

WHEN CATS REIGNED LIKE KINGS

*On the Trail of the
Sacred Cats*



GEORGIE ANNE GEYER

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REIGNED LIKE
KINGS

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To my dear friends
Harriet Wilson Ellis, Pasha's secret love,
Carol Krametbauer Petersen, Nikko's best girl,
and Winifred Reidy, beloved of all cats everywhere



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PREFACE

Many people will doubtless wonder, given my background in the world of international affairs, why I became so fascinated with the history of the royal and sacred cats. After all, my beat for many years has been foreign cultures, various national histories, and other political and social systems. I view myself and all foreign correspondents as unique “in-between” people who rove between different and often mutually hostile societies carrying messages from people to people and trying to make some sense of things. How, then, did I become so enthralled with cats?

Well, frankly, after covering Vietnam, Lebanon, El Salvador, Iraq, Angola, and other hot spots around the world, cats looked pretty good to me compared to humans!

What’s more, as I’ve traveled around the world for the last forty years, always immersed in my first love of history, I began to find an intriguing, fascinating, and largely unknown story unfolding before my eyes. Across our known human history and in very differing cultures, human beings had made cats into royal and sacred creatures. Alone of all the animals of the world, cats were sacred in many cultures. Egypt, of course, came first, but then there were ancient Siam, Burma, Japan, Turkey, and probably to some extent China, and even Persia.

If we explore the world of the big cats—pumas, jaguars, and tigers—we find still other cultures, from the Inca to the Maya to the great tribes of Africa—all of whom used them to represent their search for the spiritual. I have not

PREFACE

attempted to deal with the big cats here, but only with our beloved little household “gods,” the cats that we think we know so well.

Thus, inspired by my first beloved cat, Pasha, the “Egyptian god cat,” and then by my second dear cat, Nikko, the Japanese “Buddhist good fortune cat,” I traveled around the world to find out the true history, legends, and sagas of the cats who served the human need for symbols of the spirit and of sacredness and royalty.

My voyages took me to the ruins of the great cat temple at Bubastis in Egypt, to the wild northeast of Burma to a magnificent Buddhist monastery where cats leap endlessly and devotedly through hoops, to the royal family in Siam or today’s Thailand, to Buddhist temples in Japan, and to veterinary schools in Turkey.

In the Library of Congress in Washington, I found a rare copy of a charming book by the founder of cat shows, Harrison Weir, titled *Our Cats and All About Them*, published in 1889. It has loving sketches of the varied breeds by the author himself. The book was so delicate that in order to read it, I had to place it on a little stand designed to protect the pages from being pulled down too far. I was enchanted as I read the words of this fine Victorian gentleman who had done so much to bring cats to the attention of the world, and thus to protect and love them:

Among animals possibly the most perfect, and certainly the most domestic, is the cat. I did not think so always, having a bias against it, and I was some time coming to the belief, but such is the fact. The cat is more critical in noticing things than the dog. I never knew but one dog that would open a door by moving the fastening without being shown or taught how to do it. The cat seems to take note of time as well as place.

Then, just when I thought that I knew a lot about the “time of the cat” in history and as I was finishing the book, a veritable bombshell was dropped about the history of cats. It had long been assumed, and proven, that cats were first domesticated by about 2000 B.C. in Egypt. But in the spring of 2004, scientists discovered feline remains alongside a human burial site in the village of Shillourokambos on the island of Cyprus. This exploration suggested that people and cats were living together as early as 9,500 years ago or at approximately

PREFACE

7500 B.C. The fossils indicated that the animal was larger than today's domestic cats, but it was found so close to the human skeleton that researchers believe that the cat had been tamed and even had some "spiritual significance."

Jean-Denis Vigne of Paris's Museum of Natural History reported that wild cats were never native to Cyprus, and thus were surely brought there by humans. "Possibly tamed cats were devoted to special activities or special human individuals in the village," he wrote, adding that the burial "emphasizes the animal as an individual." Zooarchaeologist Melinda Zeder of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington further confirmed that the burial provided good evidence that the animal, the same furry *Felis silvestris* as the Egyptian cats, had been tamed by then.

Today, cats are "royal" and "sacred" in other ways. Many are beloved of their human families, and the breeds take part in competitions designed to raise their status among all humans. Cats are America's favorite pet, having bypassed dogs in household numbers some years ago. One thinks of Shakespeare's Hamlet who says, "The cat will mew, the dog will have his day." The cat is still mewling, and meowing, and RRRAGHHRING, but the cat's day is clearly now.



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I want to thank a number of people for helping me bring through to fruition an admittedly unusual book.

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Original research was done for me as early as the 1990s by my former assistant, Ariane de Vogue, who scoured the Los Angeles libraries for marvelous old books on the historic Family of Cat. Her work laid the basis for the book and was invaluable. My trusted and treasured assistant of fourteen years, Rita Tiwari, saw me through the book at every stage with her charm, her intelligence, and her indefatigable organizational sense. In earlier years, my goddaughter Rebecca Coder also worked on the book with her wonderful capacity for originality, efficiency, and grace.

My literary agent, Fredrica Friedman, constantly offered invaluable advice. Her patience, her enthusiasm, and her excellent suggestions buoyed me when I dared to consider that maybe cats were *not* royal or sacred, after all. Bill Fitzpatrick, the legendary White House photographer, was kind enough to take picture after picture of Nikko and me, despite Nikko's obvious reticence to be in the spotlight that day.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I could never have gotten the marvelous pictures for the Family of Cat without the help of my respected former editor, Elizabeth Andersen, and a fine Kansas City photographer, Gloria Berkel. With extraordinary patience, they scoured the Internet, going from cattery to cattery to find the best pictures of the different breeds, always hitting upon just the most beautiful and the most evocative photographs.

I want to especially thank the breeders of the catteries for their spontaneous generosity in providing us with such unforgettable pictures.

Two superb professional photographers, Helmi Flick and Linda Beatie contributed immeasurably to the photo exhibitions.

To all, I thank you for allowing my mind to wander—and for going with me.

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PART one

ON THE TRAIL
OF THE ROYAL
AND SACRED
CATS



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CHAPTER ONE

an EGYPTIAN GOD CAT,
LOST ON THE STREETS
OF CHICAGO



*If the traveler can find
A virtuous and wise companion
Let him go with him joyfully
And overcome the dangers of the way.*

BUDDHIST PROVERB FROM THE DHAMMAPADA,
THE SAYINGS OF THE BUDDHA

CHICAGO:

There was no reason to go out that hot, sticky July morning in 1975. There was no possible excuse for me to leave my mother's apartment on Barry Avenue in Chicago at exactly 10:28 A.M. and walk to the corner to mail one letter. It was not even an important letter and could easily have waited until later. I was home with my mother between trips. As a foreign correspondent, I struggled to study, understand, and somehow encapsulate the complex human cultures of the world, and I was usually writing at that time.

There are many who will rightly insist that nothing was foreordained about such a fated meeting on a Chicago street corner. There are those who will also argue that it was crazy to dream of finding a royal cat, albeit one of recent and

suspicious lineage and travels, masquerading as a Chicago street cat. They are right on one point: five or ten minutes either way, and I wouldn't have seen the charming creature at all!

Indeed, when I came upon that lean, scrawny, Wizard of Oz scarecrow of a kitty lost on the streets of Chicago, with his long legs and his pinched little face and an odd black spot on the very end of his nose, I had never heard the names Bastet or Mau, much less Freyja or Maneki Neko. Oh, I had heard loosely of the sleek Siamese cat and her fluffy, pug-nosed Persian half sister, but I had never heard of all the other great breeds of the Family of Cat, such as the con-founding Burmese, the mysterious Birman, the curious Chinchilla, the avidly swimming Turkish Van, or the slightly scary, black-as-night Bombay. I could never have guessed how impoverished I really was.

Before I found the kitty that summer's day of 1975, displaced on the streets of Chicago by some still-unknown destiny, I had barely known that the cat was considered a god in ancient Egypt. I had no knowledge of those ancient biblical tales that contend that, during the long weeks when Noah's Ark floated over the invading waters, rats and mice increased so alarmingly that Noah passed his hand three times over the head of the lioness, before she then sneezed forth the cat. Because of its success in eliminating vermin, it was also the cat that led the procession out of the ark when the rains finally stopped.

I was not aware that the Prophet Muhammad was so devoted to his pet cat Muezza that he once cut off the sleeve of his garment rather than disturb the little fellow who had fallen asleep there. Or that centuries later, in his African hos-pital, Albert Schweitzer began to write his prescriptions with his left hand because his beloved cat, Sizi, would fall asleep on the right arm of his shirt. I surely had never heard of Lao-Tsun Temple, although eventually there would come a time when I was sorry that I had heard of it!

I had yet to discover that the furry Birman cat had earned its pristine white paws centuries ago when it touched the bier of its king or that the Peruvian city of Cuzco is laid out in the form of the sacred puma. I still did not know that the charming, poetry-creating bushmen of southern Africa, who were so respectful of the supernatural qualities of lions that the very word for the beast—*n!l*, spoken with a clicking sound made by the tongue—was like the name of God and

could not be uttered in daylight. Yet although I did not exactly know these things, I was hardly surprised to learn that writers (Petrarch, Charles Baudelaire, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Wordsworth, T. S. Eliot, to name only a few) loved cats, while most dictators (Hitler, Napoleon, and Stalin, among others) not surprisingly hated them: cats were simply too free and self-determining ever to prove agreeable to such human tyrants.

I did not know then, although I sensed it on different and mysterious levels, that after this fated meeting I would enter a new world, a world that is still with me and will be forever. It is a world in which I would be driven to explore, examine, and immensely enjoy history's lessons in order to understand the relationship of cat to man.

It was most unusual to see a friendly young animal like this in our area of high-rises and busy streets. Thus, on that auspicious July day, I stopped in my tracks when I saw him—he was pacing efficiently in little measured steps, back and forth, along a brick ledge that edged the sidewalk—and we stared at each other for a long and searching moment. He had a most forthright gaze, charmingly clear, and as our eyes met I had the strangest feeling that I had known him for many, many years—even centuries.

Still, I only patted him on the head, and as I did so, the small creature purred like a veritable industrial machine at the height of production hour. Then he suddenly elongated his whole body in what I would come to call his “Halloween Cat” stretch, arching his back and thrusting his tail out in a daring, saucy greeting. His flexible little shoulders hunched up as if to attack, but he only purred some more. Then he meandered with the studied and casual nonchalance of a feline Fred Astaire over to some nearby bushes, and proceeded to sip some milk from a plastic container placed there, probably by the wanton person who had left him out all alone.

Before I could escape this encounter, with a flick of his tail he was back, staring at me fixedly, the yellow eyes as deep and impenetrable as amber pools. This kitty's fur was revealing. He had a rich but flat white coat with black spots scattered artistically down his back, long white legs, and a dramatic black spot of fur right on the top of his head, which looked like a hairpiece parted exactly in the middle of his head. All I really knew was that he was assuredly one

adorable young kitten, probably between four and six months old, with a black-as-midnight tail that flicked like lightning, twitched creatively, and managed to cover astonishingly large expanses in every direction. As I greeted him, he acknowledged my every word with a quirky swish of his luxuriant tail.

I had always loved animals, but in our modest bungalow on the South Side of Chicago, our family had only small “black-and-tan” dogs that came from a farm in Ohio. Cats were not exactly favored or pampered pets in those days. They were left outside to roam and range, and so they were almost always mangy, furtive, and unfriendly. My favorite books as I was growing up were Albert Payson Terhune’s volumes about his beautiful collies in New Jersey, all extraordinarily valiant creatures whose noble deeds would leave me recurrently and inconsolably in tears throughout my childhood.

“I hope that kitten is gone when I get back,” I said to myself halfheartedly that day as I crossed the street to the mailbox. After all, I was about to move to Washington, D.C., and at this point in my life a pet would only be a burden. My mother already had a cat—a scourge against humanity named Mookie—and hardly needed another such “pet,” given her wretched experience. Yet when I returned moments later, there he was, staring at me with such an ineffable calm that now I unhesitatingly scooped him up and swept him into the apartment, where he settled into my arms like some sweet child who had been lost and now was found.

In our first hours together, he adjusted to the apartment just as easily and comfortably as if he were thoroughly inured to the ways of the city. After introducing him to my big brother, Glen, and to our close friends, I began to wonder about an appropriate name—but that could wait until tomorrow. It had already been a full day.

The next morning, I found the kitten—*my* kitty now—sleeping next to me. It evoked in me the strangest feelings to see that he was curled up on his side in the same position in which I had been sleeping, his lanky cat limbs surreally askew exactly the way mine were. Already I sensed in our relationship a parallelness and a strange and even magical togetherness that would soon enough come to haunt me. When I got up, he barely stirred, but when he did, he stretched briefly, with a consciously restrained movement that seemed strange

in such a small, young, lost animal. Then he examined me again with that penetrating gaze, his eyes staring fixedly into mine. At that moment he seemed to be an ancient and wise creature.

He also immediately began to invent and then display his games for me. For instance, that first morning the summer sun was gleaming and glittering in a kaleidoscope of light reflecting off Lake Michigan and playing all over the walls. How the kitten loved these fluttering, flickering pools of light that were playing such wondrous tricks on him! First, a beam would appear, and he would naturally try to climb the offending wall. What else could any self-respecting cat be expected to do? Then several beams would sweep the ceiling, and the little puss would leap up and down, trying not to let a single beam escape. He reminded me at times of a philosopher searching in every dark corner for the light of truth. How he scampered around the apartment that morning, trying with all the charming abandon of youth to catch and capture the light!

I knew the intention: I had tried to do the same many times. He never quite did catch it, but then, how many of us do?

I had already been to Egypt several times in the late 1960s and 1970s in my work as a correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*, and I had seen the Egyptian cats etched on the walls of tombs and on every sort of statue in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. For just a fleeting moment that first morning with my kitten, I thought those Egyptian cats reminded me a lot of this cat, with his long, lean, almost languorous body, his pinched and knowing face, and his regal, upright bearing. Could he perhaps be a feline from somewhere far, far away? Being quite enough of a romantic, I did not dismiss the possibility, but how could he have arrived at Barry Avenue on the North Side of Chicago?

I decided it might well be appropriate for him to have a Middle Eastern royal name. I tried Emir—no, the syllables were too harsh. I toyed with Sultan—again, not enough of those imprecisely warm sounds that cats like so much. Then I hit upon Pasha. The pashas were men of high military and civil rank in both Egypt and Turkey. More important, the *shhhh* sound absolutely engrossed the cat!

“Pasha,” I said aloud to him that first afternoon. “PASH-a!” His ears twitched with excitement as he came to attention, and his regal plume of a tail plopped uncontrollably with all the unpretentious, natural spirit of a plebian cat who had suddenly come across a field of sparrows. “PASSHHA . . .” I repeated. At this, he rolled over onto his side, tipping his head toward me, his ears on the alert and his eyes gleaming. I had to admit that some of the historical, spiritual, or even cultural implications of the name were lost in his spontaneous response.

But they were not lost on me. The name had the correct political connotations. The Egyptians had abolished the office and even the term “pasha” in 1952, when they entered their modern nationalist and revolutionary period. Thus, I could not be accused of elitism but only of historical romanticism. Pasha it was—ever after.

Of course, being a responsible person, I did have some lingering concern that he might actually belong (if that word can be applied to any cat) to someone else. So I scoured the papers for a few days, and if I had found an ad in the “Lost” column saying, “Royal Egyptian cat from the Third Dynasty lost at Barry Avenue and Sheridan Road at 10:28 A.M. on July 28. Answers to the name ‘Pasha.’” I would surely have returned him.

So it was that a game centered around Pasha’s origins soon became a most serious search. All my life as a journalist and as a writer, I had been searching for truths about different cultures and how they related to one another. I had often remarked to people, “I became a journalist and explored the world in order to explain it to myself.” Now I had with me a mysterious, devoted creature whom I could not explain at all; much less describe our special relationship.

I began to wonder, “Who am *I*, and where did *I* come from?” and “Who is *he* and where did *he* come from?” Those questions would soon take me across the entire globe.

First, of course, I tried to “place” Pasha by his breed—if indeed he had one—through the nice veterinarians at our local McKillip Animal Hospital, where I took young Pasha for his shots and exams. He needed extra care, for he obviously was a cat with a “shady” past. Pasha would sit quietly in his carrier until

he saw the vet. Then, some spirit of ancient shaman, some streak of banshee, some strain of hyena, perhaps, would suddenly overcome him, and he would begin to howl! I do not mean cry. The noise, which was truly terrible, would pause only at those moments when he needed to catch his breath, and then move on, sotto voce. All his life, this otherwise serene, composed creature hated vets with an unquenchable rage.

In between the bloodcurdling screams, I would always find time to implore the vet for information on my friend's unknown past: "Do you think he might be Siamese? Oriental? After all, he doesn't meow, he gurgles."

The vet invariably looked at me pityingly and pronounced with a tight, unequivocal smile: "American Shorthair!"

At first this response hurt me to the quick. Then it came to me: I had before me a Chicago example of what happened all the time in Asia and other parts of the Third World. In many of those lands, they protected babies from kidnapping, from mortal danger, and from the resentment and jealousy of the gods by pretending that a beautiful newborn baby was hideously ugly. They would say of the child: "He's an ugly little mud pie, isn't he?" Or, "Too bad, she'll never get a husband."

After that, the vet's words never hurt me again. Indeed, sometimes I would tickle Pasha on the head and ears and say fondly, "Hello, my little shorthair." It was all in the true spirit of Catherine the Great, who, upon choosing a handsome colonel for her bed, would cajole him endearingly with, "Hello, my sweet serf."

Another reason I knew that Pasha was unusual was that he was a mischievous and endlessly creative prankster. He designed tricks and then displayed them to me, sometimes with notable impatience if I did not take part immediately. He would jump over a box in the apartment, then come over to me and put his head in my lap, then jump over the box again, until he felt I was paying him sufficiently fond attention. Then he would tire, of course, and like all good cats, would need a little snooze for, say, sixteen or eighteen hours.

Indeed, Pasha was a classic rogue operator, an engaging trickster ever full of artful maneuvers. One day he suddenly came racing out of the bedroom toward an innocent visitor, terrifying her so much that she put her hands up to protect her face before he turned on a dime and streaked away, not to reappear

for hours (and then without the slightest hint of shame). Another day, I brought some cans of peanuts for the staff members who had been working on one of my books, and I warned them not to leave the nuts out in the open, for most cats love peanuts. One staffer paid no heed and placed the peanuts atop a tall chest. I suddenly glanced up from my work to witness Pasha ambling across the room with a deceptiveness that outdid the Borgias, looking the very soul of innocence with a mien that would have shamed many prophets. In fact, he then leapt with Machiavellian purposefulness up onto a chair from which he reached the top of the chest and, with a flick of his quick paw, whiffed the peanuts to the floor. There, he quickly gobbled them all up before we could get to him. Of course, he immediately got quite sick and threw up all over the rug, leaving it majestically for his supposed “owner” to clean up.

Pasha loved food of almost any kind. The first time I gave a party after finding him, I discovered the miscreant in the act of licking his way across the hors d’oeuvres. It was a purposeful feat that was accomplished in the veritable flick of an eyelid while I was putting on lipstick, for he could cover an immense amount of territory with that scratchy little tongue. (Sometimes good cats do bad things.) I never felt it quite necessary to tell the guests who, of course, immediately arrived, that someone else had “touched” their delicious hors d’oeuvres before they had. So far as I know, no one perished from the experience.

It is said in cat veterinary circles that some cats hesitate before eating and make faces at their food dishes. This is duly explained by experts who say that the strange, almost sneering expression is called the “Flehman response,” and occurs when the scent is transferred to the Jacobson’s organ in the roof of the cat’s mouth. I can assure you that Pasha did not waste any of his time on such ridiculous beliefs.

As students of animal rites point out, cat games have their own rules and rituals, and these are neither random nor accidental. In fact, cats seldom break a rule in their play. Some would attribute that fact to lack of intelligence, but it is really simply part of their cleverly patterned little minds. Studies have shown that cats can recall problem-solving mechanisms for as long as sixteen hours, but Pasha’s own particular gamesmanship only alerted me still more to the mystery of the origins of my little pet.

I began to wonder: Do god cats behave so? Then I remembered the gods in ancient Greece who were always cavorting about, drinking excessively, and surely mating without any noticeable exclusivity. I concluded that such behavior was actually *proof* of Pasha's royal lineage.

After all, a rogue cat could not be an alley cat, for alley cats expend all their energies in foraging for food, fighting with their fellows, and engaging in the most morally distressing sexual encounters by moonlight. Only aristocats or cosmopolocats could afford to be rogue cats or devilish mephistocats, with all that means in playfulness, and a satiric view of life. Question answered!

In the months after finding Pasha and bringing him into my life, I began a secret little scrapbook for him. It is a small and deliberately unassuming brown book called a *Pet Passport*. Where it asks for type of pet and breed, I wrote, "Egyptian temple cat from Second Dynasty." Where it asked hair length, I wrote "Sassoon cut." Where it asked for ID or license, I put in "Clearly unlicensable." Where it asked for pedigree or registration, I wrote, "Ramses II, Cairo, Egypt, summer home, Luxor." At the end, I wrote, "Beware of his powers. When he looks in the flames and then fastens his all-knowing eyes on you, he penetrates your soul."

Throughout history royalty and sacredness are inevitably confronted by vulgarity and evil. By that token, in that same magical summer there was . . . MOOKIE! Repeat the name to yourself only in silence and in secret: Mookie. For it is a name that should not be spoken in the light or day or within the hearing of man. Pasha's encounter with that bad customer would eventually serve to assure me even further of his noble character, but not, unfortunately, before a most unpleasant confrontation.

How does one describe such a thoroughly bad cat as Mookie? My elderly mother loved pets, and so my brother, Glen, brought her a little gray kitten, whom she immediately named after a white angora kitten she had when she was first married. This Mookie could have had the best life in the world. She could have been the most loved and appreciated cat ever, but Mookie, incapable of love, dedicated herself only to mayhem.

Almost from the very beginning, Mookie, her fluffy physical beauty not at all reflected in her personality and character, ran wild in the apartment, apparently incapable of any modicum of decent cohabitation, much less any *civilized* domestication. For a small kitty, she spent abnormal amounts of time growling and hissing and running around the apartment, all the while uttering terrifying war cries reminiscent of the onslaught of the Mongol hordes as they raged across Central Asia and into Europe in the twelfth century. (It has also been suggested to me by shadowy observers that there is a Mookie file at the CIA, and perhaps the FBI and the attorney general's office as well; but I was never able actually to confirm such rumors.)

Mother would not hear of getting rid of Mookie, so there we were, locked in the apartment with this mad cat. It was August by then, and my mother had been at our Wisconsin home with Mookie all summer, and I wanted to introduce mother to Pasha before he and I left for Washington.

As I relate this story, it is important to remember that Pasha was a very, very tiny kitten, weighing only three or four pounds. He was surely not more than four months old, although we could not know his birthdate for sure. His coat was so sleek that he looked even smaller than he actually was. Mookie, on the other hand, was a huge and threatening creature, with bushy gray hair and wild eyes that made her look like some great Tatar warrior ready to sweep across the central plains of ancient Russia. Glen and I and our friends were a little concerned about putting them together, so I carried Pasha through the door into the little house. We called to Mookie, who was out on the porch straining for possible prey among any of the local robins, raccoons, chipmunks, skunks, squirrels, bunnies, and lake cats that might randomly or foolishly stumble by, not to speak of human ankles, wrists, cheeks, ears, or fingers that might happen to present lively opportunity. The fact that she could not get at them, but could only growl and scream and wildly paw at the porch screens only drove her on to greater displays of unnatural temper.

I put tiny little Pasha down on the dining-room floor, and he immediately looked about in some confusion. After all, this was his second home in as many weeks, after all his voyaging around and across the world. He very carefully picked his steps, moving slowly and nonthreateningly out to the porch to greet Mookie. He actually made it close-up to try and rub noses with her. In fact, I watched the entire ballet with fascination; he was so careful, so deliberate, and

so measured in edging up to greet her with his wet nose that I thought at once, “Pasha, the great Egyptian peacemaker.” (An Anwar Sadat of cats, perhaps?)

As she perused the front yard, Mookie seemed to spot the movement of foreign fur out of her left eye. At this first sight of Pasha, Mookie’s entire body stiffened until she was like a corpse, only standing up. Her eyes seemed to bulge from their sockets, and her ears went flat back on her head until they were almost even with her shoulders. She began to snarl and cough and hiss, but not, frankly, for very long. Almost immediately, she actually jumped out of the porch through the screen, tearing a huge hole in it, and leaving all of us in a total panic as she raced crazily across the yard before climbing our huge oak tree and staying there for many hours. Frankly, the thought did occur to us to just leave her there.

Instead, it took Glen all those hours to get a high ladder, climb most of the way up to her, and reason with her to come down. He finally grabbed her, stuffed her into a pillowcase, and lowered her, hissing and screaming inside, to the ground. Once again captive in the house, she stayed under the bed for three full days, a relief to everyone.

Now I had seen Pasha, the diplomat, the peacemaker, the cat destined for great things, in full action—so confident and noble, trying to reason with that evil, treacherous Mookie—and somehow I sensed already that he would become a very famous and beloved cat indeed. I also had a brave companion to drive with me for two days to the nation’s capital, where all the laws and decisions of the land are so masterfully made and so flawlessly executed. To tell the truth, I was more frightened than excited, for I was just starting my own syndicated column, and such an undertaking was an equivocal thing, depending totally upon the unsureness of how many papers would buy the column, whether I could keep up the strain of telling the entire world how to live, three times a week in exactly 750 words, and whether people would actually like having me tell them how to live those three times a week.

Then, just at the moment when all my plans seemed to be coming together, a new problem raised its pesky head. I had bought a condominium in D.C., but since it would not be ready until December, I planned to stay at the old Fairfax Hotel on Massachusetts Avenue. It had once been elegant—and it would be again in years to come, when it became the Westin Embassy Row—but at this time, it was a seedy, worn old lady, still genteel to be sure, but way down on her