



Pet Tips 'n' Tales

by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

Surviving against all odds

A journey from dog lover to cat owner

Renee freely admits that her family is made up of "strictly dog people," who, in the past, have adopted smart-serious, rescue dogs. Well, that is, they used to be "dog people" until Mimsy wandered into their lives.

Three years ago while holidaying at her parents' cabin, 500 miles north of their home in northern Canada, they learned of three adorable kittens, born to a feral cat, in the woodshed of their parents' summer lake cabin. When Renee and her 11 and 13-year-old daughters emerged from their vehicle after a very long drive, it was a thrilling welcome when the two fluffy, little orange kittens and a black and white kitten ran into their enthusiastic arms.

That night there was a very loud thunderstorm. The girls ran out to the shed to "save" the

kittens from being scared.

Renee purrs-onally thought, "It was their plan all along to sleep with the little fur-babies!"

In the morning, the skinny, worried, soaking wet, matted, and quite ugly, mother cat was calling for her babies. Paws-ibly she was wet because she spent the stormy night searching for her little family.

Renee and her daughters could not stand seeing the all-alone, starving mother cat. "We fed her," said a kind-hearted Renee, "and after she ate, the 'wild feral cat' fell asleep in my youngest child's lap."

Renee and her concerned daughters then knocked on every one of the neighbors' doors to ask who owned the felines or if anyone knew their hiss-story.

"We were told that the cat's heartless family had moved away, prior to winter setting

in," said Renee, "and left her behind! She became pregnant, and had kittens while trying to survive with temperatures dipping to 40 below. The lake cabins were long empty for the winter months, so no one was there to feed them. It is a miracle that they survived against all odds and didn't starve to death when the snow arrived. We were amazed that this dedicated mother cat was raising three healthy kittens!"

Renee knew one thing for sure, she could not abandon the cats and have them starve or breed relentlessly over the winter. Cats and dogs can become pregnant as early as four months of age, and produce offspring every two months. They were on a mission to find homes for the mother cat and her triplets to avoid finding an ever growing feline herd the next summer.

Because her parents live in a "no pets" building, it was out of the question for them to adopt any pets. Renee's family has a very busy lifestyle so they were not looking to add a cat, and they had Kooteni, a Shepherd mix. "So we drove the cat family to a pet shelter," said Renee, "and said a tearful goodbye."

The shelter estimated the mother cat was barely nine-months-old and the kittens were three-months-old. This means that if you add on two months for gestation, the cat had conceived her kittens as a baby herself, at four months of age. It is hard to understand that anyone would abandon a kitten at a lake cabin in the woods with a hard

winter approaching to survive or starve on its own!

A responsible Renee checked in on the kittens until they were adopted. Not surprising, their exhausted, stressed mother fell ill with a respiratory infection, and she was labeled un-adoptable.

"I couldn't get the mother cat out of my mind," said Renee. "Before leaving the shelter us mothers had locked eyes, and I promised her that everything would be okay. But now would it? Her future looked bleak and I felt responsible. I asked the shelter if I could adopt her, and they agreed that if I paid for her spaying I could have her. My father picked up the cat and drove her 500 miles to her new home and our waiting large dog!"

Our names honor us, so we wanted this cat's brave spirit to have a meaningful one. We

chose Mimsy, which is Greek for 'little mother'. She's grown into a great cat, who has become a beautiful, strong and confident pet. She fast became best friends with Kooteni and bears an uncanny resemblance to her. Both have matching long-hair tortoiseshell colored fur coats that camouflages into our living room chair."

Mimsy thinks she is a dog! When her family calls her, she comes running. When someone rings the doorbell, she runs to the front door and insists on being vigorously petted like a dog, and she purr-furs sleeping in bed with them.

"The funniest behavior between our pets," said Renee, "is that Mimsy enjoys being groomed by Kooteni! Kooteni holds Mimsy down, with her big front paw, and then licks her all over. The first time we

saw this we jumped to Mimsy's defense and told Kooteni to 'Stop!' But Mimsy nuzzled in to Kooteni, rolled over onto her back, and insisted that Kooteni continue, which she did and does to this day. Mimsy loves being 'mothered' by Kooteni.

Our family admires Mimsy because she is a survivor, a strong-dedicated mother, and a trusting, friendly feline. She has blended easily into our family and found her way into our hearts."

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