Nathan Borchelt

Professor Neelon

Creative Writing

28 March 2022

My name is Tom, an orange tabby who is just trying to live my life. I am here in this metal cage, it looks larger than the other cages, but that does not help me with the space that I need to be able to comfortably move around. The others are calling this a shelter, but I do not believe it. This place is loud and unwelcoming. Why would anyone get rid of me, I am thirty pounds of love? My humans have not come back but this human boy has taken some interest to me. Until something happens, I should reflect on what has brought me here.

It was just an average day for me. It seemed odd that my, now former, humans rushed off at an odd hour. Nothing happened while they were away. I went on the counters; they do not like when I do this as they do not understand I am trying to help. That has little meaning to this part of the story. But they came back home later and now there is a little human. It is loud and constantly wants attention, attention that should have been going to me. This child as they called it, would often mock me because it got the attention before me. It wanted me gone and my thoughts of security due to being the eldest child led me to a false security in who would be rehomed first. I gave the child a smack on the nose to let it know who the boss was. I was reprimanded. I do not understand why, I do not have claws or any way of easily hurting it.

The human boy has come back, some of the others in here with me have said that being a lap cat will help me find a new home. This new human puts me in her lap. She goes by “Mom” and really likes the way I curl up on her lap. I do not appreciate the way I am compared to a small child. It did not end well when a child is around. She seems quite emotional, she says that she is not going to get another cat, but I can sense that that is a lie. I cannot keep this lie up much longer myself, I need to get off her lap. There is a corner to hide in; it is quieter, calmer, and makes the world slow down. But this joy is just temporary as I am being grabbed from the hips and pulled out. While I am being put in my cage, the humans speak about my fate and as I watch them leave, I am unsure what is in store to me.

Hal, that is the name they give me. No longer am I the house cat Tom who just wanted to assert my dominance in a losing battle. These humans who got me out of my cage have taken me to their home. This place is massive compared to the tiny cage I was in. The only issue I am having right now is that the humans are loud. They are interesting, but I am unsure if I can trust them. The smell here is strange, there are other animals in this household. I notice that the humans are trying to shower me in love, but I just want to find a corner to relax in. What feels like hours passes by and suddenly I am free. I rush into a room where there is a bed I can get under. As I crawl under the bed, a new area opens to me. There is a wooden cave under here. It is dark, quiet, and not easily accessible by the humans who want to hold me. Lying down, I can finally rest with no one trying to bother me. At least that is what I thought, this sanctuary now has light spilling into it and the human boy is pulling me out. I am smacking him, “Let me go, I was enjoying my peace”, but to no avail, he seems to not understand me. I am pinned down in his lap. This idea of faking a lap cat has failed miserably as he and Mom try to get me to lie with them and become friendly. I can tell that this stress is not good for me, something is feeling off. I am afraid I may be getting sick.

I am trying to go to use this litterbox they got me, but they have this wooden pellet litter that does not feel good under my paws. I cannot do this; I need my clay litter. I have had a few accidents outside of the litterbox and the humans seem to be getting annoyed. When I speak to them, some idea is getting lost in translation. “I am trying”, “Something is wrong”, “I don’t want to cause issues” are all things I have said to them whenever I have an accident and they find it. I now know I must try more drastic measures. Marching into the living room where the humans seem to congregate, I squat trying to pee, thankfully they recognize that this is a sign, and they rush me to the litterbox. I try and try, but to no avail. All that is left for tonight is to rest and hope that it goes away.

After a rather uncomfortable night of rest, I am dragged from my cave. I hate the cramped caged box they put me in. I fight them with little slaps on their hands.

“I don’t want to go,” yet no one listens to me.

“I know that you do not want to go, but you have to,” Mom is trying to console me.

Mom and the boy have realized that I simply do not fit in those little cages. The boy runs off into another room and brings back a white basket with a towel in it. Begrudgingly, I allow them to set me in the basket and a moment later the world goes black.

“I don’t like it in here,” I tell the person driving me. It smells like the boy, but there are other smells. Suddenly, a ghost is pushing me around. I cannot see it, but the ghost sounds like a mixture of rumbling, strange noises that haunt the boy when he is at home, and other humans. This experience goes on for a while as the boy drops me off at the veterinarian building and I am afraid this may be the end of my time with this family.

“I wasn’t trying to cause trouble, don’t leave me here,” I plead him.

“Calm down cat, you are here to get some medicine, so you quit acting up,” he tells me.

The vet takes me from the boy and start to look at me. I am hesitant to let them look at me; I am not sure that they are friendly and will help me. I want them to know I am serious, I am brave. Backing up into the corner for a defensive advantage and rearing up to make myself bigger, I smack their hands for a little while, yet they seem unfazed. A bowl of food is set out for me, I come back down to all fours and now I contemplate one idea while I start eating, *Did the boy sell me out? Can I really be bought this easily?* There seem to be other vets as different people with similar coats take care of me. That uncomfortable feeling when trying to use the litterbox has gone away, but the boy has not come back for me.

“Where is my family, I want to see them,” no one listens to me, “I told them I would behave, do they not believe me?”

The days go on, the sun fades into the moon and I question if my new family would come back for me. As I mope in my corner, accepting the love of the vets to fill the void left, as if an angel descended on me, Mom had come to take me back home. Holding back tears, I start to rub up on her legs and show my affection and gratitude for bringing me back home.

As I return home, the boy takes me around to make sure I know where everything is. I cannot determine if he thinks I am stupid, or if it makes himself feel better. I cannot let this disrespect stand without punishment. Many of the other cats that were with me at the shelter had their claws, they spent their time destroying the scratching post given to them but not me. My ability to sneak around this house is unheard of to the others I spoke to. Without claws, I can sneak up on the boy and smother him, all I must do is wait for him to go to sleep.

Night has come, and the house is quiet and dark. The human boy is asleep and has no idea of his impending doom. As silent as a snake, I make my way into his room. The only noises are the two rodents on their wheels, running, chasing after some unobtainable goal. I prepare to hop onto the bed, I square up and make the jump. All this planning goes to waste as I land, the bed makes noise and shakes in such a way that I wouldn’t be surprised if he thought an earthquake happened.

Slovenly, he rolls over. He sees me in the dim light. I start to panic. *He must know my plan; this won’t end well for me if he fully wakes up.* With my tail all bushy and a look of panic, I start slowly backing away.

“Hal…, what are you doing?” the boy mumbles to me, “it is too early in the morning for your shenanigans.”

“I cannot let your disrespect to me whenever I finally got home after you abandoned me stand. I shall smother you and make you regret your decisions.”

“I am not feeding you now, it is too late. I will feed you in the morning.”

“I do not see how that is relevant to this conversation, but as long as you hold to that promise, I will let you breathe another day.”

“Hal, I have school. Shush”

*I do not understand why he started a second conversation, but it will benefit me.* I hop down and head towards Mom’s room. She usually keeps a part of the blanket down for me sneak into.