

CULT MOVIE VAULT TAKES A LOOK AT CATS!



High Plains Library District

CommUNITY

APRIL 2025

9 Lives of Cats

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What do **YOU** have to **SAY** about our newsletter?

What do you have to say about our newsletter? Think about this as our Letters to the Editor option. If you have something to say about our newsletter, head to mylibrary.us/letters to get your feedback in the right hands.

Privacy & Online Safety Vol. 1: **General Tips**



by HPLD Staff

In the digital age, it can be difficult to ensure your privacy and security. Sometimes, it may feel like we are trading security and privacy for convenience. This can be scary and intimidating but worry not! You don't have to retire from society in a cabin in the woods or stop using technology entirely. There are plenty of ways to be a part of the digital world while still protecting your personal information and preserving your privacy.

Here are a few basic ways you can boost your privacy and safety online:

- Use a secure password or passphrase. Don't reuse passwords!
- Block ads and reject cookies
- Use browsers that prioritize privacy
- Check your devices and apps for updates
- Update the privacy settings on your device or your accounts. Often, you have to opt-out or opt-in to certain features to protect your privacy.
- Set your social media accounts as Private.

If you have questions about online privacy or want help with any of these privacy tips [you can Book a Librarian!](#) Stay tuned for future articles on privacy and online safety, where we will learn more about ways to secure your information!

Ian's JOKE Corner



It's April, and we didn't want to go TOO hard into April Fool's, but we did receive a handful of jokes from a staff member that warrant sharing.

Please enjoy this first installment of Ian's Joke Corner. If you love it, we'll hassle him for more. If you don't like it, well, fair enough. If you don't like it and are mean and aggressive about it for no real reason, prepare for Ian's Joke Corner to become Ian's Joke Department.

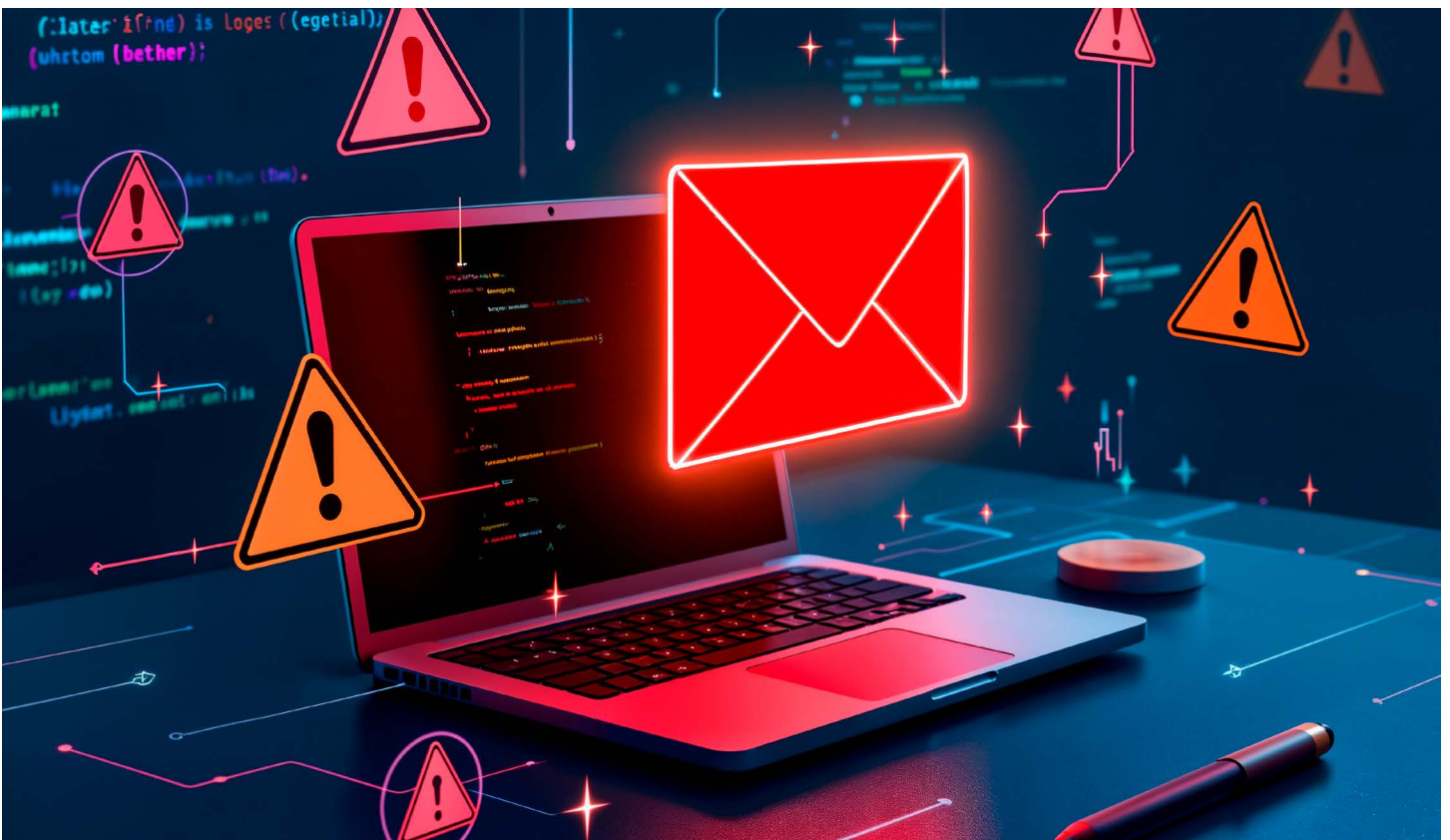
After library staff has scanned your card, ask if they need to see your card again, when they say no, reply, "are you sure?" And pull out a nice sweater.

Toss your books in front of the person at the desk and say, "Book 'em Danno!" Gets em every time.

Run up to a librarian and tell them urgently that a child is having an accident in the children's area. They'll crack up. There's nothing funnier.

Honestly, I don't want people knowing I'm a librarian. I worry they'll take advantage of me and try to get free books.

DON'T BE FOOLED: **SPAMMERS** on Social Media



We've recently seen a huge uptick in the amount of spam comments we're getting on social media. It's an amount of spam that would deeply please people who are fans of this meat paste and Weird AI.

This is especially true of the events we post. It seems we can hardly go a day without someone posting a comment on one of our events that's meant to trick you into giving them information or money that you really shouldn't give them.

Before we go any further: If we have tickets to an event, they will be available through our events calendar. If we are looking for vendors to fill spaces, we'll let you know on our website, not through some third party weirdo we've never met and appears to have no connection to the library. Contact Us outside of social media if you're not sure about something.

I thought, this being April, and fools being the sort of flag-carriers for April, I'd run down a few of these comments and respond to them here as though they were real.

Because while we've rooted out a lot of these, well, it's possible that some of them are legitimate? And we live to serve, so here we go.

~

Hey you guys, my bestfriend was excited to join me, but her partner is being a buzzkill and says she can't come. Going solo feels a bit weird so i'm looking to sell the passes at a good price, does anyone want any?

First of all, feel free to come to any of our events solo. You won't be the only one. In fact, if you show up and say, "I was going to come with my best friend, but her partner is being a buzzkill," you'll likely get a knowing nod from SOMEBODY in the room.

Now let's turn this into an advice column: I know some peoples' partners can be buzzkills, like you said, but putting out on social media that your friend's partner is being one is a bit passive-aggressive. There's a not-horrible chance your friend or that very buzzkill will see the post, and boy is that awkward.

I'm saying all of this speculatively, as the person in a relationship who is more likely to be called a buzzkill than to be the victim of a buzzkilling. I barely go anywhere anymore. Getting me to wear non-pajama pants outside the house on a weekend is a battle. Getting me to wear non-Halloween pajama pants is the real struggle, I've fallen that far. I can hardly be called a buzzkill anymore because in order to kill a buzz, I would've had to have a live one at some point.

I'm totally catching a chest infection and I've got a pair of tickets! Is anyone still looking? Like my post and send me a dm!

So one thing I want to say about not attending one of our events that you've signed up for is that we don't require a reason. In fact, we'd prefer you not provide a reason, especially a medical one, especially a gross one. The only exception to this is if something genuinely hilarious happened and you wanted to share that with us. If you slipped on a banana peel and slid all the way down the block only to fall into a dumpster labeled "rotten fruit that makes hilarious splat sounds," we would like to hear about that. But, in general, this isn't like high school, you don't have to come up with a reason you're not at an event.

If you've got a medical thing that means you can't make it, you can cancel your registration or just not show up. Nobody is going to demand a doctor's note. Unless your doctor wants to send us a note that says we are, medically speaking, "hunky."

Has anyone had any luck getting a refund for their ticket? I hate it, but I have some stuff going on. At this point, I am open to any offers as I'm 100% can not attend, but please be reasonable.

Well, we don't actually charge for our events, so I'm not sure what you'd like refunded. Your time? Are you asking us to build a time machine that can reimburse you for the time you spent signing up for the event you're not attending? Because...I mean, I'll give it a whirl. I haven't explored EVERY aisle at Lowe's, so I guess I could see what sorts of capacitors they have and whether they're of the flux variety.

But, wait, then you said "please be reasonable," and building a time machine doesn't seem very reasonable.

Wow, this is a conundrum. Nobody tells you about this part of the butterfly effect, the whole thing where time gets messed up and it creates confusion about whether library events are free. They are. In this timeline, if you're reading this, they are.

Unfortunately, my beloved grandmother passed away this week, and we're unable to attend this event. Plz, if you're able, we'd like to sell off our tickets.

Wow, something is going on in our communities, because based on the number of grandma death spam comments we're getting, grandmas are dropping left, right, center, left of center, right of left, and in every other permutation of that limited set of options.

Watch out for yourselves, grandmas. I don't know what exactly is happening to your buddies, but it seems like a dangerous time to be a mom of a mom. Maybe get yourself some protective gear and stay in the house. Buy some Halloween pajamas. It makes staying home fun, plus, by the time you're grandma age, YOU decide when holidays begin and end.

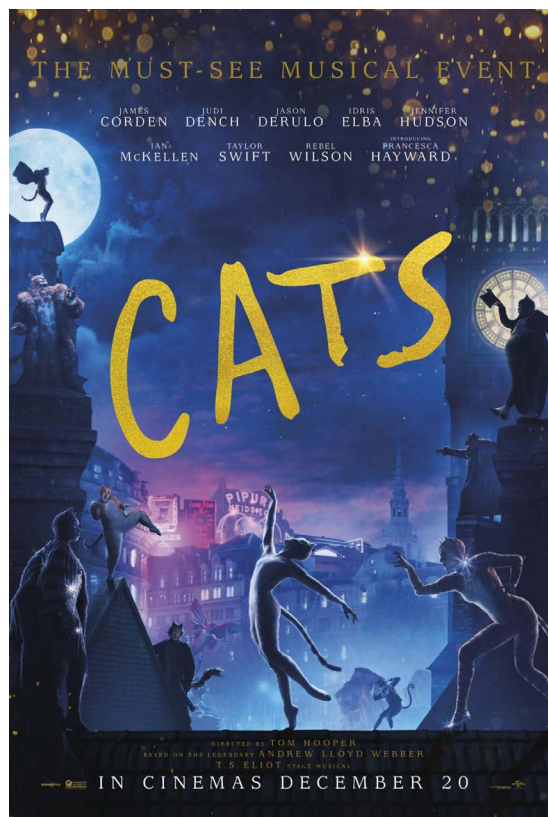
I am the only authorized person to provide vendor spaces for this event, which are available. Don't believe anyone else who says they can give you vendor spaces. I am the only option. Please DM me, we do have vendor spaces available.

Vendor spaces at storytime? Not traditionally a library service, but now that I think about it, why not? Why not have a hot dog vendor at storytime? I guess it'd be a little rude for me, as a storyteller, to eat a hot dog in the middle of a storytime, but I can throw on some Raffi, let him take the wheel, and easily polish off a dog before the third time we hear about where and how Baby Beluga swims.

That'd be "in the deep blue sea," "so wild," and "so free," for the under-Raffi-ed.

Cult Movie Vault:

The 9 Lives of Cats



Welcome to the Cult Movie Vault. This being April, and April being Poetry Month, I figured it was high time we got some culture, some CLASS some chips de pomme de terre extra croustillantes up in here.

By the way, that last one is “extra crispy potato chips,” but it’s translated into French, therefore it is fancy.

But which movies would qualify as poem-centric?

[Howl, the movie about Allen Ginsburg](#), famous for writing

Howl the book, not *Howl* the movie? *Howl* is about *Howl*, but *Howl* isn’t about *Howl* because when *Howl* was written, *Howl* didn’t exist yet.

Well, it’s a 6.5 on IMDB, so it’s probably too good for us to cover here. Way too good. That’s Daniel Radcliffe territory, what with *Guns Akimbo*, *Jungle*, *Swiss Army Man*, *Viktor Frankenstein*, *Horns*, *Kill Your Darlings*—All right in the 6.5-ish range.

Danny Rad: Mr. 6.5.

How about *Barfly*, the movie about Charles Bukowski? It DOES star Frank Stallone, which is a good sign for cult

movie status.

Oof, wait, it’s a 7.1, we’re moving in the wrong direction here. A 7.1 is *Anchorman* level. *The Mist* tier.

Back to the drawing board. The ol’ scratching post...

Ah, of course. That’s the answer. I’ve got it.

What if there was a world-renowned poet, say, T.S. Eliot, and this poet wrote a book of poems that was adapted for the stage, let’s say, running on Broadway for DECADES.

And now let’s say that the poetry adapted into a musical was adapted into a movie, and that movie was...a 2.8!

Let’s stop with the hypotheticals and snap back to reality.

I bring you a real movie, based on real T.S. Eliot poems, which really spawned one of the most popular Broadway musicals of all time.

I bring you: *Cats*.

~

The movie *Cats* was one I expected to be pretty bad, but on the other hand...

Y'see, sometimes when a movie that's *pretty* bad hits the mainstream, a lot of folks like to jump in and rip on it, but to an experienced bad-movie-viewer such as myself, I give it a watch and end up a little disappointed.

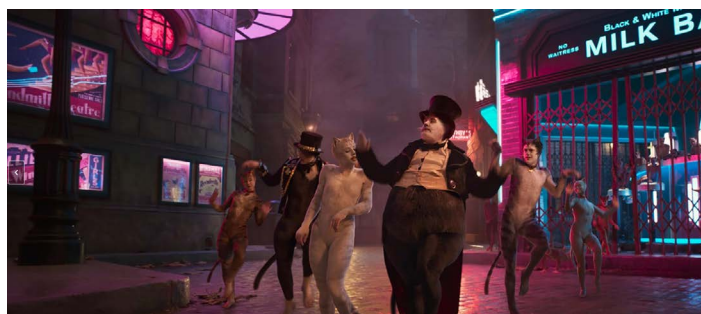
As an example, *Human Centipede* was a movie that, though hilarious and very generous in terms of what it gave the culture, didn't offer much beyond the initial premise of sewing [remainder of this sentence has been redacted in the name of taste and also in the interest of keeping these jokes relevant to this decade.

Guys, *Human Centipede* is turning 15 this year. Sometime, in OUR lifetime, grandkids will ask their grandparents where they were when *Human Centipede* came out. *Human Centipede* will occupy the same space as a movie our grandparents watched, like *The King and I* or *Ben Hur*. The same exact space].

Whether *Cats* would prove truly terrible or just kind of bad was a big question mark, but before the end, the movie killed me nine times. Yes, a convenient, on-theme number of things that were just baffling, strange, and kind of boring, all killed me, figuratively, for a total of nine deaths. There's a lot of mystery around the origin of the idea that cats have nine lives, but it's pretty commonly associated with an ancient Egyptian god, Atum-Ra, who is said to have taken the form of a cat in order to visit the underworld. I guess the underworld is kind of like a bodega in that they're just used to a cat wandering in every so often. While in cat form, Atum-Ra created eight more gods. So, Atum-Ra, in some sense, could be seen as the physical embodiment of nine cats (himself plus the eight others) in one.

Sorry, did that seem convoluted? It probably was, but I genuinely think *Cats* has scrambled my sense of what is and isn't logical and linear. An Egyptian god creating a bunch of cats is the LEAST convoluted piece of lore you're going to read here.

And with the obligatory educational portion of this library newsletter out of the way, let me tell you about the nine moments in *Cats* that absolutely killed me.



~

I will do my best to summarize for you the plot of *Cats*. Normally, I would warn you that this may spoil the movie, but I think that's like saying, "If you eat shrooms, you might have a weird experience," is "spoiling" the "plot" of what might happen when you eat shrooms:

Someone throws a sack in an alley, and out of that sack crawls Victoria, who is our main character. Main CatRACHTER? Can I get away with that?

Victoria is kind of a stand-in for the viewer, an excuse for all the other characters in the movie to explain things. Sort of how Harry Potter being the new kid at magic school gives a reason for characters to dump a little exposition here and there. I mean, if Harry was raised in the world of magic, I think he'd know what Quidditch was, right? Then again, I thought I knew what basketball was, but this March

Madness demonstrated that I don't know much. What is a Valparaiso? How come everyone is saying this like it's a totally normal thing we all know about?

Anyway, Victoria walks around a set of London(?) streets that look like tests for rain effects that someone at Lucasfilm threw in the garbage when they were making *Episode 1*.

This was the first thing that killed me: The movie is really awful to look at. We're going to leave the uncanny valley issues of the cats themselves to the side, even though I do hold a conspiratorial theory that the digital artists who made the sets purposely sabotaged the character models in order to distract from how terrible the sets looked.

"Sets" is probably being a little generous. They weren't sets so much as they were backgrounds from *Final Fantasy VII*. You know, those sort of environments that look kinda cool, but it's pretty obvious where you're supposed to go and not go, like you can just feel that the space off to the left has never and will never exist?

Those ugly sets. There went life one.

My second death was quick on the heels of the first because we jump into the songs almost right away.

It seems like most of the songs are songs various cats sing to inform us of who they are and what they're all about. They don't so much advance a story or catalyze events. It'd be like if we met and then I broke into a song that rhymes "emotionally unavailable" with...hang on, I can do this..."skin care routine? Unassailable!"

And, I don't know, it's not like every song needs to advance the plot or deepen our relationships with the characters, but the musical side of *Cats* is, if I'm being harsh, accomplishable by the type of sitcom theme song they used to make in the early 90s that didn't really tell us a ton but gave us more than enough, like the *Perfect Strangers* theme, which was definitely a situation where a singer went much harder than necessary, and we thank him for his service.

Two lives down.

Next, we're introduced to a bunch of other cats with the WORST cat names I've ever heard in my life.

I am very flexible when it comes to cat names. Cats are wonderful creatures, and proof of that is that you can name a cat almost anything and it will become cute.

Measles. Horrible disease, not pleasant to think about, scourge on humanity. And yet, I could love a cat named Measles. Easily. Don't tempt me to prove it. I'll adopt a whole shelter's-worth of cats and name them after every affliction ever visited upon humanity, and you'll see me smiling all the time and going on about how little Ebola and ol' cranky Diverticulitis have become fast friends.

Cats almost feels like an experiment in pushing the ability of cats' cuteness to overcome naming conventions.

For your enjoyment and mine, I've made a list of 10 names. Some are from the *Mad Max* franchise, a frontrunner in the weird name department, and some are from *Cats*. See if you can identify which are which!

Skimbleshanks
Mr. Mistoffelees
Old Deuteronomy
Macavity

Growltiger
Bearclaw Mohawk
Coma-Doof Warrior
Mudguts
Toast the Knowing
Pole Cats

Okay, Coma-Doof Warrior was a gimme. We all know that was the guy suspended from bungee cords while he shredded out guitar riffs atop a rolling wall of speakers because *Fury Road* was like something beamed straight from my brain to the screen.



Those names account for me losing life number three. But it's not the only life I lose to the bizarre naming conventions at work here.

Just a reminder, our main cat's name? Victoria. Skimbleshanks, Mr. Mistoffelees, and Victoria?

Is this a Pac-Man-esque joke? Is this like having ghosts named Inky, Blinky, Pinky, and then naming the last one Clyde?

And there, right out of me, went life four.

As we're introduced to cats, we meet a cat whose primary distinguishing feature is staying up all night (very catlike behavior), a gluttonous cat (check), and a cat who is some kind of train conductor.

Now, hold the phone, or maybe the brake

lever: These other cats seem to be pretty cat-ish, doing cat things. And then we get this one who wears a little conductor's outfit and has a pocketwatch?

I looked into this, and it seems possible that this idea came to T.S. Eliot because cats would commonly take up residence at train stations in the UK, probably because they were pretty good at keeping away vermin.

Today, this mostly seems to have gone away, probably because we have ways of keeping vermin out that don't also involve caring for live animals. But there are still occasional train cats, such as a personal favorite of mine: Super Station Master Tama, who saved a train station nearly single-pawed-ly and was given an office, gold

medallion nametag, and even had a custom station master hat, which took 6 months to make, probably longer than it took to manufacture every stitch of clothing I own, and I'm 100% okay with that and think it was the right decision.

Cats, you sent me down a rabbit hole that seems pleasant at first, but then you start looking up all these kitties and remember that cats live cruelly short lives and Tama is dead and nothing in the world is fair or just.

Life five has left the station.

Let's talk about dancing.

I am not a dancer. If you're one of a dozen people who've seen me dance, you probably just burst out laughing because that is a mighty big understatement regarding my dancing skills. You've probably laughed a second time, remembering a specific move I pulled on a dance floor, or perhaps the manner in which I limped away after pulling that move, or maybe how sweaty I got simply from shuffling side to side for 12 minutes.

But if you filmed me dancing and then cut it together the way *Cats* is cut together, you could convince the world that I'm a talented dancer, the next Gregory Hines over here, the next Michael Flatley, at the very least. Those are the only famous dancers I can think of. I've never watched any of the dance contest shows because, as I JUST stated, I know nothing about dancing.

Do you all remember when there was that clip going around of Liam Neeson in *Taken 3*, a short bit where Liam Neeson jumps a fence, and it's done in 15 cuts!? Because, you know, if you cut something like that into half-second bits, it's easier to hide that nobody ever did it?

Meanwhile, this legend nearly got killed in a one-take car rollover stunt for *Silent Night, Deadly Night 2?*

We used to be a society.

If you filmed me dancing with 6 cuts per second, you could probably convince the world I'm a dancer.

My quandary with *Cats*: SURELY they hired people who could dance, I have zero doubt about the dancing skills

possessed by the cast, so why are the dance sequences cut together the way you'd cut together a sequence of an elderly man trying to jump an 8-foot fence? Why is there floaty CG wirework if real dancers can actually do this stuff, which they totally can?

What's the point of the spectacle of dancing if the dancing is all fake?

I mean, it's like making a CG movie where a guy bench presses 8,000 lbs. It's not impressive to DRAW A PICTURE of an impressive things.

I feel like the dancing could've been enjoyable if they'd just filmed it differently, with a better sense of scale and a more pulled-back focus. But they didn't.



Minus one more life, life number six.

I was kind of surprised there was less comedic hay being made about Taylor Swift's appearance in *Cats*. But once I saw it, I don't know, I understood.

She's in one scene, basically, sings one song, gets in and gets out. It's far from the most distracting thing in a movie full of distracting things.

And if a singer is going to be on screen in a major motion picture, this makes a lot more sense than, say, Madonna in *Dick Tracy*, Beyonce in an *Austin Powers* movie, 2PAC in *Nothing but Trouble*, or Shaq in *Kazam* (I consider

Shaq a rapper first, basketball player second).

It's like singers all see Joey Fatone killin' it in *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* and think, "I can do that."

You can't. You can't match the charisma of Full-On Fatone. Nobody can. Deal with it.

Here's the problem with Taylor Swift being in *Cats*: It's a musical, and the best song in the entire movie is a Taylor Swift original that plays OVER THE END CREDITS.

It's not the greatest song ever penned, but after 2 hours of *Cats*, it's refreshing to hear something that sounds like, you know, music.

Bye-bye, life seven.

Oh, and, yes, I just mentioned that *Cats* is long. It's an hour and 50 minutes. One thing about lots of bad movies is that they are usually mercifully short, stretching hard to reach a 90-minute run time. With *Cats*, I looked at the clock, and I despaired when I saw that I still had a full *Predator-2*'s worth of *Cats* left to go.

Life eight.

This cannot be Gandalf's last movie, Magneto's last movie. This is what I thought to myself as I watched Ian McKellen, SIR Ian McKellen, in cat makeup, drinking milk from a saucer with his tongue.

This was a moment of intense fear. *Cats* came out in 2019. It was entirely possible that McKellen didn't do any work in Hollywood during COVID, the man is 85 years old.

It was entirely possible that this was his final film. I experienced an anxiety during the remainder of the movie that I can only describe as devastating.

Y'all, he's fine, he's been in something else. I don't even care what it is. Doesn't matter.

That was a close one. I just managed to hold onto that life by the width of a Gandalf beard hair.

I don't know if cat lives work like video game lives. You know how in some games 0 counts as a life, and in others, 1 is your last life? Can we convene a summit about this, get everyone on the same page?

Well, here goes life nine.

Throughout the movie, I kept hearing about jellicle cats. Maybe this was something cats wanted to be, or something they aspired to, or...something?

I sat through an entire two hours of this without really knowing, and in the FINAL MOMENTS of the thing, Judi Dench (also in another movie after this, thank goodness) explains what jellicle means.

If you're going to explain this, which seems like a reasonable thing to do, why would you wait until the final moments!? Why make me sit through an entire movie wondering what on Earth you're talking about only to then give me the answer at the point where it's utterly useless?

Boom, dead.

~

Okay, in a sort of post-mortem, I'm pretty sure that *Cats* is about a bunch of cats who sing and dance, and the best singer among them gets to ride on a hot air balloon to heaven where they will be resurrected as another cat. And, of course, the best singer among them turns out to be a wretched cat, played by Jennifer Hudson, whose nose is constantly running into her mouth while she's singing.

I suppose this was intended to show that she's pathetic or sick or something, who cares?

Look, I think there are times when adaptations of musicals work, and I think there are times when they land in the litterbox.

I think there's a lot to be said for live performance in a Broadway show. Looking up clips of *Cats* to try and discover why on Earth people liked this, I saw this version of the song "*Memories*" and thought it was very touching. Poignant. The kind of performance that makes you go, "Okay, I get it."

And part of that is that it's a live performance. A real person really singing a real song, right there, right then. Spittle flying into the audience. People around you jabbing their elbows into you because, y'all, nobody told me, but the one time I went to a Broadway show, those seats are TINY.

Broadway songs are, in my opinion, meant to be performed and enjoyed live. They're not the same type of singing you get from most of what you hear on the radio. That's not a quality judgment, it's just a different style.

I think there's something to be said for bringing that experience to people who can't make it to Broadway. I get that.

But *Cats*...it's just not it.

You can't impress me with dancing when you cut so often that I can't keep track of who's where when. You can't dazzle me with movement on the stage when you're directing the camera to look at certain things at certain times.

And, everyone, stop putting celebrities in these movies, start putting great performers in them. Nobody is going to see *Cats* because James Corden is in it. It's fine. We'll watch stuff with people we don't know. Remember how Marvel put a Spider-Man we didn't really know on the screen and how well that worked? Do that.

Wait, am I saying they should make a *Spider-Man* musical: The Movie!?

Of course I am. I need SOMETHING to write about in this column, and I can guarantee that'd be the perfect fodder.



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Visit www.MyLibrary.us/locations-and-hours for library hours

Administration & Support Services

2650 West 29th Street
Greeley, CO 80631
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Carbon Valley Regional Library

7 Park Avenue
Firestone, CO 80504
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Centennial Park Library

2227 23rd Avenue
Greeley, CO 80634
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Eaton Public Library

132 Maple Avenue
Eaton, CO 80615
(970) 454-2189

Erie Community Library

400 Powers Street
Erie, CO 80516
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Farr Regional Library

1939 61st Avenue
Greeley, CO 80634
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Fort Lupton Public & School Library

370 S. Rollie Avenue
Fort Lupton, CO 80621
(303) 339-4089

Glenn A. Jones, M.D. Memorial Library

400 S. Parish Avenue
Johnstown, CO 80534
(970) 587-2459

Grover Library

402 Chatoga Avenue
Grover, CO 80729
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Milliken Location of the Glenn A. Jones, M.D. Memorial Library

1109 Broad Street
Milliken, CO 80543
(970) 660-5039

Hudson Public Library

100 S. Beech Street
Hudson, CO 80642
(303) 536-4550

Kersey Library

332 3rd Street
Kersey, CO 80644
1-888-861-READ(7323)

LINC Library Innovation Center

501 8th Avenue
Greeley, CO 80631
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Nantes Library

703 Birch Street
Gilcrest, CO 80623
(970) 737-1035

Northern Plains Public Library

216 2nd Street
Ault, CO 80610
(970) 834-1259

Outreach

2650 W. 29th Street
Greeley, CO 80631
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Platteville Public Library

504 Marion Avenue
Platteville, CO 80651
(970) 785-2231

Riverside Library & Cultural Center

3700 Golden Street
Evans, CO 80620
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AFFILIATED LOCATIONS

Hazel E. Johnson Research Center at the City of Greeley Museum

714 8th Street, Greeley, CO 80631
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Poudre Learning Center

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