

The 'Unlucky' Cat

By Annalise Peters

A black cat wanders down the streets of her town. People walk by too, giving her mean looks while others ignore her completely. This town has always despised her due to the superstition that black cats bring bad luck. Any misfortune this town has endured has been blamed on her. Like the river flooding over last year for instance. But she wouldn't give up. She would prove them wrong.

"Hello!" She meowed as she approached an older lady, twirling around her legs. Just be friendly; that was the key.

The lady screamed and hit the cat with her purse. The black cat lets out a yelp, scampering away down the street.

Would she ever be seen as something other than bad luck to everyone? She felt let down by this rejection, but she would keep her head up and have hope. She would think of better ideas. And what better place to go and think than the park? So, she padded down the streets, ignoring the glares and fearful gasps coming from people as she strolled by.

The park was right in the middle of the town, beside the river. Unlike other cats, she loved the river and its peaceful waters. There was the park ahead, and if cats could smile, she would. It was dotted with trees and park benches, and the grass so luscious and green she could fall asleep right there and never get up again. But she didn't. Instead she went down to the river, and padded over to the willow tree that stood right beside it. When she was a kitten she loved to come and play

with the long branches that hung down from the tree like upside down grass. Now she just lay beneath it and stared up at it's beauty, thinking. For this was her thinking tree, as she liked to call it, and she thought about all the ways she might someday have a home.

"Is the black cat trying to find a human in the tree?" Quacked some nearby ducks. The black cat looked over to the river to see three ducks, all gazing at her, eyes shining with laughter. Ducks were always so full of themselves. She was glad to be a cat.

"I'm thinking." she explained calmly. "but you wouldn't know anything about that sort of stuff, now would you?"

That shut the ducks up quickly. They knew she was right. As full of themselves as they were, ducks were also very dim-witted. The ducks let out grumbling quacks and made their way down the river, away from her.

"Looks like you showed them, hey there little kitten?" came a rumbling laugh behind her. She jumped, startled. Upon a closer look she saw a large old man standing above her, eyes warm and amused. He crouched down and held out a hand. "Steady there girl, I'm not going to hurt you."

The black cat's ears pricked in curiosity and surprise at his gentle approach. No one in the town ever went near her, much less offered a hand to touch. The old man smiled, stretching his hand closer, and she obliged, purring and letting him pet her head. Finally, someone who would go near her! She couldn't be happier.

"What's your name, precious?" He asked, as he lifted her up gently into his arms, making her squirm a little before giving up. He then searched around her neck for a collar but finds none. He frowns, "are you the black cat this town is so afraid of, kitten?" If the black could nod, she would. Instead, she pretends she

doesn't hear him, and looks down at the river. The ducks from earlier are glaring enviously at her.

"Sir, get away from the cat!" A lady sitting on a bench cries. "That poor scrap's bad luck!"

"Don't be superstitious, ma'am." The old man chuckles, scratching behind her ear. She purrs. "This is just a misunderstood little kitten."

The lady huffs and walks away with her head high.

"How 'bout I take you home?" The old man chuckles and begins to carry her away. "I think I'm going to call you..." He looks around the park, "Willow. Do you like that?"

She purrs in response, and he begins to carry her away. Being carried away she watches her thinking tree move farther away from her. She would have to find new things to ponder under that tree now that she had a new home.