

Rescue Cat - Written By Will Snow

Chapter Six

Bill's first foray into the local pet superstore was slightly unnerving. After receiving directions to the aisles devoted to cats, he was overwhelmed with choices. Toy mice, feathers, shiny beads, scratching posts, and much more as far as the eye could see. How could there be so much stuff that people bought for cats? Wait, what was this? A cat litter disposal system? Ridiculous, he thought, why wouldn't you flush it down the toilet? Well, there were suckers born every minute, he laughed to himself. Now, where to he begin? Fortunately, a woman was wandering down the same aisle. Maybe she would have some advice.

"Excuse me. Do you know anything about what cats like to play with?"

The woman stopped and looked sideways at Bill. "Are you serious, or was that just a really lame pickup line?"

As Bill looked at her a bit longer, he realized she was a beautiful, tall, blue-eyed, buxom blonde. "I would never try to pick you up in a pet store... I mean, no, this is not a pickup line. I am fostering a cat for my friend, and I think he is bored."

The woman narrowed her eyes and purred. "Oh, you want to know how to stimulate a kitty. Hmmm."

Bill's mouth dropped open momentarily as he was rendered temporarily speechless. "I... What I meant to say was... Do you know anything about kitty toys? I mean cat toys."

Bill's discomfort obviously amused the woman. "Absolutely. I'd be happy to help you. What kind of cat is it?"

Bill shrugged his shoulders. "I have no clue."

The woman chuckled again. "Clueless about kitties? Unfortunately, that's not the first time I've encountered this in Laguna. I think what you are looking for is your basic mice, bird, and laser pointer combo." She went down the aisle with Bill and dropped a few things in his cart. She then picked out a small harness and leash. "Some kitties are really into these kinds of things." Finally, she picked up a small bag of dried leaves. "I think you will also want some catnip. Kitties are always friendlier when you get them high."

Bill felt the tips of his ears getting very warm. "Uh, I don't know how to thank you for all your help."

The woman smiled again and leaned into him. "Not a worry. It was all my pleasure. Have fun!"

As he pushed the cart to the cash register, he turned to say goodbye, but she was already gone. He played the conversation over several times in his head until he pulled into his driveway with his new acquisitions. What just happened? Did that

woman flirt with him? He wasn't expecting that. He didn't want that. He never wanted that kind of attention ever again. He didn't need it. There was nowhere for that to go. That part of him was shut down forever. Still, there was something about her...

Bill pushed those thoughts far away as he entered the house and unloaded his bag of goodies. "Cosmo! Look at all the cool things I bought for you today!" Cosmo sauntered over to Bill, sniffed the purchases, and eagerly climbed into the empty bag. "What should we play with first?" Bill excitedly unwrapped all the toys and tried to engage with Cosmo. After several minutes of watching Cosmo play with the empty bag, he gave up. "Fine. Have it your way." He left the toys strewn around and went to the bathroom, only to discover the toilet was hopelessly clogged. "I am having the worst luck this week!" Bill shouted out loud as he stormed upstairs to his office.

Many hours later, Bill walked downstairs in his dark and empty home, flipped on the kitchen lights, grabbed a microwave dinner from the freezer, pulled down a bottle of scotch from the cabinet, and stopped in his tracks when he saw Cosmo staring up at him holding a toy mouse by the tail. He put the bottle back on the shelf and sat on the floor. Cosmo dropped the mouse in front of him. Bill picked up the mouse and tossed it across the floor. Cosmo padded across the kitchen and brought it back to him. They played fetch for the next several minutes until Cosmo batted his food bowl and mewled.

As they ate their dinners together, Bill told Cosmo all about the strange lady in the pet store and the rest of his day. When he ran out of things to say, he put the dishes in the sink and went quietly upstairs to bed but left his door open that night.