.

As they soak it in, she peeks into his woeful ornament box.

JESS  
What's this?

From Dominic's box Jess retrieves a semi-crushed cardboard  
toilet paper tube--a grade school art project gone awry.

On one end is some glitter and a few frayed remnants of  
feathers. Mostly it's just pure, bare cardboard tubing.

A ribbon loop is where it would hang from a tree.

DOMINIC  
This is from third grade, I think.  
Kind of gave up halfway through.

JESS  
And now it's disintegrating.

DOMINIC  
Let's chuck it.

JESS  
No way, Dominic. Your mom saved  
that all these years. I love it.

She hands it to him.

JESS  
As a hoarder of nutty ornaments, I  
deem this tube worthy of a prime  
spot on the tree.

JESS  
In fact, hang it next to the cat  
butt.

Dominic shrugs, obeys.

A second after he hangs it, the tube tumbles to the floor.

Dominic re-hangs it. Once again, the tube falls.

DOMINIC  
Your cat butt hates my crappy tube.

JESS  
Let me try.

Jess hangs the tube, but it falls.

She tries again and again and again. Same results.

JESS  
Damn. Constant rejection.

They stare in astonishment.

DOMINIC  
Is this the magic you were talking  
about?

She nods solemnly. Yep.

JESS  
Classic cat butt wizardry.

She frowns.

JESS

You don't think this is a sign, do you? The foreshadowing of a doomed marriage?

DOMINIC

It's just a fluke, Jess.

JESS

Hold on. I've got an idea.

From various drawers she gathers ribbon, glitter, paint.

JESS

We should collaborate to fix up the undecorated half of this nasty tube. Is that okay with you?

DOMINIC

Yeah, okay. Sure.

The couple gets to work. Paint. Glitter. Ribbon. Renewal.

LATER

The toilet paper tube is now red, glorious, glittered, and looped with ribbon. Jess gestures for Dominic to hang it.

JESS

Let me say something first.

She steps close to the tree.

JESS

Cat Butt, Dominic is my husband and I love him. We worked together on his disgusting toilet paper tube and we made it a lot less awful and sad. We think you should accept it.

She shifts.

JESS

Dominic's mom used to hang this tube on her tree, but she's passed on. Let's make a place for it here. This is where it belongs.

To solidify her point, Jess pulls Dominic close, gives him a sweet, earnest kiss, and hands him the tube.

Moment of truth. Dominic hangs the ornament, waits--

One second. Two. Three, four, five. It stays in place!

Joy. Celebration. Kisses. The marriage isn't doomed.

Decorating resumes.

LATER

The newlyweds admire a fully decorated and lighted tree. Jess turns off the room's lights to enhance the tree's glow.

She takes Dominic's hand and leads him away for the night.

Moments after they leave, shadows swirl.

In this dreamy, sugarplum hour, comes something truly magical: a fanciful dance spectacle.

A whimsical version of Dominic prances at one end of the room. He wears a cheesy costume that makes him resemble a giant discarded toilet paper tube.

Up and down he goes, like a performer in the Nutcracker.

On the other end of the room twirls fanciful Jess. She wears an oversized cat butt helmet, tails extending like antlers.

A clumsy, woebegone ballet begins.

Spinning. Whirling. Lunging. The two dancers are totally out of sync. The giant tube falls oafishly to the ground.

But somehow they find a rhythm.

Their movements become magical, enchanted, Christmassy.

They embrace and vanish--a fine flourish to end the dance.

But the whimsy isn't over. It transfers to the tree.

Something stirs, falls, hits the floor. Plop. The bacon ornament.

Another ornament drops: the glass eye. It rolls on the floor.

All the ornaments fall out of the tree. A jingly avalanche. Down goes Burt Reynolds circa 1977.

Soon the only decorations left hanging are the tube and the cat butt. They have this tree all to themselves.

Together. Blissful. Baffling.

A round, pink butthole shines amid Christmas light.

FADE OUT: