

Rescue Cat - Written By Will Snow

Chapter Seven

Bill woke up at 4:15 AM to the weight of Cosmo on his chest and the terrible smell of Cosmo's breath. "Ugh. We are going to have to get you some better food today. I don't know what Jodi has been feeding you, but this is not good! No wonder you can't sleep." Cosmo jumped to the floor and headed downstairs. *"Pot calling the kettle black, human."*

When their morning ritual had concluded, Bill was about to head upstairs to his office but stopped to look outside at his deck. It was still dark outside, but the predawn light dimly illuminated the horizon. He opened the sliding glass doors and stepped out into the cool morning air. As he looked out over the canyon, he felt Cosmo brush up against his legs. Momentarily panicked by the memory of Cosmo's last foray outside, Bill swiftly scooped the cat into his arms. Cosmo stiffened, growled, and dug his claws into Bill's forearm. Rather than drop him, Bill endured the cat's displeasure and held tight. "Sorry, buddy, I don't want you getting hurt. It's too wild out there for you." He held him steady until Cosmo finally stopped squirming. When all had settled, they watched the clouds on the horizon turn pink and a glorious sunrise together. "Look at that, Cosmo! Isn't it beautiful out here?" It's going to be gorgeous today. Let's have some fun. What do you say?" Cosmo was in rapture, his

eyes shut and tongue out, tasting the breeze while sweeping his fluffy tail back and forth. *"I am air! Born of the four winds! I float through clouds."*

Bill carried Cosmo back into the house, set him on the floor, and closed the doors. He sorted through the pile of toys and chose the leash and harness. "Oh yeah! Let's go for a walk. That will be fun! You can check out the neighborhood, and I won't have to worry about you running away again. Come here, boy!" Cosmo looked slightly wary of the leather straps and buckles. Bill pulled him over and tried to wrestle Cosmo into this bizarre contraption for several minutes. When finished, he clipped the leash and tugged at it to encourage Cosmo to walk to the door with him.

Cosmo had none of this and lay flat on the floor. "Come on, Cosmo! All you need to do is walk. You know how to walk." Cosmo's eyes were angry slits, and he started chewing at the leash and harness. Bill was confused by his reluctance. Didn't animals like going on walks? Cosmo seemed to want to go outside all the time. He opened the front door and let the outside air wash over the cat. "Don't you want to go outside?" He tugged on the leash again, dragging the uncooperative feline across the floor. *"Human, you will regret this indignity!"* When Bill bent down to lift him off the floor, Cosmo made good on his promise and raked him across his hand. "OUCH! OK! Forget it! I give up." Bill unclipped the leash. "Maybe you just need some time to get used to it." Thirty minutes later, Cosmo hadn't moved a muscle and hissed at Bill.

"Remove this abomination from me now." Bill finally unbuckled the harness and set it aside as his experiment had gone rather badly.

Frustrated by his failure and tantalized by the novelty of exploring his neighborhood in the morning, Bill left Cosmo to his devices and went out to his car to take a drive. As he drove down the street, he couldn't help but notice how peaceful everything was at this time of day. As it was just after dawn, the building contractors and lawn services that plagued this neighborhood hadn't yet arrived at their job sites with their mowers, blowers, tile saws, and hammers.

He turned down the winding street that headed down the hills into the central part of town and was struck by the picturesque views. How long had it been since he took any time to enjoy where he was living? He drove through the empty streets, looking for a coffee shop. As he was heading past the closed shops on Pacific Coast Highway, he saw a light on in the distance, and he slowed down. It was a gym. Of course. What other place would be open this early in the morning? He hadn't been inside one of those for many years and was about to drive past when he remembered Cosmo's mocking look from the day before. He pulled over to check it out. An hour later, Bill triumphantly burst through the door! "Guess what I just did, Cosmo?"