

Art Therapy for Maturing Divas

- ACT I SCENE I: A community room in a senior apartment complex. It's high up in the building, with big arched windows that give glimpses of the ocean, blocks away. There are several round and rectangular tables in the center of the room, couches and reading chairs around the perimeter interspersed with bookshelves. At the center table LUCY is knitting and sipping tea while chatting with DORIS who is doing paint-by numbers and RED who is coloring.
- DORIS: Did you hear? Frank down on two is in the hospital again. Joe and Myrna are taking the bus over tomorrow for visiting hours.
- RED: Did he fall, or is it his emphysema?
- DORIS: Emphysema.
- RED: You'd think after last time he'd stop smoking. Roll that green pencil closer to me, would you?
- LUCY: (counting stitches) One, two, three, four, five, six... damn, I forgot that fucking perl again.
- RED: (drily) Language, dear. You might scare the children.
- (Across the room a twenty-year-old staffer glances over at them with a disapproving look on her face)
- See?
- LUCY: Impudent child. Tried to tell me there were rules. I told her I'd been cursing like a sailor before she'd been born and I wasn't likely to stop any time soon, and when she'd been a medic in a war zone she could maybe think about lecturing me. Fuck... was it knit six, perl three or knit five, perl two? (she begins ripping out stitches)
- RED: This is why you never complete anything.
- DORIS: It's not about the finished project. It's about the stimulation of the creative act. Making art is good for the brain.
- RED: We're not 'making art,' we're coloring in pictures. You're just using a brush instead of pencils or crayons.
- DORIS: It is, too, art. I choose the brushstrokes. I choose the picture. And you, you select the colors you use. Or do you see a lot of cats striped pink and yellow?
- RED: Pink? Where do you see pink? That's tan? They're calicos. Tiny little calicos. It's time to get your eyes checked, Doris... do you want me to go with you next week?

DORIS: (sighing) I suppose. I keep hoping Sasha will come by, but she keeps telling me, 'Work is so busy, Mom. I'll come on the weekend, Mom.' And then she never comes.

RED: Is she still dating that musician?

LUCY: Musician? Red, you've been home coloring alone too long. Sasha dumped the musician *weeks* ago. She's dating a chef now.

RED: A chef?

DORIS: A chef. He works at that chi-chi French place on the waterfront.

RED: Ooh-la-la! (she sorts through the pencils, selecting another color, finds it and holds it up) Ah-ha! (coloring) I love doing their eyes. These little kitties have the best eyes. (picks up coloring book, shows it to friends)

LUCY: They look shell-shocked.

DORIS: Well...

RED: I'd say, more like stoned. Like they've been sneaking into Old Man Fletcher's garden for the really strong catnip and hitting it a bit too hard. Pretty sure that one on top is about to hold his wee paw in front of his big, green eyes, and start swaying back and forth while his friends all purr a chorus of 'Whiter Shade of Pale.'

ALL SING: *We skipped the light fandango
Turned cartwheels 'cross the floor
I was feeling kinda seasick
But the crowd called out for more
The room was humming harder
As the ceiling flew away
When we called out for another drink
The waiter brought a tray...*

(The song devolves into a chorus of laughter as each art project is abandoned for a few minutes. As the nurse approaches, LUCY calls them back to order)

LUCY: Straighten up, solidiers! Sergeant's coming!

NURSE: (simpering) Ladies, is there anything I can help you with today?

RED: Oh, we're just three ladies collaborating on an art project. You heard about Frank, right?

NURSE: He's back in the hospital, I'm afraid.

RED: We thought it'd be nice if he came home to a decorated apartment is all.

NURSE (pandering) Oh, how sweet.

DORIS: Oh, we're the sweetest.

RED: (resumes coloring) Anyway, we'd better get busy. Thanks for checking in.

NURSE: Just... keep it down. Some people can't handle too much stimulation. (walks away)

LUCY: That woman totally lacks charm.

DORIS: And brains.

LUCY: Nice ass, though.

DORIS: Yes. Frank thinks so, too.

RED: (showing off her completed picture). My latest masterpiece. "Tripping Loco Cats."
The lights fade out as they continue chatting and working on their art.