

MY BODY IS POISON

By Stephanie Heathcock

CHARACTERS

ELAINE BLY

Female in her twenties.

LUNA

A cat. Preferably female, but ultimately their gender is the director's choice. This script will use "she/her" pronouns.

Luna's "cat sounds" should sound like real cat sounds.

Be mindful of how Luna is portrayed. DO NOT put a person in a cat costume. The litmus test should be that when the cat is first revealed to the audience, they do not laugh.

DANIELLE BLY

Female in her twenties. Elaine's younger sister.

DAVID

Male. Twenties.

SETTING

Elaine's apartment. There is a couch with a coffee table in front of it, and three doors: one leading outside, one to her bedroom, and one to the bathroom. Her kitchen is offstage. There is also a TV facing the couch.

CONTENT DISCLOSURE

Self-harm

Language

SCENE 1

Elaine's apartment. She hasn't tidied up in a while. A pile of folders and documents fills one end of her coffee table.

Elaine is sitting on the ground against the couch, scrolling through her phone, but not engaged.

LUNA
(offstage)
Meow.

Pause.

LUNA
(offstage)
Meow.

Elaine sighs.

LUNA
(offstage)
Meow.

ELAINE
Shut up.

Pause.

Luna enters, leaping up from behind the couch onto the top. She stares at Elaine, slinks across the couch until above her, and stares for a beat more. She leans into Elaine's ear.

LUNA
Meow.

ELAINE
Shut the hell up!

A knock at the door. Elaine gets up and answers it. As soon as the door opens Danielle enters and hugs Elaine.

DANIELLE
Elaine! How are you! I feel like I haven't seen you since the, you know.

ELAINE
Thanks for stopping by. Your crap is ruining the feng shui of my bedroom.

Danielle enters the apartment fully now, and she takes in the mess.

DANIELLE
Jesus.

Elaine rushes to haphazardly tidy up.

ELAINE
Sorry. I've been busy. I-

Danielle spots Luna. She squeals.

DANIELLE
Luuuuuuna!

Danielle sits on the couch strokes Luna, who purrs.

DANIELLE
She's even cuter in real life!

Luna hops onto Danielle's lap, who just can't get enough of the cute.

DANIELLE
You are too much!

Danielle takes out her phone to take a picture. Elaine snatches it away.

DANIELLE
Hey!

ELAINE
Sorry sis, no pictures.

DANIELLE
Seriously?

ELAINE
Seriously.

From a stack of papers on Elaine's coffee table, she pulls a binder and hands it to Danielle, who sets and opens it on the couch so as not to disturb Luna. Danielle flicks through the pages. Elaine returns to tidying up.

DANIELLE
Did Mom write this?

ELAINE

Yup. Or some lawyer. Second page, halfway down.

DANIELLE

(reading)

"Copyright of all photography, film, or other likeness created to reproduce or resemble Luna the Cat are the sole property of Victoria," crossed out, "Elaine Bly."
The hell does this mean?

ELAINE

It means any picture you take of Luna technically belongs to me.

DANIELLE

That's stupid! Can't I take a picture for myself!

ELAINE

It says to avoid letting anyone else take photographs. Any "out of house" content could make its way online and "jeopardize" the brand.

Elaine holds Danielle's phone up to her, but just out of reach.

ELAINE

No pictures. Okay?

DANIELLE

Fine.

Danielle snatches back her phone. Luna leaps onto the coffee table.

DANIELLE

Aww, bye Luna.

Luna stretches, then hops onto the floor and slinks around the apartment, doing cat things.

DANIELLE

How many pictures do you have to post every day?

ELAINE

At least one or two. But there's also the website I need to maintain. And any promotional stuff for merch.

DANIELLE

Not the end of the world then.

Elaine huffs and collapses onto the couch.

ELAINE

Feels like it sometimes. She has over 400,000 followers.

DANIELLE

At this point though you just need to take a picture and they'll be happy. Mom was the one who built the brand, so just coast and enjoy the extra money.

ELAINE

I got a letter yesterday from a woman in London. She said Luna's posts helped her get through her divorce.

DANIELLE

Aww!

ELAINE

Her husband cheated on her, emptied the bank account, and took off. Luna was a "small ray of happiness in the cloudiest, darkest time of her life."

DANIELLE

That's so special.

ELAINE

Every week when I check the P.O. box there's at least one letter, or kid's drawing, or cat toys. So many cat toys.

DANIELLE

Aww! You're making the world a better place.

ELAINE

Yeah, I guess I am.

DANIELLE

(checking her phone)

Hey, so I've got a thing at 2. Can I...?

ELAINE

Right! Let me grab it.

Elaine leaves through her bedroom door. Danielle watches Luna for a moment, then tries to lure her back.

DANIELLE
(clicks her tongue)
Luuuuna!

Elaine returns with a large cardboard box and sets it on the couch. Danielle opens it.

ELAINE
It's not much, but she did leave you all of her jewelry.

Danielle peers inside the box and find herself getting a bit emotional.

ELAINE
You alright?

Danielle smiles at Elaine.

DANIELLE
(Trying to appear fine)
I'm fine!

ELAINE
If you ever need to-

DANIELLE
I don't want to be late! I'll get out of your hair!

Danielle takes the box, hurriedly goes to the front door, and fumbles with the knob. Elaine has followed her and opens the door.

DANIELLE
Bye El! Bye Luna!

Danielle exits before Elaine has the chance to say goodbye.

LUNA
Meow!

Elaine shoots a sideways glance at Luna, and shuts the door. Elaine pulls her phone out of her pocket, plops onto the couch, and goes back to scrolling. Luna leaps onto the couch and sits beside Elaine. They sit together for a few moments.

LUNA
You knew she was coming over. You could have at least tidied up.

ELAINE
I've been busy.

LUNA
No you haven't. You've been on your phone all day.

ELAINE
I'm tired.

LUNA
It's not that difficult. For example, see the pile of paperwork that's been sitting there for weeks.

Luna waits for an answer.

ELAINE
(Annoyed)
Yes?

LUNA
All you need to do is get your file organizer, and bring it to the living room. Then lift up your arm, take a piece of paper, and place it into the box. It's easy.

ELAINE
There's more to it then-

LUNA
You're lazy. That's all there is to it. You're lazy.

Elaine turns her back to Luna and focuses on her phone.

LUNA
Interesting how when your sister shows up, you suddenly have the energy to clean your entire apartment in a few minutes.

Pause.

ELAINE
(getting emotional)
I know, alright? I know. I'm lazy.

LUNA
Do you think that Danielle thinks that you're lazy too?

Elaine looks at Luna.

LUNA
It's an honest question.

Elaine turns back around.

ELAINE
(*Holding back tears*)
Why don't you go lick your ass or something?

LUNA
Oh, you want me to go back to acting like a dumb
cat again?

ELAINE
No, wait! I-

LUNA
Meow!

ELAINE
I didn't mean-!

LUNA
Meow!

ELAINE
I'm sorry! Is that what you want me to say?

LUNA
Meow!

ELAINE
Please stop.

LUNA
Meow!

ELAINE
Please stop!

LUNA
Meow!

ELAINE
What, do you want treats or something?!

LUNA

Oh. I could go for some treats.

Elaine rushes to the treat canister and takes out a few treats.

ELAINE

Here.

She holds the treats out in her open palm, which Luna eats. She enjoys them while Elaine waits.

LUNA

Had enough energy to walk across the room. You just needed to proper motivation.

Elaine is about to cry again, but holds it in.

LUNA

You were just being lazy, weren't you?

Elaine nods.

SCENE 2

Elaine's apartment. It's back to being untidy. Luna is napping on top of the couch.

Elaine bursts through her bedroom door. She's dressed nicely. Her face is red and blotchy.

ELAINE

Shit.

Luna gently wakes up and watches Elaine as she rushes to tidy up.

LUNA

He'll be here any minute.

She throws things into her bedroom and closes the door.

ELAINE

I know.

LUNA

Sure you're up to it?

ELAINE
Too late now.

LUNA
Think he'll notice?

Elaine checks her clothes. Checks the apartment.

ELAINE
What?

LUNA
Your face.

Elaine runs to a mirror.

ELAINE
Fuck.

LUNA
Maybe some makeup?

ELAINE
I have makeup on. Dammit.

There is a knock at the door.

LUNA
(like the movie)
He's heeeere.

Elaine closes her eyes and takes a calming breath. Three counts through her mouth, six out her nose. She walks up to the door and stops. She is frozen. There's another knock at the door and Elaine opens it immediately.

David is standing in the doorway. He is also dressed nicely. He has a messenger bag.

DAVID
(startled)
Hey.

ELAINE
Sorry! I didn't mean to, um, pleasecomein!

David enters.

DAVID
How was your day?

ELAINE
Oh, you know, the usual.

Elaine notices that David is standing awkwardly in the middle of the room.

ELAINE
Sit! I mean, please, sit, if you want.

David takes a seat on the couch. The stack of papers is still there.

ELAINE
I'm sorry!

She collects the pile of papers and throws them into her bedroom. Luna snorts.

DAVID
(*Just noticing Luna*)
Oh, hey there. What's their name?

ELAINE
Her name's Luna.

DAVID
(*scratching under Luna's chin*)
Hey there. I'm David.

Elaine disappears into her bedroom.

ELAINE
Sorry! Just a second!

DAVID
(*To Luna*)
So, have any advice for me?

Elaine returns.

ELAINE
Sorry about that. Do you want anything? To drink, I mean.

DAVID
I'm good with whatever. Coke, if you have some.

ELAINE
(*joking*)
You've come to the wrong house for that, mister.

DAVID
(*Playing along*)
Whoops! Wrong apartment! I thought you were my dealer.

Elaine disappears into the kitchen.

ELAINE
(*offstage*)
Diet or regular?

DAVID
Do you get more or less high from diet?

ELAINE
(*offstage*)
The same. Bu you won't get fat taking diet.

David laughs.

DAVID
(*Still joking*)
That's horrible. We're going to hell for that one.

Elaine enters with two cans of soda. She's mortified.

ELAINE
I'm so sorry. I-

DAVID
I'm kidding! You're fine.

Elaine relaxes.

ELAINE
I'm sorry, I was just... I don't know.

She sits on the couch and hands him the soda.

ELAINE
So what are we doing again?

DAVID
Alright. After a few dates, I have every girl I'm seeing go through a test.

ELAINE
Uh...

DAVID
It's not anything weird! I promise. It's just...

David reaches into his bag and pulls out a DVD case.

ELAINE
Is that Psycho?

DAVID
Yes.

ELAINE
Your test is Psycho?

DAVID
Yes.

ELAINE
(teasing)
...Are you trying to tell me something?

DAVID
Psycho is a masterpiece! If a girl I like likes Psycho, then I know for sure that we share the same tastes.

ELAINE
And how many girls have passed your "test."

DAVID
Well. Um.

Beat.

ELAINE
I'm the first one you're showing this to, huh?

DAVID
You caught me.

They laugh.

ELAINE
Alright. I'll take your little test.

David sets up the DVD.

ELAINE
I've already seen it though.

DAVID
What?!

ELAINE
(laughing)
Everyone has seen Psycho.

DAVID
And? Thoughts?

Elaine smirks at him.

ELAINE
You'll have to find out after it's over.

David sits back on the couch.

DAVID
Fine. Worth the wait.

Elaine turns out the light. The couple are lit by the TV. The movie begins. Lights fade out. Time passes.

Lights fade back in. It's now the middle of the movie. Elaine has a blanket and David a bag of instant-popcorn. Luna is still on top of the couch. The scene is Norman and Marian eating together in the parlor.

Elaine and David sit silently, watching the film.

LUNA
Do you think he noticed?

David doesn't react. He can't hear Luna.

LUNA
Your face, I mean. Do you think he noticed your face? He didn't say anything, but he had to have noticed.

Beat.

LUNA
You were crying for, what? An hour before he got here?

Elaine takes a cleansing breath. Her eyes are fixed on the screen.

LUNA

I hope he noticed how remarkable I am. He's a bit out of my demographic, but you never know.

A few moments of silence.

LUNA

He said he liked you.

Elaine lets out a choked gasp.

DAVID

You alright?

Luna laughs.

ELAINE

Sorry. Swallowed down the wrong pipe, or breathed down the wrong... sorry.

David gets up.

DAVID

Need water?

ELAINE

I'm fine! Sorry.

David sits back down.

DAVID

You say "sorry" a lot.

LUNA

Tell me about it.

ELAINE

Force of habit. Sorry.

(David and Luna together:)

DAVID

// There it is again.

LUNA

// There it is again.

Elaine and David stare at each other for a moment, then awkwardly go back to watching the movie.

A few more moments of silence.

LUNA
Nice going.

Elaine breathes in through her nose, trying to regain her composure. David notices.

DAVID
Elaine? Are you...

Beat.

DAVID
Oh no I- I shouldn't have picked this movie.

Elaine hides her face in the blanket.

ELAINE
I'm fine.

DAVID
You're... I can tell that you're...

David pauses the movie.

DAVID
Are you alright?

LUNA
What a waste of an evening.

DAVID
Your Mom just... I should have-

ELAINE
It's fine.

LUNA
He was such a nice guy.

DAVID
Are you sure? I can tell something is wrong.

LUNA
And you had to go and mess it all up.

Elaine appears from under the blanket. Her face is beet red and splotchy.

ELAINE
(yelling)
It's fine!

Silence. Elaine is beginning to hyperventilate. David stares at her.

ELAINE
I'm sorry.

DAVID
What?

ELAINE
Maybe you should go.

DAVID
Elaine, are you-?

ELAINE
Please go!

Elaine hides her face in the blanket. David stands up, turn on the light, and turns off the TV.

DAVID
Elaine?

She doesn't look up from the blanket.

DAVID
Goodnight.

David leaves through the front door. Silence. Luna chuckles and leaps onto the couch next to Elaine.

LUNA
Nice going.

Beat.

LUNA
Well, we're never going to see him again. It was nice while it lasted, at least.

Elaine peeks out from the blanket. She's crying.

LUNA

You just had to freak out, didn't you. She died months ago, normal people would have gotten over it already.

Beat.

LUNA

Unless... This isn't about your mom?

Beat.

LUNA

So you freaked out for nothing. Nice.

ELAINE

It wasn't nothing.

LUNA

Sure seemed like it to me.

ELAINE

Why do I do this to myself?

Elaine buries her face again.

Beat.

LUNA

You missed our weekly livestream for that. Perfectly good money thrown out the window because you couldn't behave like a normal person.

ELAINE

Oh shut up.

Luna chuckles.

LUNA

I'm just saying what you're thinking.

ELAINE

Shut up.

LUNA

We could have made someone's day better. Made someone smile. Made some money. But you had to waste the evening crying and scaring away a guy who was gullible enough to actually like you.

Elaine throws the blanket off of herself.

ELAINE

Shut up! You don't mean as much to people as you think you do! Sure, they'll look at your stupid feed and smile for two seconds, but once they put their phone away, you disappear!

But not to me. I get to look at you 24/7. And what they don't know is that behind that cute face is fucking poison! If any of them came in contact with you for more than five seconds, if any of them paid attention, they would experience what you do to me every day. Every time I do something wrong, you're right there to rub it in. And between every spare second of silence, you're right there, ready to remind me that I don't just do wrong things, I am wrong.

You want to know why I told David to leave?!

Because now I'm poison too! Because if Danielle or David actually got to know me, they would find out that you're fucking right!

You happy?! You're fucking right! I agree with every fucking word that comes out of your mouth! I'm lazy, and neurotic, and I am so unreliable I can't so much as run the social media account of a fucking cat! I hate myself!

Elaine takes the blanket and throws it on top of Luna. She presses her entire weight down as Luna struggles. Luna gradually stops moving.

As soon as she's sure Luna has completely stopped, Elaine slowly lets go and stares. As she leans back away from the blanket, she notices that she's bleeding. On her wrist are large cuts, larger than what could be caused by a cat.

She stares silently.

Luna appears from behind the couch, leaping onto the top. Elaine sees her, and removes the blanket from the couch. There is no Luna underneath the blanket.

LUNA

Maybe we should call the hospital.

Elaine stares at her wrist as the lights fade.

SCENE 3

Elaine sits on the floor against the couch. Her arm is wrapped in a bandage. She's wearing a hospital wristband on her uninjured arm. Luna is not there.

A knock at the door.

ELAINE
Come in.

Danielle opens the door, peeking inside.

DANIELLE
Elaine?

ELAINE
Yeah?

Elaine looks up at Danielle, and bursts into tears. Danielle rushes to her side and hugs her.

DANIELLE
Are you alright? I mean... Oh god, that's probably the worst thing I could say right now, isn't it?

ELAINE
It's alright.

DANIELLE
No it's not.

Danielle looks at Elaine's arm. Silence.

ELAINE
I'm sorry.

DANIELLE
El...

Danielle hugs Elaine.

DANIELLE
You have nothing to be sorry about.

ELAINE
I made you and Dad worry.

DANIELLE
You didn't "make us" anything. We're worried because we love you.

ELAINE
(muttering)
You shouldn't.

DANIELLE
What?

Elaine takes a breath.

ELAINE
I don't know what's wrong with me. I... Don't
deserve to be loved.

Beat.

ELAINE
All I can think about is how much I hate myself.

DANIELLE
You know that doesn't make sense, right? For you
to hate yourself? There is nothing about you that
you should hate yourself for.

ELAINE
I know that. Logically I know that. But it
doesn't matter how much my thoughts don't make
sense. What matters is how I feel. That's my
reality. And I feel like I hate myself.

Danielle hugs Elaine.

DANIELLE
Knowing that you shouldn't feel that way is a
start, I guess.

They sit together for a few moments.

ELAINE
I talked to Dad while I was in the hospital.

DANIELLE
Yeah?

ELAINE
He said that I reminded him of Mom. She used to
feel this way too sometimes.

DANIELLE
I never knew.

ELAINE
Me neither.

Beat.

ELAINE

He told me some ways he helped Mom cope. And he's sending some books that helped her.

DANIELLE

That's good.

Beat.

ELAINE

Could you...

Elaine tears up. She pulls away from Danielle.

DANIELLE

What is it?

Elaine can't look at her sister. She cries.

ELAINE

I want you to know how much I hate myself for asking this...

Beat.

ELAINE

Could you call Dad and get some advice on how to... help me? When things get bad.

DANIELLE

Oh my god El, of course!

Danielle hugs Elaine.

ELAINE

I'm sorry.

DANIELLE

Don't say I'm sorry. You've done nothing wrong. Say "thank you."

ELAINE

Thank you.

Elaine hugs Danielle back. They hold each other for a minute before Elaine pulls back.

ELAINE

(laughing)

My nose...

Elaine reaches to the tissue box, grabs a tissue, and blows her nose.

DANIELLE

Are you hungry? What do you have that I can make?

ELAINE

You don't need to...

Danielle smiles at Elaine.

ELAINE

Pasta?

DANIELLE

Pasta it is.

Danielle hugs her sister before getting up and walking to the kitchen offstage.

Elaine sits in silence and smiles.

Luna appears from behind the couch, jumping onto the top.

LUNA

Making your sister do your dirty work, are we?

Elaine doesn't respond.

Luna jumps onto the couch and sits over Elaine's shoulder.

LUNA

Still as lazy as ever. Even took a trip to the hospital and you won't wake up and change.

ELAINE

I'm not lazy. I'm sick.

LUNA

You don't have the flu. You're physically capable of getting up, walking into the kitchen, and getting yourself food.

ELAINE

What about emotionally?

LUNA

(chuckles)

What?

ELAINE

Am I emotionally able to get up, walk into the kitchen, and get myself some food?

LUNA

Yes. You know you are.

ELAINE

Maybe.

She turns away from Luna.

ELAINE

There's nothing wrong with asking for help.

Beat.

ELAINE

I can't make you stop talking. But I'm done blindly believing everything you say.

LUNA

Even when what I'm saying is true?

ELAINE

You lie more often than not. We both know that.

LUNA

But do you feel like I'm lying to you?

Beat.

ELAINE

No.

Lights fade.

End of play.