

# Don't Kick My Spirit Animal

by  
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Based on wishes, dreams, hopes, and fears.

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FADE IN:

EXT. A BACK YARD AT THE SOUTH JERSEY SHORE- DAY

It's the height of summer.

MELISSA, mid-20s, squirrely, sits on the ground beside a chain link fence over-grown with vines. She is cutting up a pair of HIKING BOOTS and fashioning the leather straps into a WRAP around her forearm. She is alone save for a HAWK perched on the fence.

MELISSA

I don't know. Something about Poison Ivy. Supposedly it makes sense to him, but whatever. It's weird.

HAWK

(a talking hawk)  
Well, you know how I feel about it.

O.S. Sound of someone CRASHING though bushes.

MELISSA

What is he doing over there?  
Nevermind. I don't even care. You ready?

HAWK

Hatched ready.

The Hawk takes flight. Melissa, now wearing a FALCONRY GLOVE, gets up and sprints after the bird. She takes a leap, and with some effort, is able to stay off the ground. ALOFT.

MELISSA

A little help?!

The Hawk swoops down and grabs hold of the glove with his TALONS, swiftly picking Melissa up. They fly into...

EXT. THE CLOUDS - CONTINUOUS

Big bushy clouds.

MELISSA

I always forget that I can do this.  
Like when I'm running late for class. Oh, right, duh. I can just fly there! Whoa this looks familiar.

Melissa looks down at a long, flat highway zooming by below them...

EXT. HIGHWAY (#? THE "TOLL ROAD") - INDIANA - CONTINUOUS

HAWK

You ready to take control?

Melissa looks down and zeros her "hawk-vision" in on a green Honda Civic whizzing past all the other cars.

MELISSA

I guess sss-  
 (the hawk drops her)  
 -OOOOOOOOOH!!!!

Melissa plummets toward the earth...

INT. HONDA CIVIC (AKA LAFAWNDUH) - CONTINUOUS

But Melissa lands safely in the driver's seat, and takes the wheel.

MELISSA

Holy deja-mother fucking -vu,  
 bioteches! Ow, ow!

Melissa is wearing sunglasses now, and a huge smile. She pumps up the volume on the RADIO.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Yeah, goin' to Chicago right now.  
 Doin' it. Doin' it for reals!

Melissa checks the rear-view mirror. In it she sees: GRANT, 24, a bespectacled Aryan giant, driving a U-Haul just a short distance behind.

He HONKS the horn, and waves "Hi!"

MELISSA (CONT'D)

I knew this road looked familiar.  
 Even though I've never been to  
 Indiana before!

Melissa smacks the roof.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

(laughing)  
 Thank you!

O.S. A shrill HAWK CAW. Melissa waves out the window to...

The Hawk flying high above.

Melissa flips on the left turn signal...

MELISSA (CONT'D)  
I'm goin' the right way, goin' the  
right way.

EXT. BELL AVENUE - CHICAGO - CONTINUOUS

She turns onto N. BELL AVE, and pulls up to a 4 story brick building over-grown with vines. Grant parks the U-Haul just behind the Honda.

Melissa and Grant jump out of their vehicles.

GRANT  
CHICAGO OR BUST!

Melissa jumps into Grant's arms.

MELISSA  
Gah! I can't believe it!

She hops down from his arms and they both rush toward the front door...

INT. BELL AVENUE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Flush with excitement, the couple stumbles into the living room of a HUGE, empty apartment.

GRANT  
I'm going to go pick out a room for  
my office! You coming?

Grant lumbers off excitedly.

MELISSA  
The little one's mine!  
(then to self)  
I'ma start a fire.

She heads over to the decorative FIRE-PLACE to explore.

GRANT (O.S.)  
(making a discovery)  
HO-HO!

MELISSA  
What is it?

GRANT  
Big enough for a king size bed!

MELISSA  
(to self)  
Oh great. With whose money?  
(to Grant)  
What did your parents ever say  
about that?

Melissa stands up, looking perplexed for a second.

MELISSA (CONT'D)  
(to self)  
Wait. What am I doing? Oh right.  
Fire place. Erm, not functional.

She pokes at it anyway, but something pops out of it.

MELISSA (CONT'D)  
(jumping back)  
BLAAAAHHH!!!

Grant comes in.

GRANT  
You have got to see the size of  
that master bedroom. Closet is  
tiny, but you can have the one in  
the other room.  
(...? Then finally  
noticing something is  
wrong)  
What?

MELISSA  
Rabbit.

GRANT  
(looks to and fro)  
Rabbit? Rabbit where?

MELISSA  
Rabbit there!

Melissa points at the fireplace, and indeed there is a BUNNY  
RABBIT hiding in it. Grant stoops down and picks it up.

GRANT  
Hey there little bunny rabbit. Come  
say hi to Mommy.

MELISSA

Say what now? No, no, no, no, no.  
Get that thing away from me.

GRANT

It's just a widdle bunny wabbit.

Grant hoists it off into Melissa's hands. She holds it like Charlie Sheen would hold a baby back in the 80s.

MELISSA

Please take this out of here.

GRANT

I'm going to go set up my computer.

Grant dashes outside.

MELISSA

Please! I think it just peed on me!

Melissa eyes the rabbit with fear and suspicion.

INT. BELL AVENUE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's winter now. Snow falls outside the windows.

Grant sits slumped over at his COMPUTER, basking in the ghoulish blue light. He RAPS out a tune with his fingers.

Melissa, EYES WIDE, looking paralyzed with fear, sits on the couch watching TV with the Rabbit sitting in the crook of her arm.

MELISSA

Please stop. Please stop. Please.  
Please. Please stop. Please stop.  
Please stop. Please stop. Please.  
Please. Please. Please stop.  
FUCKING PLEASE STOP!

Grant stops tapping his chubby little fingers for a second. The starts up again. Rat-a-tat-tat. Tat-a-tat-tat. Ratta-ratta-rat-a-tat-tat. And so on.

Melissa grows bunny ears.

INT. BELL AVENUE APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

The room lies in darkness. Melissa shuffles in and crawls into bed. The Rabbit hops in next to her.

She pushes it off the bed. It hops back on. Melissa grips her pillow and holds back tears of anguish.

Grant comes in and turns on the LIGHT.

MELISSA  
Leave it off.

GRANT  
I'm just going to read a little.

MELISSA  
Please. Off.

Grant gets in bed and starts to read a book. He flicks his fingers. Flick-a. Flick-a, flick-a. Rat-a-rat-a-rat-a. And the room is SO BRIGHT!!!

Melissa rolls over and tries to sleeps. Her eye lids FLUTTER closed.

SWAW WINGS FLAP over the screen.

Melissa's eyes snap open...

EXT. A GLEN IN CONNECTICUT (BLACK LEDGE RIVER) - EVENING

Melissa awakes in a beautiful, over-grown glen by a gentle, black, river. She breathes in the fresh air. She smiles and stretches.

There is a lagoon up ahead. Melissa strips off her clothes, sexily struts with ease and confidence toward the water's edge, twirls her hair, and then jumps in.

When she comes up for air, she is smiling - capricious. Playful. She slaps at the water and flips like an otter.

EXT. THE GLEN - LATER

Melissa gets out of the water and lays on the ground. She closes her eyes, but hears O.S. a TWIG BREAK. She snaps to attention and grows PORCUPINE QUILLS out of her hair.

MELISSA  
(whispering)  
Bunny?

More branches break and FOOTFALLS are heard approaching. Melissa plays dead.

A tennis-shoe clad FOOT pokes her in her yellow belly.

ADAM

What are you, like, dead or something?

MELISSA

(peeking one eye open)

Maybe.

(then)

Who wants to know?

Adam, late-20s, with brilliant blue eyes, holds out his hand.

ADAM

I'm Adam.

Melissa sits up, and regards her new quills.

MELISSA

I'm a...porcupine. Or something.

ADAM

That's cool. I saw you swimming. Would you like to swim with me?

MELISSA

Yeah I would!

But just then, EVA, a prom queen type, steps out of the shadows and grabs Adam by the arm.

EVA

What are you doing?

MELISSA

Going for a swim with Adam here.

EVA

I don't think so. See, we're engaged. See.

Ella displays her ring. Then Ella walks off with Adam in tow. Adam waves goodbye.

MELISSA

(suddenly angry)

What you think I'm like some whore or something? Bitch, I might be coquettish at times - like, you know, back there in the water - but that does not mean I'm gonna sleep with your man. He's not even that good looking!

DEER (O.S.)

Hi. You're not mad at her.

Melissa turns around, and sure enough finds herself talking to a DEER (a doe).

MELISSA

Easy for you to say, bright-eyed  
and bushy tailed.

DEER

Oh Melissa. That's just misdirected  
anger. Like when people get so  
upset because "immigrants" are  
stealing their jobs, but really  
it's the machines that are doing  
it. Still. I don't judge. Because  
it's not the machines' fault.

Melissa scratches her spikey head and one of the quills  
dislodges in her hand - she looks at it.

MELISSA

I guess that makes sense.

DEER

Your fear has gotten the better of  
you.

The quill has tuned into a PEN. Melissa is astonished. She  
looks at the Deer for guidance.

MELISSA

I don't know what I'm afraid of.  
Why I'm so angry all the time.

DEER

Don't look at me. I can't go where  
you need to go. It's too...well,  
it's too. Just try to be gentle.  
Try to be kind.

A HAWK flies high above their heads.

Melissa puts the pen to paper (which has also miraculously  
appeared).

INTERCUT WITH  
ILLUSTRATIVE  
IMAGES:

MELISSA (V.O.)

Oh Grant. So big on the outside,  
but how little you give me.

(MORE)

MELISSA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I don't even have words for you,  
that's how small you are. You make  
me forget how much I resent your  
very existence. For breathing too  
loudly. For taking too much. For  
not giving enough. When I'm with  
you, I forget the days when...

(slipping into poetry)

Everything made sense, and nothing  
needed to be explained..

I first made rain angles. Ha. With  
a girl that I love.

I moved across the country on a  
lie. For a girl that I loved.

I hoped for the future. With a girl  
that loves me.

I gave up. On a love that could  
never be.

I found myself happy again and for  
no reason at all. Without a love  
but for myself, and all that we  
made and then forgot.

(Back to self)

But, when I lie with you in bed,  
and think about all the things I  
wish I could forget, and surely do  
regret,

(slipping back into  
poetry)

I feel safe looking into the abyss.  
With you by my side. With  
you...with you.

BACK TO:

INT. BELL AVENUE APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Melissa turns into a sleeping Grant. He snuggles her against  
him.

GRANT

(through sleep)

Hi you.

MELISSA

Am I? You?

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. WATER'S EDGE - LAKE MICHIGAN - DAY

A SWAN attacks a DUCK.

MELISSA (V.O.)

You fucking bastard. Stop being so sweet, and let me kick you away. Because that's what I fucking need to do.

The Swan bites off the neck of the ugly Duck.

EXT. A BACK YARD AT THE SOUTH JERSEY SHORE - DAY

Melissa's SPIRIT is jolted back into her body. She is right where she started, but the Hawk is gone and she is lacing up her boots.

Grant walks up to her and throws down his shoes. His socks are covered in mud. His giant feet splatter gross sock mud everywhere. Eh.

GRANT

Hey.

MELISSA

Hey.

GRANT

You ready to get this show on the road?

MELISSA

Yeah. Help me up.

He takes her out stretched hands and aids her to her feet. They take a few steps then Grant accidentally kicks something.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

(hyper-tense)

Was that my spirit animal?

Close on: A SAPLING, a pine, recovering from the jolt.

GRANT

Your what?

MELISSA

Nothing. Just watch where you're going, yeah?

GRANT

My foot is fine. Thank you for asking.

MELISSA

I'm sorry. Just don't kick my spirit animal or I will tear your balls off.

GRANT

Great. Lovely to see you too.

MELISSA

(scouring the horizon)

Do you see any waskelly wabbits? Rabbits are totally fine, though, just so you know. To kick. Feel free to kick a rabbit if you see one. The little fear mongers. I hate them and their little twitchy noses.

GRANT

(chuckling)

You are the living end.

MELISSA

You don't even know what that means!

They reach the driveway.

EXT. MELISSA'S CAR IN THE DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Melissa gets behind the wheel. From the outside, Grant closes the door for her. Melissa takes a deep breath; just then, BIRD SHIT lands on the wind shield. Melissa looks at it with big scared, rabbit-like eyes.

MELISSA

It's a sign.

Melissa looks back at Grant, who smiles and waves. Melissa exhales, relieved, then starts the engine and puts the car in REVERSE.

FADE TO BLACK.