

My name is Rachel Anderson. I am 41 years old and I live in the Village of McGraw. I live alone with 3 cats and I am completely okay with that. Thank goodness I'm an introvert! I am the furbaby mama to Jude, Simon, and Jolene. My cats are the greatest thing I have ever done with my life. I have been in quarantine since March 2020. It is now January 2021. I am in the high risk group. For me, quarantine means I am not allowed to go to the grocery store or pharmacy. I have to go to my work office on a Saturday alone for maximum two hours because the ventilation in our building is poor. I am not supposed to be indoors with another human during this pandemic. The only time I have been touched by another person in the past 10 months was in July. I had one in-person appointment at the doctor office. I have been so starved for human touch that I almost asked the doctor to give me a hug. I didn't ask for a hug because I didn't want her to think I'm losing it. I should have asked for the hug. That was my only in-person appointment in 10 months. They had to take blood from me. All of my other doctor appointments have been on the telephone. I can't zoom or do any type of video meeting that people are using for "human contact" in the pandemic. There is no broadband where I live. The internet for my work from home comes from a cell phone signal. The signal is so weak that it does not support video. I talk to people on my landline telephone. Cell service is so weak here I cannot even talk to people on my cell phone or do a FaceTime or anything like that. My doctor has approved me for outside visits with people as long as we are all masked and distanced. I see people through windows a lot. I drive my car twice a week to keep it going in case I need it for an emergency. The mechanic told me I shouldn't let it sit. Twice a week I drive the car around with just me in it. When it needs gas, I try to go at a slow time so there is no one else at the pump. I pay at the pump. I wear a mask and gloves. When the car broke and needed to be serviced, I dropped the car off and put the keys in the drop. All my "interactions" have to be human free. Then I had to walk 2 miles home while it was fixed. Thankfully I was having a good day with my disability and did not need my rollator. I'm not supposed to be in a vehicle with anyone either. My groceries are delivered to me twice a month and that is contact free also. The first few months of the pandemic were the hardest. I involuntarily lost 15 pounds from March to July because it was hard to get food with the food shortages. I weigh less than 100 pounds to begin with, so this was not good. I get food deliveries more regular now, but it's hard to pay for. Food prices have gone up 3-4x in the pandemic and there are still food shortages. I have multiple food allergies, so some things I need are considered "specialty items" and not essential. That means they're not being made or stocked anymore. Pretty much everything on my Christmas list was a food item I have been unable to obtain these past 10 months of the pandemic. I was not able to obtain any of the food items on my Christmas list. That's okay. I'm just happy to be alive. Two vaccines were approved and I was excited. You see, as a high risk person, I'm close to the top of the vaccine list. I have all of my vaccines except for two that I am medically unable to have due to severe life threatening reactions. A vaccine is a way out of this mess. The doctor called and I cannot medically have either of the two vaccines approved. I went from the top of the vaccine list to medically unable to receive the vaccines that were developed. We are hopeful that a vaccine will be developed that I can have. When I heard I can't be vaccinated, I cried. I really just want a hug from another human. Even if other people are vaccinated, I am still stuck in quarantine because vaccinated people can still pass the virus on to me. So I remain in quarantine. I'm not sure for how long. My only wish is to outlive my cats. I'm their human, you see. I need to stay alive to keep these 3 together. Being a cat mom is the best thing I have ever done with my life. I am scared for my job. I need my job to keep the house that keeps us

all together. Quarantine may sound like the pits, but being home with my 3 cats has been the best gift of my life. I know this will all end some day. I'm not sure when. I guess what I would like to say is please don't forget about me. I know that my cats are the best thing I have ever done in my life, and that may not mean a whole lot to other people. I don't want to die but I don't want to be forgotten either. All I'm trying to do is keep my cats together and be the best cat mom possible. That's all I'm asking from life.

Rachel Anderson