

PAPA

(softly)

I know that feeling.

(A pause. DADDY reaches over, rubbing her back in slow circles.)

DADDY

Next time it gets loud, you can always tell someone — Miss Holly, or us. Hiding made sense in the moment, but it scared people who love you.

(Kayden looks up at him — the guilt and comfort landing together.)

MISS HOLLY

We'll make sure the others understand too. They don't mean to be unkind, but it still hurts.

(Her tone isn't explanatory now, just honest. She speaks to Kayden directly.)

MISS HOLLY

Tomorrow, why don't you help me hand out the art supplies? You'll be beside me. Safe spot.

(Kayden nods. The tension loosens. PAPA wipes his eyes discreetly, pretending to adjust his glasses. DADDY squeezes Kayden's shoulder.)

PAPA

Thank you, Miss Holly.

MISS HOLLY

Of course. We're a team.

(Kayden opens her lunchbox quietly. Inside sits a single cookie, slightly crumbled. She breaks it in half and offers a piece to each of her dads without looking up. They take it. The gesture says everything she can't.)

(As they prepare to leave, a faint glimmer of light passes across the classroom wall — unnoticed by anyone but Kayden. She watches it, calmer now, and whispers almost to herself.)

KAYDEN

Okay. I'll try again tomorrow.

(The light fades.)

Blackout

SCENE 5 – THE BEDROOM

(A small nightlight glows on the bedside table. Stuffed animals are scattered across the bed — a soft fortress. From the other room, the faint clink of dishes and murmured voices of PAPA and DADDY drift through the quiet. It's domestic, familiar — the sound of care.)

(KAYDEN sits cross-legged, hugging a stuffed cat to her chest. She stares at the wall, thinking hard. The room is too still. Then, softly, the voices begin — faint echoes from the day.)

VOICES (Overlapping, faint)

Not normal...

Everyone has a mom...

Who's your real dad?

Who's your real dad?

(Kayden squeezes her eyes shut, covering her ears.)

KAYDEN

(whispering, urgent)

Stop it... stop it... please stop.

(Silence. Then — a soft, curious voice from the dim corner near the toy shelf.)

KITTY (Off)

Can't sleep?

KAYDEN

No. The words keep running around in my head.

KITTY (Off)

Those voices are loud, huh?

(Kayden startles, clutching her stuffed cat tighter. A faint glow grows in the corner — breathing light, alive but calm. From it steps KITTY — playful, a bit scruffy, the age of a classmate. She feels real in the way dreams sometimes do.)

KAYDEN

(barely above a whisper)

You... you hear them too?

KITTY

Every word. They bug me too.

(Kayden blinks — not afraid now, just curious.)

KAYDEN

Who are you?

KITTY

Hmm... that changes.

Sometimes I'm the brave one who hides under your bed.

Sometimes I'm the part that says *"throw the ball if they won't stop."*

And sometimes I'm just here.

KAYDEN

So... you're real?

KITTY

As real as you need me to be.

(Kayden studies her. The tension in her face softens.)

KAYDEN

Do you always show up when it's bad?

KITTY

Pretty much. That's kind of my deal.

(grins)

I hang around until you remember who you are.

KAYDEN

What if I forget again?

KITTY

Then I'll remind you. Wanna try something?

KAYDEN

Like what?

KITTY

Practice. Pretend I'm them — the kids at school.

(playfully, teasing voice)

"Two dads? That's weird."

(Kayden winces, then hesitates.)

KAYDEN

I don't know what to say.

KITTY

That's okay. First, breathe.

(she breathes in; Kayden copies)

Now lift your chin — a little higher. Good.

Then say, *"It's not weird, it's mine."*

(Kayden repeats it quietly, testing the words.)

KAYDEN

It's not weird... it's mine.

KITTY

Good start — but you sounded like you're apologizing for winning a trophy.

Try it again, like you mean it.

(Kayden sits taller, a spark of strength in her eyes.)

KAYDEN

It's not weird. It's mine.

(Beat. Kitty grins, proud.)

KITTY

There she is. The real you.

KAYDEN

What if they laugh?

KITTY

Then you keep walking.

(smirks)

Let them trip over their own words.

(Kayden smiles, repeating the line under her breath — a mantra now.)

KAYDEN

It's not weird. It's mine.

(A small pause. The house hums around them — the sound of a cupboard closing, the last dish rinsed. Kayden looks toward the doorway, then back at Kitty.)

KAYDEN

You're not going anywhere, are you?

KITTY

Only, when you don't need me to stay.

(The door opens softly. Warm light spills in. PAPA and DADDY enter, carrying the gentle fatigue of the day. They smile when they see Kayden awake.)

PAPA

There's my night owl.

DADDY

We thought you were asleep already.

(Kayden lies back under the blanket, the stuffed cat tucked beside her. Kitty sits quietly at the edge of the bed — unseen, her glow faint but steady.)

PAPA

(tucking the blanket)

Comfy?

KAYDEN

Yeah.