

THREE THINGS REMAIN

A Radio Play

By Rachael Carnes

For Karin, Molly and Naomi — And all the mothers who —

CHARACTERS

GEORGE: A man his seventies — Grumbly.

KITTY: A man in his fifties — Tough sounding but sweet.

IRENE: A woman in her twenties — thirties.

NURSE ONE, OTSETSEG, CHINESE SUBWAY ANNOUNCER, MOTHER, CAMP HOST. WAITRESS: A woman.

NARRATOR, NURSE TWO, GONDOLA DRIVER, HAMISU, GERMAN U-BAHN ANNOUNCER, HOMELESS MAN, COLLEGE GEORGE, DAD GEORGE: A man.

LITTLE GEORGE, MEGAN: A child of six or seven.

SETTING: Here.

TIME: Now.

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THREE THINGS REMAIN

Scene 1: Interior.

NARRATOR: A hospital room in a city. It is morning.

SFX: Labored breathing — beep-beep-beeping of a heart monitor — then one long beep. Over the beep — Metal door handle turning and opening — Squishy shoe walking across linoleum — A plastic click. Quiet.

NURSE ONE: No pulse — No breathing — No response. Time of death — 6:30.

KITTY: Meow?

b/g: Tubes, clips, wires, plastic — All the unhooking.

KITTY: Meow — I said meow.

GEORGE: Where am I?

KITTY: In the hospital — There — See?

GEORGE: Oh — But —

KITTY: Follow me.

SFX: Purring.

GEORGE: My legs — I'm standing?

KITTY: You've got nice calves, George. Cats know these things —

GEORGE: My cat used to do that — Walk between — Wait — You're talking!

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: And you're listening — Follow me!

GEORGE: Where are we going?

SFX: Metal door handle opening —

NURSE TWO: (OFF) Is the family here?

NURSE ONE: (OFF) He didn't have any — The home brought him in.

SFX: Squishy shoes walking — Rolling gurney.

GEORGE: Watch out, Kitty!

KITTY: I got it — I'll wait over here —

SFX: Gurney locking into position.

GEORGE: What's happening?

KITTY: Don't watch this part — Let's go, George!

GEORGE: What?

NURSE TWO: (OFF) Okay — Ready? — 1-2-3 —

SFX: Lifting a body off a bed by the sheets and lowering it onto gurney.

NURSE TWO: (OFF) You work the holiday?

NURSE ONE: (OFF) Yeah — I'm off tomorrow though —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: How can they — If I'm —

KITTY: This is upsetting — I know, it's hard on everybody.

GEORGE: I'm scared — Let's —

KITTY: We have to wait 'til the door opens —

SFX: Zipping up a bag —

GEORGE: (SFX: Zipping continues.) Oh — What — Stop!

KITTY: This part's hard —

GEORGE: But how will I —

KITTY: I'm sorry —

GEORGE: Where —

KITTY: You're in-between, George. It's okay —

SFX: Gurney unlocking — Rolling. Two pairs of squishy shoes on linoleum.

NURSE TWO: (OFF) You get the door? Thanks —

SFX: Hospital door handle turning and opening. b/g sound of hallway — TV's.

NURSE ONE: (OFF) Here — Got it.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

NURSE TWO: (OFF) There's fudge at the nurse's station.

NORSE ONE: (OFF) D'you try it?

NURSE TWO: (OFF) I'm trying to watch my weight —

SFX: Metal bits on plastic, rolling —

NURSE ONE: (OFF) This fudge is worth it — Salted caramel.

SFX: Gurney hitting door.

NURSE TWO: (OFF) Oops! I'm so sorry!

NURSE ONE: (OFF) He can't feel it — Now they just put salted caramel in everything —

GEORGE: What just happened?

SFX: Two pairs of squishy shoes on linoleum and a gurney rolling down hallway.

KITTY: Now, George! Follow me!

GEORGE: What?

KITTY: Before the door closes!

THREE THINGS REMAIN

Scene 2. Interior.

NARRATOR: Outside the hospital room, George and Kitty look down the long hallway.

b/g: Hospital door closing, gurney rolling down the hallway, ambient with various televisions.

GEORGE: I left my wallet —

KITTY: It's not your wallet now — It's just worn or carried —

GEORGE: It has my money — All my ID.

KITTY: It's not here, George. You haven't had a wallet or keys in a long time.

SFX: Of motion — swiping —

GEORGE: Why can't I grab the handle?

KITTY: Cats can't open doors — Now you can't either. Sorry —

GEORGE: But the — There —

KITTY: You won't need it where we're —

GEORGE: Where are they taking —

KITTY: It's okay, George — It just happens.

GEORGE: How do you know my name?

KITTY: You're my person.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: Who are you? How can you talk? Where is this?

KITTY: Three places —

GEORGE: What?

KITTY: Meow, George —

b/g television from different rooms as GEORGE and KITTY walk past — GEORGE is barefoot.

GEORGE: Let's go see the nurses — They'll help me —

KITTY: Let's sit in this chair for a minute and you make scratching noises.

GEORGE: What?

KITTY: Look at that upholstery, George. Hospital fabric's the best! Oh — The sound of it!

GEORGE: What are you talking about? Where we are?

KITTY: You're in the hospital — You came here Friday.

GEORGE: Where am I going?

KITTY: We'll get to that — But George! This chair!

SFX: Cat jumping up on hospital chair.

KITTY: Could you just scratch it — a little?

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: What?

KITTY: With your finger — You know, on the fabric, like you're calling me?

GEORGE: Like this?

SFX: Finger scratching quickly on upholstery.

KITTY: Now say, "Kitty-kitty-kitty" real fast.

GEORGE: Kitty-kitty-kitty?

KITTY: Faster — More high pitched — Like you can't find me but you're looking.

GEORGE: (SFX: Scratching finger on upholstery) Kitty-kitty-kitty!

KITTY: (SFX: Cat purring) Oh, George — That's the best! No cat can resist —

GEORGE: (SFX: Banging on the nurse's station desk.) Help! Somebody! I'm here —

KITTY: They can't hear you —

GEORGE: (SFX: Dinging the desk bell repeatedly.) Nurse — Please! I'm here! Do you see me?

KITTY: This is normal, George. It's a transition. How 'bout more scratching?

GEORGE: (SFX: Scratching.) I'm in a hospital gown talking to a cat — Nothing is normal!

KITTY: (SFX: Cat purring.) This is a typical reaction —

GEORGE: I need to make a phone call — I'm using the nurse's. Hey —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: You can't —

GEORGE: Goddammit — Why can't I pick up the receiver?

KITTY: Because — You can't touch anything.

GEORGE: But I can see — and hear. I hear you — And all the TV's. And I can — (Sniffs.)

KITTY: You can smell. That one's important for the forgetting. Smell this —

GEORGE: (Sniffs.) What's the forgetting? Is that cinnamon?

KITTY: Cinnamon is a Human Universal. Everyone seems to like it — It's comforting.

GEORGE: How can I see and hear and smell and not be able to pick up the phone?!

KITTY: You can't taste anything, either. That can be hard —

GEORGE: This place smells awful — Like antiseptic and soup.

KITTY: I'm ready to get outta here, too, George.

GEORGE: I can't leave — I left my wallet — And my family won't know where —

KITTY: George — You came here alone.

SFX: Cat jumping on counter. Squishy shoes on linoleum. Rolling chair rolling. Typing.

NURSE ONE: (Humming a tune to herself — like “Goodnight Irene”.)

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: She's back. Hello — Nurse? There seems to be a — Where am I?

KITTY: She can't hear you — You need this — Here —

SFX: Cat jumping, then walking on a soft package tied with paper.

GEORGE: What are you doing, Kitty?

KITTY: Just a minute — I just really love to walk on paper! (SFX: Purring.)

GEORGE: What are you talking about?

KITTY: Walking on paper is a Cat Universal. Like scratching fabric —

GEORGE: What's a Cat Universal?

KITTY: Did you know we can read with our tummies?

GEORGE: What?

KITTY: Did you ever try to read the newspaper with a cat nearby?

GEORGE: Nurse! My name is — I need to go home now!

KITTY: (SFX cat hopping onto counter.) Open your package, George —

GEORGE: But you said I couldn't feel anything — How can I —

SFX: GEORGE inspecting rustling package.

KITTY: I sent to you this one. That's why you can feel it. It's from where we're going —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: Hey — It's addressed to me!

KITTY: Of course it is! It's made of stars.

GEORGE: What?

KITTY: I had it brought out of inventory when you checked into the hospital.

GEORGE: Is that where I am now? The hospital?

KITTY: Sort of — You're there and somewhere else, too. You're in-between, George.

GEORGE: Nurse — Please —

KITTY: We gotta get you into some other duds — Open it.

SFX: Rustling and tearing paper —

GEORGE: Who wraps with brown paper anymore? Is this a grocery bag?

KITTY: Inside out! Economical!

GEORGE: I thought only I did that —

KITTY: Now they send packages all over the world without ever touching them!

GEORGE: It's my tweed suit! I loved this suit — I haven't seen it in —

KITTY: Put it on!

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: Where?

KITTY: You're invisible to everyone but me —

GEORGE: But I'm embarrassed.

KITTY: Okay, fine — I'll cover my face with my paws —

GEORGE: That's really cute.

KITTY: Not trying to be cute! Just get dressed —

GEORGE: Right here in the hallway?

KITTY: We have to go, George.

SFX: Getting dressed.

GEORGE: Go where?

KITTY: Just put your suit on —

GEORGE: (SFX: Tapping dress shoes together.) And my brown wing tips! Bought these babies for my first job interview! 1964 — I love these shoes! (SFX: Tying shoes.)

KITTY: Look at that craftsmanship! The Wing-tip Oxford looks great with dress or casual. High-riding vamp — new square toe — leather lining — Non-slip heel — Leather sole.

GEORGE: Leave my laces alone, Kitty!

KITTY: You look, sharp — Like a million bucks —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: How does a cat know about quality footwear?

KITTY: We have to go.

GEORGE: But who are you?

KITTY: I'm your guide —

GEORGE: My guide?

KITTY: For what happens next — Name's Virgil. You can call me Kitty.

GEORGE: Kitty — But you can talk.

KITTY: Of course I talk — We always did, you just couldn't hear it —

GEORGE: I must not have been paying attention —

KITTY: That's okay — There's a lot to process —

GEORGE: That's a dumb word. I hate it!

KITTY: Sorry, Tiger.

GEORGE: Do we all get cats?

KITTY: Dogs are too loyal for the ending time.

GEORGE: The ending time?

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: Don't worry about it —

GEORGE: What's the ending time?

KITTY: Dogs just form bonds so fast and — Cats are simpler.

GEORGE: I don't much like cats.

KITTY: You're a "Dog Person" — I know. I'm all you've got.

GEORGE: For what? I've got for what?

KITTY: The adventure of a masked hero and his partner —

GEORGE: What? Why can't a dog take me?

KITTY: Puppies are too much work — And I told you. Dogs get sad —

GEORGE: Sad about what?

KITTY: Over the years — We've just learned cats are the easiest. And the children —

GEORGE: Children?

KITTY: The children get kittens —

GEORGE: Kittens? What children?

KITTY: The ones who — They get kittens to lead them.

GEORGE: Oh —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: You know how you feel, George? They're little and —

GEORGE: But —

KITTY: The kittens help a little.

GEORGE: My —

KITTY: They're playful — And they have those pudgy bellies and real big eyes, you know?

GEORGE: I had a —

KITTY: And the kids — They just see that kitten and they feel better —

GEORGE: Nurse! I have to make a call!

KITTY: You look good, George — Like a million bucks! You ready?

GEORGE: Ready for what?

KITTY: Three places — three people — three things that remain.

GEORGE: How do I? What do —

KITTY: That's why I'm here. Follow me — First stop's the subway!

SFX: GEORGE and KITTY walking down the hallway.

KITTY: Here's the elevator. We have to wait for someone to get on.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: Why?

KITTY: This looks promising —

VISITOR ONE: I got it. (SFX: Pushing elevator button — beep.) Which floor's the cafeteria?

VISITOR TWO: Four? Five? I don't know.

VISITOR ONE: You look tired — I — (SXF: Elevator opening. Moving inside.)

KITTY: Here we go, George. Come on!

THREE THINGS REMAIN

Scene 3. Exterior.

NARRATOR: George and Kitty emerge from the hospital to a busy city street.

SFX: Cars, horns, jackhammers, whistles, people — The din.

KITTY: Pick me up, George!

GEORGE: What? Why?

KITTY: All these cars!

GEORGE: Well a dog could walk on a leash —

KITTY: We're heading for the subway — There it is —

GEORGE: Why?

KITTY: I'll tell you when we —

GEORGE: It's cold —

KITTY: You can't feel cold — You just see that *they're* cold.

GEORGE: There are lights up — Is it the holidays?

KITTY: George — You died today. Do you remember?

GEORGE: Which way, Kitty?

KITTY: Down there, George. That's our stop.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

SFX: GEORGE's steps leading down into subway station. Background: Commuters.

KITTY: Do you have a metro card?

GEORGE: I thought I was invisible — Can't I just go through the turnstile?

KITTY: I told you — We can't use doors on our own —

GEORGE: But I could just sneak through — Like behind that guy? Or that lady?

KITTY: You wanna push the charitable bounds of the Metropolitan Transit Authority?

b/g Train announcements and people whirring.

GEORGE: But you said they can't see me — I'm —

KITTY: Never underestimate the MTA.

GEORGE: What do we do?

KITTY: We need two dollars.

GEORGE: I can't believe how fares have gone up!

KITTY: No kidding! I remember when the place we're standing was a dirt path —

GEORGE: Let me check my pockets — Ah — Look! Five dollars!

KITTY: Great! Let's use the machine. It'll accept the money —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: But I can't feel — I can't touch anything?

KITTY: There's a few things that are like a language between the world you knew and where we're going. Paper clips — Love paper clips — Rubber bands and money. But money's not for spending, it's just a way of saying where you've been. Try using your five dollars — here.

SFX: Machine sucking in cash.

KITTY: See? What did I tell you? It's like a calling card.

GEORGE: It's taking it!

KITTY: You just signed up for the ride.

SFX: MTA Metro card machine bleeping and spurting.

GEORGE: But I don't like rides — What, like a rollercoaster?

KITTY: More like a ferry.

GEORGE: How do I — I can't — I can't pick it up, Kitty!

KITTY: Sorry 'bout that.

GEORGE: Can you?

KITTY: Me — No. No opposable thumbs — See?

GEORGE: What do we do?

KITTY: We leave the card for someone else and we play our game now.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: Leave the card? What game?

KITTY: Three places —

GEORGE: I'm too tired —

KITTY: Come on, George. It's fun — I'll help —

GEORGE: No — I'm going home!

KITTY: George —

GEORGE: Where do I? Where do I live?

KITTY: That's okay, George. It's the first forgetting —

GEORGE: I live in an apartment — Right?

KITTY: George —

GEORGE: Wait — No, I — In — Did I move? To be nearer to my — Who is she?

KITTY: You had a — Never mind, George. Name a place you've always wanted to go!

GEORGE: I want to go home!

KITTY: That's not possible, George — I'm sorry.

GEORGE: What are my options?

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: A lot of people say they wanna go someplace warm — Hawaii?

GEORGE: I sunburn.

KITTY: You don't have skin, George. No tasting. No touching?

GEORGE: But I can smell — It smells like piss here!

KITTY: I know — People are animals! George, if you don't pick, I'll have to pick for you —

GEORGE: I don't like travel. Makes me queasy — I like my routines.

KITTY: Cats like routine, too, George. But how 'bout this?

SFX: Venice Carnivale — Laughing, cheering, Italian, music, fireworks —

b/g: Carnivale continues.

GEORGE: What is that? How can we —

KITTY: Venice Carnivale! Fun, right? Did you know that the word Carnival means farewell to meat? I like the party, but a vegetarian lifestyle is not for me!

GEORGE: Are we on a gondola? Where's the subway station?

GONDOLA DRIVER: Mi piace il tuo gatto!

GEORGE: What?

KITTY: The gondola driver says he likes your cat.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: I don't want to visit Carnivale — I just died!

KITTY: You must be tired. Okay — try this.

SFX: Crackling fire. Buddhist monks in the *Datsan* — The temple — chanting for the dead.

GEORGE: Where are we now?

KITTY: Mongolia.

GEORGE: Mongolia?! Don't I need shots or something?

KITTY: You don't have an immune system, George.

GEORGE: What are they doing?

KITTY: It's the White Moon Festival — *Sagaalgan* —

GEORGE: What are they cooking? It smells nice —

KITTY: Everyone prepares for the festival by cleaning out their houses and making dairy dishes to share with family and friends — (SFX: Purring.) Dairy's a Cat Universal.

ODSETSEG: (SFX: bonfire roaring.) Ene bol belgedliin tseverlegee yum —

GEORGE: Why is she burning clothes? That fire's huge! I'm so hot!

KITTY: George, you're not hot — You just think you are.

GEORGE: I *feel* hot.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

b/g: Musician playing a *morin khuur*, a traditional bowed stringed instrument.

KITTY: At the new moon they make a fire and burn their old clothes and household waste —

GEORGE: We used to burn the trash when I was a —

KITTY: It's a symbolic purging, George, a resolve —

GEORGE: For what?

KITTY: A fresh start —

GEORGE: I just — I'm — Who are you?

KITTY: You're doing great, George — with the forgetting. One more place —

GEORGE: Where's the — Where were we?

KITTY: Difarabe — The crossing of the —

SFX: Cattle herd walking through a river.

GEORGE: Is it too late for Hawaii?

KITTY: Don't be racist. Put me on your shoulder, George. I don't like to get wet.

b/g current Niger pop music.

KITTY: Staying dry is a Cat Universal.

GEORGE: What are they doing?

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: This is the Niger Central delta — Home to farmers, fishermen and cattle herders —

GEORGE: I can smell the cows!

KITTY: When the rains come, they move their cattle to drier lands.

GEORGE: Everyone looks sharp — Are they wearing wing tips?

HAMISU: (SFX: Cows in the water.) Ku zo, shanu, ku zo a yanzu —

KITTY: He's driving his herd —

GEORGE: Okay — But this is useless.

KITTY: When I met you, George, where were we?

GEORGE: What? I met you here — By this river — With the cows —

KITTY: George, do you remember what happened today?

GEORGE: Can we go now?

KITTY: Yup — We've gone to three places.

GEORGE: This was fun.

KITTY: Kittens get asked to visit playgrounds.

GEORGE: What?

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: When they meet their children — The kids ask to go to the park.

GEORGE: Oh —

KITTY: And they want to see their moms.

GEORGE: That's —

KITTY: Don't worry about it — We do what we can for them.

GEORGE: But —

KITTY: They have a harder time with forgetting.

GEORGE: Forgetting what?

KITTY: Three places — Check. Ready to roll?

GEORGE: Where?

KITTY: Doing really good, George!

SFX: Train announcement in Berlin U-Bahn station platform — Train arrives.

GERMAN SUBWAY ANNOUNCER: Zug nach Hermannstraße — Einsteigen, bitte —

SFX: Loud ringing bell sound — Faint beep — From older train in Beijing subway. Then recording of announcement from Beijing subway platform: "Lieche qianfang de chezhan shi — You zai — xiache de chengke, qing nin tiqian zuo hao zhunbei. — jiu yao dao le."

CHINESE SUBWAY ANNOUNCER: (b/g faint beep then OFF) The next station for this train is — Passengers alighting at — please get ready. We will soon be arriving at —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

Scene 4. Interior.

NARRATOR: George and Kitty are in a new subway platform. There are people from all over the world here, and they all have cats.

SFX: Beeping. Subway opening.

KITTY: George, get in now!

SFX: Doors shutting. People murmuring. Meowing in different languages.

KITTY: That's your hat on the floor. I had it sent here —

GEORGE: My red knit hat! — What's it doing on this subway car? I lost this —

KITTY: And those —

GEORGE: Two different mittens! I loved those mittens —

KITTY: Two different sledding hills — I know. You can pick them up, George. They're mostly made of helium.

GEORGE: My mother made them for me — She was so cross when I —

KITTY: We find people do better with this next part if they have a reminder from childhood —

SFX: Doors open. People shuffling off and on.

Conductor: (OFF) Mind the gap.

HOMELESS MAN: Ladies and gentlemen! If I could please have your attention!

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: Just ignore him, George.

GEORGE: Who is he?

KITTY: He'll walk up and down every car —

HOMELESS MAN: I am gathering enough money today to stay in the shelter, folks!

GEORGE: The shelter — (Loudly.) He should have made something of himself —

KITTY: He can't hear you, George.

HOMELESS MAN: (singing) Irene, good night, Irene, good night —

Good night, Irene, good night, Irene! — I'll get you in my dreams.

GEORGE: I know that song!

KITTY: It's not earning him a lot of tips — Let's play three people —

HOMELESS MAN: (singing) Sometimes I live in the country — Sometimes I live in town —

Sometimes I have a great notion — To jump in to the river and drown —

GEORGE: 1950! I was nine years old — I had this hat — This red one! Wait —

KITTY: Okay, we have work to do.

GEORGE: That was when I knew you?

KITTY: My name was Topper then —

GEORGE: But I called you —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: Kitty — Everyone calls us Kitty — It's a Human-Cat Universal.

GEORGE: You're back? But how?

KITTY: I'm back, just for this part —

GEORGE: I loved you —

KITTY: We have to go — You've chosen —

GEORGE: No, I didn't —

KITTY: I heard you, you chose your three people. Hold my paw —

GEORGE: Where are we going? And why the subway?

KITTY: We make the transportation look like what they — What *you're* used to —

GEORGE: What station is this? I've never been here —

KITTY: Everyone in Holland does this by bicycle!

GEORGE: Does what?

KITTY: This, George — The after time.

GEORGE: Your paws are soft! I remember that —

KITTY: For most of human history it was walking — We'd just walk them —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: Where are we? I don't like it here —

SFX: Crinkling, dripping, churning, waves and waterfall —

KITTY: Stars — Moss — Magma — Blood — Milk — Don't look.

GEORGE: It's awful! But I feel like I've seen it before?

KITTY: The Subway — The Tube — In France it's *Le metro* —

SFX: Subway beeps and signals from around the world layered together.

GEORGE: Where are all the people going?

KITTY: This is our stop.

GEORGE: All of us?

KITTY: This is the transfer station — We all make different connections.

GEORGE: Feel my heart, Kitty.

KITTY: It's not beating — That's just a thing people say because it feels so real —

GEORGE: I'm scared!

KITTY: Pet my fur — Right here — That soft spot behind my ears — Better?

GEORGE: No — Well, okay. You like that? Who's a good kitty? You are! You're a good kitty.

SFX: Subways doors opening.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

Scene 5. Interior.

NARRATOR: George follows Kitty through a crowded subway station.

GEORGE: I've never been out this far. (SFX: Bumping into someone.) Oh, Excuse me —

KITTY: He can't see you —

GEORGE: But he turned around?

KITTY: He's on his journey, too — We're everywhere, see?

GEORGE: Where are they going?

KITTY: Three people — .

GEORGE: That tabby there?

KITTY: She's with me. Hey, Joyce. Meow.

GEORGE: And that Golden Retriever? You said that only cats —

KITTY: Sometimes we let in a "Service Dog" — I mean, if someone has allergies — Hey, Larry.

GEORGE: How can —

KITTY: Right this way — up these stairs —

GEORGE: I can't — I have a disease — Breathing is —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: You did, that's true. Try now —

SFX: Walking slowly upstairs, four paws shadowing. b/g commuters and cat guides.

GEORGE: Hey!

KITTY: Right?

GEORGE: This is great!

SFX: Running upstairs quickly, paws galloping.

GEORGE: Not so bad!

KITTY: You're made of helium, George!

GEORGE: Like a balloon?

KITTY: Stars make it — They burn hydrogen in their core and that makes them shine —

GEORGE: It feels great!

KITTY: They're paper-clipped to stars that existed before them —

GEORGE: (Singing up-tempo.) Stop rambling and stop gambling — Quit staying out late at night — Go home to your wife and your family — Sit down by a fireside bright!

SFX: Walking fast upstairs, the sound of footsteps and paws above the commuters —

KITTY:

This is our connection — We follow the green line.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: To where?

KITTY: Carbon — Nitrogen —

GEORGE: What?

KITTY: Oxygen — Iron —

GEORGE: Where are the people all going?

KITTY: They're seeing their three people — Their carbon-based lifeforms.

GEORGE: But I'm a person — We're all —

KITTY: A star's life is a constant struggle against the force of gravity.

GEORGE: What?

KITTY: Human beings — Stars — They're okay as long as there's a balance — Between pressure pushing out and gravity pulling in.

GEORGE: You know what I haven't done in forever? Running!

SFX: George running down a subway passage, with b/g commuters.

KITTY: Wait for me, George!

GEORGE: Which way? Up those stairs? Come on!

SFX: George! My legs are shorter than yours!

THREE THINGS REMAIN

Scene 6. Interior.

NARRATOR: It's taken a while to wait for all the doors to open, but after slipping in behind a mail carrier who brought a package, Kitty and George find themselves in an old apartment.

SFX: The sound of radio show from the 50's — Cowboys and Indians — in the background.
GEORGE and KITTY walking around the apartment. b/g an old sewing machine sewing.

GEORGE: What? Where did we — I know this home — This is my —

KITTY: There's my old chair. The blue one by the window — Go scratch it!

GEORGE: Kitty? Wait — You're *my* Kitty? (SFX: Finger scratching upholstery.)

KITTY: Remember how you used to let me play out on the fire escape? (SFX: Purring.)

GEORGE: I'd sit out there — Hey — Let's try it — I can't open the window —

KITTY: Think there's any of that old-timey milk with the cream on top?

GEORGE: In the glass bottles? Let's see!

KITTY: Can't open the fridge —

GEORGE: (SFX: Walking down hallway.) — My mother's here! In her bedroom — Hi, mother!

KITTY: What's she doing?

SFX: Sewing machine sewing.

GEORGE: Sewing.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: What's she sewing?

SFX: Sewing machine sewing.

GEORGE: My Halloween costume — Lone Ranger. I begged her!

KITTY: Never understood that holiday — And what's with the black cats?

MOTHER: (OFF) George! Come here and let me try this on you!

GEORGE: Do I go?

KITTY: I think you're too big for it.

GEORGE: But she's making it for me —

SFX: Sewing machine sewing.

LITTLE GEORGE: I don't want to miss my show, Mama!

GEORGE: There I am! My red hat —

MOTHER: Fine! If this doesn't fit don't come crying to me.

SFX: Sewing machine sewing. Pause. Cigarette tapping, lighting, inhaling and exhaling.

MOTHER: Your father's working late tonight —

LITTLE GEORGE: Can I have a dog?

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: George —

SFX: Sewing machine sewing. Pause. Bottle unplugged — bwap — Glug glug into glass.

GEORGE: I chose to come here? She was a —

KITTY: She loved you, George.

GEORGE: She looks lonely.

SFX: Mystery Object dropped on apartment ceiling.

GEORGE: What's that sound?

KITTY: Those are the neighbors —

MOTHER: The neighbors are cooking organ meats, again, George!

GEORGE: Every day at 3 —

MOTHER: Every day at 3 they cook it. I can't stand the smell!

GEORGE: I want to leave here.

MOTHER: Turn the radio down! It's too loud!

GEORGE: Another place — Anywhere —

SFX: Bucharest subway platform. A pre-recorded female voice says "Atentie se inchid usile — Mind the closing doors."

THREE THINGS REMAIN

Scene 7. Exterior.

NARRATOR: George is driving a '63 Alfa Romeo Giulia on a back road — With the top down.

KITTY: Nice car.

SFX: Alfa Romeo engine purring.

GEORGE: This car! I *loved* this car — An Alfa Romeo —

KITTY: The most comfortable! Superior road-holding!

GEORGE: We had to sell it when my wife got pregnant. Where are we?

KITTY: New Jersey —

GEORGE: Why are you sitting up there?

KITTY: Sitting behind the driver and looking around is a Cat universal.

GEORGE: The Turnpike looks different —

KITTY: It's 1963 —

GEORGE: How can I be driving?

KITTY: You're with me — This car's made of star stuff. I mean, *look at it*.

GEORGE: Listen to that engine!

KITTY: You're visiting her parents —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: Let's listen to the radio!

KITTY: You're the driver —

SFX: Car radio — Turning the dial — “Sugar Shack” — “Surf City” — “He's So Fine” —

GEORGE: Great, right?

KITTY: The greatest!

SFX: Car pulling up — parking.

GEORGE: I know this house —

KITTY: Who's that?

GEORGE: That's her.

KITTY: She's beautiful —

SFX: B/g lawn mowing with a push mower —

KITTY: She's coming over — Your hair George!

GEORGE: But how can she see me?

KITTY: It's an alignment, George — One of those moments. Just —

IRENE: Nice car —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

COLLEGE GEORGE: I thought I'd visit you on break —

GEORGE: What? How?

KITTY: Quiet George — This is your protostar!

IRENE: Did you miss me?

COLLEGE GEORGE: Maybe —

IRENE: you must have missed me — You live nine hours away!

SFX: Mower — stopping and starting

IRENE: That's just my dad — Wave at him — He looks like he could kill you but —

COLLEGE GEORGE: Wanna go for a ride?

IRENE: I mean — Okay? Sure!

SFX: IRENE gets in the car.

KITTY: What a pretty girl — And smart —

GEORGE: I know —

KITTY: We're visiting the moment, George — ignition —

GEORGE: Visiting what exactly?

KITTY: Transfer of energy — The stuff — The chemicals.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: We fell in love.

KITTY: Love is universal — It can be measured by thermometer.

IRENE: (OFF) Bye, dad! Be back soon! SFX: Car door opening and closing.

KITTY: You didn't keep her —

GEORGE: We don't "keep" each other — (b/g engine — driving.)

KITTY: But you keep pets? Pets live eight, nine, ten years?

GEORGE: We — I —

SFX: Turning radio dial — The Chiffons' "I Have a Boyfriend" then — Actual news report —
"President Kennedy was shot today, just as his motorcade left downtown Dallas" —

GEORGE: Oh — I —

KITTY: We knew it would happen. So we sent him a terrier — Charlie — For the children.

GEORGE: A terrier —

KITTY: It helps. Next person —

GEORGE: No — I don't want to!

KITTY: You said you wanted to, George, I heard you.

GEORGE: I change my mind! I want to go to the pyramids! Or — Machu Picchu!

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: Don't panic, George. Just — Let's play with this string —

GEORGE: I don't need distraction — I need answers!

KITTY: Last stop — Coming up.

SFX: Chicago "L" announcement recording: "Your attention please: We are being delayed, waiting for signals ahead. We expect to be moving shortly."

THREE THINGS REMAIN

Scene 8. Interior.

NARRATOR: George and Kitty find themselves in a 1974 Volkswagon bus, Kitty perched on George's shoulders, looking out at the rainy night. George's younger self is driving. Irene dozes in the passenger seat, and in the back, their daughter Megan sleeps. She's had a fever all day.

GEORGE: The bus! Typical — I can't see anything —

KITTY: That's just the condensation on the windshield, George. See — I'll wipe it with my paw.

SFX: Wiping water off glass. VW Bus driving on gravel.

KITTY: Bay window, George — Pop top!

GEORGE: Pop top! I loved this stupid bus! No heat in the winter —

KITTY: Smells like maple syrup —

SFX: Sound of windshield wipers. Sound of turn signal —

GEORGE: Listen to that engine! Wow — Did I really used to have sideburns?

DAD GEORGE: (OFF) I'm turning in here —

IRENE: (OFF) Let's just pick a spot in this campground, George — It's late —

KITTY: Who's in the back?

GEORGE: That's our daughter — Megan. Oh —

IRENE: (OFF) What was wrong with *that* camping spot? Or *this* one? Megan's sick —

DAD GEORGE (OFF): We need to be closer to the bathroom and —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

IRENE: (OFF) It doesn't matter — Just pick one!

GEORGE: Kitty, no — I want to see the running of the bulls —

KITTY: You asked to see the star stuff — the mittens — the hats — Your memories.

GEORGE: Take me to Pamplona!

KITTY: You wanted to come here — these are the moments — the potential energy —

GEORGE: I changed my mind —

KITTY: Stars — Flowers —

IRENE: I'm worried about her — I've never seen her so sick.

DAD GEORGE: She'll be fine —

GEORGE: I can't bear to see this! It's —

KITTY: The choices we make set off reactions —

GEORGE: What? Kitty — No —

IRENE (OFF): Megan's sick — And it's raining — Great vacation.

DAD GEORGE (OFF): Your sarcasm's not helping.

SFX: Attempting to open car door.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: I can't open the door.

KITTY: Because you're not here, George. He is —

GEORGE: I didn't know — You have to believe me!

DAD GEORGE: Megan just needs sleep.

KITTY: Sleep is healing — It's a universal.

GEORGE: I was so stupid. No! Take her into town! There's a hospital — Drive!

DAD GEORGE: This looks good, right? Near the bathrooms?

SFX: Parking. Stillness — Rolling down manual window — Door opening — Feet on gravel —

GEORGE: Kitty — I don't want to be here —

KITTY: It's okay, George — New stars are formed from this material.

MEGAN: Daddy?

IRENE: Hi, sweetie — How are you feeling?

DAD GEORGE: You're awake — Hi, little bean!

MEGAN: I feel dizzy —

IRENE: (SFX old seatbelt unbuckling. Moving in the bus.) Let me feel your forehead, honey.
George, she's burning up!

THREE THINGS REMAIN

SFX rain on bus exterior. Tap-tap-tapping of flashlight on the window.

CAMP HOST: Evening — You folks just pull in?

DAD GEORGE: Yes — I was just going to go register —

IRENE: Our little girl just has a fever —

DAD GEORGE: Not a high one, a little one — Barely. She just needs rest —

MEGAN: Daddy, will you tell me a story?

CAMP HOST: There's a hospital 'bout 30 miles from here if you —

DAD GEORGE: She's fine — Just needs some sleep.

KITTY: Why are you crying, George?

IRENE: Megan, honey?

DAD GEORGE: I'm sure she'll be fine, thanks for checking —

IRENE: Yes, thank you —

DAD GEORGE: Hey, where can I buy firewood?

CAMP HOST: We sell it 10AM to 5. Come by in the morning?

IRENE: Megan — Come be with me —

SFX: Unbuckling metal seatbelt, moving MEGAN into IRENE's lap.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

DAD GEORGE: I'll pop the pop top —

IRENE: Megan, just come be with mommy —

GEORGE: Kitty — Stop this!

KITTY: Stars burn — Releasing heat and light —

CAMP HOST: You sure the little one's okay?

GEORGE: Get me out of here!

IRENE: I'm worried, George — Maybe we should take her to that hospital?

DAD GEORGE: We've been driving all day — Beautiful country here!

CAMP HOST: That it is. We love it.

DAD GEORGE: She just needs some sleep —

CAMP HOST: Okay then, you all have a good night.

SFX: Rolling up car window, CAMP HOST walking away. Prerecorded score of subway announcements and beeps, tones and signals — From all corners of the globe.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

Scene 9. Night.

NARRATOR: A diner in outer space. George and Kitty share a booth.

SFX: Quiet. A big room — A restaurant — With quiet talking — like a hospital cafeteria.

GEORGE; Where *are* we?

WAITRESS: You want some more coffee, sweetie?

KITTY: Yes, please, thanks.

SFX: Pouring, cat licking liquid.

WAITRESS: How 'bout you, hon?

GEORGE: I just —

WAITRESS: it's okay — Take your time. It's a lot to — What's that word?

GEORGE: To process.

WAITRESS: That's what the kids say — I'll be back to check on you in a minute.

GEORGE: Thanks —

KITTY: She had a swelling in her brain — They couldn't stop it.

GEORGE: Why does that happen?

KITTY: Stars live 10 billion years — Cats get nine lives — You get one.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: She looked scared — My poor baby — I couldn't help her!

KITTY: Do you see her now?

GEORGE: Where? Here?

KITTY: No, not in this diner — In your mind, George. Can you see her?

GEORGE: Megan? Her — Did she have? — What color eyes?

KITTY: It's just easier —

GEORGE: What is? What is this place?

KITTY: This diner?

GEORGE: Who are all these people?

KITTY: They just sell coffee and things that go down easy — The things that keep you alive without much chewing — Casseroles — You know, funeral food.

GEORGE: What funeral?

KITTY: This is the forever cathedral —

GEORGE: Cathedral?

KITTY: Temple — Kiva — Could be a rock formation — A tree — A mountain —

GEORGE: A mountain?

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: A sacred place —

GEORGE: Well, I'm not hungry —

KITTY: No one is — Look around. Loss of appetite is universal.

GEORGE: To what?

KITTY: We try to make it easy for folks — Familiar.

GEORGE: What are we doing here?

KITTY: It's an intergalactic all-night diner — for the parents who lose their children.

GEORGE: I don't want to stay —

KITTY: It's nice, though — Right? Especially when you can get a booth.

GEORGE: You're making fun of me —

KITTY: No, I'm not. Some have been here for centuries. And some find each other. See?

GEORGE: You're a cat! Always telling me what to do and where to go — Leave me alone!

KITTY: Read your menu.

GEORGE: What?

KITTY: You can stay here if you want — It's always open. Or —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: This menu is all breakfast food.

KITTY: Everyone loves breakfast.

GEORGE: I don't want to stay here —

KITTY: Okay. What was your daughter's name?

GEORGE: No — I can't —

KITTY: Parents are like stars — Their children are their fuel — And when their children die—
Mothers and fathers begin to collapse under their own gravity.

GEORGE: When —

KITTY: There's a place you go from here — Find it on the menu —

GEORGE: What? I — Were you talking?

KITTY: What did we do today?

GEORGE: Huh?

KITTY: Where did we go?

GEORGE: Look at the stars! I've never seen them so bright!

KITTY: Focus, George — We're close.

GEORGE; The menu — Right. Okay —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: What looks good?

GEORGE: Stream of consciousness — life after death — reincarnation?

KITTY: With no memory — Yes — Continue.

GEORGE: Plane of existence — Divine judgment —

KITTY: Did you know that every culture in the world has a flat round bread?

GEORGE: Actions —

KITTY: Pancake-tortilla-Norwegian-*lefse* —

GEORGE: Beliefs — Heaven and hell —

KITTY: Wonton-Egyptian *eish merahrah*-Indian *appam* —

GEORGE: The world to come —

KITTY: Bannock-bolengo-French crêpes!

GEORGE: Paradise — comfort based on righteous deeds —

KITTY: Ethiopian *injera* — Matzo's everywhere! The menu, George —

GEORGE: Unchanging self — Soul passing —

KITTY: What'll it be?

GEORGE: Empty space — Darkness — Stars?

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: Point to what you believe — and I'll put in your order.

GEORGE: My order?

KITTY: The compression of a star can cause rebounding expansion —

GEORGE: I like this one —

KITTY: Great, George! I'm writing up the Scope of Work.

GEORGE: What?

SFX: A pencil on paper.

KITTY: What happens after —

GEORGE: Kitty?

KITTY: Here's your request — Take this paper — And this —

GEORGE: A rubber band?

KITTY: And this is your paper clip. It holds the past to the future.

KITTY: Do you remember the subway, George?

GEORGE: What subway?

KITTY: Music, George?

THREE THINGS REMAIN

SFX: Car radio — Turning the dial — “Sugar Shack” — “Surf City” — “He’s So Fine” —

GEORGE: What is that? Where are we?

KITTY: Feel my fur, George. Right here — On my shoulder. Nice?

GEORGE: It’s soft and underneath is —

KITTY: I know — It’s comforting. Like cinnamon —

GEORGE: I do feel better but I can’t —

KITTY: George, who is Megan?

GEORGE: She is my —

KITTY: Who is Megan, George?

SFX: Little girl laughing.

IRENE: (Singing softly.) I’ll see you in my dreams —

MEGAN: Daddy?

KITTY: Three things remain — They’re reminders.

GEORGE: Wait — I —

KITTY: Stars —

GEORGE: It’s fading —

THREE THINGS REMAIN

KITTY: Flowers —

SFX: Children laughing outside — Maybe a playground?

KITTY: And children.

GEORGE: Children —

KITTY: Where's your tweed suit? The hat? The mittens?

GEORGE: What are mittens?

KITTY: It's time. We're here.

GEORGE: Where is here?

KITTY: Some of these people I brought here eons ago —

GEORGE: What are eons? You're a c- c-

KITTY: Cat. The word is cat.

GEORGE: Where? Who? It's — What's the word?

KITTY: It's dark out — Those are stars.

GEORGE: Stars!

KITTY: Just walk through those doors — Right out of the diner.

THREE THINGS REMAIN

GEORGE: Where are we?

KITTY: New Jersey. Calcutta. Sao Paulo. We're everywhere.

GEORGE: Right through those doors?

KITTY. You're ready. Meow, George.

GEORGE. Bye — ?

KITTY: Kitty.

GEORGE: Bye Kitty, thanks.

SFX: Walking to the door of the diner. Door opens — Jingle bells on it — Closes. Layering in children's voices and quiet chit-chat of many languages — with subway sounds — then transitioning to music: Corelli's Christmas Concerto, Opus 6, Number 8 — The Adagio.

FADE. End of play.