

A Cat's Story by Allie Catt

MY NAME IS SPUDLEY

My name is Spudley and I am about eight years old. I used to have a home, but one day when I was about eighteen months old, I went home to find my cat door boarded up, stopping me from getting in.

It had to be a mistake I thought, so I spent weeks and weeks waiting for it to be opened again, but it never was, so I was forced to find hidden places to sleep and shelter from the weather. This was hard, especially as most humans threw things at me and kicked me to make me go away. I don't know why they did this, all I wanted was some shelter. Maybe it was because I ripped open their rubbish sacks looking for food, but I couldn't help it, I was so hungry! I did think about trying to catch something to eat, but I just couldn't stand the thought of hurting something like that so I made do with what scraps I could find in rubbish bag.

One day I was in the street I once had a home in and I had found a whole chicken carcass in someone's rubbish. As I sat in the bushes crunching on the bones, I heard a voice saying 'poor kitty must be so hungry!' and shortly after that, a bowl of tasty cat food appeared near one of the cars I used to shelter under. The food was very tasty, but it must have been a mistake I thought – no human would

give me food like that, humans didn't like me.

'No human would give me food like that, humans didn't like me.'

A few days later I was walking around looking for food when I vaguely smelt some tasty cat food somewhere nearby. I followed the smell and was led back to the same place where the food had been before, and although it must have been a mistake, I ate it again because I was so hungry and didn't know when I would be able to eat again.

Every day after that, I went back and there was always a bowl of food outside. I felt sorry for the cat it was meant for, but I had to eat it because I had no other food. One day I went to eat, but there was no food so I thought maybe the cat it was meant for had eaten its own food for a change. So, I decided to settle down in the bushes and have a quick sleep. Suddenly there was a voice, 'Oh Spudley! I'm so sorry! I forgot your dinner!' and a lady brought food out and put it right by where I was sleeping!! She must have thought I was someone else, but I ate the food anyway because I was hungry.

I started to see this lady more and more as time went on. If there was no food

when I arrived outside her house, she would come out with some and say that 'Spudley' word to me each time.

'I used to look at the cats living inside the house with the lady and wonder why they were in there, and I was outside.'

I used to look at the cats living inside the house with the lady and wonder why they were in there, and I was outside. I wanted to go to the lady and ask her, but I was too scared in case she hurt me like so many other people had done. Years passed, and I was starting to feel tired from living on the streets. I was sneezing and my bones were sore so it was hurting to walk.

One day a few weeks ago, I felt really bad. I saw the lady with her man and they were both looking at me, they looked sad and worried so I think they could see I wasn't feeling well. I heard the lady say something about 'by Christmas' before they went in to the house.

A couple of weeks later I was feeling even worse. The lady brought me out a big bowl of meaty food to eat. I didn't run away like usual as I was too tired and hungry, so I started to eat while she was still right next to me. I'm not sure what happened next, it was all so quick – but one minute I was eating tasty

food and thinking how tired I was, and the next minute the lady was holding me and carrying me INSIDE the house! Oh no, this was scary! I had to get out! What was she going to do to me? I hid inside a warm and cosy igloo thing, so soft and comfortable... next I went to a place where they gave me an injection to make me sleep, and when I woke up I'm sure something was different, it was like something was missing but I don't know what. Then I went back to the lady's house and back inside the warm and comfortable igloo.

I had my own room away from the other cats, and for weeks the lady came and went – she gave me fresh food and water every day, and cleaned my toilet. I was a bit confused at first, I didn't know where to go to the toilet but I learnt very quickly.

First I was too scared to let the lady touch me, I would run and hide in my igloo house as soon as she came in to my room. One day I decided to see what it felt like to be touched as I'd seen other cats enjoying it. First I cringed, what if she hurt me? But then I slowly started to relax and enjoy being gently stroked. I made myself jump when a funny noise started coming out from my throat, it was like a quiet car engine and it scared me! But, as I learnt to relax and enjoy the stroking more, the noise in

my throat got louder and louder and I had an overwhelming urge to knead with my front paws. I don't know why, it just seemed the right thing to do.

'I have these things called 'toys' that I can chase and wrestle with...'

I have been in this house for lots of weeks now, and you know, it's actually not bad! There are lots of other cats here and they're all happy, though some have told me they weren't always so happy before they came here. I've learnt so many new things! I have these things called 'toys' that I can chase and wrestle with, I have big tall things I can really stretch on and dig my claws in to nicely, I have boxes I can hide in and it's great fun to wait until another cat walks past and poke them as they don't know I'm in there! There is always food and water here, lots of water! At first I used to drink in every silver puddle I found just in case there weren't any more, but now I know there are lots so I just drink when I need to – there's even a fountain in the kitchen for us cats! Oh, there's a D-O-G here too... I wasn't sure of it at first, but really it is just a big cat and not scary at all.

The lady here sometimes looks at me and gets water in her eyes. She seems so sad



My name is Spudley - and I'm braver now, as well as happy!

when this happens, and she tells me that no one will ever hurt me again. I think she's right, it's good here and I'm safe now.

My name is Spudley and I'm a happy cat.

NOBEL WINNER SHARES VIEWS ON FELINE FRIENDS

Born in Persia, raised on a farm in southern Rhodesia and a long-time resident of London, Doris Lessing, 88 years old, has led an unconventional and itinerant life. But over the decades, she has maintained several passionate, long-term relationships – with cats.

She has rescued, harboured and adored them, and when necessary to save the life of a mother cat, she has condemned some kittens to death. Lessing, who won the Nobel Prize for literature last year, is best

Doris Lessing in her youth, with feline friend



Photo by Mark Gerson

known for her novels, including the 1962 feminist classic, *The Golden Notebook*, and the *Canopus in Argos* science-fiction series. But in her book, *On Cats* (first published in England in



Doris Lessing receiving her Nobel Award in 2007

2002, just out in the U.S.), Lessing applies her formidable powers of observation to the beasts she calls 'exotic visitors, household friends.'