

Kitty Magic

After a meeting one night, I felt very tired. Eager to get home and get to sleep, I was approaching my car when I heard mew, mew, mew, mew. . . Looking under my car, I saw a teeny¹⁾ little kitten, shaking and crying, huddled close to the tire.

I have never had a fondness for cats. I'm a dog person, thank you very much. I grew up with dogs all my young life and cats always bugged²⁾ me. Kind of creeped me out. I especially hated going into houses that had cat boxes. I wondered if the residents just ignored the awful smell. Plus, cats always seemed to be all over everything— not to mention their hair. And I was semi-allergic³⁾ to them. Suffice it to say⁴⁾, I had never in my life gone out of my way⁵⁾ for a cat.

But when I knelt down and saw this scared little red tabby mewing like crazy, something inside urged me to reach out to pick her up. She ran away immediately. I thought, Okay, well, I tried, but as I went to get into my car, I heard the kitten mewing again. That pitiful mewing really pulled at my heart, and I found myself crossing the street to try to find her. I found her and she ran. I found her again and she ran again. This went on and on. Yet I just couldn't leave her. Finally, I was able to grab her. When I held her in my arms, she seemed so little and skinny and very sweet. And she stopped mewing!

It was totally out of character, but I took her into my car with me. The kitty freaked out⁶⁾, screeching and running at lightning speed all over the car, until she settled herself right in my lap, of course. I didn't know what I was going to do with her, and yet I felt compelled to bring her home. I drove home, worrying the whole way, because I knew my roommate was deathly allergic to cats.

I got home very late, put the kitten in the front yard and left some milk for her. I was half hoping she would run away by the time morning came. But in the morning she was still there, so I brought her to work with me. Luckily, I have a very sympathetic boss. Especially when it comes to animals. Once we had a hurt sparrow⁷⁾ in the office for weeks that he had found and nursed back to health. All day at work, I tried to find someone who would take the kitten, but all the cat lovers were full up.

I still didn't know what to do with the kitty, so I took her on some errands⁸⁾ with me when I left work. Again she freaked out in the car and this time wedged herself under the seat. My last stop that afternoon was at my parents' house.

Recently my father had been diagnosed with prostate⁹⁾ cancer. He had undergone hormone¹⁰⁾ treatment and the doctors now felt they had arrested the cancer. At least for the present. I liked to go there as often as I could.

That afternoon, parked in front of my parents' house, I was trying to coax the kitten out from under the seat when she zoomed out of the car and into the neighbors' bushes. There are a lot of bushes in that neighborhood, and I realized after looking for a while that it was a lost cause. I felt a bit sad but consoled myself that this area had many families with kids. Surely someone would find her and give her a good home, I told myself.

To be honest, I felt somewhat relieved because I didn't know what I would have done with her. I visited with my parents, and as I was leaving, I told them to call me if the kitty came around their place and I would come pick her up. I kidded my father, saying, "Of

course, you could keep her if you wanted, ” to which he replied, “Not on your life¹¹. ” I supposed that my dad wasn’t that interested in having pets, particularly cats.

That night there was a call on my answering machine from my father. The kitty had actually shown up on their front doorstep. He said he had her in the house and she was okay, but could I come pick her up the next day? My heart sank. What am I going to do with this cat? I thought. I didn’t have the heart to take her to the pound, and I was sure that my room—mate wasn’t feeling up for a hospital trip to treat a cat—induced asthma¹² attack. I couldn’t see a solution.

I called my father the next day and told him I would come over and pick up the kitty. To my great surprise, he said not to rush. He had gone out and bought a cat box (oh, no.), cat food and a little dish. I was amazed and thanked him for his generosity. He proceeded to tell me what a character the kitten was and how late the previous night she had been zooming back and forth across the floor. I listened, open—mouthed. The topper came when he said that “Kitty” came up and lied on his chest when he was lying down. I asked, “You let her do that? ”

“Oh yes. I pet her and I could feel her motor running, ” he replied lovingly. “So take your time, dear, finding a home for her. I can keep her until you do. ”

I was floored. My dad, Mister “Keep—Those—Dogs—Outside, ” had a kitty purring on his chest. In his bed, no less.

As the weeks went on, Dad got weaker. His cancer had reappeared. Yet whenever I called Dad, I heard more and more about how cute Kitty was, how she zoomed around, how loud her motor was, how she followed him everywhere. When I was at the house, my father would call for her, have her come up on his lap, pet her, talk to her and say how much he loved her.

“Dad, aren’t you allergic to cats? ” I asked once, as he was putting his hand kerchief away after one of his infamous loud honks. He just shrugged his shoulders and smiled sheepishly.

As he got sicker, and could barely move without terrible pain, one of his few joys was to have Kitty lay on his chest. He would pet her and say, “Listen, her motor is running. That’s a good Kitty, good Kitty. ” We all watched in awe at Dad’s unabashed affection for this little feline.

Kitty worked her magic on both Dad and me. Charming a reluctant pet—owner, the little cat became one of my father’s single greatest comforts in his final days. And me? Kitty opened my eyes to the wonder and my story of how life unfolds. She taught me to listen to my heart, even when my head is saying no. I didn’t realize on that unusual night that I was simply a messenger. An unknowing courier delivering a most beautiful and needed friend.

□by Lynn A. Kerman

魔 猫

一天晚上开完会，我累极了，就想回家睡觉，我走近我的汽车的时候，听见喵喵的叫

声，往车底下一看，只见有只很小的猫，紧靠着轮胎，浑身颤抖，叫个不停。

我从来就不喜欢猫。请允许我直说，我是个爱狗的人。从小到大，我生活中总有狗相伴我成长，可是我总腻味猫，它让我浑身起鸡皮疙瘩。我尤其讨厌进有养猫箱的人家。我怀疑那些人家里的人是不是闻不见那可怕的味。再说，猫哪儿都去，更别提那猫毛啦。我对猫有些过敏。只需说，我一生从来没有特别为一只猫而做过什么。

可是当我低身看见这只深色斑纹小猫吓得拼命地叫的时候，内心有股力量促使我伸手抱起它来。可它却一下子跑了。我心想，这不怪我，我尽力了。可是我刚要上车，又听见它喵喵叫。那可怜的叫声真揪我的心，我竟然穿过街去找它。我发现了它，可它又脱身跑了。再找到它，它又跑掉了。可我不能就此撒手不管。我终于抓住了它，把它搂在怀里，它显得那么瘦小，可非常可爱。而且它不再喵喵叫了。

虽与我的本性相悖，但我还是抱着它上了车。那猫过度惊慌，在车里尖叫着，以闪电般的速度到处乱窜。最后它还是在我腿上趴下。我不知道要拿它怎么办，可我觉得带它回家是我该做的事。我一路开回家，担心着，因为我知道我的室友对猫高度过敏。

到家时已经很晚了，我把猫安置在前院，给它倒了些牛奶。我或多或少希望它天亮前就走了。可是第二天早上，它还在那儿。我只好带着它去上班。幸运的是，我有个富有同情心的上司，他尤其同情动物。有一回，他捡到一只受伤的麻雀在我们办公室待了好几个星期，一直养到痊愈。那一整天，我在办公室试着给猫找个主，可是所有养猫的人都不想再添一只了。

我还是不知道该怎么处理这只小猫。于是就带它外出去办几件事。它在车里还是那么惊慌，不过这回它钻到了座椅底下。那天下午最后一站是我父母家。

前些日子我父亲被诊断得了前列腺癌，接受过激素治疗。医生认为癌细胞已经得到控制，至少目前没有扩散。我一有可能就去看望他。

那天下午，我把车停在我父母家门口后想把小猫从座椅底下哄出来，可它嗖地一下窜出汽车，跑进了邻居花园的灌木丛。那个居民区里长着许多灌木，找了一会儿之后，我知道没希望了。我有点不安，可又自我安慰地想这一带住着许多有孩子的人家。肯定有人会发现它，给它提供一个良好的安身之处的。

坦率地说，我多少感到解脱了，因为我不知道我会拿这只小猫怎么样。我和父母待了一会儿，临走时我告诉他们要是那只小猫再出现，就打电话给我，我回来接它。我开玩笑地对我父亲说，“当然，你想要的话，就把它留下。”他回答说，“没门儿。”我想我爸爸是不那么喜欢宠物的，尤其不爱猫。

那天晚上，我的电话录音机上录着我父亲的留言。那猫出现在他们家前台阶上了。他说现在猫在他们家，它没事，问我第二天能不能去接它。我的心沉了一下。我想，我该怎么处理这只猫呢？我不忍心把它送到动物收容所去，但我又肯定我的同屋不愿去医院治疗猫诱发的气喘病。我真想不出解决办法。

第二天我给我爸爸打电话，告诉他我去取小咪咪。出乎我的意料，他说不用着急。他出门买了养猫箱（我的天啊。）、猫食，还买了一个碟子。我感到惊异，谢谢他为小猫花钱。我爸爸还说小猫真够意思，昨天晚上很晚它还在屋里窜来蹦去。我吃惊地张口听着。最令我惊讶的是他说他躺下的时候，小猫跳上来，卧在他胸口上。我不禁问道，“你让它趴在那儿？”

“是啊，我轻轻摸它，它就呼噜呼噜叫，”我父亲充满深情地回答。“亲爱的，给它找收养人家的事慢慢来，没找到之前先待在我这儿。”

我简直要晕倒了。我爸爸，这位不让狗进家的先生，竟然让一只小猫咪趴在他胸口上发出呼噜呼噜的声音。而且确实还在他床上。

日子一天天过去，父亲体质越来越衰弱，又发现了癌细胞。不过我每次看望他时，都会听到更多说小咪咪多么逗人爱，它怎么跑来跑去，呼噜声有多大，他到哪儿，它也跟到哪儿

学英语，练听力，上听力课堂！

之类的话。在我父母家的时候，我父亲就叫它，让它扑到他怀里，轻轻摸它，跟它说话，告诉小猫他有多么爱它。

有一回，他大声咳嗽后，放下了手帕，我问他，“爸，你对猫不过敏吗？”他只是耸耸肩膀，局促地笑了笑。

我父亲日益病重，每活动一下都要忍受剧痛。他不多的乐趣之一就是让小咪咪待在他胸上，轻轻拍着它说，“听啊，它的发动机又呼噜呼噜地转了，真是只好猫咪。”我们怀着尊崇的心情注视着他老人家毫不掩饰地对这只小猫表达他的情意。

小猫咪在我和我父亲身上产生了魔力。它征服了我父亲，从一个厌恶动物的人变成宠物的伴侣。它是我父亲生命最后的日子最大的宽慰。而我呢？小猫咪打开了我的眼界，让我看到生活所展示的美妙和神奇。它教我，即使在我脑子说“不”时，也要听听我内心深处的感情。我当时未能意识到在那不寻常的夜晚，我充当着信使的角色，不知不觉中送去一位为人所需、给人带来愉悦的动物朋友。

NOTE 注释：

teeny ['ti:ni] adj. <口>极小的，极微的

bug [bʌg] vt. (美俚) 烦扰，使烦恼

semiallergic [semɪə'lɜ:dʒɪk] adj. 有些过敏的

suffice it to say 只要（说）……就够了

go out of one's way 特地，不怕麻烦地，自愿

freak out [俚] 躁动不安，极度惊慌

sparrow ['spærəu] n. [鸟] 麻雀

errand ['erənd] n. 差事，差使

prostate ['prɒsteɪt] adj. 前列腺的

hormone ['hɔ:məun] n. 荷尔蒙，激素

on your life [口] (用于否定句) 绝对

asthma ['æsmə] n. [医] 哮喘