ON CATS: Some Things in Common

by Gil Biggie

My cat was sitting on the desk watching me. I was writing on a different topic for a monthly column. She stood and stretched the way only cats can do, and then took one step onto my keyboard. She knows this will make me stop typing to give her an ear rub before pushing her back.

She put her face hypnotically close to my nose, and did that intense cat-stare thing. I thought, suddenly, I'll write about cats!

After her nightly ritual of a short visit and a few scratchy licks on my arm, which I think are kitty kisses, the cat went to her basket to retire for the night. She is the only cat that we haven't booted out each night after the news. Unlike the typical cat who likes to perseuse, prowl, purr and visit all hours of the night, this cat goes to her basket at 8 PM and stays there till dawn, at which time she sits on Don's chest silently staring him awake. She never ever comes to me in the morning. She knows I am comatose and useless to her purpose.

I have always owned a cat, but never bought one. Each one just showed up.

Our previous cat disappeared, and I was, for a short period, "sans kitty." I own one cat at a time.

During this period of being kitty-less, I made my spring trip to the nursery. A friendly buff-colored cat accompanied me through the rows of potted plants and trees. I told the nurseryman I thought it was endearing how this cat shopped with the customers. Wasn't his cat, he explained. It wandered in a few weeks prior, and had been hanging around. After I loaded the plants, the cat jumped through the car window and sat on the seat next to me. I had been adopted. I call her Anna.

Anna is NOT your 100% typical cat. She is void of most of the cat habits that are annoying, and yet has all the sterling traits of the felis domestica. She prefers asking to go out rather than using a litter box. She never

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jumps up to eat forbidden goodies from the counter, and she snubs the expensive, wet, stinky, fishy canned food to gobble up the cheap dry stuff. She usually drinks out of the fish bowl, (I can't guess why) and has had the goldfish come up and touch her nose. She ignores the fish. She likes to ride in the car and travels better than I do.

Anna is a talker. A soft spoken cat with a definite set of sounds and utterances for different occasions. The only time she "raises her voice" is when she gets locked in the garage all night and isn't discovered 'til way past her breakfast time. She has a distinct scolding tirade for that. Other than the occasional polite request for snack or an outing, (or scolding), she is very quiet.

Because of Anna's unusual traits and low-keyed personality, I've thought she must be a mellow golden retriever reborn into a cat's body. In her previous life, I envision her as a yard dog in Minnesota, with a mean, neglectful owner who ignores Anna, the dog, and treats the house cat like royalty. While Anna occupies this dog body, lying outside in the snow and bitter cold, she envies the fat old feline sleeping cozily in front of a fire; and Anna wishes with all her heart that in her next life she could be a house cat.

Her wish comes true. That's my story, anyway. It explains Anna's unique canine qualities, since I know for a fact cats and dogs won't interbreed.

For this article, I did some research on cats. Seems they didn't always have the pampered life of my imaginary cat in Minnesota.

During the Middle Ages in Europe, the cat was thought to be an incarnation of the Corn-Spirit. Cats weren't a domestic pet then, and the agrarian peoples had cat-involved rituals for the harvest. Thusly, we associate cats with Halloween. The Russians would bury a black cat in the furrows of a newly plowed field. They thought it lucky—obviously not for the

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2 Inch Gift French Theatre

"There are two means of refuge from the miseries of life: music and cats"
Albert Schweitzer

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"There is no snooze button on a cat who wants breakfast."
Unknown

Sylvester, Looney Tunes, Streamline 1989 (ISO)

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"I have studied many philosophers and many cats. The wisdom of cats is infinitely superior"
Hippolyte Taine

Wood from JHB

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"As every cat owner knows, nobody owns a cat."
Ellen Perry Berkeley

Carved Lucite by Ryan Empson, Idaho studio artist

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"You will always be lucky if you know how to make friends with strange cats"
Colonial American Proverb

Victorian Fur background

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"Cats are smarter than dogs. You can't get eight cats to pull a sled through snow."
Jeff Valdez

Acrylic on polymer, by Joy Journay, Alaska / Oregon studio artist

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"Cats go on the principle that it never does any harm to ask for what you want."
Joseph Wood Crutch

Decoupage on wood, Margaret Johnstone, studio artist

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"Dogs have owners. Cats have staff."
Unknown

Enamel, by studio artist Glenda Shi

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"Cats aren't really clean. They are just covered with cat spit."
Unknown

English Porcelain

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"Some people say that cats are sneaky, evil, and cruel. True, and they have many other fine qualities as well."
Messy Distick

Anamorphic cats, Russian lacquer
CATS (continued)

**as a gesture of condescension.**

Cats have such a unique air of mystery. That unflinching gaze can lead you to loathe cats, as my mother did, to the point of being phobic; or adore them like the lady in California who had hundreds of them in her condo. But rarely does a cat leave one indifferent. And, my last feline pithism......

**Women & cats will do as they please.**
**Men & dogs should relax & get used to the idea.**

Robert A. Heinlein

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