

A BOY NAMED WILBUR PETERSON

"Genesis"

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INT. OUTDOORS - DAY

WILBUR PETERSON (14) awakens and lifts his body up from the ground. He shakes his head and wipes off his clothes.

WILBUR

Wow, that was crazy!

He looks around. He is in a line of people. One WOMAN talks to another woman, standing behind him.

WOMAN

Girl, I can't wait to get in there! It's gonna be lit!

WILBUR

I'm in line at a club? But I'm only 15!  
(deep voice)  
At heart. I'm a cool 25, of course.

A MAN turns around to him.

MAN

We're not going to a club.

WILBUR

(regular voice)  
Then where in the hell am I?

MAN

Hey! Language! And you're wrong in more ways than one!

WILBUR

What?

MAN

I'll give you a hint. You won't have to worry about a curfew.

Wilbur looks around. Puffy, white clouds form and begin to surround the line.

WILBUR

(gasps)  
I'm dead??

MAN

Or, you're alive here.

WILBUR

So this is the way to Heaven?  
(clears throat)  
(MORE)

WILBUR (CONT'D)

Damn, crap, [expletive], bitch,  
[expletive], ho, [expletive], ass.

MAN

We're already in Heaven, stupid.

WILBUR

All the words that I'm glad to have  
gotten away from!

MAN

We're just waiting for the plane. There's  
a delay.

An ANNOUNCER speaks.

ANNOUNCER (O.C.)

Ladies and gentlemen, we will be taking  
off shortly. Please be patient.

WILBUR

Okay, it ain't like we're going anywhere!

He GIGGLES, looks at the man, then quickly STOPS. A LADY  
races to the front of the line, where an ANGEL stands.

LADY #1

Sorry I'm late! The paramedics took  
forever to pull the plug!

ANGEL

Fine, fine, go ahead.

The lady walks through a security scanner and exits.  
Another LADY interjects.

LADY #2

Hey, wait! I died first!

ANGEL

What can I say? She's VIP! We've seen her  
work! Your turn.

She walks through the scanner and exits. The man  
approaches the scanner.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Pockets empty?

MAN

Yep!

He walks through. Wilbur empties his pockets, puts his items on the conveyer belt, and walks through the scanner.

SFX: BEEP!

WILBUR

Oh, sorry, forgot to take off my belt.

He does so and puts it on the conveyer belt.

SFX: BEEP!

Wilbur SCOFFS. Another angel whispers in the angel's ear and points to Wilbur.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

You want me to strip down or something?

ANGEL

It is how you came into the world, but no. You have to come with us.

WILBUR

What? Why?

ANGEL

It's in your body.

WILBUR

You mean, like a pacemaker?

ANGEL

Sins!

WILBUR

Well, nobody's perfect!

ANGEL

You gotta wait in that room over there. Think of it as purgatory.

WILBUR

But I'm a Baptist.

ANGEL

Will you just come on??

WILBUR

(sighs)

At least you didn't tell me to go to...you know.

ANGEL  
Tempting, but let's go.

Wilbur follows the angels out.

INT. WAITING ROOM - LATER

Wilbur sits in a room with a little BOY.

WILBUR  
What you in here for?

BOY  
Fell down a well.

WILBUR  
That still happens?

BOY  
Guess not. I can't even die right.

Wilbur looks at a grandfather clock.

WILBUR  
If God's always on time, what's the holdup?

BOY  
No kidding. For all this, I could still be on Earth. And to think my death was trending all over, until I got upstaged by our mayor dying two hours later. I can't catch a break!

The angel enters.

ANGEL  
Mr. Peterson, he's ready for you.

Wilbur gets up.

WILBUR  
Hope I'm dressed for this.

He follows the angel out. The MAYOR enters the waiting room and sits next to the boy.

MAYOR  
Hey, David.

BOY/DAVID  
(scoffs, uses "air quotes")  
Your Mayorness!

INT. ROOOM - CONTINUOUS

Wilbur approaches a podium that towers over him and the angel. GOD speaks to him.

GOD (O.C.)

Wilbur Peterson, I've been waiting to speak with you.

WILBUR

I know, sir. I know I'm not perfect. Apparently, you do, too. And I'm sorry for all the wrong things I've done. Please don't send me to Hell! I don't do well in the heat!

GOD (O.C.)

You're even sorry for how you treated your cat?

WILBUR

Yes! I'm sorry that he was behind the wheel, but I don't have my license!

GOD (O.C.)

Not just that! Wesley, show him the tablet!

ANGEL/WESLEY

I would, sir, but it's not finished updating.

GOD (O.C.)

(sighs)

Fine, use my phone.

Wesley goes behind the podium and returns to Wilbur with the phone.

WILBUR

This is Heaven, and your devices don't automatically update?

Wesley nudges him.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

Sorry.

ON THE SCREEN

INT. PETERSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Baby Wilbur crawls on the floor. His MOTHER and FATHER approach him.

MOTHER

Happy first birthday, Wilbur!

FATHER

We got you a gift!

They place a box with holes next to Wilbur. The lid opens, and a kitten crawls out.

SFX: The kitten MEOWS. Wilbur COOS and BABBLES.

Wilbur grabs and hugs the kitten.

MOTHER

Careful, not too hard!

FATHER

Oh, let them be, dear. Wilbur won't hurt him.

Wilbur crawls away and drags the cat by his ear.

INT. PETERSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The parents sit at the table and eat. KID Wilbur walks past them, with his cat on a leash and wearing a helmet.

FATHER

Wilbur, what are you up to now?

KID WILBUR

Taking him bike riding!

MOTHER

Why the helmet?

KID WILBUR

To keep him safe, of course!

FATHER

Don't you think you're being a little rough on him?

KID WILBUR

He'll be fine, Dad! And if not, he has nine lives!

He CHUCKLES.

KID WILBUR (CONT'D)  
(to the cat)  
Let's go, stupid!

He yanks the cat, who gives a SQUEAL.

EXT. OUTDOORS - ZOO - DAY

Kid Wilbur hangs his cat over the rails of a lion's den.  
Lions ROAR. The cat whimpers.

KID WILBUR  
Come on, these are your relatives! They  
won't hurt ya!

An EMPLOYEE races to them.

EMPLOYEE  
Hey, kid, for the last time...!

Kid Wilbur runs away with his cat.

EXT. OUTDOORS - DAY

Wilbur, at his current age, sets up his phone on a selfie stick. His cat is behind the wheel of a car. Wilbur approaches the cat.

WILBUR  
Okay, pal, we gotta hurry, record this,  
and get the car back before Mom knows  
it's missing.

He puts the car in drive, SLAMS the door, and races back to his phone.

BACK TO HEAVEN

WILBUR  
But I was watching him the whole time!

WESLEY  
Oh yeah?

ON THE SCREEN

Wilbur types on his phone.



WILBUR

I did select all the images! Isn't the handlebar part of the bike?

(sighs)

And all I want is a cheeseburger!

The car ZOOMS and approaches Wilbur.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

Uh oh.

BACK TO HEAVEN

Wesley turns the screen off.

WESLEY

Well, you were there. You know what happened.

WILBUR

I know all of that was wrong! And I'm sorry! I didn't know I would get punished for it!

GOD (O.C.)

Mr. Peterson, I'm sending you back to Earth.

WILBUR

What?? Really??

GOD (O.C.)

Yes. We are, let's just say, overcrowded here.

WILBUR

Oh, thank...you! I didn't even get to third base with Penelope Harris yet!

(pause)

After we get married, of course! And I'll treat my cat with more respect! I'll even name him!

GOD (O.C.)

"Her"!

WILBUR

Really?? I mean, thanks again!

Wesley walks Wilbur out. God walks from behind the podium. He is in the form of a cat.

GOD  
Oh, don't thank me yet, son.

INT. PETERSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Wilbur, in bed, wakes up and stretches.

WILBUR  
Wow, what a dream. No more vegetables  
before bedtime for me!

He lies back down.

SFX: SCRATCHING and CLAWING sounds.

WILBUR (CONT'D)  
Hey! Get off the curtains!

A FEMALE VOICE responds.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)  
Is that any way to speak to your mother?  
Look at me when I'm talking to you!

Wilbur turns around and sees a cat named DIANE facing him and standing upright. She wears a shirt, pants, and an apron. She puts her hands on her hips.

DIANE  
Well?

Wilbur SCREAMS and jumps out of bed.

WILBUR  
What are you doing talking??

DIANE  
Wilbur, what's up with you?

WILBUR  
What's up with you?

DIANE  
Oh, I get it. You had a dream.

WILBUR  
Am I still dreaming now?

DIANE  
If this were a dream, I'd be married to  
Tony the Tiger and not your father.

WILBUR  
Is Tony the Tiger here?

DIANE  
Wilbur...  
(pause)  
Good question.

They both look around.

DIANE (CONT'D)  
Get dressed and come down to eat.

She kisses him on the forehead and exits.

WILBUR  
Okay, I'm still dreaming. Fine. I'll play  
along.

INT. PETERSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Wilbur sits at the kitchen table with a baby kitten,  
RANDOLPH, who sits in a high chair. A male cat, BENNY,  
approaches Wilbur with a plate of food.

BENNY  
It's about time, son!

WILBUR  
Uh...sorry about that.

Diane enters.

WILBUR (CONT'D)  
Thanks, Mom, for waking me up.

PARENTS  
(gasp)  
"Mom"??

WILBUR  
Uh...

DIANE  
Aww, I think I'm gonna cry!  
(to Wilbur)  
But we discussed this, already, dear.

WILBUR  
Okay, sorry, uh...

DIANE  
"Diane" is just fine for now.

WILBUR

Cool. This breakfast looks great, Benny!

Benny looks at him angrily.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

"Dad"!

BENNY

You got that right, joker.

Randolph COOS.

WILBUR

And this must be my little brother!

BENNY

Huh?

DIANE

(to Benny)

He'll snap out of it.

(to Wilbur)

You already know who he is!

WILBUR

Right. Since it's my dream, I'll name you, "Muffin"!

BENNY

(to Diane)

Where are the girls? I know it takes ya'll a minute to get ready, but still.

A female kitten named MEGHAN (7), enters with a diorama. She places it on the floor.

MEGHAN

Sorry, guys, I had to put the finishing touches on my diorama. And I had to look over my math teacher's lesson for today.

BENNY

Again?? He has to start paying us for that!

MEGHAN

No, me.

She sits next to Wilbur.

MEGHAN (CONT'D)

Hey, you!

DIANE

Don't start! It's too early for that!

MEGHAN

Ready to apologize yet?

WILBUR

For what?

MEGHAN

Well, if you don't know, I ain't gonna tell ya!

WILBUR

Well, that's that!

MEGHAN

Yeah!

(scoffs)

What are big brothers for, anyway?

WILBUR

(to himself)

I've never had dreams this extended before.

Another cat named HARLAND walks in, wearing all white. Wilbur sees him.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

(to the family)

And I guess he's my big brother, right?

He points to Harland. The family looks.

DIANE

Who?

BENNY

(to Diane)

We have to have that talk with him again.

HARLAND

They can't see me, Wilbur. Only you can.

WILBUR

Huh?

HARLAND

Follow me.

Wilbur looks puzzled.

WILBUR  
(to the family)  
I'll be back. I forgot something.

MEGHAN  
Common sense?

INT. PETERSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wilbur races in his room, where Harland awaits.

WILBUR  
What's going on here? Who are you?

HARLAND  
I'm an angel, of course! But you can call me Harland.

WILBUR  
Look, can you attempt to hit me or something, so I can wake up?

HARLAND  
I could, but it won't change anything. Wilbur Peterson, this is your new life!

WILBUR  
You mean this isn't a dream?

HARLAND  
Nope. The man upstairs made this possible. You're gonna have to go through life living with cats, since you...  
(air quotes)  
..."like" them so much.

WILBUR  
For how long?

HARLAND  
You can't ask God those things!

WILBUR  
Can I ask you?

Harland turns around, pulls out his phone, types on it, looks at it, puts it back in his pocket, and turns back to Wilbur.

HARLAND  
No.

MOMENTS LATER

Wilbur and Harland return downstairs to the kitchen.

WILBUR  
(to Harland)  
Can you at least run down the line for me?

BENNY  
What?

WILBUR  
(sighs)  
Nothing.

He takes a seat at the table. Harland follows him.

HARLAND  
That's your father, Benny. He married Diane, your stepmother. And that's your little sister, Meghan.

WILBUR  
And let me guess, "Muffin" here is my little brother?

Another female cat, MONIQUE (19), who is pregnant, enters while wobbling.

MONIQUE  
No. Do you want him?

She sits at the table.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)  
And if ya'll go anywhere, take Meghan with you!

MEGHAN  
Monique, don't you have someone to do?

BENNY  
(to the girls)  
Stop it, you two!

HARLAND  
(to Wilbur)  
That's your older sister, Monique.  
(points to Randolph)  
Randolph is her son. And she has another on the way.

DIANE

No one told you to keep getting pregnant,  
Monique.

MONIQUE

(to Diane)

You said that they're gifts from God!

MEGHAN

Just like the babies' fathers?

MONIQUE

Shut up.

WILBUR

(to Harland, hushed voice)

And this new family is my gift?

HARLAND

You're supposed to learn something. And  
until you do, get used to this. Now  
hurry, so you can get to school.

WILBUR

How do I get there?

HARLAND

It's the same one you've been going to.  
With one difference, of course. I'm out.

He exits.

WILBUR

I guess I'm gonna go to school, then. See  
ya'll later.

DIANE

Bye, son.

WILBUR

I'm gonna go to the bathroom first.

He walks in the living room.

BENNY

Where are you going, Wilbur? The  
bathroom's right there!

He points to the bathroom.

WILBUR

Oh, right!

(chuckles)

(MORE)



WILBUR (CONT'D)

I was looking for kitty litter. But that would be silly!

DIANE

(chuckles)

Yeah! Now quit playing around and get going!

Wilbur enters the bathroom and closes the door.

MONIQUE

None of us can use the kitty litter. Meghan didn't take it out yet.

MEGHAN

That's because it's Dad's turn!

BENNY

No it's not!

INT. SCHOOL - LATER

Wilbur walks through the hallway, passing other feline students who wear shirts, jeans, and sneakers.

WILBUR

I can't believe it. Everyone's a cat! And walking upright! And no one's licking themselves!

He spots a student.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

Except him.

A TEACHER shouts.

TEACHER

Reginald, stop that!

PURNELL (15), wearing a jacket over his outfit, approaches Wilbur.

PURNELL

(chuckles)

Hey, what up, homo?

WILBUR

(gasps)

Excuse me??

Two other cats, JACKLYN and SCOTT (both 15), approach them.

JACKLYN  
(to Purnell)  
Knock it off!

PURNELL  
But Jacklyn, I always call him that!

SCOTT  
And "homo" is short for "homo sapien",  
which he is.

PURNELL  
(facetiously)  
Yeah, that's why I call him that!

He CHUCKLES and exits.

SCOTT  
(to Wilbur)  
Don't mind Purnell.

JACKLYN  
Scott's right. I remember when I was the  
butt of all the jokes. I tripped over a  
chair on the first day of school, and I  
was known all year as "Jack Tripper".  
Then attention slowly turned to you when  
yoy transferred here. You remember!

WILBUR  
Oh...yeah.

SCOTT  
What Jacklyn's trying to say is that it  
won't last long. And even if it does, we  
like you for the way you are.

JACKLYN  
Just like you like us for the way we are!

She and Scott exit.

WILBUR  
Yeah, right.

Harland approaches him.

HARLAND  
So, enjoying your first day?

WILBUR  
Not only am I in a world of cats, but I'm  
the butt of all the jokes at school!  
(MORE)

WILBUR (CONT'D)

Please get me outta here, and I'll never make fun of Harry Kent again!

HARLAND

Good! Especially since Harold is only his middle name!

WILBUR

I know. I found that out later on. But it's still funny, right?

Harland stares at him.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

Never mind.

HARLAND

That's not even the reason why you're here!

WILBUR

What is the reason?

HARLAND

That's for you to figure out!

WILBUR

I gotta make things right.

(pause, snaps fingers)

I know! Where does Meghan go to school?

HARLAND

Garfield Elementary.

WILBUR

Okay. How do you get there?

HARLAND

Do I look like God to you?

WILBUR

God doesn't look like God to me! I'll put it in my phone!

He runs away.

HARLAND

Wilbur!

(scoffs, then snickers)

"Harry Kent".

INT. GARFIELD ELEMENTARY - LATER

Wilbur approaches a classroom, KNOCKS on the door, then opens it.

WILBUR

Excuse me, teacher, but can I speak to Meghan? She's my sister.

The teacher nods to Meghan, who gets up. A KID chuckles.

KID

Your brother's a human!

MEGHAN

So is your mom!

KID

So??

The class LAUGHS and points at the kid.

KID (CONT'D)

Shut up!

Meghan enters the hallway with Wilbur.

MEGHAN

What's the matter? This couldn't wait until we got home?

WILBUR

No! Look, I just wanna say whatever it was that I did, I'm sorry.

MEGHAN

How convincing. I'm going back to class.

She turns around. Wilbur pulls her back.

WILBUR

No, wait!

(sighs)

Come on. You know I'm not really like that.

(pause)

Right?

MEGHAN

(sighs)

Yeah, I know. And I'm sorry for saying that you were adopted. Even though you were.

WILBUR

Well...yeah, that hurt.

MEGHAN

Diane and Dad always wanted a son, and I'm glad they got you. Just remember that I'm the baby, and an actual cat, so I get the perks!

WILBUR

Right. See you at home. I love you.

He hugs her.

MEGHAN

Whoa, I can't believe you're acting feline. Later.

She returns to the classroom.

WILBUR

Alright, that should do the trick! Now, take me back!

He attempts to jump, then stops. The PRINCIPAL approaches him.

PRINCIPAL

Hey, kid, what are you doing here?

WILBUR

I said, take me back!

He jumps.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

Please get me outta here!

EXT. GARFIELD ELEMENTARY - MOMENTS LATER

Wilbur is tossed out of the building.

WILBUR

AAAARRGGHH!

He PLOPS on the ground.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

(woozily)

Thanks.

INT. SCHOOL - LATER

Harland stands in the middle of the hallway. Various students walk through his body. He makes silly poses as they do that.

HARLAND

I never get tired of this!

Wilbur approaches him.

WILBUR

Harland, what are you doing?

Harland stops.

HARLAND

You'll get to experience this when you're dead again.

WILBUR

Well, I told my "sister" that I was sorry. I'll never mistreat cats again. There, I righted my wrong.

HARLAND

By skipping school?

WILBUR

Damn.

(looks at Harland, catches himself)

...nation.

HARLAND

It's good you're back, anyway. It's time for your game.

WILBUR

What?

Scott approaches him.

SCOTT

Wilbur, what you doin'? You gotta change! The game's about to start!

WILBUR

Game?

HARLAND

You're the star player of their basketball team.

WILBUR

I can play a little bit, but I'm not a star!

SCOTT

Yeah you are, compared to us cats! We can only push the ball around! And it's only okay if I say that, got it?

WILBUR

But...

Scott pulls him away, while he looks back at Harland.

HARLAND

Bye-bye!

He waves.

INT. GYM - LATER

MONTAGE - WILBUR THE SUPERSTAR

-- Wilbur runs with his basketball team. He dribbles the ball down the court and passes it to a teammate, who makes a layup. The crowd CHEERS.

WILBUR

Being a token makes me better at basketball?

-- Wilbur dribbles, stops, and makes a jumpshot. The ball goes in, and the crowd CHEERS. Harland runs with Wilbur.

HARLAND

Having fun yet?

WILBUR

Yeah! In gym class, I used to ride the bench! They named the bench after me!

-- Wilbur dribbles.

CROWD

Five...four...three...two...

-- Wilbur "lobs" the ball to the basket, and a teammate dunks it. The buzzer BLASTS, and the team and crowd CHEER. The MC speaks on the mic.

MC

And that's game!

END OF MONTAGE

The team gathers, CLAMORS EXCITEDLY, and gives high-fives to Wilbur. A STUDENT REPORTER approaches Wilbur with a cameraman.

STUDENT REPORTER

Wilbur Peterson, what a performance, and your team got the win! How important was this game in the series?

WILBUR

Very important! They don't like us, we don't like them...

The cheering STOPS. Everyone except Wilbur GASPS. An OPPOSING PLAYER walks past him.

OPPOSING PLAYER

Dang, what did we ever do to you?

WILBUR

(to Harland)

We can't say that about them anymore?

HARLAND

You can't even call them "them" anymore.

WILBUR

(to the reporter)

Just kidding, ya'll! We both played well! And you guys are the best fans ever!

Everyone RESUMES CHEERING. Wilbur walks away with Harland.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

This is great! I can be All-American! I can get a full ride to college! I can take classes like Chillhop Studies 101! Then get to the Final Four! I can make it to the NBA!

HARLAND

Yep! Sky's the limit!

WILBUR

I could get used to this!

A female cat, TASHA, approaches Wilbur.

TASHA

Uh, Wilbur? Got a minute?



WILBUR  
Yeah, what's up?

TASHA  
Well, uh, I took the pregnancy test this morning, and...

WILBUR  
Oh, no! Uh-uh! No way!!

He dashes away. Tasha's friend, JILL, approaches her. Tasha shows her some papers.

TASHA  
I got the answers to the test right here!  
He doesn't need them anymore?

Jill puts her hand on Tasha's shoulder.

JILL  
(sighs)  
It's for the best, Tasha. It's for the best.

INT. HEAVEN - LATER

Harland stands in front of God's podium.

HARLAND  
Wilbur had trouble dealing with the whole cat thing at first. But now, he seems to be enjoying himself, especially after winning that game!

GOD  
Harland, the idea is to get him to want to go back to his normal life! As a human!

HARLAND  
(gasps)  
Oh! No problem, I'll fix it right away!

GOD  
I hope so, especially if you want to go back to your normal life, Fido!

Harland moans and PANTS like a dog.

GOD (CONT'D)  
And put your tongue back in your mouth!

He does so.

HARLAND

Sorry. I'll get out of your hair.

He hurries away.

GOD

(sighs)

Oh...my...self.

THE END