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VS.

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VS.

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HUMOR

True nature

You can't de-queer that cat



Today we will be discussing the mysterious world of cats.

Many of us recall from reports we wrote in fifth grade using the research technique of copying out of the encyclopedia—which is another way of saying “in our own words”—that cats and people have lived together since the earliest civilizations. (We’re talking long before Melissa went blond.)

Cleopatra and other ancient Egyptians kept domestic cats who roamed the palace wearing bejeweled golden collars, as evidenced in scientifically authenticated hieroglyphs and old Cecil B. DeMille movies.

You would think that after all this time someone would have figured out why cats do certain things, like meowing to go out the front door when the back door they just came in is still wide open. Or launching an attack on a stray pencil—whose offense only the cat perceives—just when the humans are finally falling asleep. Or, if you so much as shift your foot under the covers, huffing out of the room indignant on a cold night when you would appreciate the extra warmth.

That very same cat, of course, will withstand all manner of pushing and cajoling and refuse to relinquish her spot in the middle of the bed when you would like some people-only time, such as during the mating ritual. Is there anything as ego-deflating as looking up from between a woman’s thighs to find her absent-mindedly petting the cat?

Perhaps this explains why so many dykes have never warmed to the idea of applying a sexual connotation to the word “pussy.”

Yes, cats remain a mystery to us, and that’s why we like them. We tend to get bored and irritated with things we know too much about, such as the fiber content of our breakfast cereal.

Cats operate according to a code of reason that is all their own, much like the Christian Coalition. Just as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell continue to blame us wanton homos for society’s descent from godliness, reality plays little role in cat logic.

The cat with whom we live is attuned to some strange cosmic influence beyond our human comprehension. Kitty (not her real name) is wired to a signal that apparently only cats and John Ashcroft get, although a good deal of Kitty’s bizarre behavior makes more sense than spending thousands of tax dollars on a drape to cover a statue’s bare breast. Still, there’s no getting around her being odd.

Kitty will regard Sweetie and me as little more than door operators and kibble dispensers for months on end. We try everything: talking in that silly kitty voice, scratching the couch fabric in the most appealing way.

But can we get her to come sit with us like a “normal cat” while we read the Sunday paper? Nooo. The sound of the pages turning is

way too scary. (Perhaps Ashcroft’s feeling about breasts?) And heaven forbid we should try to pick her up if we haven’t kept current on our tetanus shots.

But when we go away for one measly holiday weekend, even though we leave plenty of food and water and arrange for the neighbor to let her in and out every day, we come back to a cat who acts like she’s just been let out of one of those anti-gay deprogramming places. She’s on her very best behavior—effusively affection-



ate and attentive to the “right” people (us). While we’re unloading the car, putting our left-over tofu dogs in the fridge and tossing our rainbow flag towels in the laundry, she weaves around our legs for all she’s worth. She follows our every move. She undergoes a makeover so miraculous you’d think she’d been hanging out with Cher.

When we finally sit down to check our mail and sort through the newspapers, exhausted from the long drive and needing to deal with our piled-up stuff before we turn in, the cat’s gotta have it. She climbs into my lap without so much as a casual invitation and

starts purring like a Hitachi magic wand.

She rolls onto her back and wants her belly rubbed. She does such an innocent-yet-seductive number that we’re convinced she’s been renting old Ann-Margret videos while we were gone.

And, of course, I fall for it, fawning all over the poor widdle pussitat, scritching her neck just the way she likes and letting her do the push-paw dance in my lap until the tops of my thighs are bruised. (Yes, I swear, those marks are from my cat.) I’m such a sucker.

But it doesn’t take long for Kitty’s true, aloof nature to re-emerge. The effect of our absence might make her seem different for a little while, but she is who she is at the core no matter what kind of aversion therapy she’s sustained.

You’d think the de-queering movement would get a clue. Just like a briefly neglected cat, some essentially LGBTQ people can be tweaked to dress and act in somebody’s narrowly defined, acceptable way, but everyone is still who they are inside.

Like our Kitty, who is now sprawled out bathing herself in the middle of our bed, ignoring me. [F]

Softie SALLY SHEKLOW is a free-lance writer and member of the Eugene comedy troupe WYMPROV! Advice on de-queering her cat can be sent to sally@wymprov.com.