

Everything fell eerily quiet. Johnny let go of Cyn's hair, and she fell to the floor like a teardrop. He stood over her, breathing and blowing like a bull. The tiny, bloody, Georgia clay-colored kitten hanging lifeless, in his right hand.

Billy spoke, "Damn, Johnny, what the hell have you done? Goddamn, Johnny! You said that we were gonna scare her and make her touch our willies. You didn't say nothin' 'bout all this. Damn, Johnny!"

"Shut up, you coward. You sound like a girl, as weak as this crippled, sissy girl. Why don't you run away like Sam did? Go on, run, you big sissy, run!" Johnny screamed while flinging the kitty carcass back and forth as if he were wielding a sword, droplets of the little one's blood scattering through the air. This was too much for Billy and he did run. With Johnny's taunting words pelleting his backside, Billy ran.

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Cyn lay curled on her side, waiting for the next onslaught of words or fist, powerless, brokenhearted. Johnny knelt beside her, and as he did, she saw the tiny, bloodied remains of her beautiful kitten still in his hand—the kitten she had run all the way out to this place to see, to love, to care for. Rage filled Cyn, her first real rage, and it was absolute.

Johnny reached for her, and as he touched her exposed breast, she rolled swiftly over onto her back, pulled her legs to her chest, and drove them into him. She kicked with both of her strong legs, the long and the short of it. Lying on her back, using her powerful limbs and heavy-heeled shoes, Cyn was a young woman you wouldn't want to have to reckon with.

She kicked again, and again, and again. Johnny was screaming now. She had kicked him up against one of the kudzu vine-covered columns that had once made the old Taylor plantation a thing of beauty. Johnny looked like the broken one now, the cripple, and still Cyn kicked. She couldn't stop.