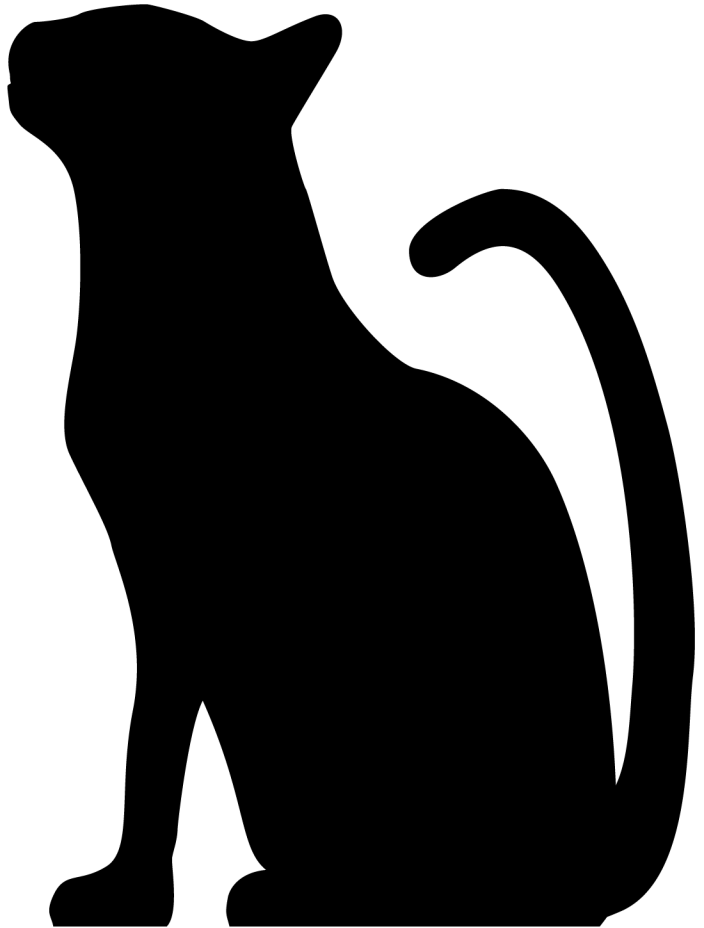


Tales of a *Silly Kitty*

by Tim Elias



*All stories and images ©Tim Elias.
No animals were harmed in the creation of these stories
because PETA was not allowed near them.*

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Foreword

Cats have played an important role in my life. I love their dualistic personality. On the one hand they can be affectionate, clean, and entertaining. On the other hand they can be quite mischievous and show none of the remorsefulness characteristic of dogs.

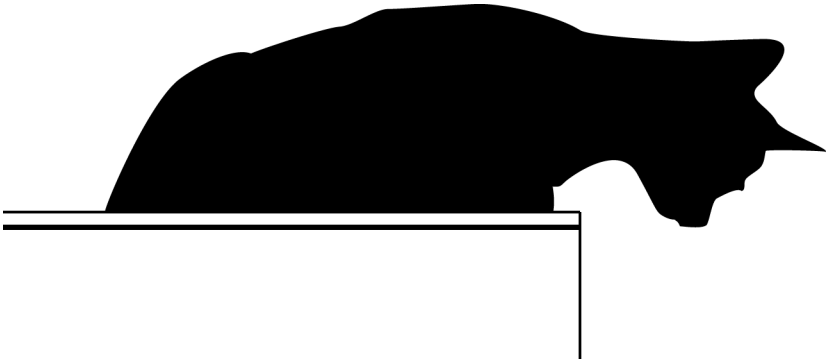
My current cat, Abigail (Abby) Normal Elias, has been a great comfort to me during some rough times in my life. She is also good at causing trouble. Nevertheless her good qualities outweigh her failings. In fact those failings seem to become endearing mischief. I love cats and was inspired to write some amusing stories highlighting their qualities.

Prologue

Jason led a lonely life. He worked long hours, many of them at home. He had little time for socializing.

Jason's life changed drastically when a cat entered his life. It happened one Saturday afternoon when the neighborhood children asked him to come see a kitten they found. To his horror it was wrapped in a paper bag and had been left in a dumpster. He could never tolerate cruelty to animals, which was why he didn't support PETA. He understood why the children had been so insistent that he take a look.

He took the brown and gray kitten home. Upon bathing the kitten he discovered that she was brown and white. The gray color was fleas. One month, three more baths, and two visits to the vet later, the kitten was the most devoted pet Jason had ever known.



Jason Knows Better

Jason's apartment was dark and quiet. Not even a mouse was stirring. His cat, naturally, wasn't stirring either. She was stretched out across the fresh laundry that had arrived that afternoon.

Suddenly the cat's ears perked up. She raised her head to face the door. In the distance faint footsteps were approaching. The sound of keys jingling and signature footsteps told the cat that it was time. She leaped up, suddenly full of energy, and sprinted for the door.

Jason opened the door slightly and shoved his foot into the apartment. Plaintive meows and a purring body snuggled against his leg begged for attention. Jason, however, did not respond to this. He merely pushed the cat aside and entered the apartment as quickly as possible slamming the door behind him. He knew that the cat really wanted to run out of the apartment and explore. Jason knew that if she ever got out he would have trouble catching her unless she ran out into the busy street and was hit by a car. This was the scenario he wished to avoid. The cat wanted out, but Jason knew better.

"What is all this meowing, silly Leia?" asked Jason. He had named her after the Star Wars character because of her white fur and brown spots near her ears. It always made him think of the weird hairdos that Princess Leia wore. Leia, on the other hand, did not know the significance of her name but assumed the role of princess nonetheless.

Leia continued meowing and walking between his legs and on top of his feet causing him to stumble repeatedly until he reached the kitchen counter safely and could release the groceries had been slipping from his arms. He sighed and looked into the loving eyes of the cat. He wanted to

be angry with her, but she would not have understood. Jason knew better. Nevertheless he leaned down and said, “What do you think you are doing? Don’t you know that this is a good way to get stepped on?” She responded by rubbing against his legs and purring loudly. He knelt down to pet her briefly before putting away the groceries.

The whole time he was emptying the bags and filling the cupboards, Leia sat on the kitchen table watching him patiently. “Leia, I told you not to get on the table!” he scolded in a soft voice. He picked her up, stroked her fur a couple of times, and set her back down on the floor while he went to make his dinner.

The refrigerator had the prepared ingredients for a rice and bean burrito, one of his favorites. As he bent down to collect the containers he would need, Leia trotted in front of him to investigate the refrigerator. It was nothing exciting. Yet she did this every time that it was opened. Jason knew what would happen next. With a sigh he waited for the...

“Meow, meow, meow...” began Leia. Jason knew that this would continue the duration of food preparation. She wanted some of his food. Rice and beans with jalapeños, however, are not good kitty food. Jason knew better.

While his dinner was heating he retrieved a can of cat food from the frig. This was Leia’s daily treat. She gobbled it up eagerly. He sat down at the table with his hot meal and Leia jumped onto Jason’s lap to beg for his food. He gently put her down and scooted his chair up to the table so that his lap was covered. Begging was an activity Jason wanted to discourage. Leia may have acted as though she only wanted his food this one time, but Jason knew better.

As he finished he pondered what he would watch on TV that night. His pondering was interrupted by more pitiful meowing. Jason knew that she was just begging for attention. He also knew that she would lose interest in him within minutes and climb up to the window to watch her own version of TV in the form whatever creatures of the night were visible from the second floor. Jason strolled into the kitchen to wash the dishes determined to ignore Leia for quite some time, but Leia knew better.







Advanced Cat Gaming

He couldn't believe it. He had completely failed to study for the math test that now lay on the desk in front of him. The fact that he had graduated from this high school a decade ago didn't seem to enter his mind.

Meanwhile, Leia was focused intently on the sleeping Jason. She was ready to play but was a bit put off by the strange mathematical equations he was speaking out loud. Nevertheless, his arm was sticking invitingly out from the bed. That was it! No arm should stick out that way without being attacked.

Jason yelled and sat up straight on his bed. He was upset that his cat should attack him while he was taking such an important test. As his eyes adjusted to seeing nothing he realized that he had been dreaming. The pitter patter of little paws running from the room and slight sting on his arm told him that the cat attack was real. He switched on the light and scolded the cat that had just run back into the room. Leia crouched and twitched her tail with excitement. This was the attention she had been looking for.

The unlit analog clock told him that he still had five hours of sleep to go before he needed to wake. Groggy, he got himself a glass of water and began to rummage through the box of unopened cat toys. He kept plenty on hand for just this sort of emergency. He grabbed one that claimed to be good for hours of continuous enjoyment. Back on his bed he called to Leia as he removed the packaging.

"Hi, Leia. You want to play? Do you? Do you?"

She charged into the room and crouched on an unremarkable section of carpet. This was her current favorite crouching spot.

“Are you ready? Are you?” he called pleased to see her ears perk up.
“Alright, go get it!”

The toy sailed across the room and hit the floor with an enticing crinkling noise. Leia briefly glanced at the toy and then turned back to look at Jason expectantly.

“Go on!” he said encouragingly. “Go get it!”

Still no indication that Leia was interested in the toy. Jason frowned as he read the packaging. He frowned more as he read the price tag. For that amount of money it should come with a game controller, several video games, and possibly a 50,000 mile drivetrain warranty. It couldn't even keep the cat's attention for a few seconds. He sighed, turned off the light and tried to go back to sleep.

Just as he drifted off he was startled by eight pounds of excited kitty jumping down on him from the top of the bookshelf. The startled Jason jumped up to a seated position, found he had seated himself off the bed, and fell to the floor. Leia was so startled by Jason's flailing that she darted out of the room. She thought that Jason was overreacting and not playing by the rules.

A calmer Jason called to Leia hoping to soothe his frightened kitty. A cat in fear of him would be bad for the two of them. He soon resorted to tossing treats towards the door in hopes of coaxing Leia back. Moments later she was back on the bed standing on his lap swatting at his hands to get the treats faster. She continued to cry for more even after he had given her a few more than he should have.

Jason decided to read a little, giving his heart some time to slow down after such an abrupt awakening. He removed the bookmark only to have it replaced by the cat. He moved the book away from the cat only to have it blocked, sat upon, and climbed upon. Finally Leia curled up in his lap and he got to read.

Jason fell asleep again only to be awakened by a ruckus on the bed next to him. Little paws were racing up and down the bed with claws out for optimal traction. The running was occasionally interrupted by pausing and jumping. Jason turned on the light. A bit of red string dangled from her mouth, clearly beaten into submission by the determined kitty. Jason recognized it to be from the expensive toy's packaging. He also noted that it was the sort of thing that Leia would love to swallow but not love the subsequent visit to the vet's office to have it removed. Jason hid the string.

Leia glared at him with a mixture of disappointment that he had removed that ferocious string that she was clearly capable of handling and expectancy waiting for him to start the next game. Not getting any reaction she trotted to the toy's packaging to see if there was anything else that demanded attacking and possible ingesting. Jason tried reading again

while Leia began to disassemble the cardboard box one bite at a time.

“Odd,” thought Jason, “I spend all this money on a toy that is ignored and while the packaging was providing more cat entertainment than the even the toy had promised to provide. I must remember to only buy toy packages from now on.”

With four more hours to go before the clock’s alarm would wake him up, he tried to go back to sleep but his heart was still trotting along at a brisk pace. He lay staring at the black area that the ceiling occupied. His mind was still running quickly when he felt a warm, furry body snuggle against his side. Within minutes he was fast asleep. Even though he had not gotten the sleep he wanted to the rest of his night would be peaceful. There’s nothing quite as relaxing as a purring kitty.





Cat TV

Jason hummed to himself as he finished making dinner. He had worn a smirk on his face all afternoon. The comedy he had been dying to see had finally arrived from the video store. He sat down on the couch, food in one hand and remote control in the other. He switched on the TV only to watch it switch off again. It was followed by the winding down of all electrical appliances in the apartment. Across town a transformer had blown knocking out power to most of the valley.

Jason looked outside, disappointed. Not an electric light could be seen. Leia was also looking outside but far from disappointed. She was staring intently at the squirrels running across the power lines. Jason remembered that the last time the power went out it was due to the squirrels chewing on the power lines. This time they were innocent.

Leia, the cat, began making chirping noises at the squirrels. Electricity or not, her version of TV, the drama of animals outside the windows went on day and night. Even though cat TV always played variations of the same shows, *Squirrels Run Around the Backyard*, *Birds Fly Around Outside*, or *Outdoor Cats Walk Along the Fence*, she never tired of watching them.

The summer sun wouldn't stay above the horizon for much longer. Jason gathered candles to illuminate the room so he could see while he ate his dinner. Deprived of his evening's entertainment he flopped down onto the couch with disappointment. He was supposed to be laughing so hard that he could barely keep his dinner in his mouth. Instead he stared out the window at the squirrels in the twilight. Somehow he didn't find them as amusing as his cat did.

Leia was more alert now. The squirrels were behaving normally. Such villainy could not be tolerated. Leia chirped as she smacked the window with her paws. The squirrels ignored the noise. Leia stared hard at them while she considered her next move. Her claws tore into the carpet as she raced down the hall into the bathroom and back. She stood alert but confused as to what to do next. She had forgotten all about the squirrels.

A smirk appeared on Jason's face as he watched Leia's antics. He called to her and she responded by flopping down on the floor to clean herself. Jason grabbed a nearby feather toy. It was a rod with a cluster of feathers attached at the end of a string. He cast the feathers at Leia as though he was cat fishing. Leia responded by rolling on her back. After several more casts Leia had rolled to her side so she was slightly closer to the feathers. She swatted her paws out despite the fact that they were two feet too short to catch the faux bird.

Jason reached for another toy. This time he selected a very unrealistic looking mouse. However it did make an exciting rattling sound. Jason rattled it to get Leia's attention. Her pupils widened as she looked intently at the mouse. Jason threw it across the room. This time Leia quickly turned her head to watch it without moving her body. She stared anxiously at it waiting for it to come close enough to attack. Despite her excitement she was still too lazy to actually get up to walk to the toy. She didn't even roll her body to be closer. Instead she looked intently at Jason waiting for him to play a game that didn't involve getting up.

Jason shook his head with amusement. He stood up to retrieve the mouse and Leia raced down the hall to the bathroom in fear. Moments later she was trotting back and Jason once again had the mouse. He now prepared to play a game that he was quite proud to have taught to any cat—fetch. Leia crouched down as he rattled the mouse tantalizingly.

“OK?” he asked. “Are you ready?” Leia wiggled her bottom to show that she was indeed. “Fetch!” he shouted as he threw the mouse across the room. Leia, as she had been trained to do, ran after it and grabbed it in her mouth. Then she ran to the bedroom with it. Jason hadn't managed to teach her to bring it back to continue the game. Still, he chuckled while he looked on.

Leia was bounding back to the living room. She stopped, dropped the mouse, and looked at Jason. He looked back. With that she grabbed the mouse again and flung it into the air. She jumped after it and brought her prey down. She rolled on her back biting it and scratching it with her back paws. She paused, looked at Jason, and resumed her assault.

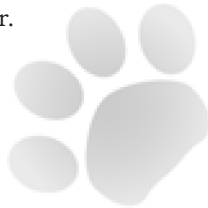
Back to the couch Jason fell as he shook with laughter. Leia was not

distracted. This vile mouse that dared to invade her space must be killed. Then she lost interest and walked to her food dish. Jason laughed again. He got up to play a new game. He positioned himself in the middle of the kitchen between the carpeted living room and the carpeted entryway. He rattled the mouse to get Leia's attention. Leia stopped eating and positioned herself just outside the kitchen.

The toy fell to the middle of the kitchen floor and taunted Leia. Her eyes locked onto the target and she wiggled her tail end in preparation. The toy remained motionless. Leia knew that such audacity called for only one action. She bolted across the floor as fast as her paws could carry her across the slippery surface. She bounded over the toy and raced into the next room. Instantly she was back, facing the toy with her eyes locked on it once again. With another tail wiggle she was off again. She repeated the maneuver and just as completely failed to touch the toy again.

Jason rolled on the floor with laughter. Leia wondered what was wrong with him and responded by cleaning herself.

The evening continued like this. Jason would attempt to play and Leia would find some silly, illogical way to respond. Despite the power being out and the movie being unwatched, Jason continued to laugh and laugh. He later went to bed quite happy. As it was, he had so much fun he never did finish his dinner.



Epilogue

Jason arrived at home feeling rotten. He had made some costly mistakes at work, wrecked his car, and got in an argument that ended a long friendship. He felt low. He slumped on the couch in tears. Leia's cries made him get up and feed her. He slipped back into his sadness. Then he noticed that the litter box needed cleaning. He put his sadness on hold again to take care of the task. Depression gripped him once again. He began to wonder where his life was going, if his life had any meaning.

Leia rubbed against his legs and meowed. She gazed up at him with big eyes that seemed to say that she needed him. He looked back at her and she hopped into his lap. She snuggled into his arms and began purring loudly. She looked at him again with sweet eyes expressing unconditional love. He stroked her fur and decided to leave off his heavy thoughts for the time being and enjoy his wonderful companion. She felt safe with him and fell asleep. He looked around the apartment. He noted the furniture shredded by cat claws. He remembered how his favorite mug that sat on a shelf had to be glued back together after Leia had knocked it over. He looked at the bag of cat food that had been torn open and its contents scattered across the floor. Then he looked back down at the endearing animal in his lap. Somehow those other things didn't seem to matter that much. Even the troubles in life seemed less troublesome. Here was a creature that entertained him and loved him. He felt happy as he drifted off to sleep.

Cre

Stories

Inspiration

Illustrations

Quotes on back

dots

Tim Elias

“Abby” Elias

Tim Elias

Tim Elias

The Critics Say:

- ◆ *“Unbelievable! This is fiction!”*
- ◆ *“Almost worth the price!”*
- ◆ *“Meets all requirements for a final project!”*

