
Lost Souls: FOUND!™

Inspiring Stories About Cats

Kyla Duffy and Lowrey Mumford



Published by Happy Tails Books™, LLC

Happy Tails Books™ uses the power of storytelling to affect positive change in the lives of animals in need. The joy, hope, and (occasional) chaos these stories describe will make you laugh and cry as you embark on a journey with their authors, who are guardians and/or fosters of rescued cats. “Reading for Rescue” with Happy Tails Books brings further awareness to animal advocacy efforts. Additionally, each sale results in a financial contribution to animal rescue groups.

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<http://www.alleycat.org/>

Blind Cat Rescue

<http://www.blindcatrescue.com/>

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Christmas Spirit



I slammed the door against the cold, letting out my breath in a puff of whiteness. Sniffing, I kicked off my boots and scuffled across the floor in my fuzzy wool socks to hang up my coat. It was just after shoving my scarf into its place that I saw him, staring forlornly through the back door with his wide-set green eyes. His runny pink nose was pressed against the glass, his whiskers buffeted by the icy wind. The white fur on his paws was tinged with brown, and seated on the hard cement, he looked scrawny. When he saw me, he scampered

timidly away, his tail disappearing into the bare branches of our back yard. Nevertheless, I poured some dry cat food into a bowl and slipped it out the door in case he returned.

I began to see him regularly, either pressed up against a wall or huddled in a corner, trying to avoid the rapidly deteriorating weather. Each time my mother or I put out food, he edged a little closer, drawn toward the warmth and safety of our house. My mom was itching to do more for him, but we already had two cats and were busy enough with Christmas shopping, school, and work.

Still, the day came when we had to decide how committed we were to our unfortunate visitor. It was bitterly cold, and the gray sky hinted at a coming storm. As my mom slid open the door to put out a dish of food, the tomcat scurried in. He was shivering and thin, his ribs faintly visible under his skin. He buried his snout in the food, and my bewildered mom shut the door quietly behind him.

Mom tempted the cat into the bathroom, where he could be kept separate from our other cats, and he submitted easily to using the litter box. He gobbled up every morsel of food we

gave him, and after his first indoor night, he looked a little cleaner and a lot happier. I called him Linus because of his easygoing nature, my fondness for Charlie Brown, and the prevailing holiday spirit. He didn't try to escape the bathroom, and when our other cats snuffled under the door and hissed territorially, he only mewled, lowering his head to smell them back.

We took Linus to the vet a few days later to confirm what we already knew: he was an unaltered male, about a year old, and he didn't have fleas. He sat patiently through his shots and vaccinations, almost as though he knew they would do him good. Linus purred when we stroked his nose through the bars of the cat carrier, his whole chest rumbling as I scratched him behind the ears. He was an absolute sweetheart.

Linus was introduced to our other cats just a few days after he was neutered. When they batted him on the head and sniffed him cautiously, he merely submitted, acknowledging that while he was almost twice their size, he was the newcomer, the odd one out. Linus quickly befriended our cats, letting the younger one rub against his belly and tumbling with them across the furniture in pretend fights. He never struck

out, didn't hiss, and walked down the stairs like a baby: one step at a time. We called him the Zen Kitty; he spent a lot of time sleeping and ate with a slow deliberateness.

It didn't take long for us to love Linus. At first we'd thought of putting him up for adoption, but as soon as it was clear that he got along with our cats, we claimed him as our own. He was too distinguished to give up, and our determination to keep him was only made stronger when our one feeble attempt to give him to a family friend fell through. We had never really wanted to give Linus away anyway. One frosty morning, as I tumbled downstairs to find him curled up on the couch next to our kitten, it was clear: Linus had already found his family.

Solange Dagrass, 14 years old

My Special Corner



The area where the outside fence meets a corner of my house holds a special place in my heart—maybe because the sunlight on a particularly nice day hits the grass just right. This is where I can set out my lawn chair and sit most comfortably with my back to the sun, catching its warm rays as I read the books for which I don’t normally have time. Even the breeze there is a little different: extra fragrant, extra soft, whispering gently through the leaves of the hibiscus tree directly in front of

me. Maybe the fragrance is, in fact, coming from the hibiscus flowers themselves.

But I have yet to mention the most important reason for me to sit in this particular corner. For many years my cat has chosen this corner for snoozing in the sun. I have had this beautiful creature in my back yard for over 16 years, and when she first made her presence known to me, she was probably over two years old. That would make her 18+ years old in the present day.

I’m told that cats, who reign supreme over the kingdom of sleep, actually sleep even more as they get older. Apparently, it’s a detriment to their health if they happen to sleep less and cut corners in this regard. So seeking out perfect corners in which to nap, especially on lovely spring days, becomes even more imperative as they age. My cat is hardly an exception to this.

To my jaundiced eye, this cat is absolutely gorgeous to behold. She is completely, irrevocably, indubitably, black—pitch black. She has big yellow eyes that sometimes carry a greenish tinge. When she opens her mouth to yawn, I can see

her enormous, razor sharp canines glinting quite ominously, even though she loves me to death. Her teeth sparkle in the sun that graces this corner; they actually deflect the rays, as she yawns right in my face, facing the sun directly.

She sits right across from me, probably making fun of me silently in her head: "That silly girl, reading a boring novel when she could be doing so many more worthwhile things—like taking a nap or lying directly on the sun-warmed grass. She has been with me now for over 16 years and has yet to learn from my example!"

My special corner always lacks something if Midnight happens not to be there. I look up periodically from whatever novel I am reading to catch my cat's eye, and if I suddenly see that she is no longer there, I have to put my reading down and get up to search for her.

Why would I get up? What about the sun's rays, the fragrant breeze, and the hibiscus flowers? Are they not enough to keep me in my comfortable lawn chair, reading the books I never have time for? The answer, dear Reader, is a resounding *no*. Midnight makes this corner what it is, and I believe she

knows it. Maybe that's why she always picks out this corner in which to sleep on nice days, when the sun is shining and the birds are singing: to draw me out, to get me to sit in my lawn chair, to force me to forget my busy schedule and take the time to smell the hibiscus.

Alokananda Ghosh

A Happy Survivor



After work I climbed the 36 steep rock steps to the deck of my house in the remote mountain area west of Estes Park, Colorado. Nearby I saw the resident fox waiting, protecting his den on the hillside behind the house, hopeful for after-dinner scraps to feed to his kits. The chipmunks scattered as usual, the birds fluttered around the feeders, and a new visitor was hanging around this evening—a handsome but terribly thin cat, who ran and hid as I approached. As he bolted, I could see his ribs sticking out. For how long had he been starving?

When I reached the top step, I stood on the deck and looked out at the surrounding beauty of the Roosevelt National Forest. Despite the coyotes howling in preparation for their evening hunt, it was a peaceful moment with sweet deer grazing nearby. Then I again saw the stray cat, whom I would soon name Jack. He peered around the corner of the cabin at me. I already had two female cats in the house and certainly didn't need another, but it was October, the weather was getting colder, and well, I'm a sucker!

I fed Sophie and Phoebe their dry kibble. Then I took a bowl outside and sat on the deck. Sophie and Phoebe meowed at the door, probably wondering why they were not allowed out. They didn't know about the foxes and coyotes that were looking for a tasty meal. Soon enough, Jack came near. He carefully approached me while I talked softly to him. It didn't take long for him to curl up in my lap, purring loudly and enjoying his dinner.

As much as I tried, he did not want to come inside that night. My heart ached as I worried about him being outside alone. The next morning I put more food out, and as I stood watching, the fox attempted to take his food. I shouldn't have

worried—Jack shooshed him away and happily ate his breakfast!

Like I said, it was October. October in the Rocky Mountains is cold and unpredictable, so I was glad that a few nights later I was able to coax Jack into the house. Both my girls accepted him right away. He purred loudly and was clearly appreciative of a warm home and a good meal.

My husband was working out of town when Jack adopted me, but he had already grown used to my need to "rescue" pets. When my husband called the night Jack came inside, I told him, "We have a new cat." He said, "I knew it!"

It was obvious that Jack had been someone's beloved pet, so we posted signs at the ends of our dirt roads. Some people called, but no one described a cat like Jack, so he became ours.

Our Jack was a mere 13 pounds when we rescued him with his bones poking out, but now, years later, he is a healthy, happy 23 pounds. I often wonder if some family out there is missing him or wondering about him, but despite our efforts, no one has ever claimed him. That's sad for them because Jack

is wonderful! He is the love of our lives. He purrs louder than any cat I have ever known.

Recently our sweet, brave Jack surprised us yet again. We moved to another remote mountainous area, taking Jack and the others with us. Here Jack enjoys hunting mice, proudly leaving them at the doorway each morning. One day in September our mountain community was turned upside down by the Reservoir Road Fire. Sadly, Jack and his kitty siblings were too frightened to come to us when we were forced to evacuate with flames raging close behind. Two of our cats were rescued by firefighters that first day, but Jack remained missing.

A few days later we were allowed to visit our home for a short time to gather important things and assess damage. While my husband gathered our belongings, I combed the ash-covered hills, calling for Jack.

We were only allowed 30 minutes at the house before being escorted back down, as it was still unsafe for residents to be there. So when Jack didn't respond, I sat on the steps and began to cry. Then, suddenly, I heard a faint meow. I listened

carefully and heard it again. There, crawling out from under some burnt timber was my Jack! I picked him up, hugged him, and cried! He quickly began to purr, and I knew all was well with the world again.

Today, Jack and the rest of the family are safely back at home. Jack still purrs louder than any cat I have ever known, and tonight I fall asleep peacefully knowing my happy Jack is next to me. He's happy and so are we!

Shereen Raucci

Saved by a Kitty and the Internet



It is hard to believe that the big, lovable man-cat we call Boris came to us only five short years ago. It feels like he has always been here, a part of this family and my best friend.

When he came to us, he was such a little thing that he could fit in the palm of our hands with room left over. He appeared on our doorstep when a neighbor and her boyfriend came knocking with a cookie tin in hand. Instead of cookies, that tin held a small kitten that the neighbor's boyfriend had found while cleaning out a shed with his grandfather.

The neighbors had come to ask the crazy cat ladies if we wanted a kitten. We already had three senior cats in our house, and we really felt it was not a good time to bring a kitten into the household. We declined.

As the kids walked away, we heard one of them say, "We'll take it down to the humane society." Knowing full well what the humane society would do to a tiny kitten who needed to be hand-fed, I stopped them in their tracks. The first thought that went through my mind was that the shelter would put him down, and there was no way I was letting that happen. I quickly made the decision that we would take care of the kitty until we could find a place for him.

Since I knew absolutely nothing of hand-raising a kitten, I turned to the Internet for help, which is where I found a group that pointed me to a kitten rescue website. Without their help, I don't know what I would have done. All I know is that I was not going to give up on this kitten.

That's the story of how, with the help of the Internet, we rescued a white-and-gray tabby kitten, whom we soon named

Boris. Little did I know that one day Boris would return that favor.

From the time he was finally allowed to be loose in the house, he would greet me at the back door whenever I came home from work. No matter how hard my day was, he always came running when he heard that back door open, and my spirits would lift. In fact, Boris' backdoor greeting still has the same effect on me five years later.

Back then I would call, "Hey, Squirt," and he would pick up his pace before wrapping himself around my feet and legs until I would reach down and scoop him up into my arms. Now, as an adult cat of nearly 25 pounds, we continue with our ritual. Although it is a little harder for me to scoop him up now, I still do. However, I have replaced the term of endearment I used when he was but a wee little squirt to a more suitable, "Hey, Moose!"

When Boris was two, my partner and I were in an automobile accident. While Beth was only bruised, I was hospitalized for a few days with six broken ribs. When I returned home, I was met with my usual greeting, but

somehow Boris knew I could not reach down and pick him up. He followed me into the living room where I was to spend the next three weeks recuperating on the sofa.

Never once did Boris leave my side. He was always there right next to me on the sofa or on the blanket down by my feet. Night and day he watched over me and nursed me back to health. He was my furry little nursemaid.

After the accident, I went through a bout of depression. Every day without fail Boris would greet me as usual. Each day it seemed as if there was just a little more spring in his steps, as if he was telling me to cheer up because he was here now, and everything was going to be okay. Soon enough it was.

But his biggest challenge was yet to come.

My mom had a stroke the day after Christmas the following year. She died a few days later and was buried on New Year's Eve. By March my dad had become so depressed, confused, and physically ill that he had to be hospitalized a few days before my birthday. Being hospitalized was not helping him. In fact, his doctor was telling us he should be allowed to

starve himself if that is what he wanted. He kept telling us that we should just let him go.

This was all starting to really affect me, and it was showing in my behavior. I was staying up all night and not eating properly. All I did was go to work and spend the nights on Facebook. It was brought to my attention that my behavior on that popular social networking site was becoming a little bizarre, and perhaps I needed some help. I did seek professional help, but at the same time I also took steps to help myself.

Late one night I was online, and Boris was on the sofa beside me looking up at me with those big green eyes. He seemed to be asking me what he could do to help. At that moment a crazy thought went through my head, and I went about setting up a Facebook profile for him. His new Facebook page was a great outlet for all the stress that was building up inside me.

The Facebook profile soon led to a Twitter (another popular social networking site) account, where his personality blossomed. I could truly lose myself in this fantasy animal

world of cats and dogs on the net. By becoming Boris online, I was able to deal better with my real life issues.

Boris pulled me out of a very dark place when I needed him the most. It was his turn to rescue me.

Later I saw a bumper sticker that read, "Who rescued who?" This has since become our motto. Boris and I are trying to give back to the world by using his internet voice to help other homeless pets in need.

Kelly Hoffman

Kitty Kwips

Meezer Express: Hours before a forecasted ice storm, two courageous rescuers intervened with a breeder-gone-bad situation and removed more than a dozen cats from bare outdoor kennels, where they would surely have died from exposure. Some were already ill and did not survive. Damian was one of the lucky ones who recovered at one volunteer's home until he could be welcomed into ours. Damian's other rescued siblings and cousins have found homes all over the country. Four of them traveled from Texas to Oregon via Meezer Express, a volunteer Siamese-cat transport organization, where they are now enjoying the life to which they might not have become accustomed, had it not been for the wonderful, caring members of Austin Siamese Rescue. As for Damian, he is completely spoiled and enjoys his life with our other cats, especially his best friend Wally. He is much too fine a cat for plain folk like us, but he loves us anyway, and we him! -*Crystal Wood*

Cure for Cancer Blues: I had breast cancer 3½ years ago, and while I was going through chemo, I had a few really bad days. My cats sensed that I was feeling terrible, and while I was lying on the couch after my chemo treatment, they both jumped on the couch with me: one lay on my chest and the other cuddled next to me. I petted them both for a little while and immediately started feeling better. I love my girls and would not trade them for anything. They helped me through a bad time in my life. Thank you Cookie and Sophie, you're a great example of how wonderful pets can be. - *Yvonne Chapek*

Last Wish Fulfilled



One night Nanette from RescueCats called. The police department was asking us to take in a few cats. It seems a man had taken his own life and the note he left stated his cats were to go to a no-kill rescue. Nanette had taken in the cats, but there was one black-and-white tuxedo cat who wouldn't let anyone touch him and wouldn't eat.

I have always been good with cats who have behavioral issues, so she thought I might have some insight. I drove down

to the rescue and found Nanette sitting in front of the kitty's condo. He was pacing up and down, growling, and hissing. He wouldn't allow anyone near the condo.

I wasn't sure exactly what I was going to do but remembered a story my mom had told me. She had inherited a Boston Terrier, Tiny, from my aunt when she passed away. Tiny refused to eat and just moped around, so Mom called the vet. He told her that animals understand much more than we know and that she needed to explain to Tiny that Aunt Pauline had passed away and that she would see her again one day, but in the meantime, Mom would be caring for her, feeding her, and loving her in just the same way Aunt Pauline did. Mom was skeptical but went home, sat down, and talked with Tiny, exactly as the vet had advised. Believe it or not, Tiny started eating and was perfectly fine from then on.

Taking this story into consideration, I sat down in front of this cat and started talking to him. I told him that his owner could not stand the pressure of this world any longer, but his last wish was that his cats were looked after and loved and that nothing bad was to happen to them. I told him that we were going to love him, feed him, and care for him until we found

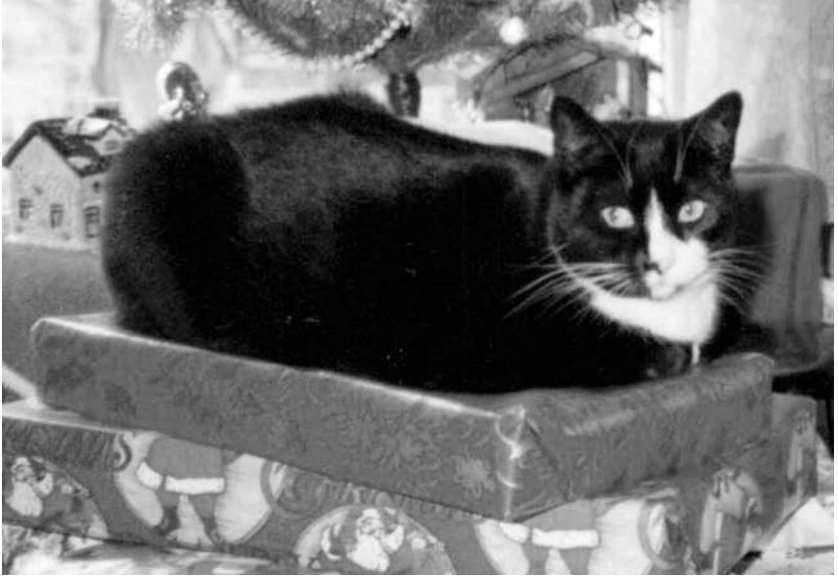
him a forever home. I told him that his owner had loved him very much and would be waiting for him when the time came, but until then, we would love him and take care of him.

As I was talking, the cat's pacing slowed, and he finally sat down in front of me and let me scratch his chin. At that point, a strange feeling came over both Nanette and me, a warm feeling like something was washing over us and through us. We both broke down in tears. It was so intense that Nanette had to leave the room.

The only explanation I can think of is that this man's spirit had stayed with his favorite cat until he was sure all the cats were in good hands, and the feeling we felt was him letting go of this world, knowing that his last wish was fulfilled.

Sherry Davis

The Cat in the Box



When my daughter was seven, we went to see our friend Tony who owned a pet store. He didn't sell puppies or kittens. Tony sold fish, mice, birds, hamsters, pet food, and supplies. People would often leave kittens and puppies at his back door, but Tony wouldn't sell them; he found them homes.

We always went in Tony's back door, but this time a box was right in front of the door. We took the box inside, and when we opened it, we saw a very small, scared black-and-white cat. Also in the box was a bill from a vet in New Jersey on which

someone had written a note saying he or she couldn't keep the cat. The owner's name was crossed out, and when I called the vet, he would not divulge any information.

My daughter helped Tony in his store that day, and when she came home, she brought the little cat in her sweater pocket. We named the cat Mittens because she had four white feet. She never liked to be picked up and would growl and hiss. We think she was dropped or maybe the box she arrived in had been dropped with her inside it.

We didn't know it then, but Mittens was pregnant with four kittens. When the kittens were about four weeks old, my Aunt Toot came to visit. Aunt Toot didn't like cats because when she was young, someone had thrown a cat at her, and as could be expected, she got scratched. Nevertheless, one by one, Mittens deposited the kittens between Aunt Toot's feet, and Aunt Toot didn't object. I believe Mittens was showing off her little family.

Mittens' kittens were all different: one black, one gray striped, one brown marble, and one gray and white. They were so cute, and Mittens was a great mommy. When the kittens

were nine weeks old, we found homes for them, and Mittens was spayed.

Years went by, and my daughter moved out. Then I moved to another state and brought Mittens with me. While living in the South, Mittens was a great hunter of bugs and lizards. Any intruder in the house was fair game for Mittens.

I later moved back to my home state with Mittens, who was an old girl by then. Though a small, now toothless, indoor cat, Mittens still could keep the house dogs away. She wasn't afraid of anything. Because she was so tough, we used to call her Mittens Magee from Jersey. Mittens always loved to be petted, but watch out if you tried to pick her up. She lived to be 21 and was a wonderful girl all along. She passed on four years ago, but we miss Mittens still, and in our hearts we have a special place for the cat in the box.

Holly Allen

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contains over 60 stories about adopted dogs,
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Happy Tails Books™ was created to help support animal rescue efforts by showcasing the love and joy adopted pets have to offer. With the help of animal rescue groups, stories are submitted by people who have adopted pets, and then Happy Tails Books™ compiles them into books. These books serve not only to entertain but also to educate readers about adoption and the characteristics of each specific breed (when applicable). Happy Tails Books™ donates a significant portion of proceeds back to the rescue groups that help gather stories for the books.

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