



# *A Letter from Clementine*

*for Eleanor*

Spring 2011 – October 2025

Dear Eleanor,

If I could have held a pen, this is the letter I would have written you.

I didn't have words while I was with you. I had something better — eyes that knew when you were sad, the kind of stillness that said I knew you were there, and a heart that was always, always pointed at you (even when I pretended otherwise).

But now I have something like words. And there are things I want you to know.

I want you to know that I noticed everything.

I noticed when you came home tired and sat on the floor with me instead of changing your clothes. I noticed when you talked to me in your real voice — the one nobody else got to hear. I noticed the way you waited on the third stair every evening, exactly where the last of the light landed.

I noticed the slow first coffee, you curled against my arm before the day could start. That was the best part of every day. Both of ours.

I want you to know that I was happy. Not just fine. Not just okay. Happy — the kind of happy that loaf-shapes in a sunbeam and decides nothing else needs to happen today. You gave me that. That was you.

I know how it ended.

I know what it cost you. I know you wondered, in the dark hours after, whether there was something you missed. Whether there was something you could have done differently.

There wasn't.

I was loved every day of my life. I was warm, and full, and safe, and known. There is nothing more any of us can ask for.

Wherever I am now — and there is a now, somewhere — I am not tired. I am not hurting. My body moves the way it did when I was three years old. The sun feels good on my back. Somewhere there is always the warm square of windowsill above the radiator, and the folded blanket at the foot of the bed.

I think of you the way I always did. Constantly, and without complication.



So here is what I want for you.

Be sad. Be sad for exactly as long as you need to be. Don't let anyone tell you I was "just a cat." They didn't know me, and they didn't know us.

But then, when you're ready — and only when you're ready — be happy again. Laugh at something stupid. Eat something good. Take a walk and notice the things I used to notice with you. The smell of grass after rain. The way the light moves in the late afternoon. The dog two houses down who barks at nothing.

I loved you. I always did. I always will, as much as a cat can love — which, it turns out, is a lot.

*Yours, always,*

Clementine

*Clem, Miss Clementine, the small grey shadow*

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