

A CAT FROM CANADA: BOOK 2
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CITIZEN CAT

My parents and I were getting ready to take our annual vacation. My dad, Carter Williams, and my mother Andrea Sumner-Williams are very successful civil attorneys, and that's not all, they have their own law firm. Thank goodness we're millionaires.

I'm a beautiful Canadian Tabby. My name is Toby Williams.

It was a beautiful sunny Sunday morning in the month of June. My parents and I were happy but also anxious about our long vacation. Our starting point was Belmont, Ontario, located 50 miles northwest of our beloved nation's capital (Ottawa); we were going out west, first stopping in western Ontario, then onto Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. As agreed upon, we weren't going to leave Canada. I've always been adamant about that. My parents know that if they decide to vacation outside of Canada, they can't bring me along. I'm a Cat from Canada.

Our plane was scheduled to leave from Murdoch Airport at noon. It was 8:30 A.M., we were getting ready to eat breakfast, and although we were happy, vacation day is also full of stresses. We were seated in front of our kitchen table getting ready to eat a hardy breakfast. And gosh, I knew something was going to happen.

"Toby, don't pour ketchup on your omelette. I demand that you put down that ketchup bottle right now."

"Mom, why are you being like that? You know that I always eat my eggs with ketchup. Why are you so up-tight all of a sudden?"

"Toby, we're going on vacation. I don't want you to embarrass your father and me by eating like a peasant. You know very well that we're an uppity family. Just look around you. We live in a dreamy white mansion with a beautiful spacious lawn landscaped with scattered flowerbeds, and we have a white picket fence, a swimming pool and patio, and a play ground for you. And let me not forget all the beautiful amenities that go along with a mansion.

Your father and I agreed that you must correct your behaviour during our vacation. When we return the three of us will have a nice long talk about some of your peasant-like behaviours."

"Do as your mother says, okay, Toby, c'mon, the three of us need to get along, especially now. We're going on vacation."

"Mom, dad, listen up, okay, I promise not to put ketchup on my eggs for the duration of our vacation. However, the bottle is already in my paw and the cap has already been raised."

"Okay, go ahead just this once. And by the way, that's so disgusting," said mother.

We dug into our breakfast like a family of lions chomping down on a wild-beast carcass. Following breakfast we packed our things and then waited anxiously for time to pass.

At 10:30 A.M. my father called for a cab. My mom and I stood nearby, ears cropped up and very excited. The speaker phone was on.

"Hello, Belmont Cab Company. How may I help you?"

"We'd like a cab to be sent to 1550 Park Boulevard. We want to go to the Belmont Airport."

"How many passengers in the cab, please?"

"There will be three persons in the cab including me, my wife and our beloved cat son."

"Your cab will arrive in about 10 minutes. Please have your baggage in front of your house before the cab arrives. It'll make things a lot easier."

"Don't worry madam we go through this routine every single year. I guarantee that we'll be ready before the cab arrives."

"Thank you sir, and have a beautiful day."

"Mom, can I bring along some gummy bears?"

"Toby, you can on condition that you apologize for being nasty to me and your father."

"Huh, Okay, mom, dad, I'm sorry for misbehaving, and for umm, being nasty."

I grabbed a couple of boxes of gummy bears and then put them in my shoulder bag. Following a minute of silence, my parents asked me to take one last look at the interior of our mansion. I was under the assumption that it was going to be a long time before we were coming back home. There was something peculiar, but I couldn't quite put my paw on it. My parents were hiding something from me. Anyway, I went ahead and obliged them on this issue I knew they were correct.

Gosh, was our mansion beautiful. Our kitchen table was larger than most peoples' dining table, not to mention the numerous other amenities therein. I was going to miss it all, even the giant HD television in the kitchen and in my bedroom too.

I made it clear to my parents that I couldn't bear it any longer. I had to leave the mansion; I loved it so much, perhaps almost as much as my parents. Cats are like that. We love to live in large homes and mansions, wherein we have full and easy access to many fun things.

Shortly thereafter, we crossed our lawn and then stopping on the sidewalk. Technically, we began our vacation.

"Toby, I put several oatmeal cookies in your shoulder bag because I love you so much."

"Dad thanks a million. Umm, can I eat a cookie right now?"

No son, you better not. Wait until after we check our baggage in; I mean, when we're in the waiting area. It would be impolite if you left crumbs in the cab. Though even if you didn't, cabbies don't like it when people eat in their cabs."

A deafening silence followed our conversation. I scanned the neighbourhood admiring the other mansions, the beautiful tree-lined streets, and the sound of water splashing from the Albertson's swimming pool.

I noticed a lone squirrel diagonally across the street from our location. He was perched on a Maple tree on the Edison property. The squirrel was chomping down on a walnut and eyeing us ever so intently.

"Oh gosh it's Randy! Mom, dad, that's my friend Randy! Can I say goodbye to him?"

"No, you can't! There's no time for that! Besides, your dad and I don't like the looks of that Randy fellow. He's staring at us with those dark, beady eyes. And besides, he's always eating something he's a bit pig-like.

I lowered my gaze to the ground fixing my eyes on the curb. I had to show my parents the resentment I felt. I wasn't even sure if I was ever going to see Randy again.

"Toby, okay, you can say goodbye to Randy, but be brief and quick. The cab will be here any minute," said mom.

I looked both ways and then ran to Randy reaching the Maple tree in a jiffy. I looked intently at Randy. He was roughly 10 feet off the ground.

"Toby, I have something to give you, okay?"

I nodded my head indicating approval then waited for Randy to act.

Randy further scaled the Maple tree until he was roughly 20 feet off the ground; he snatched something from a hidden spot and then proceeded to descend the tree using 3 legs. I could see and smell the large banana-flavoured lollipop he was cupping with his free paw.

As soon as Randy descended unto the ground he grinned at me and then said, "Toby, the talk in this neighbourhood is that you're going on vacation. I want to give you this lollipop as a going away present. I hope it suits your taste."

I was flabbergasted. But that feeling didn't last long. My feline senses alerted me that trouble was looming nearby. Not only that, but Randy was also giving me his own signals. His eyes kept shifting back and forth in a nervous manner. Whenever his eyes shifted away from me he was gazing at my parents.

As soon as I turned back to look at my parents all hell broke loose.

"Toby, come back here right now, your mother and I don't want you to talk to that squirrel anymore."

My father was a very large man, standing at six feet and six inches, large-boned, with a squared off chest and jaw, with large biceps, and he weighed about 250 pounds. My mother was six feet tall and had an athletic-looking body. Together, in their enraged state, they appeared quite menacing to Randy.

"Randy, what's going on here? Why do my parents hate you so much? You haven't done anything to them, right?"

"Toby, the mayor of Belmont along with the city council, and the majority of influential members of the community are calling for a drastic reduction in the number of pest-like animals in Belmont. They say we're bad for the town's image, beg too much, and steal caches of food stocks from supermarkets, grocery stores, and homes.

Your parents are at the forefront of this wicked witch hunt."

Unfortunately, Randy was unable to finish his statement. He soon froze in fear. He seemed to be gazing at my parents. So, I turned to see exactly who he was looking at.

My mother was talking to someone on the phone. I found that quite odd considering it hadn't been too long of a wait for the cab. So, I crooped up my ears and eyed my mother's lips intently. I had to know who she was talking to. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to fully utilize my hearing abilities. I didn't want Randy to feel that I'd forgotten about him. However, I did take in some of my mom's message.

"Yes, the will, family, okay, moving away forever, and the legal matters have been taken care of. Thanks, Oliver, you've been a great help to us."

Oliver, hmm, there was only one Oliver that our family knew. Oliver Daniels was a probate attorney. Why would my mom be speaking to him at this inconvenient time? I wondered. Randy nudged me, indicating that he wanted to have my attention. But as soon as I turned to look at Randy my mother threw a fit.

"Toby Williams, you come here right now! And don't you dare stall for time!"

"Randy, I can't comprehend why my parents are freaking out. Initially they told me that it was all right to speak to you. Maybe, they have the jitters; the cab will be here any minute now."

"Toby, enjoy your lollipop. Actually, I was saving it for you. I didn't get much sleep last night. I knew your family was scheduled to leave sometime today. Anyway, I guess we won't be seeing each other again."

"Huh, Randy, what are you talking about? Please don't scare me."

At the very moment Randy was about to answer my question the cab arrived. We embraced and then said our goodbyes. It was truly a sad moment for both of us. Worst yet, as soon as I returned to my parents I noticed an awful angry expression on their faces. And they were eyeing my lollipop too.

"Don't worry about that. I'll put your heavy baggage in the trunk of my cab," said the cabby.

My father sat in the front passenger seat, my mom and I sat in the back. There was a deafening silence until the cab driver entered the cab.

"How are you guys doing?"

"Oh, everything's just fine. We hope you're doing fine too?" replied dad.

"Fine, you're going to the Belmont airport, right?"

"That's correct," replied dad.

And whoosh, we were on our way. For the following 20 minutes no one in the cab uttered a single word. I'm certain the cabby sensed my parents' anger.

As soon as we arrived at the airport parking lot the cabby slowed down to a halt and then spoke to the parking lot attendant in the booth.

"Hey Steve, it's a nice day, sunny and hardly a breeze, and minimal traffic."

"Phil, you really know how to raise a guy's spirit. You're dropping off your passengers and then exiting the parking lot, right?"

The cab driver nodded his head indicating an affirmative response. Then, he began his drive to the airline parking area.

"Sorry, I forgot to ask what airline terminal you wanted to be dropped off at."

"Please take us to Canuck Airlines," responded dad.

The cab driver grinned and then proceeded to drive to the Canuck Airlines terminal parking section. We arrived shortly thereafter. The cabby removed our baggage from the trunk of the cab. My father then handed the cab driver a 50 dollar bill. As soon as the cab driver drove off my parents directed their gaze at me. I knew they were up to something.

"Toby, your dad and I want you to toss that lollipop into the garbage can just behind you. The Williams family doesn't accept charity from homeless people, especially when they're squirrels. Toss it into the garbage can right now, without any delay."

"Mom, dad no way, this is my lollipop and I refuse to toss it into the garbage can. Besides, it's a present from my friend Randy."

My father glared at me, puffed out his chest and then clenched his fists. It looked like he was readying himself for an attack.

I did what any brilliant Canadian cat would do under the circumstances. I spoke my mind.

"Mom, you weren't exactly born with a silver spoon in your hand. You're not really a Williams; you're only a Williams by marriage. You're a Sumner. Your parents were hard-working middle class folks."

"Cat bit your tongue! How dare you speak to your mother in that manner? I've got something else to say to you!"

At that very moment my dad placed his hand over my mom's mouth. He kept it there for roughly 10 seconds before letting go. Somehow, my mother was going to throw a horrible bombshell on me. What was it? I wondered.

Seeing that my parents weren't going to budge, I opened my mouth as wide as I could and then stuffed the lollipop therein. Assuming the worst, I reached into my shoulder bag, withdrawing both packs of gummy bears. Without any delay, I ripped both

boxes and then shoved the contents into my mouth. With cheeks the size of grapefruits I looked like a chipmunk.

By now, many of the passersby stopped walking and then backtracked to see what was going on. Then, more people began to converge upon the scene. Noticing this, my parents squirmed then turned red-faced.

"Let's enter the airport terminal, okay, I don't like it when peasants stare at me," said dad.

Belmont Airport is one heck of a beautiful site; something of a very proud Canadian achievement. It's humungous, clean, and has a beautifully decorated interior.

As soon as we entered the terminal I felt a rush of cool air, not the kind that emanates from cold temperature. I sensed something sinister going on. Furthermore, my parents were too quiet. It's like they were conspiring against me. Really, I'd never been paranoid before.

We walked to the baggage check-in line and waited attentively. There were roughly 20 persons in front of us, but luckily the airline workers were fast and efficient.

I couldn't help but notice that most of the people in line appeared anxious. Although vacation time is very joyful standing in the check-in line can be quite stressful.

When it was near our turn to check our baggage in I went ballistic. I simply couldn't hold myself back.

"Mom, dad, are you holding up your end of the bargain, or are you being deceitful to me?"

"Honey, what do you mean by deceitful?" asked mom.

"Are we leaving Canada or not? Don't give me the run-around give me a straight answer, okay."

"Honey, your father and I aren't, I mean, the three of us aren't leaving Canada, really. Why are you so paranoid?" asked dad.

Something was up. I couldn't quite zoom in on it but I instinctively knew that something terrible was looming on the horizon. My incredible feline senses were alerting me to eminent danger; but from where? I wondered.

Just as I was about to go ballistic again the airline worker, a beautiful blond in her late twenties motioned us to come forward.

"Please move forward. Are these all of your bags?" she asked.

"Yes, here are our tickets."

"Okay, you two are going on vacation?" she asked.

"Yes, umm, uh, yes, we're heading westbound, we'll be stopping in every province on the way until we reach British Columbia," responded mom.

I pulled on my father's pant leg, trying to get his immediate attention.

With a grin on his face my dad said, "son, don't worry, I'll explain later."

I didn't want to talk too much while my parents were checking our baggage in. I assumed Canuck Airlines was having a 'cats board for free' special. That raised my spirits.

After checking our baggage in we were instructed to go to Gate #9.

"Toby, you know something. We have a lot of free time to spare before our flight leaves. Why don't you sit over there beside the pay phones, your mother and I will walk to Gate #9, then sit and stretch our legs. We'll be back in about 30 minutes. Thereafter, we'll eat at that restaurant over there, the one beside the shoe shines."

Shocking indeed, there was no restaurant 'over there'. Furthermore, my father would never point at something that quickly and then leave. I tried to stop him but he wouldn't listen.

"Dad, wait a minute! Why can't I go with you and mom? And another thing, there's no restaurant 'over there'."

My dad was lying, but I didn't know why, at least for the time being. Our flight was scheduled to leave at noon. It was 11:00 A.M.

I sat all alone on a typical uncomfortable airport seat. I guess airport management doesn't want travellers and visitors to get too comfortable in their seats; no one will use more than one seat or decide to sleep in the airport.

Pedestrian traffic in Belmont Airport started to pick up at 11:15 A.M. I saw travellers from different parts of Canada and the World.

I enjoyed myself so much time flew by at lightning speed. As I happened to glance up at a nearby clock I was shocked to realize that it was already 12:05 P.M.

Oh gosh! What happened? Did my parents forget get about me? Were they so deeply ingrained into their vacation travel? Or maybe something terrible has happened to them? Other terrifying thoughts raced through my mind. I leaped onto the floor and then ran to Gate #9.

No sooner had I begun to run I heard a sharp voice calling out to me.

"Hey kitty, stop right there! Don't take another step, or else you're going to be in very big trouble!"

I stopped in my tracks then turned to see who was shouting at me. It was a tall, burly tanned man whose head was shaped like a cantaloupe. He was wearing an airport security uniform,

an official looking badge on his shirt, and was grasping his holster.

"Kitty, it is absolutely forbidden to run in this airport, or any other airport for that matter! Listen up, next time we'll have to take you in for interrogation."

I nodded my head indicating approval and then apologized for my actions. Luckily, it was enough to get him off my back. I proceeded to walk to Gate #9, arriving there in a relatively short period of time. Shockingly, the seating area was empty. I couldn't understand what was going on.

I scanned the entire area, but didn't see my parents. I directed my gaze to the long corridor leading to the other terminals. After a brief pause, I continued walking through the corridor until I reached Gate #14. I saw a large congregation of people waiting for the door leading to the skywalk to be opened by airline personnel. Three Canuck Airlines personnel were standing behind a counter.

As soon as I approached them a slim, middle-aged woman grinned at me. Then, she waved me over. For a brief moment I assumed that my parents were redirected to this gate. Unfortunately, I was in for the shock of my life.

"Honey, I'm very sorry. I forgot about you. I have a letter for you ... I was supposed to give it to you at noon, I should've had you paged."

"Miss, please tell me where my parents are, where did they go?"

"I'm sorry kitty I don't know where your parents are at the moment. However, I do know one thing Mr. and Mrs. Williams left this letter for you. They told me that it was imperative you receive it."

I leaped up onto the counter, snatched the letter from the woman and then thanked her. By then, the entire congregation of people in the terminal was gawking at me. I felt like they knew something about the contents of the letter that I didn't.

"Wait honey," said the woman.

"What relation are you to the couple that gave me this letter?"

"Huh, I mean, umm, they were just friends, nothing special."

I felt blood rushing to my head and face, so much so I actually changed colour. I know this because a little girl who was standing near me said "mommy, why's that cat's face as red as the inside of a watermelon?"

It was time to leave. Although I sensed the woman had more to say I didn't care to hear it.

I leaped back onto the floor. After folding the letter and then placing it in my shoulder bag I proceeded to walk away, not looking back even once. I was acting out of instinct.

As I walked away I pondered about what the contents of the letter were. And where did my parents go?

I decided that the best place to read the letter was in the restroom. I passed several airport restrooms until I reached the one furthest from the most congested areas.

I entered the restroom took several steps towards the sink and then leaped onto it. Thankfully, this particular restroom was empty.

I removed the letter from my shoulder bag, unfolded it and then unsealed it with one of my claws. I removed the single piece of paper in the letter and then unfolded it. I took several deep breaths and exhaling, bracing myself for the worst.

Dear Citizen Cat:

My husband and I have left you for good. Please read the entire content of this letter before you judge us. You are not our biological son. We adopted you when you were very young. Mr. Williams and I had been married for 5 years, unable to have a child we decided to adopt a cat.

We purchased you from The Belmont Puppy Mill. None of the puppy mill staff knew what your real name was or who your biological parents were. Apparently, you were either stolen from a human family or snatched from your biological mother. Therefore, the staff referred to you as Citizen Cat. You were certainly born in Canada making you a citizen and obviously, you belonged to the cat species.

My husband and I tried ever-so-dearly to raise you as a genuine Williams, but for some reason you couldn't make the grade. Furthermore, on numerous occasions you were nasty to us, argumentative, insolent, and aggressive, not showing us the kind of love that we needed.

Last night while you were sound asleep we inserted 500 dollars into your shoulder bag. This money should get you off to a good start. We had to empty out your checking account; it was really our money.

Don't wait for us; don't even fantasize about us or imagine that someday we'll return. We're not trying to be abrasive we're trying to save you a series of headaches and let-downs.

The Williams name isn't cheap. And as for some of your peasant friends, especially that Randy rodent, our neighbours were starting to talk about us.

We had all of the names on your I.D.s in your shoulder bag changed; the name on them now reads Citizen Cat. We didn't want you to run into any legal problems.

One last thing you are forbidden to use the Williams name, even in your fantasies or in your dream states.

My husband and I want the very best for you. Please believe us, we like you!

Best of Regards,

Carter and Andrea Williams

What the hell is going on here? I asked myself. I'm not me, I'm someone else. 500 dollars inserted into my shoulder bag plus the one thousand that I already had on my person; although that seems like a lot of money it's not even enough to sign your average lease. I had no bank account, no assets, and absolutely no references.

Suddenly, I felt a powerful pulsating feeling in my temples. I figured it was anxiety, stress, and confusion, a normal response considering what I was going through.

"Excuse me, are you done with your business in this airport? Or do I have to call for backup!"

I turned to look at who was speaking to me, and lo and behold it was the burly airport security guard. He seemed to be a lot angrier than our first meeting. I wasn't in the mood to take anything from anyone.

I crouched down and then leaped onto his chest grasping his shirt with my hind-legs. I began a horrendous assault on him, throwing every kind of punch in the book, and some. I finished off my assault by giving him a powerful head-butt. He fell backwards unto the marble floor. He was out cold.

I'd never really been a physical cat, but under the circumstances I had to shut that guard up. I scanned the area, noticing 2 cameras in the restroom, worse yet both lenses were aimed right at me. The cameras moved by remote control. I figured that backup was on its way. It was time for me to make a lightning-fast exit, and just in time may I add.

As soon as I exited the restroom I saw about 20 armed men and women running towards me; worse yet, they were coming at me from the right and the left. There was nowhere to go.

Travellers and visitors alike began to converge upon the area. This is normal behaviour for humans. They have this urge to want to know what's going on. And they say cats are curious.

I only had a few moments to spare. Worse yet the armed men started to draw their weapons.

I scanned the entire area up, down, left and right but found no viable option. Then, I heard a honk of a car horn. It was from outside, I saw a cab. An escape plan dawned on me. Without wasting a moment I ran to the nearest window and then leaped through it, smashing it, catapulting myself along with countless shards and bits of glass onto the outdoors.

No sooner had I landed on the ground I heard an alarm and the voice of a stern sounding man on the intercom.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is Captain John Baron speaking. I am the director of Airport Security. We have a situation; please stay calm, do not run, stay where you are and then immediately lie on the marble floor. Please DO NOT say a word until you get an okay from airport security; it will be conveyed through the intercom."

Not a single person listened to Captain Baron. Incredible chaos ensued people were running in all directions, some were screaming, others were shouting. I took advantage of the commotion, running across the street and then through the parking lot.

Like a big cat eyeing prey I zoomed in on one particular vehicle. It was a police car. Now, who would ever suspect that a cat on the run would leap into a police vehicle?

I stayed very low, not wanting anyone to see me. The car was parked roughly 50 yards straight ahead. As soon as I got to within 10 feet of the police vehicle I zoomed in on an open window. With incredible accuracy and athletic prowess, I leaped into the car landing in the back.

The sun was shining on the car making it very difficult for me to be completely aware of my surroundings. So, I did the next best thing; I slithered underneath my seat, staying put. As soon as I was well-hidden began to scent food. It smelled like a Tim Horton's jelly filled donut.

To put it mildly, I couldn't resist the temptation. I figured the officer left his car to get some coffee to have with his donut.

I cropped up my ears, focused my eyes and sniffed the air. I scaled the back of the front seat and then descended it. Now, I was eye-to-eye with a box of donuts. Donuts! Wow, more than

one donut! I was flabbergasted, so much so I completely forgot about the commotion around me.

With lightning speed I lifted the top of the box eyeing 2 large jelly filled donuts. I snatched one eating it in the exact manner a crocodile eats a large slab of flesh, shifting my head left to right and vice versa and chomping down on my donut. Then, I ate the second donut, but this time I ate it the manner a dominant male lion eats a slab of flesh. I roared, used my powerful jaws and teeth to rip through the donut, not allowing anyone to get too close to my food. By meal's end I was satiated. Indeed, it felt like I'd eaten a large slab of zebra flesh.

Stomach distended, happy as can be, wow, I felt like I was on top of the world, specifically Mount Everest.

This euphoric feeling lasted roughly 15 minutes. I was abruptly brought back to reality by the stamping footsteps of a human being. Judging from the walking style and jingle sound I deduced that it was an officer of the law. What! An officer of the law; I righted myself and then leaped over the front seats landing on the foot rest of the back seats.

Thank goodness I was securely hidden. But that didn't alter the mood of the officer. As soon as he entered the police vehicle he put a gargantuan cup of coffee in the cup holder, then fastened his seat belt, turned on the ignition, and extended his right arm to open the box of donuts. And boy, did he get the surprise of his life. Immediately, he began to talk to himself.

"What the hell! Who the hell! What is going on here, damn-it! I had 2 large jelly filled donuts in that box.

Who is stupid enough to rob a police officer; more so to steal something out of a police vehicle? Whoever this guy or gal is, if I ever find out who you are I'll shoot you between the eyes. I'll make it look like I was defending myself.

I can't believe this. Who can you trust nowadays? This world is in shambles. Next time I'll make sure to lock my vehicle's doors. Everything will be safe and secure."

The policeman shifted the vehicle into gear and then began his drive out of the airport parking lot. For me, this was the only way out. I was a wanted kitty. Well, I had no choice in the matter. Cats don't like it when people pick on them, especially when the person is a large human being carrying a badge.

The policeman stopped his vehicle when he reached the exit gate. I curled up like a ball and cuffed my entire face using my right paw. The last thing that I wanted to do was sneeze or hiccup; either of the two would've been a dead giveaway, perhaps in a literal sense too.

"Officer Turner, how's it going?"

"Not bad Steve. I'm heading back to the Fenton Police Station. Upon arrival I'll check in with the desk Sergeant and then I'm going home. I'm tired as hell; maybe, I'll call it quits for this job too."

"Come on, Officer Turner. You're the best officer on the beat and in the whole world too. We're lucky you have airport duty this week."

"Thanks Steve, you helped raised my spirits. Anyway, have a good day and see you on Wednesday. I have a couple of days off."

Officer Turner drove slowly over the speed bump and then left the airport parking lot. Thereafter, there was a deafening silence for roughly 15 minutes. Then, out of the blue, Officer Turner and took a downward turn for the worse.

"What am I doing here? I have nothing to show for myself. My wife of 10 years recently filed for divorce. I'm certainly going to lose custody of my 3 kids. I've been a patrol officer for 15 years. Many of my friends have been promoted. One of them is a Captain. I'm a worn out middle-aged man; no chance of being promoted; I've had it with this job. It's so stressful."

Although I felt genuine pity and compassion for Officer Turner the main issue on my mind was getting back home. Therein, I could eat, rest, and wash up. Afterward, I could come up with a game plan, I mean, I was on borrowed time. Even the Williams' mansion was likely only a temporary stay.

All I had to do was stay put and be patient. Judging from our travelling speed we were roughly 10 or 15 minutes away from Belmont city limits. After entering city limits I could slither my way out through the back window without being spotted by Officer Turner. But if he did spot me one right cross to the face would end my problems. By the time he came to I'd be long gone. Don't get me wrong, non-violence is the best way, unless you're cornered and have no other options.

Shortly thereafter, Officer Turner took another turn for the worse, and this time it was deadly.

"My life isn't worth living. I can't take this anymore!"

I instinctively knew it was a suicide alert. But I couldn't help him. Somehow, I froze stiff. Perhaps it was my own instinct for survival that froze me. Who knows?

As for our location, I knew we weren't on the highway; we were probably on Jackson Road. But I couldn't be 100 percent certain without leaping onto the back seat and craning my neck. Unfortunately, that option was out of the question, for obvious reasons.

Officer Turner slowed down his vehicle leading to an eventual stop. He was parked on the shoulder of the road. For a moment I thought he was going to take a leak, or perhaps vomit.

"Life isn't what it's out to be. It totally sucks! I can't live on this planet any more. I don't care about my wife because I know she's having an affair a little squirt, probably a cat-faced idiot. As for my kids, they never really loved me."

Following a 10 second deafening silence I heard a POW sound; instantly, blood and brain tissue splattered throughout much of the interior of the vehicle, including yours truly. I leaped up onto the back seat, standing on my hind legs and craning my neck as far as possible.

My suspicions were correct. Officer Turner had blown his head off. Worse yet, I had much of his blood scattered all over my body.

Before I could contemplate the full extent of this shocking and tragic event I took notice of a vehicle that slowed down stopping parallel to our location.

It was time to get out of there. The last thing I needed was to be suspected of murdering an officer of the law. The police don't like it when one of their own commits suicide. Spouses and dependents receive no death benefits from a suicide. It would be better to call it a cold blooded murder. This way, everyone in the police department can save face.

I leaped out of the vehicle but not before several more vehicles converged upon the scene. We were on Jackson Road and close to Belmont city limits, roughly a mile away. Although this was my ultimate destination, being so close to Belmont meant that a 911 call would result in a quick police response.

I kept low, running deep into a grassy field heading to Belmont but in a circuitous manner. Running on Jackson Road would've been disastrous. Thankfully the sun had begun to set.

"Someone call the police! There's the cold-blooded killer kitty, he's running through the grassy field!" shouted a woman.

Worse was to come, "take his picture! Download his image and send it to the Belmont Police! There's likely a huge reward for his capture, dead or alive!" Shouting and more shouting came from different people. I figured it was doomsday for me.

Though I was scared and anxious, my blood was also boiling. I momentarily lost control of myself, stopping dead cold, craning my neck and then shouting back at my accusers, "no I didn't freaking kill that officer, he blew his own head off, he committed suicide, damn you all!"

As soon as I regained control of myself I felt the gravity of my mistake.

"There he is, right there! Now that we know where he is, keep your eyes fixed on him and above all else do not let him out of your sight!" shouted a tall, chubby man.

I instinctively went into snake mode slithering through the grass, weaving left to right and back again. Within a few

minutes the crowd had lost sight of me. Nevertheless, it wasn't enough. The grassy field that I was in was only a few times the size of a football field. The police could cordon off the area until sunrise or worse yet they could use their bloodhounds to sniff me out. Many of these police bloodhounds have a personal vendetta against cats, making matters even worse. A posse would certainly be formed soon thereafter.

My pulse and blood pressure rose so sharply I became dizzy. I don't remember exactly when, but I passed out. The stress of it all was simply too much for me. When I came to I noticed a handsome prairie dog hunched over me. No doubt, he didn't want to be seen by the forming posse.

"Hey, kitty, what did you do?"

"Listen, I didn't do anything, really." I explained my story to the prairie dog, keeping my description short and to the point.

As soon as I finished my story the prairie dog embraced me then gave me a kiss on each cheek. Believe me, that was a good consolation.

"Listen, Citizen you and I are kind of in the same boat. As you're surely well-aware, my people almost always live on the prairies. Aren't you curious why I'm living here? That's not all. My roommate and best friend in the whole world is a black-footed ferret."

"Huh, no way, that's absolutely impossible! Prairie dogs and black-footed ferrets never live together. They're arch enemies. I know as a fact that your people fear black-footed ferrets."

"Citizen, listen up. Morris and I became best friends out of circumstance and necessity. Our people, prairie dogs and black-footed ferrets that are living in the prairies have lost so much of our original homelands and are constantly being demonized and harmed by humans. We've endured numerous pogroms.

Morris and I boarded a cargo train in Alberta heading east. We decided to stop in Ontario. Well, we've been here for 3 whole years, and you know what, it beats living on the prairies.

Citizen, let me formally introduce myself. My name is Rick Huston. My friend's name is Morris Webb. I'll help you evade the posse, but umm, I want something in return.

I notice you're carrying a kitty shoulder bag. And judging from your appearance, mannerisms, and voice you can spare 50 dollars, right? I'm sorry, I'd love to help you for free, but you know how it is. Everything is for money."

I took out a 50 dollar bill from my shoulder bag, sniffed it, and then reluctantly gave it to Rick. It wasn't that I couldn't spare the money I was worried about additional money requests in the future. Besides, Rick was still a stranger.

"Rick, as stated in my personal mini-bio I am Citizen Cat, formerly and incorrectly known as Toby Williams.

Just one thing, where's Morris?"

"Morris left for a few days. He's roaming the downtown core sniffing for money. Humans drop money, believe me, it works. And it works so well I do it every so often. Sometimes we find 50 or even 100 dollar bills, but mostly we find coins and small denominations of bills.

Just about any sniffer dog can do it too. But prairies dogs and other low-lying animals have an incredible advantage, we aren't as noticeable to people.

Sirens blaring from Belmont interrupted our conversation. Not to mention the ever so growing crowd converging upon the scene of the suicide, though they believed it was a cold-blooded murder.

"Toby, Morris and I have access to 17 underground tunnels, with entry points and exits. Each of which is well camouflaged. And just in case we regularly smear the area with various animal and human scents to off-track any person or persons who search for us, especially those dreaded hounds. All hounds are the same when it comes to tracking other animals.

Anyway, let's not waste any more time, okay. Citizen, follow me. Tomorrow I'll show you our entire network of underground tunnels, on condition you don't tell anyone. Don't worry, I trust you. If you weren't in such a troubled bind I wouldn't have taken you in. The way I see it, you need me more than I need you."

Thank goodness the sun had set making it more difficult for my pursuers to see me, except of course, if they used night vision equipment. I wasn't taking any chances.

Rick and I instinctively kept low, slithering through the grass for roughly 5 minutes before we stopped.

"Citizen, this is our main entrance. Don't worry our tunnels aren't narrow like they are out in the prairies, and besides, Morris and I have absolutely no competitors in this grassy field.

Rick pulled back a thick sheet covering of grass and dirt, literally opening a doorway into an elaborately built entrance to a tunnel.

I followed Rick into the tunnel for several feet before I became claustrophobic. He stopped to see what was going on. By then I was hyperventilating, and feeling quite nauseous.

"Oh gosh Citizen, I'm really sorry. I forgot you're not designed for deep underground incursions. It won't be a problem. We'll backtrack some, to the spacious area near the entrance. I think you can survive there, right?"

"Yes, that place is okay for me, but please don't ask me to go any further. I'm not like you or Morris, and I'm certainly not a mole either.

Wait a minute, Rick. Oh my, my worst nightmare has come to pass. I hear the baying of bloodhounds! They're going to find me. I'm finished. Do you know what those kinds of dogs do to a wanted kitty? They'll treat me like a hunted fox, ripping me into pieces without any mercy whatsoever. Meanwhile, the police officers will be overjoyed at my suffering. They'll probably film my demise, downloading it into their system and manifesting it on You-tube and the national and international news outlets."

"No, they won't. You didn't take notice of the cloud cover above us, nor the thunder and heavy rain creeping ever-so-closely to our area."

"Rick, you're right. And umm, the rain along with your artificial scent decoys of the area will literally confuse the bloodhounds. Gosh, you made my day."

Soon after, a downpour ensued. Some water actually entered the tunnel. But thank goodness the downpour only lasted around 10 minutes. It was enough to neutralize the bloodhounds.

Rick took several steps to his right, grabbed a small sack and then reached inside. He proceeded to pull out 'handfuls' of a variety of nuts. He placed 4 handfuls beside me, doing the same for him-self. We enjoyed our meal. Although I would've preferred a meat and milk meal the nut variety was enough for the meantime.

Studying the area around me I felt relieved, the area was quite spacious. It almost felt like I was in a large reception room.

"Rick thanks a lot for your hospitality. You're an honour to every prairie dog in Canada, really. I hope you allow me to stay here for a few days. I don't know what kind of a composite photo they have of me."

"Citizen, don't you worry one bit. I'll find out in a jiffy, okay? Just let me call my friend Morris. He's an inherently snooty fellow, wanting to know what's going on everywhere. But he's extremely jealous too. If he ever suspected I took in another person even for a day, he'd go ballistic.

Rick pulled out his miniature phone and then proceeded to call Morris, but not before punching the speaker option. Then suddenly without notice, he turned off his phone.

"Citizen, can I take your picture please?"

"Huh, Rick, just look at me. I still haven't cleaned up from all the grass, dirt, and blood pasted on me."

"Umm, don't worry about it. C'mon, you and I are good friends."

I agreed to it, but I was a bit apprehensive. Rick's body language and tone of voice indicated that he was being deceitful. Deceitful about what, I didn't know. Anyway, I didn't think it was that serious of a matter.

After taking my picture he called Morris.

"Hey, Morris, it's me Rick."

"Of course it's you. You don't have to tell me that. I mean, who the hell else could it be? You and I are the biggest losers in town. We have no other friends but each other, and we're still not fathers; like any girl's going to approach a couple of goofs like us."

I couldn't help but notice Rick's face turn blood red, and he shrivelled up like a prune. He was so humiliated I thought he was going to pass out.

"Umm, okay, listen, Morris, I need some vital information, okay? What have you heard about the killer cat?"

"The entire downtown core of Belmont is swarming with local and provincial police. What's more, word is they've called in the big boys, I mean the RCMP."

The killer cat supposedly brutally beat an airport security officer, and then he forced Officer Turner to drive him away from the airport. Apparently, the killer cat had placed a gun to the head of Officer Turner. But why did he shoot him? All he had to do was leap out of the police vehicle and then disappear."

I was finished. Even Morris, a black-footed ferret had already tried and convicted me of this heinous crime.

"Morris, do they have a description or a composite of the killer cat?"

"Rick, unfortunately they don't. The police and local volunteers have posted so-called composites of the killer cat. Unfortunately the composites are fuzzy and unclear."

I'll tell you something, Rick, this cat is very lucky. The airport surveillance cameras were malfunctioning at the time of the restroom beating. Worse yet, every single witness that came forward had a unique description of the cat. It's all contradictory stuff. The best thing this cat could do is stay low for a few days then leave this part of Canada for good."

Wait a minute, Rick, why are you so interested in this killer cat?"

"Umm, Morris, the killing occurred on Jackson Road just beyond the peripheral of our grassy field. How could I not be interested in this case?"

"Rick, there's one more thing. It has to do with the 10 thousand dollar reward for any information leading to the arrest and conviction of this cat. The reward was posted by the city, and the way it looks it'll increase geometrically as time passes, especially if the killer cat commits subsequent heinous

crimes. Other organizations are going to pitch in along with citizens of Belmont.

As soon as Rick heard the figure given to him he started to drool like a rabid dog. Then, he started gyrating. If that wasn't enough his eyes rolled and then he dropped to the ground. Rick was out cold. I knew he didn't die, he never stopped breathing.

Instantly, I felt a very powerful physiological response. My pulse raced like a stallion and my blood pressure soared to a dangerous level. In addition, my muscles tightened and my face reddened.

My flight or flight instinct was telling me that I was in grave danger; it was in full drive.

It took half an hour for my adrenaline level to drop back to normal. It didn't take long for me to realize that Rick and Morris couldn't be trusted. The money was too tempting a prize.

As I was pondering about what my next move would be, I eyed Rick intently. Something deep within my psyche was trying to catapult itself into my conscious mind, and certainly it didn't take long before it happened. I found myself in 'lion mode'. Every single cat has this inherent instinct.

My muscles tightened and swelled, I could feel blood rush throughout my body, teeth and claws bared, and I was frothing at the mouth like a starving Siberian tiger.

I focused my attention on Rick's neck, in particular his jugular vein. I slowly bent over, opened my mouth and then grasped my target. All I had to do was bite, and it would've been over.

But I just couldn't do it. My urge to be a good kitty kept my behaviour in check. Thank goodness I was able to exit lion mode. I didn't want to kill Rick; furthermore, Morris would likely put one and one together, giving the authorities one more reason to gun me down in cold blood.

I studied the area searching for something to take. I reached over to my side and grabbed two 'handfuls' of nuts then placed them in my mouth. I swallowed them whole.

Then, I reached into Rick's shoulder bag and proceeded to snatch wads of cash. The money was in denominations of 20 dollar bills (my favourite).

Because Rick was possibly readying himself to pull a fast one on me, I considered my action a form of pre-emptive retaliation.

An overhead clock read midnight. Although I felt hyper on the outside, I was very sleepy on the inside. I couldn't sleep beside Rick, if he awakened before me there's no telling what he would've done to me. Furthermore, I had no idea when Morris was returning.

I decided to leave the area practicing extreme caution. I placed myself on high alert, sniffing my way out, cropping up my ears to detect any dangerous sounds, and focusing my eyes on key areas and objects.

Step-by-step I slowly left the entrance to the tunnels. As soon as I was able to crane my neck above the mouth of the entrance I observed the grassy field and the scene of the suicide. Thankfully the crowd had disappeared. The crime scene was cordoned off by yellow police tape indicating it was a NO ENTRY crime scene.

Therein were 2 officers of the law, a policeman and a policewoman. They appeared to be half-asleep.

I couldn't see anyone using night vision technology. But I couldn't forget that the police were hell-bent on capturing the 'killer kitty'. I decided to slither through the grassy field, keeping the suicide scene on my left. The authorities were searching for a cat, not a slithering reptile.

It took me roughly an hour to enter Belmont city limits. And boy was I happy! No sooner had I felt joy, I collapsed onto the shoulder of Marcus Road, a dirty and dusty road.

I awakened a couple hours later somewhat refreshed and ready to continue my trek into town. It would be an anxiety-inducing experience. The fact is, I lived on the opposite side of town, specifically west Belmont. That's where the super rich folks lived. The safest passage to my home was through downtown. Therein were buildings, alleyways and other places I could slither into.

I was facing the WELCOME TO BELMONT ONTARIO sign. There were several police vehicles positioned 50 yards apart crossing the main entrance into town.

Thank goodness it was dark. All I had to do was reach deep into the downtown core. I was born and raised in Belmont, therefore, if a police officer were to stop me I could say that I was taking a stroll. But for the time being, it was way past midnight and so close to the suicide scene, I smelled like a grassy muddy field with blood stains smeared on my body, and I was a cat, it would be quite suspicious.

I decided to slither my way on the main bridge leading into town, and continuing onward until I passed the police vehicles. I took several deep breaths then got to work. The Belmont Bridge was roughly 50 yards long. Actually, it wasn't much of a bridge. It was built in the early 1800s as a crossing above the Pierson Pond. Unfortunately, the pond dried up in the mid-20th century

I used much of my energy to cross the bridge. By the time I reached the other side I was panting like crazy. The police vehicles were no longer in the area. Perhaps they were shuffling

their vehicles from one area of town to another. Who knows? I wasn't in the mood to ponder about it.

I studied my surroundings well. I deduced that my best option was to enter downtown in a straight path. Hamilton Street would lead me to the downtown core.

Belmont Ontario is a beautiful place. Roughly a dozen tree species dotted the peripheral of its downtown. I continued my walk on Hamilton Street, surprisingly not seeing a single vehicle. As I was pondering about this fact, I remembered something important. It was close to 3:00 A.M. Monday morning. Even posse members must sleep. Besides, Monday is almost always the slowest work day.

I was able to enter the downtown core without being spotted by a single officer of the law. But I did have a major problem though. I was very stinky and dirty. I needed a long hot shower, and to drink my fill of clean water.

Being from Belmont I knew exactly where to go. The Belmont Sports Center had 2 dozen shower heads in its gymnasium. I knew exactly how to get there. Mr. and Mrs. Williams always had a membership therein. Often-times, they'd take me along with them.

I only had a couple of hours until dawn. I'd lose my night vision advantage. With no time to waste I galloped to the Sports Center. I reached the outlying border in 10 minutes. Now, my biggest problem was getting inside without being spotted. There were visible cameras scattered in strategic locations. And no doubt, there were numerous hidden cameras too.

I studied the area intently. The first time round I saw no openings. But then I took notice of a large tree roughly 20 feet away from the gymnasium. Eureka! I had a plan.

I studied the tree carefully. Then, I slithered forward until I reached it. I paused for a moment then scaled the tree with lightning speed. Thereafter, I slithered to a large branch nearest the gymnasium.

I readied myself, took 3 deep breaths, and then leaped onto the gymnasium building I exhaled as soon as I landed then I slithered down to the first floor. As far as I knew I'd evaded all cameras.

Using my powerful claws and paws I pried a window open. Then I craned my neck, scanning the interior with caution. I slowly descended unto the marble floor and then ran to the shower room, wherein the first thing I did was drink my fill of water. Then I washed myself thoroughly and dried up using a clean white towel.

Suddenly, I heard a squeaky sound emanating from the entrance door of the shower room. I panicked, not knowing what to do I pooped and peed on the floor. Afterwards I galloped to

the door and waited patiently to see who was going to enter the shower room.

As soon as the door opened I saw a dark haired, well-built security guard. But for some reason he looked beaten, kind of like a boxer who went 15 rounds with a considerably better opponent. He had hamburger eyes, a bruised nose, lips that looked like they'd been punched really hard. The fellow who beat the security guard mercilessly was one heck of a prize fighter.

I was cornered. Not knowing what to do, I froze in silence. It seemed like forever before I could think correctly. I'd already left my shower room stall and was heading for the exit. The security guard was standing between me and the exit. He was carrying a night stick in his right hand. Attached to his belt were zip cuffs, pepper spray, and a miniature flash light, any of which was a formidable weapon.

Cats' history in North America is rife with incidents of police and animal control officers' brutality. Countless cats have been pepper sprayed and zip-cuffed; flashlights can be used as head clubbers if needed. Most often the victimized cat is innocent of any wrongdoing, as I certainly was.

All the security guard had to do was to extend his left arm and flick the light switch; therein the entire area would be illuminated. No, he had other plans. I'd soon discover that this particular fellow was for the time being, public enemy number one for me.

"Hey kitty I took notice of you on several of our monitors. I'm the only security guard that knows of your presence here. I didn't follow standard procedure, umm, I came here alone and I didn't inform my shift supervisor of your presence. Who cares, it'll be our little secret.

Initially, I thought you were a rat or a mouse. But then I followed your moves quite carefully. Judging from your posture, elegance, and agility it became apparent to me that you were a cat. Which cat, well, at first I was puzzled. Why would a cat break into our sports center just to take a shower and have a satisfying drink of water? Hmm!

The only cat that I know who could ever have the audacity, conceit, and who'd need to do this is the killer kitty. That's not all. I have a personal vendetta against you; you hear me you little slime ball. Don't insult me by not remembering me. Just take a deep sniff."

What the heck was this mentally deranged fellow talking about? I wondered to myself. But then, instinct took over, his voice was familiar. Still, I didn't know who he was. So, I took his advice by inhaling deeply through my nose. Oh gosh.

"Now do you remember me? I'm that poor airport security guard that you beat the daylights out of in the restroom! Guess

what? I'm here for justice, and I'm going to have a field day beating you to a pulp."

Jeepers, I was shocked! I didn't know what to do. There was no time to brainstorm. Furthermore, I was in a state of emotional upheaval. How could I gather my thoughts under the circumstances?

The security guard took 2 steps in my direction. Then, he firmly grasped his night stick using his right hand. After a pause he changed his position, standing like a batter in a ball game. He took several powerful practice swings, indicating that my head would be the main target.

I carefully backtracked to the shower stalls. Then, I spoke my mind.

"Listen, I don't want to hurt you. Take my advice and leave this place immediately. I'm dead serious, okay. As for the beating that I gave you it was an act of pre-emptive self-defence. You were looking for a fight, I gave it to you. If you do as I say I'll forget this incident ever took place."

"What, are you out of your mind? Kitty, I'm coming after you."

"No you're not!"

I could hear the security guard stealthily creeping towards me. I waited for a moment before reacting. The only thing to do in this kind of a situation is to fight or flee. The latter was impossible due to my location.

I crept towards the security guard intent on only knocking him out for a short while. It would have to be a lightning-fast assault though. He had some serious weapons on his person.

As soon as I was within striking distance I squatted, and then prepared myself to pounce on him. But the security guard wasn't going to stop badgering me.

"Hey kitty, what's the matter? Are you afraid of me because mommy and daddy aren't here to help you?"

He hit a major nerve, no, an artery. I was now hell-bent on beating this fellow to a pulp.

But just then something quite unexpected happened. The security guard inadvertently stepped on a small puddle of water. Considering where we were it was no surprise to me. However, what ensued was.

"Help" ... Thump!

The security guard fell hitting the back of his head on the marble floor. I slowly crept towards him, leaped onto his chest and then listened for a pulse. Then, I carefully parted both of his eyelids. After studying his eyes intently and feeling no pulse I came to the conclusion that he was dead.

I had to get out of there really fast. I ran out of the men's locker room continuing on through a long hallway.

Shockingly, the intruder alarm went off. I continued running down the hall; I heard one door after another locking. This must've been programmed into the computer system. I continued running until I reached a double-door exit. I leaped onto the silver bar. The force of my leap pushed the doors open. As soon as I landed onto the ground on the other side the doors automatically locked. Boy, I barely got through. A few more seconds and I would've been trapped inside.

Soon all hell broke loose. I was certain that the authorities were going to call this a homicide. The camera would prove that a kitty unlawfully entered the Belmont Sports Center late in the night. Furthermore, our presence in the men's restroom would likely be established. But considering how tough I was even a real life Perry Mason couldn't get me a Not Guilty verdict.

Sirens were blazing from all directions, and converging upon The Belmont Sports Center. I scanned the area intently, looking for a way out from this horrible predicament. I ran as fast as I could to Green Street, well, it was the closest street from my location.

I continued to run, swerve and around buildings and through alleyways. I stopped as soon as I reached a dead-end alley. Thankfully, there were 4 dumpsters aligned beside each other. I hid behind the furthest dumpster. Therein, I slept until mid-day.

The following 10 days passed without incident. Although I must admit I lowered my head every time a police vehicle passed by.

Before heading home I decided to take a stroll along Anders Street located on the western boundary of the downtown core. It was 3:00 P.M. on a Wednesday.

I decided to enter Smith's Electronic Appliances Store. The owner, Rodney Smith, had a reputation for being an honest and polite man. Furthermore, his products were of prime quality, and he always stood by his money back guarantees.

Smith's was a medium-sized store. I figured I'd go in browse around for a while and then begin my trek home. I took a deep breath held it for a few seconds, and then entered the store.

"Hello, kitty, I'm Laura, I hope you're having a beautiful day. If you need any help please feel free to ask."

I nodded my head, gave her a slight grin then responded.

"Thanks, I'm having an incredible day. You must be new Here? I mean, I've been in Smith's many time before, but this is the first time that I see you."

"Yes, I'm a newbie. I've only been here since Saturday. I take my weekend on Thursdays and Fridays."

I grinned at her without baring my canines, indicating a friendly stance on my part.

I continued strolling through Smith's heading to the televisions section. Before the Williams left I had my own giant HD screen television. In all we had six of them. I missed lying down on my bed watching movies I taped on my box and also other movies on DVDs.

I stood in front of the largest television. Gosh it must've been a 100 incher. I couldn't believe my eyes; technology was taking us to new heights.

I couldn't help but notice the Breaking News story coming from CBC News. Something was terribly wrong. The reporters were at the scene of Officer Turner's suicide. The anchor, Linda Carey is a real-life MILF who behaved like a teeny bopper; she refused to act her own age.

"Attention Citizens of Belmont Ontario and the rest of Canada. We have a break in the dangerous killer cat story."

Suddenly, the camera man expanded the scope of vision to include 2 other persons.

"On my right is Rick Huston a prairie dog, and long-time resident of the grassy field beside town. On my left is his roommate Morris Webb, a black-footed ferret.

"Rick, I know you're still dazed from the beating that the killer cat gave you, and your memory is a bit foggy, but can you tell the viewers what you do remember."

"Sunday evening I saw a cat fleeing the scene of the cold-blooded murder, the murder of Officer Turner. The cat looked ferocious. Before I could hide he seized me by the throat and then proceeded to drag me into my den. Thereafter, he threatened to kill me if I told anyone where he was hiding. I guess his plan was to stay in my den until things cooled off. Morris is my witness.

Linda, I apologize for not remembering the cat's name, but I do remember five important things about him; first, he confessed to being a natural born killer going so far as bragging about kills, second he was very dirty, third he was born in The Belmont Puppy Mill, fourth he was adopted by a filthy rich couple who didn't show him any love and then dumped him like a dirty cloth, fifth I have a photo of him.

And, oh, about the reward, I heard they raised it to 100 thousand dollars. Linda, do you know anything about that?"

"Honey, I do. And if I help you guys find this killer kitty the 3 of us can split the reward, okay?"

Rick nodded his head in approval and then flashed a photo of me; it was computer enhanced to show what I'd probably look like if I was clean. I must say, the photo did resemble me. Oh my dear.

Suddenly, I felt as though danger was nearby. The store manager's eyes were fixed on the same television monitor. It was time to go home.

"Hi kitty, umm, would you like to check out some of our other televisions? Or our computers and stereos, and whatever else you want."

I eyed the store manager and then scanned the interior of Smith's store. Laura was standing beside the only exit with phone in hand. She kept looking at me and then away. I was certain the store workers were intent on turning me in.

I focused my vision on Laura's lips to determine what she was saying.

"Yes, Captain Cromwell, I think the killer cat is inside our store. Now, about the reward, is it still 100 thousand dollars ... oh my dear, it's now 200 thousand dollars. Umm, yes, I'll keep him inside the store even if I have to fight him with my bare fists."

I couldn't wait any longer. I had to leave Smith's store. I casually walked away from the store manager in spite of him calling me. As soon as I was 20 feet from Laura I sprinted to the exit, and then leaped right through the glass door.

Thereafter, all hell broke loose. Countless shards and bits of glass were catapulted into the air, dropping onto the ground. Worse yet, the store alarm went off. I glanced back just once, and then proceeded to run westbound. I kept saying to myself 'home sweet home'.

I still had a few hours of daytime to deal with, making matters that much worse. I wasn't going to allow anyone to capture me alive. The possibility of having to spend the rest of my life behind bars was too unbearable. Like most other cats, I needed my freedom.

I changed my style of running, sprinting like a cheetah. Although cheetahs have minimal endurance they have incredible short-term stamina, able to sprint over 60 mph per hour.

I ran like crazy for the next five blocks stopping at the Belmont Little League Ball Field. Therein, I ran under the bleachers located near the north end dugout, almost instantly, I puked my brains out. After puking all of the contents of my stomach I walked over to the next congregation of bleachers and then slithered underneath them. Therein, I rested until roughly an hour after sunset. It was a beautiful star-filled sky and the moon was as shiny as can be.

Upon awakening I heard nothing, silence was my friend. It was worse than hearing sirens. But my predicament had worsened. No doubt, the Smith's store cameras were working. The composite photos and surveillance video would be the real McCoy (me).

Home was about six blocks away. But I had more important business to take care of. I noticed a drinking fountain roughly 50 feet to my left. I walked to it, leaped onto the fountain and then pressed the button for water. I quenched my thirst and some.

Following my last gulp I took eyed of a group of teens heading in my direction. I didn't want them to see me; teens can be bad news for cats at times. I was now a wanted kitty and in no mood to be harassed or teased by anybody.

I leaped onto the ground then walked the bleachers on the other end of the ball field, hiding underneath them.

Three teens, including a couple of black-haired guys and a scrawny red-haired girl approached the drinking fountain then each proceeded to have a drink of water, one at a time.

"Hey Robert, what do you think about the 200 thousand dollar reward for the killer kitty?"

Stan, listen, if I ever see that kitty I'll do what any red-blooded sane teen would do, I'll kill it and then carry it to the Belmont Police Station. Therein, I'll ask for my handsome reward.

"Guys, wait a minute. I saw a composite of the so-called killer cat. I can't believe that a cat that's very cute and beautiful could kill anyone. But that doesn't mean that I won't kill this poor kitty for the reward money," said the red-haired girl. The three teens manifested wicked smiles.

"Stacy, you're one of the guys. That's why Stan and I feel comfortable around you. You make us feel at ease. Maybe we should play detective. Now, where would this cat hide? The news report about him in Smith's is recent. It happened just a short while ago.

I froze still until the three teens left the area. Although I was enraged at what they said, it was a beneficial wake up call. Even three loser teens wanted my hide, preferably dead. I knew that my days in Belmont had shrunk to one day at the very most, or perhaps only until the following morning.

Regarding the route to choose when heading home I had several options, but chose the most direct one. Long Street began just past the peripheral of the west end of the ball field, just behind center field.

I scanned the area intently then entered the infield area, heading directly to center field. Upon reaching center field a dark van suddenly appeared out of nowhere. It was roughly 50 yards from my location.

I dove into the outfield grass then froze still. I only kept a slit in my eyes for viewing. I didn't want to take any chances. Upon closer observation it became apparent that this dark van belonged to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

I'd seen this kind of van before. Suddenly, a very powerful, wide angled search light was turned on. I slithered my body deep into the ground but kept my face up; it was imperative that I see my surroundings.

The RCMP van moved slowly, the search light scanned the area. The search light stopped moving on 2 occasions; in reality I saw a couple of squirrels scurry from left field to right field. Both were smiling. I guess they were playing a game with the RCMP; I wasn't.

As soon as the RCMP van disappeared into the night I stood up continuing my walk through the ball-field. I braced myself before taking my first step on Long Street. All I had to do now was walk for roughly 15 minutes until arriving home. I still had to be very careful about the neighbourhood watch patrol. I was officially entering the richest neighbourhood in Belmont. And as such, I expected to be watched by suspicious eyes. The residents in our neighbourhood aren't only interested in turning in prowlers and burglars, they want to know what their neighbours are doing.

The closer I got to home the more jittery I became. When I reached 1550 Park Boulevard I collapsed out of sheer joy. I couldn't believe my eyes! Thank goodness I was home again! But as soon as I got up I noticed a sign that read TERRY BOLTON REAL ESTATE, and pasted on the sign was the word SOLD. Oh no. It couldn't have been sold. Mr. and Mrs. Williams would never sell our home.

I approached the front door apprehensively. After a moment of motionlessness I removed the house key from my shoulder bag. Then, I leaped onto the doorknob readying my house key. I attempted to shove the key into the key hole. It didn't go in. Furthermore, there was an extra lock on the door.

Worse yet, as I was pondering about the event a neighbourhood security van drove into the driveway with lights blaring right at me.

I froze, in the same manner a poor, helpless deer freezes when it makes eye contact with a filthy sports hunter, or an oncoming vehicle. I couldn't move a muscle.

A husky middle-aged man carrying a night stick exited the van. He approached me directly, in predatory fashion.

"Hey kitty, what the hell are you doing here? Oh, wait a minute, I know you. I've seen you before. You live in this neighbourhood, right? Actually, wait, I remember, you live in this house, correct?"

"Huh, officer, oh, yes, I certainly do. Actually, I'm here to get a last look at our home. I know we sold it and all, but the buyers aren't scheduled to move in until next week, yes, that's right next week."

"Okay, kitty, listen up. Tonight I'll let you off the hook, for good times' sake. You lived here before but you don't live here anymore. You can have a maximum of 24 hours in your previous home; the alarm system for the new owners will be installed the day after tomorrow.

If I see you again even one minute after 24 hours expect to be cuffed; then I'll call the police."

"Jeepers officer thanks, umm, a million times over. I guarantee that I'll be gone in 24 hours or less. In fact, I only want to sleep the night here, eat a nice breakfast and then leave forever."

"Where did Mr. and Mrs. Williams move to anyway?"

"Huh, umm, they moved to Winnipeg?"

"Why aren't you with them?"

"Umm, oh, I was staying over at a friend's house. Tonight's my last night in Belmont. I leave tomorrow; I'm flying to Winnipeg."

The burly officer grinned then returned to his van and drove off. I stayed motionless until he was out of sight.

I picked both locks using my claws. Believe me, it was a strenuous job.

As soon as I opened the door I got the shock of my life. Our home was practically empty, no furniture, even the carpets had been removed.

I headed straight for the Williams' previous bedroom. As soon as I entered it I took notice of a man and a woman sleeping on a Queen Size bed. They weren't Mr. or Mrs. Williams. If they were the new owners then why did the security officer allow me inside? No, they were freeloaders.

I realized that I couldn't be seen by either of them. No doubt, they could be an extremely dangerous couple. Thankfully, the house was almost all dark, except for a hazy lamp scattered here and there.

I left the bedroom and then headed to the kitchen. Therein, I feasted and drank until I almost burst at the seams. Regarding my actions, I didn't have much choice. I had no idea when or where my next meal would come from. Sure, I had money, but I was also a wanted kitty. As long as I was in Belmont I had to keep looking over my shoulder, not trusting anyone even a cat like myself. The reward money would turn an honest John best friend into a tattler.

Immediately following the feast I felt an urge to nap. As soon as I closed my eyes I fell into a deep sleep, lasting until 8:00 A.M. the following day. I didn't wake up on my own though, I was awakened by the voice of a man and a woman arguing about the cost of the house.

I took advantage of the situation by exiting the mansion through the back door. I made sure to close the door behind me, but as soon as I did I remembered that I'd left the front door open the night before. I ran to the front of the mansion and then slowly closed the door. I heard the sound of treading feet fast approaching. I turned and then ran away as fast as I could.

GOODBYE BELMONT ONTARIO

A few blocks onward I slowed down to a walking pace. I was certain that leaving Belmont was imperative. It had taken me several days to figure out where and when to leave.

I figured the police had posted a composite of me in the bus and train station, and the airport. Considering I had no car, there was only one thing to do; hitch a ride out of Belmont until I reached another town.

It was a warm sunny day, a light breeze kept me cool. When the time came I changed direction heading straight for the highway; it was only a 10 minute walk from my location.

As soon as I was near the entry ramp to the highway I leaped aside onto a large patch of grass. Therein, I eyed each and every vehicle desperately searching for someone to give me a ride. I spotted a potential target; thereby I stood on my hind legs and then extended my dew claw indicating a hitchhiking stance.

A male motorist in a dark pickup truck pulled over just a few feet from me. This fellow was a real grease-ball, in the literal sense. He was sweating profusely, was greasy haired, smelly, and carried at least 100 pounds of excessive blubber. Judging from what I could see he was well over six feet.

To tell you the truth he gave me the creeps. He just sat there staring at me. In cat language this indicates a direct challenge. But this guy wasn't a cat he was as human as can be. In his language this kind of a stare indicates mental instability, or danger.

I wasn't in the mood to back down from a grease-ball. I stared back; in fact I puffed out my body, extended my claws, and bared my canines. When I realized it wasn't enough I hissed loudly, even spitting in his direction.

The man bent over like he was reaching for something. As soon as he righted himself I noticed he was holding a white shirt but it appeared there was writing on it. He grinned at me and then held up the shirt so I could read what was written on it; I'M A CAT AND DOG KILLER!

No wonder the shirt had been tucked underneath his seat. Before I could comprehend the entirety of the situation the man brandished a large hunting rifle.

"Boy, you better come here! I'm not joshing you. Let me get a good shot at you, right between the eyes. You won't mind if I use your head for taxidermy purposes ... ha ... ha ... ha!"

This fellow was obviously a foreigner. He spoke like a real southerner. Well, I had to show him that yours truly a Canadian cat would not tolerate this kind of behaviour in my beloved country.

Considering that I wasn't bullet proof and there was nowhere to run to I needed to induce the man to leave his van without firing a shot. Thereafter, I'd make my move.

Instantly, I fell onto the grass, freezing still and breathing through my nose without altering the size of my diaphragm.

"Hey, kitty, you can't freaking do that! I wanted to shoot you between the eyes while you were standing and looking at me. C'mon, kitty, get up. You can't make me look like a coward in front of my hunting buddies."

My eyes were closed except for an undetectable slit in each eye. I could see the man's every move.

Thank goodness my plan worked. He exited his van, hunting held rifle with both hands. Ignoring traffic and any possible witnesses he approached me, beer belly dangling to his groin, chest dangling to his belly button, and thighs as large as a baby elephant's. No wonder this guy hated my guts. I was the epitome of what he wanted to be; slim and muscular, streamlined,

athletic, intelligent, confident, valiant and heroic, beautiful, and cute.

He approached me cautiously eyeing my diaphragm. No doubt, this fellow was also a sport hunter. Perhaps he spent most of his earnings going on safaris to kill endangered or exotic wildlife species. But no, not me, I was going to strike first.

As soon as he leaned over to inspect me I extended the claws on my forepaws, bared my teeth then threw a barrage of punches to his face and body. Believe me, if I really wanted to destroy him a good scratch or bite to his jugular would've knocked him out for the permanent count. But no, I was too nice of a kitty to do that.

No sooner had I knocked the man out motorists and their enthusiastic passengers began to converge upon the scene in great numbers. They began to cheer me on, "come on kitty finish that fat greasy tube of lard off! Don't give him a chance in hell, c'mon kitty make our day!"

For a moment I was flabbergasted and in awe. Wow, they loved me. But then I took notice of several passengers taking my picture. I quickly turned, lowered my head and ears and then tucked in my tail. I didn't want anyone to get a good shot of me. Whatever image they could get would be on the 6 o'clock news. The authorities would put two and two together, realizing that I was the killer cat, in the flesh and bone. I couldn't allow them to know which direction I was heading in.

I ran like crazy, away from the entry ramp up an embankment and then along a semi-isolated street. Because of the location of the vehicles it would've been virtually impossible for any driver to follow me. The top of the embankment was blocked off by a steel guard rail.

I ran for a quarter of a mile before slowing down, eventually stopping. Meanwhile, the sound of sirens blasted the entire area.

I reviewed my options by studying the entire area as far as the horizon. But just as I was trying to make up my mind about where to go I heard the sound of sirens approaching my position. No doubt, someone tipped off police.

There were 3 maple trees located diagonally across the street from me, thereafter was flatland a mile wide and a couple hundred yards deep behind it was a vast wooded area.

If I scaled one of the trees and my pursuers happened to take notice of me, it would be over. The authorities could simply gun me down. No one in Belmont would give a damn about a fugitive killer cat. Entering the wooded area would give me time to slither away, however, that was likely the first place they'd search and cordon off. The authorities could block off all exits into and out of the area. Furthermore, they could bring in their

search dogs. Worse yet, I'd have to deal with a large posse hell-bent on killing me. No thanks, I had to find a viable option fast.

I shifted my gaze onto the area on the opposite side, seeing nothing but a vast open sandy field containing patches of grass; a sign at the entry of the field read DODGE CONSTRUCTION INC. No wonder; the area had been chosen for major construction. Dodge Construction Inc. was a big name in town. Mr. and Mrs. Williams had frequent business transactions with the Dodge's. No doubt, if I'd returned to the area a couple of years later it would be unrecognizable containing condos, apartments, a business sector, and a large shopping center.

My pursuers were fast approaching. I conducted a major brainstorm, then Voila! I remembered one important event from my recent past.

I decided to dig my way into the ground like a prairie dog, and then sit still for as long as necessary.

I glanced back at my oncoming pursuers, then at the trees and wooded area, just to make sure that I was making the right choice. Then, I ran deep into the open field. With no time to waste I used all of my paws and the muscles and bones in my body to literally build a prairie dog home; a large hole and a tunnel. I had to splash and toss away dirt in all directions thank goodness it only took a short while for me to complete the job.

I leaped into the hole, then partially covered it, just enough to allow me to peek through and not be seen. I was roughly 400 yards distance from the street. My pursuers stopped their vehicles at the exact spot that I ran from. And oh were they intent on catching me. I counted a dozen vehicles, two of which were SWAT Team vans. A whole swarm of people exited the vehicles, intent on hunting me down like a fox, in a literal sense. The mere thought of it still terrifies me.

"Captain Smithson, where did the killer cat run to?"

"Officer Garcia, I know exactly where the killer cat is hiding. I can see him."

I pooped and peed into the ground. I was so shocked, then, I puked my brains out. I almost slithered out of my ground-hole, paws in the air, literally surrendering. Thankfully, Captain Smithson spoke before I could act.

"Officers, Detective Moreno, the killer cat must be in the wooded area. It's vast, easy to hide in, and contains many natural escape routes. Officer Garcia, call the canine unit. We need a pair from each of these dog breeds, German shepherd, Golden Retriever, and bloodhound, ASAP, no delay whatsoever. Also tell the dispatcher that Captain Smithson needs more men

and women at the scene; any and all officers on weekend or vacation leave must report for duty.

Lastly, call the RCMP. Tell them that we have the killer cat cornered and isolated inside the wooded area on Anderson Street West beside the DODGE construction area. They'll know what you're talking about. (Pointing to his right he said) This kitty isn't the first wanted criminal to escape deep into that wooded area.

All exits must be securely guarded, on one enters or leaves the wooded area without being questioned by me or by a detective working at the scene," said Captain Smithson.

"Captain, a short while ago you told me you wanted the new recruit, the cat to be part of our apprehension team, remember?"

"Officer Donovan, you have a good memory. I don't know what happened, I forgot about our new cat recruit. Officer Kitty's very excited about being part of the apprehension team. Be sure to tell the dispatcher that Officer Kitty has been ordered to the scene by Captain Smithson. I think it'll be awesome if he arrests the killer cat.

Thereafter, Officer Kitty must be sent off. I don't think it would be a good idea to burn the killer cat in the presence of Officer Kitty. He may snitch on us," said Officer Smithson.

I couldn't understand ... what! A freaking cat! I mean, what a traitor!

I was safely entrenched inside the burrowing hole, but atrociously dirty. I couldn't wait to take a nice shower or bath. My entire body was smeared and engulfed in dirt. Even my eyelids, nostrils, and ears had bits of sand in them.

I cropped up my ears and stayed still until nightfall. The search dogs were used and still, they didn't find me. I decided to crawl out from the hole to get a better look at what was going on. Captain Smithson had begun to throw a fit.

"What the hell do you mean you couldn't find him? Damn it! I'm not going back to the station empty handed. Where can that little cockroach be?"

Officer Kitty grinned at Captain Smithson then pointed his paw in what appeared to be in my direction. I thought he knew exactly where I was.

"Captain Smithson, I'll tell you what, throughout my search I kept telling my fellow officers they weren't going to find the killer cat. If I was the killer cat I'd run very deep into the open field then I'd hide somewhere therein. Maybe he's burrowed into the ground. Desperate cats take desperate measures," said Officer Kitty.

The search dogs converged around Officer Kitty. All that was needed was a go ahead from the Captain. But then, the best thing possible that could've happened did happen. In my fear and

dismay I didn't bother to look up at the sky even once since running into the field; dark clouds had covered the entire horizon.

Following three consecutive lightning bolts it began to rain like crazy; how absolutely beautiful.

I crawled towards the police to get an even closer look at my pursuers. Visibility was almost zero, however, I was able to see everyone at the scene enter their vehicles and drive off.

Naturally, I was still a bit apprehensive. Perhaps, they were pulling a fast one on me, using special high-powered binoculars to keep their eyes on the area.

Meanwhile, I stood up in order to take advantage of the downpour I took a nice shower. The downpour lasted about 15 minutes, and still there was no one in sight.

Thereafter, I violently shook my body until I was dry. Studying my options I decided to leave the open field. I headed to the wooded area. Staying there for several days was the most viable option.

As soon as I entered the wooded area I located a pre-treaded path. Though it was wet and slightly muddy it was the best that I could find. I strolled through the path for roughly 30 minutes. Considering that my pursuers had already searched the area thoroughly it was unlikely they'd return.

Time had proven me right. I stayed hidden therein for 3 days, strolling through the area, climbing trees, and practicing my pouncing routine.

I exited the wooded area at sunset. This way, I could utilize the darkness to my advantage. I treaded on the shoulder of Anderson Street until I reached the entry ramp into the highway.

Desperation forced me to stand on my hind legs and point my dew claw upwards; hitchhiking was the only way out of the area.

Although traffic into the highway had begun to simmer, motorists and their passengers tended to ignore my presence. In an ironic way, that was good news.

Then, a motorist in a dark van stopped beside me. It's common knowledge amongst animals who hitch rides not to get into a dark van especially at night. This kind of vehicle along with its colour and the fact that it was nightfall almost guarantees danger.

Just then, I noticed a patrol vehicle zooming on the other side of the highway. Although the emergency had nothing to do with me it reinforced the feeling of utter desperation that I felt.

The driver lowered the front passenger window and then stared at me for what seemed like an entire minute. He grinned then waved me over to his vehicle.

I crunched down, bared my teeth and extended my claws, hair spiked, and ready to fight till death if needed. But just then the driver spoke to me. Somehow, it didn't feel right; I didn't feel an aura of genuine consideration.

"Hey kitty if you're going westbound, come on in? I'd hate to see you stand out here all night long. Besides, I don't have to tell you about all the cat hating motorists out there. Chances are, sooner or later, one or more of them will spot you. Who knows what they'll do to you.

Please, kitty, I'm not a cat-hating human, really. I've got absolutely nothing against your people. C'mon, come in, I really can't wait too long. Other motorists use this ramp too."

I turned my gaze to the left taking notice of 3 oncoming vehicles. It was now or never. I had to make up my mind immediately.

I cautiously approached the dark van in order to get a better look at the driver. He was an unattractive white middle-aged man, chubby and scruffy bearded, dressed casually and definitely not very educated. Judging from his voice and physical attributes he'd served time in a maximum security penitentiary for numerous years. For what crime, I didn't know. Unfortunately, under the prevailing circumstances I had no choice. I decided to enter the vehicle, maintaining myself on yellow alert. If this fellow tried anything funny; the response would be a horrendous barrage of punches, scratches, and bites. There'd be no mercy upon him whatsoever.

I leaped into the van through the open window landing beside the driver. Instantly, I stood on my hind legs and craned my neck. I studied the interior intently making sure that there were no whips, chains, saws, or other tools of torture or sexual deviance. I learned a lot by being around humans almost all my life no one can really blame me for being apprehensive.

The interior of the van smelled like Vodka and orange juice. A weaker, faded scent was that of other hard liquors.

"Hey, kitty, why don't you buckle up before I continue my drive westward?"

"Huh, oh, okay, I'll buckle up. Umm, Mister, how far west are you going?"

"Well, kitty, I don't know. It all depends on how I feel, the weather, and whatever else. But I'll tell you one thing I'm going at least as far as northwest Saskatchewan. Perhaps I'll get lucky?"

In man talk I thought he was talking about scoring big with a nice woman; a one-night stand, or something of a sort. But, I was dead wrong on this issue and the man sensed it from my male-to-male grin.

"No, kitty, I'm not talking about that kind of scoring, but well, I do intend to get that too. No, I'm talking about seeing Big Foot in the flesh. I've got several pairs of binoculars in my van, and a hunting rifle, handgun, fishing gear, forest clothing, Bowie knife, and other stuff. I'm going to hide out for a while before I settle down.

Kitty, one fugitive to another, I know exactly who you are. You can't fool an ex-con. You're the killer cat, right?"

"Huh, no I'm not! And what do you mean 'ex-con'?"

"Let me formally introduce myself first. My name is Walter Gruber. Do you recognize my name?"

As soon as I was about to answer Walter's question a motorist behind us began to honk his horn. A moment later, more horns were honked. We forgot about oncoming traffic.

Walter shifted his van into DRIVE and then entered the highway.

"Walter, I know who you are. You're a convicted serial rapist/torturer/killer. But, umm, you were supposed to be serving a 1000 year sentence somewhere in Newfoundland. What happened?"

"Kitty, I did 10 years of hard time in a filthy penitentiary. I was housed in a special isolation block in The Norwalk Psychiatric Penitentiary. You're right I was sentenced to a 1000 year term. I'm an escapee. I've been free for about 3 months now. Don't worry I don't hate cats or any other animal species. And I'm not going to harm anyone else either. Spending 10 years in a filthy penitentiary has changed me. I don't want to go back ever again. I'm going to stay low for at least 5 years. I've got everything planned out, money, plastic surgery, a name change, and staying out of trouble."

"Walter, how did you know that I was the so-called killer cat?"

"I've been following your case faithfully. And another thing, I inherently felt that you're not like what I used to be. You seem to like a good person. I wouldn't be surprised if you were framed for these heinous crimes."

"I was. Now, before I explain to you my story, I must formally introduce myself. My name is Citizen Cat. Do you have time to hear my story?"

"Citizen, I sure do. Listen, we have a lot of empty time on our hands. Go slow and easy."

It took me roughly an hour to convey my entire story, with intimate details too. By the time I'd finished Walter's hands were shaking.

"Walter, my story couldn't have been that bad, or was it?"

"Huh, Citizen, what are you talking about?"

"Walter, you're hands are trembling, and your palms are soaking the steering wheel. I must've said something wrong, or did I?"

"No, that's not it. I loved your story, and for what little it's worth I do believe you; you're an innocent cat. I really feel bad about what has and is going to happen to you. Citizen, I'm a terrible person. I hurt many people."

"Walter, c'mon, I want you to open up to me. Cats are naturally suspicious. How old were you when you committed your first heinous crime?"

"I was 15 years-old and living in Mills Creek Nova Scotia, that's where I'm originally from. My girlfriend Karen and I left the school dance at 9:30 P.M. We were supposed to be back home no later than 10:30 P.M.

We walked through a nearby park. It was dark and lonely therein. At the time my mind was clear of any anger or tension. Things between Karen and I were nice.

The problem didn't start until we entered a gazebo and then sat down. Following a brief conversation I put my arm around her. Although she appeared to be shy I didn't take offence to it. It was only when I tried to kiss her did she push me away and shout NO.

Something inside me just clicked. I mean, I had to kiss her. She just couldn't say no to me. I felt dehumanized, and demanned, if I may call it that. I grabbed her arms and pulled her forcefully towards me. She screamed and tried to struggle; images of my father beating my mother because she was a snotty bitch flashed through my mind. I threw Karen on the ground, and well, I became very excited. I went through the act using the utmost force.

Somehow during the act I killed her. I don't remember exactly how it happened, but kitty, I couldn't leave her body in the gazebo. Too many witnesses saw us leaving the dance together.

Dragging her body away from the scene and deep into a nearby forested area made me feel like a powerful beast. It gave me a high. I buried Karen deep in the forest, and making sure that no sign of disturbed earth could be detected.

I got away with that killing because there was a serial killer on the loose in eastern Canada. Everyone assumed that it was him. In fact, the police hardly questioned me about Karen's disappearance. I continued on this path for many years. And you know the rest of the story, I was finally apprehended.

But Citizen, I'm now a better man. I regret hurting anyone. You're the only one in the whole world whom I can open up to. Following my conviction every single family member and friend that I ever had deserted me. Not a single person showed me any

compassion. The regional papers described me as a monster in human disguise.

I want to make amends by helping you. You're an inherently good person. Please trust me. Although I'd love to be your best friend in the whole world, we both know that being together for too long is a liability for both of us; we're both wanted by the law.

Citizen, I can give you a ride to western Ontario; thereafter, I'll drive north. Perhaps it would be better for me than to drive to Saskatchewan or anywhere else. Northern Ontario is secluded enough."

"Walter, that's sounds like a swell idea. Let's continue driving for another hour or so. But then, we'll have to grab a bite to eat," okay.

Walter indicated approval by grinning, then nodding his head.

I closed my eyes, falling asleep almost immediately. I was utterly exhausted from being on the run. And still, I wasn't sure how I'd fare with Walter. He was, after all, a potentially very dangerous person. I hadn't irritated him yet, nor have I seen him frustrated at anything.

I awakened at 2:00 A.M. following Walter's nudging my shoulder. I yawned then rubbed my eyes. Walter had just slowed down and then entered into an exit ramp.

"Walter, I must've been out cold for more than an hour. What happened?"

"Citizen, I didn't want to awaken you from your deep sleep. If it hadn't been for your diaphragm expanding and contracting I would've thought you were dead or something. Thank goodness you weren't. A sign a few miles back indicated a rest stop containing several eateries. I'm in the mood for a burger, fries, and milk shake meal, how about you?"

"Sounds fine to me Walter; do you want me to pay, or what?"

"Oh no, I'm the host here. You're my guest. How could I charge you for food? Don't worry I've eaten at this drive through before. The food is excellent."

I was about to say something, but at the last moment I cupped my mouth. How could Walter have been in this rest stop before and what about having eaten here before? Something was odd. But with all the commotion and my hunger, I shrugged it off.

Walter entered the rest stop then headed straight to John's Burger House. The scent of food emanating from the restaurant was simply mind-boggling. I could almost taste the food in my mouth.

"Citizen, I think it would be a good idea if I ordered our food from the drive thru rather from inside the restaurant.

We're a couple of wanted fugitives. Chances are someone will recognize us." I didn't say anything because what Walter said couldn't be disputed.

But just as he pressed on the gas pedal he jolted his foot away and then pressed the brake causing me to experience a very mild whiplash-like feeling. Thankfully, neither of us was hurt.

"Citizen, I want you to roll over onto your back then shove part of your paw into your mouth like a little kitten would."

"Huh, what, no freaking way I'm not a baby, now way I won't do it!"

"Citizen, please, I don't want anyone working at the drive thru to recognize us. Although I'm still overweight I've lost a considerable amount of weight, changed the colour of my hair, and tossed my penitentiary clothing."

"Oh, sorry Walter, I didn't see things that way until you made it apparent to me."

Walter approached the counter and then stopped.

A young red-haired, green-eyed bimbo from behind the counter grinned at us and then said, "John's Burger House, may I take your order."

"Umm, okay, give us two orders of the monster burger meal, everything extra on both burgers, and a couple of vanilla shakes. Supersize everything, we're starving," said Walter.

"Okay, sir, just give me a moment to calculate your tab. Umm ... that'll be \$ 20.45 please."

Walter gave the young bimbo the exact amount of the cost and then spoke, "oh, give us several ketchup and pepper packets too, and umm, some mayo packets." The young bimbo nodded her head and then turned.

A short while later we received our order and the young bimbo thanked us and wished us well. Walter and I were quite happy. Before driving off Walter extended his right arm and then pointed his index finger at several possible locations to eat. The area surrounding the eateries looked like a miniature park. It was beautiful. In fact, deeper into the eating areas were several pre-treaded paths leading into a large beautiful wooded area.

I pointed to a park bench straight ahead of our location. Walter didn't say anything he drove to the spot and then parked his van.

Walter and I exited the van and walked to the park bench. Walter carried our food. As soon as he placed our food on the park bench I leaped onto my lion's share and then instinctively pulled it closer to me. I growled, but in a low tone. Walter barely took notice of it. We ate our meal and drank our shakes in delight. A few vehicles drove through the area, but

considering how late it was most travellers were sound asleep in motels.

Following our meal Walter put our garbage into a nearby trash can. He and I walked back to the van, entered it and then readied ourselves to continue our drive. Out of the blue Walter recommended that we use the restroom first we'll be all cleaned up and won't have to go number one or two sometime soon.

We exited the van then walked to the restrooms. I entered first Walter followed me. It took me roughly 15 minutes to do my thing, clean up and then thoroughly rinse my mouth.

I didn't see anyone else in the restroom as such I assumed Walter had returned to the van. But he was nowhere in sight. Where could he be? I earnestly wondered.

I waited and waited; it seemed like an eternity. In fact, I was quite worried and bored. I wanted to get back on the highway. Soon I'd realize that my worries were legitimate, my boredom would soon disappear.

As I sat in the van all alone numerous thoughts and doubts concerning Walter began to surface. Wasn't it quite an ironic coincidence that a dangerous fugitive just happened to be driving by, slow down, and then take time out to offer and then give me a ride?

If I was on the run the last person that I would give a ride to would be a fugitive. And this Walter fellow, he recognized me almost instantly. Why did he open up to me in such a forthcoming a way?

I pondered about these and additional issues. Soon I began to twitch in my seat. I was stunned by the appearance of the young bimbo girl. She exited the drive through restaurant then ran towards me as fast as she could. So much so her apron came loose and dropped onto the ground. She didn't even stop to pick it up; how unusual, I thought.

"Honey, please listen up! That man who was with you, umm I mean the person you ate your meal with, umm, he just called the police. You're lucky because he was delayed, umm his phone wasn't working properly, but now it is.

Honey, kitty, he wants the reward money; it's a whopping 500 thousand dollars!"

I had only one doubt in my mind. I had to get it off my chest. "Okay, let's say you're telling me the truth. But why did he tell me to roll over on my back and to suck my paw? He was trying to hide my identity, right?"

"No honey, he didn't want me or anyone else in the drive thru restaurant to call the police first. The first person to aid in your capture and eventual conviction gets the reward. Honey, I don't want a reward, I don't want money from anybody.

You seem like such a sweet cat. You see, everyone thinks that I'm nothing but a bimbo. You were the first person in the whole world that I sensed would be good to me. You looked so cute lying on your back and sucking your paw. I just want one thing from you. If you can give it to me, neither of us owes the other anything."

I wondered what that one thing was; maybe something humiliating or painful. As soon as I opened my mouth to speak she cut me off.

"Honey I want you to tell me that you love me that's all I want. No one ever says that to me. Can you say those three incredibly beautiful words, please?"

Cats find it very difficult to open up to anyone, especially to a human from the opposite sex; it's just that way, really. And this bimbo girl was a complete stranger. However, under the circumstances I had no time to waste and I did owe her a humungous favour.

And what did you say your name was?" I asked.

"Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't properly introduce myself. My name is Stephanie Brunswick."

"Stephanie, can I muffle those three words. I mean, can I cup my mouth with my paw when I say those beautiful words to you?"

"Okay, that'll do."

"MPH"HH ... MPH... How was that?"

"Honey, that was superb and beautiful too! (Pointing to a dark and deserted street on the other side of the rest stop just beyond the peripheral Stephanie continued), honey, run to that street really fast and then continue walking on it away from the highway; please trust me. The police will be blocking off all the highway entrances and exits soon. More so there'll be many police vehicles on the highway. No one will ever expect you to flee to a dark and deserted street. Remember be careful who you open up to. Regarding that street, walk on the shoulder; you can dive out of harm's way much faster."

I leaped through the open window landing on Stephanie's chest. I made intense eye contact then kissed her on each cheek. I said I love you again, but this time round I didn't muffle my words.

Stephanie was teary-eyed; she returned the favour and more by kissing me on each cheek several times. When she finished kissing me, I leaped onto the ground, ran for roughly 30 feet and then stopped.

"Stephanie, would you like to come with me?"

"Oh gosh you know I would, but well, how about a rain-check. I'm not just saying that. I love you; I mean I want to spend the rest of my life with you. I need a cat like you to be

with. I can't make it with my own kind. Umm, cats are better than humans. Please, don't forget me. Presently, my life's in shambles. Come back in the future. I'll definitely say yes."

Suddenly, we heard the faint sounds of sirens going off in multiple directions. Thank goodness I had a head-start. I turned toward the street and then ran to it. As soon as I entered the street I stopped, took several deep breaths and then readied myself for a long lonely journey. But no sooner had I began my trek Walter exited the tourism office, smiley-faced and confident-looking. He thought he was getting the reward money.

Meanwhile, Stephanie had returned to the drive thru restaurant, but forgot to put on her apron. I was now on my own. I looked up at the sky; what a beautiful clear Canadian night. Part of me wanted to stay put, count the stars and then stare intently at the moon. But no, I couldn't do that. I had to get on the move, or else.

I lowered my gaze to normal level and then scanned the area for a street sign. Just behind me was a sign that read Long Street; true to its name, indeed. How long I didn't know. I stared intently at the long path that I'd be taking. It appeared to have no end.

The sirens were becoming louder by the second. I had no time to waste. Furthermore, Walter had returned to his van. He started yelling and screaming, punching the air with both fists, and searching the area intently with his eyes.

When his gaze matched my location I dove onto the ground and stood still. From my vantage point I could see him but he couldn't see me, so long as I stayed down. Now, that's the kind of advantage that any cat would cherish.

A moment later, Walter entered his van and then peeled out, not knowing what to do next. Indeed, he was frustrated, and boy did I love it.

I stood up and then began my trek, not stopping for; then, it was time to rest.

The terrain had begun to change, situated on both sides of Long Street were scattered trees, grassland, and utter quiet except for the chirping of insects and rustling of leaves. Before resting I used my eyes, ears, and nose to detect any possible danger. Thankfully, there was none. Nevertheless, there was an eerie feeling in the air.

Every so often a vehicle would pass me. Long Street went two ways. Each time I noticed an oncoming vehicle I swerved deep into the shoulder of the street and then squatted. Being out in the middle of nowhere I didn't want to take any chances with a crazy driver/s. I'd literally be a sitting duck to a cat hater.

Looking around, I desperately searched for a nice place to rest. It was dark and scary out, just in case, I didn't want to

take any chances with dangerous predatory animals, many of which are bigger and stronger than yours truly. I chose to rest on a large tree roughly 25 feet to my right.

I approached the tree and then readied myself for a leap. But I was so tired. I just couldn't muster up the energy to scale the tree. So, I slept on the grass.

Shortly thereafter, I was abruptly awakened by the baying and barking sounds of dogs afar. Instantly, I stood up and then cropped up my ears. Oh gosh it Bloodhounds! I wasn't sure whose trail they were tracking. It didn't take long for the answer to become apparent. The baying of the Bloodhounds was getting closer. This was terrifying news for me.

I ran to an open area away from the trees, I pinpointed the exact location of the Bloodhounds.

I squinted my eyes sniffed the air intently and zoomed in on the sound with my auditory sense. I could now see the Bloodhounds. Far behind them was a man on a horse. What? This isn't England, I said to myself.

I turned my body left-to-right, then forward and backward, trying to figure out what I should do. I'd never been through this kind of predicament before. You know something, I felt like, well, I hate to say it but I felt like a fox being chased down by a group of mad raving dogs.

Instinct took over. I ran as fast as I could staying out of sight of my pursuers; running beside trees. Unfortunately, after just 10 minutes of running my pursuers appeared to be closing in on me. Furthermore, the stress and anxiety of it all and sprinting without slowing down took a major toll on me.

But soon I did slow down, eventually coming to a complete halt. Dizziness almost overtook me then I puked my brains out. Teary-eyed, sick to my stomach, and unable to run anymore it looked like I was soon to be doomed out of existence.

But no, I'd make one last ditch effort to hide from my pursuers. I spotted a large tree roughly 35 feet away. With no other options available I approached the tree and then used all of my might to scale it. I soon found myself dozens of feet above the ground. If I could only evade their olfactory sense, I wondered. But then, logic took over. In reality I had no decoy scent makers, no sprays, repellents, or anything of the sort.

The Bloodhounds split into 4 groups. Now, I could see about 20 of them. A small detachment of them approached my position. I waited patiently, not knowing how to respond.

When they were no more than 50 feet away I pooped and peed; I had no control over either of the two responses. All of a sudden my pursuers stopped.

"Oh gosh what is that horrible stench? C'mon guys, we'll tell Mr. Adams that the fox wasn't here," said a Bloodhound.

"Wait a minute I think I see something even better than a fox! I smell a mountain lion," said another Bloodhound.

They sniffed their way to my tree. Following a deep sniff by each Bloodhound they raised their gaze at me; now we were eye-to-eye.

"Wow, this is a whopper! We've got ourselves a cat!" said a Bloodhound.

"C'mon guys, listen up. I'm not a mountain lion, or a cougar, or whatever else you call those big cat cousins of mine. Listen, I'm just a little innocent kitty. I'm not worth it. Mr. Adams will probably bitch you out if you harm me.

Guys, c'mon, I'm a cat from Canada. You guys are Canadian Bloodhounds. C'mon, we're all Canadians, can't we get along? I mean, it's all part of being a Canadian, isn't it."

The Bloodhounds looked at each other, grinned, and then the alpha male spoke, "that's not going to work with us. Guess what, we're not Canadians, we're Americans. We're from Mississippi. We were bred to sniff out and destroy the animals that we pursue. In this case, it's going to be you."

I was shocked. How could anyone use foreign dogs to chase down a Canadian cat? Or any Canadian animal for that matter; unfortunately, the Bloodhounds began to bark and bay. One of them left the detachment, likely going back to Mr. Adams.

Now, I only had three Bloodhounds to deal with. I had to use my incredible feline intelligence.

All eyes were on me. One of the Bloodhounds tried to scale the tree; expectedly, he fell onto his back. Under normal circumstances I'd feel sorry for him. But now, I was glad he was temporarily neutralized, but it kind of felt good to see him cry like a baby. With only two Bloodhounds facing me I had a game plan.

"Guys, you got me. Mr. Adams will really appreciate it if you capture a 'big cat like me', more so alive than dead. But I'll tell you something, your buddy that left the detachment wanted to be the first one to give Mr. Adams the good news. You guys are being cheated, bamboozled. The one who conveys the good news to Mr. Adams first will certainly be his favourite sniffer dog of all time. You guys can stand on the sidelines as second grade dogs, I mean, if that's what you want it's okay with me."

"Gregory, you can go back to Mr. Adams. I'll stay here and guard this cat, okay? And another thing let us be honest with ourselves and each other. This fellow's not a big cat. He's only the size of your everyday house cat."

"Hubert, don't let him out of your sight, or else Mr. Adams will become enraged. By the way, why aren't you anxious about being the first guy to tell Mr. Adams the good news?"

"Umm, Gregory, I really don't feel like running any more. I'm having a bad day, or I guess I should say a bad pre-dawn day. Besides, it's not in my blood to chase down small cats.

Hubert grinned and then looked away indicating that he was done conversing. As soon as Gregory left I was engulfed with a feeling of nostalgia so much so I instinctively began to suck my right paw; I felt like a little kitty all over again. And I had no idea why. Furthermore, I sniffed Hubert intently, several times over. This was strange behaviour for me.

Incredibly, I felt like I'd met Hubert before, but not recently, perhaps when I was a kitten.

I noticed that Hubert was tear-eyed. Initially I thought it was an allergy or lack of sleep. I was proven wrong. Hubert started crying.

"Hubert, why are you crying? Umm, like, I'm the one who's being hunted down. All you have to do is wait it out. I mean, where am I going to go?"

My strategy was to make Hubert lower his guard. This way, I could pounce on him. Perhaps by the time he realized what was happening I would've landed a dozen punches and scratches. He'd be in no position to fight back, let-alone harm or stop me. I could then run away. By the time the other Bloodhounds and Mr. Adams arrived it would be too late. I could be miles away, if not, much further. But really, Hubert's scent felt like a gnawing pain.

"Hubert, have we met before?"

"Yes, Citizen, we certainly have. Don't you even remember me, at all?"

"Huh, how did you know my name? Have you been following the news? Or, maybe, you want to trick me into conversing with you just long enough for the police to arrive and apprehend me. You want the hefty reward for my capture."

"No, Citizen. That's not it. Citizen, I love you."

"Huh, wait a minute, are you some kind of a pervert, or weirdo, or is this your strategy, I mean, to keep me here until the police arrive?"

"Citizen, I'd never do that to you. I still remember when you were brought in to The Belmont Puppy Mill. I was just a puppy then. You and I were cage mates. And don't let anyone tell you that your eyes were closed when you arrived. No, they were wide open. You and I were prized thefts. We were both purebreds, healthy, athletically inclined, and stolen from rich folks.

Citizen, think really hard. I didn't like Mr. and Mrs. Williams. They knew that you were stolen from another rich family. How pathetic can a couple be?"

"Oh gosh Hubert, I kind of remember you, but my memory is a bit choppy. Why's that so? What happened to me? What did they do to my memory?"

"Citizen regarding the policy of The Belmont Puppy Mill 'sensitive thefts' like us were made to forget their real pasts. It was a safety mechanism. You know, just in case we or our foster parents decided to go to the authorities and tell them about the puppy mill."

Citizen, please descend from the tree immediately. Soon, the cavalry will be here, and believe me they'll be ruthless. The Bloodhounds will be ordered to shred you into pieces. For them, it'll be a simulated fox hunt. Anyway, I'm sick of being a Bloodhound for humanity. I want to be my own self."

"Hubert, are your Bloodhound friends really American? I mean, they sounded so Canadian. I know what a southern American sounds like."

"Your hunch is correct. They're as Canadian as Maple Syrup. They wanted to scare you with that I'm from the south talk. Somehow, Canadian animals on the run fear southern Bloodhounds more than their Canadian counterparts."

I descended from atop the tree. Instantly we embraced then kissed each other on each cheek. A moment later we heard the baying of Bloodhounds from afar. But this time there were many more of them. We also heard the treading of three horses and then the yelling of one pissed off man.

"My beloved Bloodhounds, I want you to catch that bastard kitty! The target in question is the killer cat in the flesh. The reward for his capture has gone up to a million dollars in cash, not tax and no questions asked. As soon as you corner him I want you to imagine that he's a fox. Rip him into pieces! The police have a good DNA sample from him. Therefore, you need not care about how much you destroy of his body. Mercy is not an option. Do you understand my orders?"

"Yes Mr. Adams. We do understand," the Bloodhounds responded.

"Citizen, trust me, I want to get away too. As soon as I begin to run away the Bloodhounds will notice my treachery. They'll inform Mr. Adams. And believe me, if they catch me I'll wish that I was a fox; they'll treat me like a monster. I'll bring out every beastly instinct within them."

Citizen, I know a secret passage out of here. Trust me, okay? We need to go northwest, towards that congregation of trees. Behind those trees is the Hollingsworth River. We must stay afloat. The tide moves in a westward direction. The Bloodhounds will lose our trail.

Don't worry we don't have to stay in the water for long. What we're going to do is trick our pursuers. Shortly after we

enter the water we'll float towards our haven. On our left will be a cave. But this is no ordinary cave. It's hidden under some underbrush. I placed the underbrush therein to cover the mouth of the cave. The cave is quite spacious and clean.

Thankfully, there are no bats or other creepy creatures therein. This is a secret cave; I never told anyone about it. Citizen, you and I will have to wait it out until sunset tomorrow. At least for the time being, daytime is our worst enemy. Another thing, word of you being in these parts will spread like a wildfire. One million dollars in any currency is a lot of money."

We began our run to the congregation of trees. Upon arrival, Hubert stopped, turned, and then sniffed the air. Then he turned back and resumed running.

When we arrived at the bank of the Hollingsworth River Hubert gave me a short pep talk.

"Citizen, you're going to be all right, I promise. I know that some cats hate water, but just think of this episode as an enjoyable swim, and a bath too. Soon, you and I will be all alone in the cave. I'll fill you in on some of your life's details."

I grinned at Hubert then pointed to the river with my right paw, indicating that we should leap into it without delay. Hubert got the message. We leaped into the Hollingsworth River, which, thank goodness was warm. It felt really nice drifting towards safety.

A short while later Hubert signalled that we should swim to the land. And that's what we did. We crept onto land, violently shook ourselves in order to dry up, and then approached the mouth of the cave.

"Citizen, this is our temporary sanctuary. Just give me a minute to remove the underbrush."

Meanwhile we could hear the Bloodhounds baying. Mr. Adams was throwing a fit about losing the trail to his one million dollar reward and the betrayal of one of his Bloodhounds.

Upon entering the cave I was stunned at its cleanliness and shape. It was spacious, and appeared to have been made by humans. Although it was relatively dark therein Hubert and I stayed near the mouth of the cave.

Soon thereafter, the baying of Bloodhounds stopped. We were delighted. Hubert, a dog of his word laid down, then indicated that he wanted me to do the same thing. I obliged him.

"Citizen, I'd like to tell you more about The Belmont Puppy Mill. It was run by a ruthless criminal named Norman Trooper; the workers along with the animals had to address him by his title, that of administrator. He'd inherited the puppy mill from

his parents. From what I heard they were even more ruthless than he.

With roughly 1000 animals on the premises it was a gigantic facility. Most of the animals therein were dogs, but we had some cats, and a few squirrels, prairie dogs, and black-footed ferrets. Trooper's parents kept large exotic animals too, some were endangered. But that became risky later on so the practice was terminated.

Citizen, that stinking puppy mill was a living hell-hole. You understand me? The place was infested with parasites and other microorganisms, worms, maggots, diseases, fecal matter and urine, vomit, blood, pus, roaches and flies."

Somehow, I sensed that Hubert was holding out on me. There appeared to be a gnawing secret that he was apprehensive about telling me. Cats have good senses. Often-times we know when someone's keeping something from us.

"Citizen, as you can see we have a half a dozen tunnels that we can choose from if the need to escape arises. But don't worry, I don't see that happening. We're safe and secure. Our trail has been obliterated. And guess what, more good news. Listen to that rumbling sound. It's not a den of lions, its lightning."

Gosh, Hubert was right, it began to rain soon afterward. And oh boy how sweet that rain was. Initially, I had doubts about our trail being obliterated.

"Hubert, under what circumstances did you leave The Belmont Puppy Mill?"

"Actually, I was getting to that. But now that you've asked, I'll go ahead and tell you.

About a month after your departure from the puppy mill a few of the larger dogs began a serious discussion regarding full-scale uprising. It wouldn't be enough if it were only an escape; an escape that involved a few animals. These 'good fellows' were true to their name in a literal sense. They wanted everyone else to be happy and free, and if possible to retaliate against their oppressors.

Anyway, the discussion slowly began to include a larger and larger number of animals. When the number reached 100, it was time to deliver the uprising.

The uprising was to be led by a trio including a Doberman, German shepherd and a Rottweiler. A Great Dane was temporarily part of the team but he was deemed too stupid and inexperienced for the job. There was no playing around. If the administration discovered the on-goings of the plan many animals would be brutalized. Of those, most would be innocent of any wrongdoing. This kind of grand punishment scared the living daylights out of the entire animal population in the puppy mill.

The German shepherd had been slowly picking the lock on his cage over a month; a little at a time not to draw any attention to himself.

Technically, the physical aspects of the planned uprising began on a Sunday at sunset. The German shepherd had extraordinary genetic capabilities and physical beauty. The Administrator made it clear that the German shepherd named 'Herman Kruger' could not be sold. He was a purebred stud used for showing off purposes.

Herman was eventually able to escape from his cage and to free himself of the leash and collar that kept him in check. IN a sense, he was double imprisoned, first within the cage and second by the leash and collar.

Herman was located inside the Special Purebred Unit, Shack Number 5. True to his heroism, the first thing that Herman did when he freed himself was to free the other captives in his shack, who like him belonged to a superior calibre of canine breed. One-by-one, a total of 25 dogs and 5 cats in the shack were released. But Herman was no idiot, he warned his fellow inmates before freeing them by saying 'do not make a sound, and if you must sneeze hold it back or shove your entire face into the ground then do what you have to'.

Although it was 8:00 P.M. and dark out, the puppy mill had two watch towers. The standing order regarding escapees who were beyond the compound was to shoot and kill. However, an escapee who was still within the compound would be given a warning shot. Thereafter, the administration would be notified. The tower guard would then wait for an order conveyed by the assistant director or the person of highest rank in the administration building. The administrator had a reputation of having an itchy trigger finger. That's not all. Every-so-often an unruly animal would be taken out into a designated open area, strapped to a pole and then lashed. Of course, all of the animals in the puppy mill would be forced to watch the horror show.

Shack after shack was liberated. Unfortunately, a young Dachshund stepped on a rock while running out of Shack Number 12, yelping out loud, thereby awakening the sleeping guard at the main gate. Security personnel had instant access to night vision technology, deadly weapons, vehicles, and mobile phones to prepare for a possible escape.

The yelping thwarted the plan to release every single animal in the puppy mill. A total of 150 animals were freed. Soon, blaring lights and a terrifying air-raid siren blasted the area.

The animals were no longer able to work in unison; comradeship and cohesion were instantly shattered. Every single dog and cat thought of no one but him or herself. Everyone headed straight for the main gate.

Because of the sheer number of escapees and the shock of it all, the tower guards, along with every single puppy mill worker were given a horrible command, shoot or bludgeon to kill, and do not show any mercy or compassion. The administration was terrified at the prospect of escapees going to the law. Furthermore, this escape attempt would more than likely lead to additional attempts in the future.

I was one of those lucky animals who escaped. Of the 150 who left their sheds only 25 made it past the main gate. The administrator's tenacity was unrelenting. A tracking party was formed. Unbelievably, some of the trackers were dogs and cats who'd been inmates a short while earlier. They were granted promises of instant freedom if they did a satisfactory job capturing escapees; promises that certainly weren't kept.

Of the 25 animals who escaped the puppy mill grounds only 5 made it to safety. I along with 2 Doberman Pinschers, a Beagle, and a purebred squirrel escaped. We each went our own way. And come to think of it, I only know the fate of one escapee. The lone squirrel barely reached Belmont."

"Wait a minute! What's going on here? A what, I mean, a squirrel?"

"Yes, there were a few non-standard animals in the Belmont Puppy Mill. This one particular squirrel was a beautiful, athletic purebred. He was a prize, likely worth 5000 dollars or more.

Now, let me get back to my story. As expected, subsequent mass escape attempts ensued, in spite of the horrendous crackdown on captured escapees. The Administrator became even more paranoid than he'd been before. So much so he moved his entire operation to Blue River, Ontario. From what little I know The Blue River Puppy Mill is a more pathetic hell-hole than its Belmont predecessor."

"Hubert, how could such a terrible thing happen right here in Canada, or anywhere else for that matter?"

"Citizen, puppy mills tend to be away from cities and towns, often in secluded areas. Also, people just want to buy their pet, be it a dog, a cat, or whatever else. They don't want to hear a sad tale about where the animal came from or how much it suffered, or that it may have been stolen.

I'll tell you something; the day The Blue River Puppy Mill closes down hardly a dog or cat in these parts will shed a tear."

I felt an inherent need to know more about the Belmont squirrel; I didn't know why though. I almost felt like I knew him and that he and I were somehow related. I know it sounds out of this world, but I'm only being honest.

"Hubert, what about the Belmont squirrel? Exactly where is he right now? And what name is he going by?"

"Umm, well, (Hubert coughed three times, nearly choking), I guess, I don't know? I mean, I don't know where your, umm I mean I don't know where he is."

I felt that Hubert knew more than he was indicating. I let it go for the time being. He and I were very sleepy.

Hubert and I slept till early morning. I awakened roughly an hour before him. I snooped through the corridors near us, hurrying to get an idea of what they were like; in case I had to escape through one of them.

Upon awakening, Hubert grinned, stood up, and then walked to the mouth of the cave then pointed to the Hollingsworth River. I understood what he was implying.

I walked to the mouth of the cave continuing onward until reaching the bank of the river. I froze like a statue for about a minute. I focused my eyes on one particular fish, a giant salmon. When the opportunity came I pounced on my target.

After pouncing on the salmon I dug my claws and teeth deep into it. The 20 pound salmon tried to resist; its attempts were futile. I was tutored by a good coach.

Hubert encouraged me by saying, "c'mon Citizen, dig in really deep and be relentless. Show me the lion in you, dig into the salmon's mouth; rip it open with full ferocity."

Thankfully, I followed Hubert's advice to the letter. As soon as the salmon died Hubert leaped into the river. I gladly released my grip on the salmon. It was so large I was afraid to lose my grip of it, thereby causing it to sink to the bottom of the river. Oh what a terrible waste that would've been.

"Citizen, follow me back into the cave. We're going to have ourselves a delight. I'm going to imagine that I'm a ferocious prehistoric canine. You can be a Kalahari Plains lion."

I followed Hubert into the cave. The first thing he did upon entering the cave was to drop the salmon in the middle of the open area. Thereafter, he grinned at me. We lowered our heads and then began to feast. Truly, we became animals in the purest sense. Hubert growled and glared at me baring his massive canines too, I roared and hissed at him baring my canines and extending my claws in the process.

Upon stripping the salmon we ate carefully making sure no scales were accidentally swallowed. That would've been a big problem.

We took a customary map following our feast. At mid-day Hubert informed me of his short-term plans.

"Citizen, I need to take you to Blue River. I think you'll be safe there. Make sure that you keep up to date regarding the local and provincial news. Sometimes the news is so up to date

and accurate it'll actually warn you of an impending sting operation to apprehend you."

"Wow, that's good thinking, Hubert. You mean to tell me, if the police know exactly where I'm living or hiding and they intend to conduct a sting operation the news anchor may be leaking confidential information, whereby I'm being tipped off?"

"Yes, Citizen, news providers are in a very competitive business.

It's mid-day although it's against my better judgement to leave right now late last night when you were sound asleep I was awakened by the baying of Bloodhounds. I recognized some of the Bloodhounds' voices; these fellows belonged to Mr. Adams. And I have a feeling they weren't just after you; under the circumstances it's safe to assume that their hatred towards me is quite intense and personal."

I agreed wholeheartedly with Hubert about leaving the cave at once. Although mid-day is not a good time to leave, the Bloodhounds, though unable to find our precise location were close enough to pose a serious threat.

We cautiously approached the mouth of the cave then craned our necks to see if the coast was clear. After studying the surrounding area it became clear the area was secure.

I told Hubert that he would lead the way, unless I knew of a better or safer route to use, which was unlikely given I'd never been in this part of Ontario before.

We trekked through a long lightly forested area roughly 200 yards away from Junction 55 West. We were parallel to the junction far enough from the scattered homes and monuments as to not be seen. We walked for a total of 3 hours before stopping. Thirst was now our biggest problem.

Pointing in the direction of the junction I said, "Hubert, look over there. There's a family restaurant about 50 yards away from here. We can purchase bottled water from there."

"No, Citizen, we shouldn't purchase any water. You and I have limited monetary resources. I've got about 50 bucks in my shoulder bag. You're a rich kitty, likely to have considerably more money on your person. However, that doesn't mean that we can spend money left and right without caring about the consequences.

Citizen, I've always been an honourable Canadian dog. I've obeyed all city, provincial, and national laws. Unfortunately, our circumstances call for drastic action. We'll use our wits and animal senses to slither to the back of the restaurant, I mean, the storage room. Therein, we'll have to drink like African wild-beast; a large quantity of water in a short period of time.

Citizen, just imagine that you're in Africa and you're dying of thirst."

"Hubert, I too have been a law abiding Canadian. I've always been a good cat, never really bothering anyone. And you're right, our circumstance calls for drastic action."

We lowered our bodies, practically slithering like snakes. Thankfully, we had no problem reaching the storage room. But then, we were faced with a small problem. The two barnyard doors were padlocked. Even if we worked together we'd never be able to break the padlock.

"Citizen, jump onto my back and then pick the lock with your claws. Buddy, I know you can do it."

I did what Hubert asked. I grasped the padlock with my left paw then extended the claws on my right paw. After bracing myself I got to work. And boy was I good.

A brief moment later I'd picked the lock. I tossed the lock onto the dusty ground. Then, I leaped onto the ground and then stood by Hubert waiting for instructions.

"Citizen, let's not go in until both of us investigate the area first. There may be cameras on the premises. The Ma and Pa style restaurant is only 100 or so feet from us. No doubt, the owner of the restaurant cares about his goods, being careful should be the rule of thumb.

We carefully studied the storeroom before entering it, and to our delight it was spacious and full of food and drink and 6 fridges and a couple of freezers. The smell of it all was nothing short of mind boggling. Unfortunately, we weren't in the mood to eat anything fleshy. Thirst was our primary need.

"Citizen over there, I see dozens of bottles of water in that fridge. Let's go there right now we have no time to waste."

We ran to the fridge, knocked down several large bottles of water and then proceeded to remove the cap off each one, and then drinking the contents.

It really feels nice to drink your fill of water when you're very thirsty. Thereafter, we were readying ourselves to leave the storage room. But as we approached the exit we took notice of a small ice cream freezer.

"Listen, Hubert, let's have a half a dozen ice cream sandwiches each before we leave. We won't have to eat for another month. Does that sound okay?"

Hubert didn't say a word. He grinned at me and then charged the ice cream freezer. Soon, we were feasting on not only ice cream sandwiches, but other ice cream delights too.

Following our meal we exited the storage room. Oh gosh, how time had passed. It was already after 4 P.M. And that's not all. Because we let our guard down the worst thing in the whole world that could've happened did happen.

The sun was casting its powerful heat rays upon us. But there was much more. Roughly 10 feet to our right was a sixty something year-old man, tall, chubby, and wearing blue overalls. He was holding a hunting rifle in his hand, and just in case Hubert and I had any doubts about his intent, the weapon was pointed at us. Worse yet, his face indicated hatred and rage.

"Listen up you filthy creeps! My wife Agnes called the police. Now you boys just stay put until the police arrive, and don't make a sound, breathe through your noses or else.

Where do you get off on breaking into my storage room and helping yourself? I don't even know you! And that's not all. (Pointing to Hubert) he said, "You're Mr. Adam's dog. How dare you leave him and your brethren Bloodhounds for a filthy cat like him?"

"Sir, we're really sorry about the misunderstanding. Listen, I'll pay you double the worth of whatever we consumed. How does that sound?"

"Kitty, you must think I'm stupid! No way, I've got two rewards coming to me. Mr. Adams is offering a 1000 dollar reward for the capture and return of Hubert, one of his beloved Bloodhounds. And as for you kitty, I have a feeling that you're also on the run. Though I don't think you're the killer cat in the flesh, I know for a fact that fugitives hang around fugitives; you people stick to your own kind. I mean, who else can a fugitive trust, right?"

If one of you moves an inch in any direction I'll shoot both of you. The law won't punish me."

I looked at Hubert indicating from the expression on my face that I was ready to launch an attack upon the man. Hubert nodded his head indicating agreement. We had two options, be captured by the police or try to escape with a risk of being shot. We took the latter option.

We took notice of 3 police vehicles a few miles away fast approaching from the other side of the junction. Instantly, I flexed my entire body and readied myself for a quick pounce.

I was up in a flash. The force of my leap knocked the man onto the ground but not before the hunting rifle went off. Initially, I was flabbergasted; no one was shot. I found myself standing on the man's chest. He was half dazed, so I completely dazed him by giving him a right cross. He was now out cold.

I turned to look at Hubert and to tell him the good news but something was terribly wrong. Hubert was lying on his back blood pouring from the right side of his abdomen.

I was shocked! Hubert, what happened? I mean, are you all right? Hubert, please buddy, you and I make an incredible team. We're going to Blue River Ontario, c'mon. Don't play games with me I know you're exaggerating about your injury, right?"

Deep down inside I didn't believe a single word that I uttered. I'm a cat, cats have incredible senses. I knew very well that Hubert was dying, in a literal sense.

I approached Hubert stopping a couple of feet away from his now blood-gushing bullet wound. Even if he was on an operating table surrounded by the best veterinary surgeon in the world and his team there'd still be no chance of making it. Apparently, the bullet had hit a vital organ.

I shifted position, standing right next to Hubert's muzzle. His eyes were glassy and hazy. His eyes became semi-crossed. I had to say something really nice and pleasing to Hubert before he died, otherwise, I'd certainly regret it for the rest of my life.

"Hubert, you're the best dog in the whole world. Please don't leave me. C'mon buddy, I can't make it on my own. I have absolutely no one left in this world that I can love so much, depend on, and trust with my inner secrets. Hubert, you're my best friend in the whole world. And that's not all. I consider you a blood brother."

Hubert struggled to speak. He was barely able to move his left paw, thankfully, just enough for me to notice. I figured out what he was trying to do; wave me closer to him. With no time to waste I inched my way to within a couple of inches of his muzzle. His breath smelled like an ice cream sandwich.

"Citizen, I'm really sorry. Please forgive me for not telling you. I couldn't get myself to open up to you. I wasn't sure how you'd react."

"Huh, what are you talking about? I mean, like, umm, what are you hiding from me? Please tell me, I can see the cavalry fast approaching and judging from the speed they're moving, they're in a shooting mood.

"Citizen, I can speak ..."

Out of sheer instinct, I gently stroked Hubert's ears. Thank goodness it worked.

"Citizen, I'm bleeding from the inside, and I can taste blood in my mouth. Umm, I didn't give you the name of the squirrel that escaped from the puppy mill.

His name is Randy. Citizen, he's your kid brother. It took a lot of hard work to track you down. He knew where you lived. Randy your squirrel friend, the guy who lives outdoors in your neighbourhood, umm, that's the Randy I'm talking about."

"What the ... I mean, why didn't he just tell me? He knew what kind of a person I was. I would've accepted him wholeheartedly."

"Citizen, your step parents hated his guts. In fact, they called the police about him on several occasions. And besides,

he was ashamed. You were living in a mansion, he was living outdoors."

If that wasn't shocking enough, the moment Hubert finished his statement blood began to spurt out from the side of his mouth, then his tongue dangled, lifelessly. A moment later, his eyes closed.

"Hubert, c'mon please don't die on me. Please, I love you so much! You and I have a long life ahead of us."

Sadly, I couldn't take a breather or even try to comprehend what'd happened. I heard several bullets whiz by me. I looked at the street on my left. Upon seeing at least a dozen law enforcement vehicles converging on the area it became apparent to me that I had to scam really fast. Somehow, the 3 vehicles became 6. I wasn't going to sit around wondering how that happened.

I chose the only viable option; I ran deep into a grassy area nearby, with bullets coming at me from several directions. Shockingly, my pursuers were armed with semi-automatic weapons. I tried to stay as low as I could. It worked. Thankfully, I noticed what appeared to be a large forested area roughly 100 yards away. I used every ounce of energy I had to reach and then enter it. Meanwhile, I heard the faint sound of a group of choppers. Staying in the grassy area was now totally out of the question. My ground pursuers were so intent on killing me a couple of their vehicles entered the grassy area. Though they were closing in on me quite rapidly I was now only 20 feet from the peripheral of the forest.

Upon reaching the forest I noticed a sign situated in front and above the forest that read GRANGER FOREST. I was flabbergasted. I'd heard about this forest. It's humungous, certainly easy for a cat to enter and hide in.

Upon entering Granger Forest several bullets struck a tree just to my right. Although I really felt sorry for the tree, better it than me. The forest was very thick, full of underbrush, large trees and plants. Unusual bird species were singing their tunes completely oblivious to on-goings outside of the forest. .

I had immediate access to 3 pre-treaded paths. Not wanting to stand there all day trying to figure out which path was the best, I chose the one right in front of me. Regardless of how things turned out, I had no way of knowing which path was the best.

I couldn't help but gawk at the countless trees and plant species therein. I slowed down to a walking pace. I sensed that something wasn't quite right. Instinct told me to not to lower my guard.

I walked on the path for 15 minutes before someone called out to me from atop a tree.

"Hey, kitty, hold your horses, okay. I need to talk to you. C'mon, I know you're a fugitive or one desperate kitty who's so bored with life he needs to run away from the world. Now, tell me which one you are, okay?"

Considering that I was all alone and needed any help I could get, I raised my gaze to the highest branch on a beautiful tree to my right. Atop this tree was a skunk. A skunk! What the heck was a skunk doing in this forest? I wondered.

I cautiously approached the skunk, not knowing if he was legitimately friendly or was trying to pull a fast one on me.

Meanwhile, the skunk began to descend the tree, and I must say this fellow was as fast as they could get. He reached the forest floor within a flash. I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. This skunk was the most athletic animal I'd ever seen.

The skunk approached me, getting so close I felt a bit uncomfortable. Remember, this fellow was a total stranger and as such I couldn't be certain what his intentions were.

"Kitty, my name is Robert Barrymore. This forest is my home. I like to stay within a mile of the forest edge in order to be attuned to on-goings beyond the forest. The outside world is often quite hostile to skunks, even cute ones like me. That's not all, aside from my classic white stripe, I'm all black. Racism against black folk often-times extends to animals.

The grin on Robert's face appeared to be genuine, too genuine if you ask me. But still, he was so close to me. Canadian cats usually feel uncomfortable when strangers get so close to them, unless the stranger in question has something nice to offer us, or we need that person's help really badly.

"Hey kitty, tell me the truth. Why are you here, and who's on your tail?"

I knew well enough not to trust anyone so easily. I didn't even know if Robert was his real name. Perhaps he suspected who I was but needed to be certain before calling the authorities. No doubt, the bounty on me was higher still. Perhaps I was worth over a million Canadian dollars. Although it's somewhat flattering to be worth that much, the context was dreadful though.

I had to think of a believable cover story really fast. And it had to sound legitimate otherwise Robert would become suspect.

"Umm I ... actually Robert I'm running away from family. My parents are always arguing, drinking, and abusing each other;

and sometimes they come down on me really hard. You see, I couldn't take it anymore."

"I agree with you. Actually, you and I have much in common. I've been here since childhood. I once lived in an upscale neighbourhood in Belmont. My reasons for escape differ from yours. In my case there was no love, empathy, or anything good in our family. My parents were like Mr. Spock on Star Trek but without the pointy ears or blue blood. I endured it as long as I could; when the time came I took my money and basic carry-on belongings with me and then I skipped town.

I got really lucky though, because I made a terrible mistake but didn't end up paying for it. Prior to leaving I did absolutely no research about where I was heading to or how I was going to survive, or anything else that is essential to know. I fled town, trekked, and then hitched a ride off a guy from Alberta. I don't know if it was a coincidence or maybe he knew, nevertheless, he dropped me off right in front of Granger Forest.

Suddenly, Robert became teary-eyed, lowered his head and then mumbled some words. I couldn't understand what he said, but judging from his body language he had more to say. Another thought entered my mind; it was quite impolite for me not to formally introduce myself. Considering none of my pursuers had identified me by my birth name I figured it was safe to use it. And, it's a really cool name too.

"Robert, I'm sorry for not formally introducing myself. My name is Citizen Cat. And, umm, please don't be shy. I'm a cat, and cats have good intuition about people hiding things from us. Correct me if I'm wrong, you still have more to tell me. You're apprehensive about telling me the secret. Perhaps you're scared too, and feel that if you open up to me I'll have a secret on you."

"You're right. Citizen, I totally hate it when humans automatically pre-judge me. And they do it so blatantly it tears me up inside. Most often, when a human sees me he or she squirms, backs away, look at me in fear and disgust; they either speedily walk away from me or run like mad humans. And I've heard my share of insults and curses from humans; sometimes they get really personal.

Most humans make me feel like a monster. I speak for most skunks, 'you leave me alone I leave you alone. We can each go our own way, but don't you dare try to harm me; if you do I'll fight back with bitter ferocity'."

"Wow, Robert, and what about the police, how did they treat you?"

"The police consider it a normal, acceptable practice to stop a skunk in his or her tracks, ask humiliating and personal

questions, and then leave without apologizing. The police have been known to club a skunk on the head and body every-so-often just for the fun of it. Animal welfare and municipal bylaws don't protect skunks or raccoons, but raccoons fare better than us. Humans never accuse other animals of raising their tails and squirting a noxious substance at them, except if you happen to be a skunk."

Robert tilted his head towards me and then rubbed it gently against my head, precisely as one cat would do to another. Then, he purred. If that wasn't weird enough he got on his back and then played like a cat, pawing the air and meowing. Really, I began to sense that Robert was an inherently nice person; but perhaps he was a little sick too. At least for the time being I needed him badly. As far as I was concerned he was now my only friend.

Robert played the cat game for 10 minutes then abruptly stopped. He righted himself then spoke to me, "Citizen let's take a stroll through the forest. I want you to know the area well. Shortly after arriving here I was given this same advice by an escapee from a used car dealership.

His name was Ike. He was a large black mixed-breed dog. Thank goodness he had no bodily scars. He was handsome and athletic. Ike had escaped from a cruel and brutal owner, a known drug dealer who wanted to train Ike to be a dog fighter. Ike knew that he was a very tough dog. But he didn't want to hurt anyone, especially another dog to fill the pockets of a slimy good for nothing drug dealer. Ike just wanted to be happy like most other people.

Ike had heard numerous stories about other dogs going through the dog fighting ordeal. Many of the fighters end up dead, suffer from lifelong physical and or mental trauma, are dumped into an animal shelter, or may be tossed out into the street with no food, water, money or prospects. And who out there wants to adopt a former dog fighter, scarred and perhaps a time bomb?"

I was about to interrupt Robert but he raised his right forepaw indicating that he wanted to continue without interruption.

"Ike knew there was only one way to escape. Ironically, he had to attack his drug dealer owner. And that's what he did. He launched his attack with precision, biting his owner's right calf muscle. He bit with enough force to cause severe injury and bleeding.

Ike ran away from a drug infested home located deep in a secluded wooden area. Although launched his attack perfectly, he didn't know where to run to. Thankfully, he was able to use his

incredible canine senses to find an exit to the secluded area; he'd never been allowed out of there before.

Ike listened and smelled his way out thereafter he walked during the night and slept during the day. There was absolutely no return. His former owner was a killer too. Worse yet, he had numerous connections throughout the criminal underground world, able to contract a killing quite easily.

Thank goodness Ike stayed in the forest long enough for the coast to clear. He left the forest once a day to eat then returned immediately afterward.

One day, roughly a year after his initial escape he heard about Buster, his former owner being gunned down by a rival drug kingpin. Buster's death meant that any contract on Ike's life was voided. He was free to leave. Although I was very saddened to see him go I was happy for him too. He had to get on with his own life. And certainly, I did too. Perhaps one day I'll leave Granger Forest not looking back even once."

Robert and I conversed for an additional hour, strolling through the forest enjoying the peace and tranquility. We saw birds, a squirrel here and there, and other tiny animals.

The following three months were fun, Robert and I conversed quite a bit, took long walks and did what we had to for survival. But the dreaded 'goodbye day' came. And to tell you the truth I'd formed a very close attachment to Robert, and vice versa I'm sure. There was only one thing about him that made me feel uncomfortable. He was too touchy and hug-muggy (hugged too often and for too long), and he inadvertently invaded my personal space often to the point of rubbing his face and body against mine. There are other peculiarities, but I choose not to mention them due to my deep friendship with Robert.

"Robert, it's Thursday and the sun will be setting soon. We've been best friends in the whole world for three whole months. But you know how it is I've got to get going."

Robert embraced me tightly not letting go for roughly a minute. When he did let go of me I noticed that he was very teary-eyed. In fact, tears were dropping onto the forest floor.

"Citizen, I've been very honest and open with you. And being a skunk, I too have a good feel about people. You're a very nice cat, and appear to have been raised in a nice upper middle class home. I suspect that you're hiding some big secrets from me. And please don't take this personally but I never believed your 'running away from family' story. You're running away from the law. I could tell by your body language, the expression on your face, and the way you entered the forest on the first day we met.

Anyway, I don't want to take too much of your time. If you're running away from the law, keep your head down, don't

make waves, obey all laws even municipal bylaws like those against jaywalking, and above all else don't trust anyone. All it takes is one tattle tale and you're finished.

Citizen, here, take these two 50 dollar bills. It's not much but it'll get you off to a good start. Please don't insult me by saying 'no thank you'.

If you're heading eastbound or westbound the best thing to do is leap into a railroad cart. The nearest Canada Railroad depot is only a couple of miles west of here. Make sure no one sees you and then enjoy the ride. Watch out for winos, bums and other creeps."

I thanked Robert and then took the 100 dollars. I didn't want to offend him by saying 'no thank you'. Given the circumstances having extra cash on me was a good safety measure. Hardly anything's free in this world.

"Robert, I'm confused about directions. I've been here so long I don't know where east or west is. Can you follow me to the edge of the forest and point to me where the railroad depot is?"

"Of course, I should've volunteered to do so. It was my mistake to assume that you'd automatically remember where east and west were."

Robert escorted me to the edge of the forest then indicated all directions, south, north, east, and west, just in case I had a change of heart regarding the direction of my trek. Thereafter, we embraced again and then parted ways.

As I was walking away a cold feeling entered my veins. I felt like I'd lost a part of me. I wondered, 'why couldn't things have turned out differently'. Part of me wanted to be with Robert, but I knew that life's not a piece of cake it's full of ups and downs and problems that just can't be solved. Sometimes, or I should say oftentimes you can't have your cake and eat it too. If you're lucky, you can have one side of the coin or the other but not both.

While walking to the railroad depot I couldn't help but wonder exactly when I going to be able to settle down once and for all. Sure, I was a young energetic cat, but my energy was finite. Besides though I was hidden from public view for three months I had no way of knowing how much the 'killer cat' story had faded from the public eye.

Thankfully, the sun was setting and I was approaching my ticket out of the area. Albert Street was wide and sparse. There were only a few scattered structures on either side of the street, a grocery store, gas station, a post office, and another here and there. Oops! A post office! That's where Canada's Most Wanted photos are posted. But could I be that wanted? I wondered. Unfortunately, there was no way of finding out. I had

to be seen in public by all, even the police. Their response to my presence would be my answer.

I stopped walking momentarily in order to study my surroundings. And oh boy did I do it just in time. A police vehicle was fast approaching from the east. I froze still. I wasn't sure if I'd made a grave mistake. A person on the run doesn't want to look or behave like a scared-cat in front of a police officer or security guard. It draws attention unto you; the bad kind.

I couldn't help it; I dropped a giant load of poop unto the sidewalk, then I sprayed it with urine. It was a spontaneous response to outright fear and terror.

The driver of the police vehicle pulled over in front of me then he rolled down the window opposite his side and spoke.

"Hey, kitty, are you all right?"

"Umm I'm not the killer cat, I mean, I'm ... yes, I'm all right. You startled me. I was spacing out you brought me back to reality."

"Wait a minute! What do you know about the killer cat? Are you keeping any information from me about this case, because let me tell you something kitty, you'll be breaking the law, and in that case I'll have to take you in."

Once again, I pooped and peed, but this time the mound and puddle were so big the noxious scent literally made the policeman gag and choke. A few seconds later he passed out.

Looking around me I noticed there was a lull in traffic. Better yet it was dark. I did several 360 degree turns from right to left and vice versa trying to figure out what to do. Thankfully, I came to my senses after I collapsed onto the ground. I righted myself and then continued walking to the railroad depot. It didn't take long for me to get there.

Upon arrival I searched for the best train cart; the train had to be heading west. Wow, it was too much for me. All four of my legs literally buckled then I got all dizzy and stuff. I fell onto my side and then puked my brains out. I became glazy-eyed, then crossed eyed everything was in double. A minute or so later everything around me darkened.

When I came too I cringed from a stench that I'd never witnessed before. I was only certain about one thing it came from a human being. No cat could ever stink that much, only humans can stink that much. Humans who for one reason or another can't or don't want to wash and bathe themselves; it's usually a case of laziness or homelessness, and to a lesser extent illness, especially being old or hospitalized.

I noticed an ugly stinky figure roughly 10 feet in front of me. I rubbed my eyes and then focused on the image. It was a wino. The guy must've been 60 years-old but then winos and

homeless people age much faster than others, he was raggedy and unkempt with dandruff-encrusted hair; his aura was engulfed in a stench of stink and booze. The booze smelled like it was at least 100 proof, and he'd drunk a lot of it too. A faded scent of vomit was also in the air, I'm not talking about my own vomit. Not taking any chances with the wino I righted myself and stood at attention ready to fight or leap out of the train cart if necessary, just in case he decided to pull a fast one on me. Wow, somehow, I'd leaped into the train cart, and for some unknown reason hadn't remembered doing so.

"Hey kitty, you were really lucky back there. You know something the police were searching for you. And that's not all. They were using Bloodhounds and German shepherd dogs, eight of them in all. I don't know what you did, but I couldn't just leave you there all by yourself. And word is the dogs were out for blood, kitty blood. They were frothing at the mouth and growling like crazy. I'm sure the officer in charge of the search had given them an order to chase you down like a fox and then to rip you into pieces."

I had to play it smart. I didn't want the wino, that by the way had big snot dangling from his left nostril and crusted buggers scattered on his face to discover my true identity.

To tell you the truth the snot and the dried up bugger almost made me gag; I glanced at the exit of the train cart and considered leaping out. Up-scale cats like me have weak stomachs when it comes to disgusting things like snots and buggers. Blood and guts bring out the lion in us; things of this sort really aren't disgusting. Everyone has to eat. Even humans eat flesh.

"Kitty, you know something, the police were comparing you to the killer cat also known as the killer cat. They said that you assaulted a police officer with a weapon without provocation. And it was so bad he had to be taken to the hospital by ambulance. Kitty, listen to me! The officer is in a coma; if he dies all hell will break loose. I guarantee that you will become the new killer cat. In fact, if you're unlucky enough you'll be on Canada's Most Wanted list."

This fellow was telling me too much. With a bottle of booze in one hand and a beef jerky in the other I guess he was in good spirits.

"Well, Mister, how did you get me here anyway?"

"Kitty I've been a homeless drunkard for many years now. I had to fend off many creeps and monsters too. When you live on the streets for so long and travel by foot or train you learn how to be a tough guy. You either do or you'll be eaten alive by the often cold-blooded world of humans.

Kitty, I carried you like a football. I walked by the police, they hardly took any notice of me. After all, I'm only a

wino. This train is presently travelling north. I hope that's where you're going."

"Oh gosh I mean first things first. Listen, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for saving me. I consider you a hero, a Canadian hero. In fact, if it was up to me I'd grant you the highest medal of honour."

I didn't want the wino to know too much about me, therefore I lied to him about where I was heading. "Mister, actually, I was heading south to the United States. It's been a while since I've been there.

What do you recommend I do? Should I wait until the next stop or jump out right now?"

"Oh please kitty, don't jump. It's dark and you'll be out in the middle of nowhere. Wait until the next stop ... no wait a minute. You better get out before then. There may be a waiting party for you. If the train depot is surrounded you won't be able to escape; worse yet if you're lucky they'll shoot to kill. If not, you'll be shredded into pieces."

After he gave me advice a feeling of empathy and caring entered my heart. The wino closed his eyes for roughly 10 minutes. I took the opportunity to open my shoulder bag and count my money. Thankfully, it was all there.

But I felt so bad about not returning the favour. This fellow, a total stranger, had just helped me immeasurably. I decided to give him money, but not until I was readying myself to jump out of the train cart.

As soon as the wino opened his eyes I asked him a very important question, "Mister, exactly when are we going to arrive at our next stop, and what is the name of the nearest town or city."

"Kitty, the next town is Lambert, Ontario." (The wino looked at his old wrist watch intently). We shall arrive there in about 15 minutes. You better prepare for a scary leap. Make sure that you leap as far away from the train as possible, otherwise you might end up being squashed by the train."

"Mister, what's your name anyway?"

"Well, kitty, people call me snotty bugger. I don't know why, but it's been so long since anyone has called me by my birth name, I went ahead and accepted the new name."

Snotty and I knew that it was time for me to go. I grinned at him and then walked to the edge of the train cart.

I readied my muscles to spring into action, but Snotty called out to me. Considering how helpful he was I didn't dare ignore him.

"Hey kitty, wait a minute. I must tell you something very important. It relates to your survival on the run."

I felt like my jaw was about to drop to the ground. A wino giving me, a cat, advice about my own survival while on the run? I relaxed my muscles and then turned to face the wino.

"See this ten dollar bill! Come here, don't worry I won't bite you. Just come, please!"

I cautiously approached Snotty, confused and bewildered. Was this fellow going to give me that ten dollar bill or what?

I stopped a foot away from Snotty, standing motionless ready to hear what he had to say.

"Kitty, take a really powerful sniff of this bill, okay? Then afterwards sniff the money in your shoulder bag, but you can't open it."

I sniffed the ten dollar bill intently then sniffed my shoulder bag. I was a bit stunned because I can almost say I faintly smelled the money in my shoulder bag. But still, I didn't know why Snotty wanted me to do this.

"Kitty you kind of smelled the money in your shoulder bag right (rhetorical question); and umm, you're wondering why I wanted you to perform this unusual experiment. Well, kitty, I want you to survive while on the run, and while on the streets too. You've got to be tough, endure lots of crap and treachery from bad people, and always have money on you.

Kitty, I want you to repeat this experiment many times over. Sniff your money and then sniff the money in your shoulder bag. When you've mastered this ability I want you to take it a giant step further. Instead of sniffing your shoulder bag after sniffing money I want you to sniff the ground and the surrounding area.

Kitty, I want you to be a feline Bloodhound, but I don't want you to chase down innocent foxes or hares. I want you to sniff for money. And that's not all, first don't you dare tell anyone our little secret, and second after you become a professional paper money sniffer I want you to practice sniffing out coins, wallets, traveller's checks, credit and debit cards, and whatever else. If you can master sniffing these articles you'll achieve the rank of 'Dr. Cat Sniffer'!

Unfortunately for me, I only have human sniffing abilities. I can smell the money that I shove against my face. I can't sniff for money like an animal. That's why I'm a no good, stinking, homeless, wino, and loser. And I know I have wet and dry buggers plastered on my face. But to tell you the truth I can't do anything about it. I haven't taken a shower in years.

Kitty, if I give you this ten dollar bill will you lick off all the dried buggers and snot on my face?"

I waited for Snotty to laugh. I figured he was joking, or something. But he wasn't. He had a serious expression on his face.

Though I was utterly disgusted by what Snotty had said I felt sorry for him too.

I took out a fifty dollar bill and then handed it to Snotty. Initially he resisted, pulling his body back and saying "NO" a half a dozen times before I firmly insisted that he take the money. Finally he relented then thanked me for my generosity.

I waved goodbye, turned and then walked to the edge of our train cart. The cart's sliding door was open making it easier for me to jump. I readied myself, and then did what I had to.

I landed on a large tree. Following a brief daze, I righted myself then firmly grasped the nearest branch. I looked down at the forest floor intently, then at the tree. The train tracks were on an elevated plane roughly 20 feet high to my right. The tree was located near the bottom of an embankment. That made no difference to me. I had to get down, either way. And thankfully, it was only a 25 foot descent.

I descended the tree then walked through the small forested area to the embankment. The sun had already begun to rise. Thankfully, the entire area was empty; I saw no humans, cats, or dogs anywhere.

I continued walking for roughly an hour. Where was Lambert, Ontario? Oh gosh, I actually took the word of a wino. I mean, we were travelling by train. How could he know what and where the next stop would be?

I didn't have any bad feelings for Snotty. He likely made an honest mistake. Who knows, maybe he lied to me for my own good. I'd heard terrible stories about cute people, like myself, who were brutally attacked by groups of marauding train free loaders. I certainly gave off the aura of a rich kitty, and that certainly would be a red flag. Anyhow, it's best that no one knew me. All it takes is one big mouth and it's all over.

Indeed, I had to be my own kitty, tough, street smart, and ready to pounce on any enemy that posed a serious threat to me, or if that would be too dangerous flee the area as quickly and efficiently as possible.

I was under extreme stress and apprehension. I just wanted things to calm down; when will I be able to live a normal life? That was the million dollar question racing through my mind.

JENNY

I rested on the tracks, closing my eyes intending to awaken after a few minutes. But that's not what happened. I fell into a deep sleep. I was awakened by an incredibly terrifying sound, a sound almost synonymous to that of a giant ship was blowing its fog horn. I was literally catapulted into the air roughly 15 feet to the left of the tracks, and not a second too soon. A split second after my catapulting, a cargo train zoomed by. If I hadn't been catapulted the outcome would've been nothing short of gruesome, not to mention deadly.

The near miss took its toll on me. I collapsed onto a grassy patch. This time my sleep was uninterrupted. I awakened at 11:00 A.M. ready to take on the world. But as soon as I cleared my mind I came to the conclusion that in reality I could never even take on my own personal problems, let alone the whole world.

I studied the entire area intently searching for a town, city, or rest stop. Nothing therein except a dirt road beside the train tracks.

Instantly, I fell into a stupor feeling down and out and unable to focus my attention on anything or think clearly. I continued walking for another hour before I came across an abandoned, dilapidated shack. But I didn't care about it. What I cared about was the 4-way intersection just beyond it.

I felt a sudden rush of energy, so much so it almost felt euphoric. I galloped to the intersection, stopping a few feet in front of a large directional sign. I looked at it intently in order to choose the best option. One of the directional notices indicated that Lambert was 2 miles west. That would be to my right.

Wow, Snotty was telling the truth after all. I felt really bad, because I started having nasty feelings about him prior to this discovery.

I entered Rawlings Road walking on the shoulder. It didn't take long for me to notice vehicles. I was quite pleased; whenever you see vehicles or pedestrians it means that civilization is near. And for me that meant nourishment, shelter, and security. For the time being at least, I'd had it with trekking long distances. My paws were beginning to ache and the Ontario sun was beating down on me like a ton of molten lava.

The closer I got to Lambert city limits the more excited and relieved I felt. I was now within 50 yards of the WELCOME TO LAMBERT ONTARIO sign. Traffic was more congested and both drivers and passengers eyed me ever-so-closely. Maybe, they'd never seen a cat walking on the shoulder of the road outside of their city's limits.

As soon as I entered Lambert City limits a convoy of party animals' vehicles exited Lambert. There were roughly a dozen vehicles in all. Beer, hard liquor, and pot engulfed the air. But that didn't seem to bother anyone else, except for me. They, especially the drivers of the vehicles were putting many lives at stake, not to mention possible properties damage.

As I was noticing the convoy they suddenly took notice of me. I got many thumbs up, many smiles, but on horrible glare. Of all the young men and women therein, the biggest and most powerfully built person amongst them appeared to be a cat hater. These people are everywhere, even in government. In government they don't need to dirty their hands; they pass cat hostile laws and protect animal abusers in every which way they can. They reduce funding for animal shelters, aid biomedical corporations, and do whatever else they can in order to punish 'wild animals'

and to a lesser extent companion animals too. To tell you the truth I have an incredible hatred for these creeps.

As I was about to turn and continue my trek a young woman called out to me, "hey kitty, c'mon baby, come over here and hop into our pickup. We're going to party like animals. You're an animal too, right? We're on thanksgiving break.

Don't be intimidated by the heavy-muscled jocks. I'll make sure they treat you right. C'mon, you can be part of their fraternity. What do you say?"

"Miss, what school are you guys from?"

"Honey, we're from The University of Ontario at Lambert, UOL is the official acronym."

"Umm, you mean to tell me Lambert has a university, I mean, and a large campus too?"

"Yes baby, and if you want to be part of our clique you have to find a fraternity. UOL has a policy of accepting cats and dogs on campus if they're members of a fraternity or sorority, but there are conditions, same-sex membership is imperative and good behaviour too."

The young woman was around 20 years-old, had straight and shiny red hair, she had beautiful freckles scattered throughout her body especially on her nose, and her eyes were sky-blue coloured.

A jock called out to the young woman, "hey Lisa, we have to get moving, okay? We don't have time for that little kitty."

Huh, what the hell! The voice came from the person who was glaring at me. This guy was a typical jock, six feet tall, 200 pounds, very handsome and muscular, and judging from his body language he had many rendezvous with women.

Instantly, I arched my back, bared my teeth, extended my claws and then hissed at him. He backed down almost instantly. I had to show him and the other humans in the convoy that I didn't take any bull from anyone. I'd made up my mind; I was going to join a fraternity, and absolutely no one would be allowed to harass or intimidate me.

I continued walking into Lambert reaching the first major street therein. An arrow on a green sign above and to my left indicated that UOL was straight ahead. I'd have to walk on Waller Street. The UOL administration building and academic buildings were roughly 200 yards from my location.

Both sides of Waller Street were aligned with dormitories and houses for rent. The buildings weren't congested they were buffered by yards and lawns. Thank goodness there were many trees, hedges, and plants in the area. Green is a very beautiful colour. Wherever you have green-coloured plants you have life.

Shortly thereafter, I crossed Waller Street, reaching the other side and then resuming my stroll. Walking on the left side

of the street resulted in me receiving the full shine of the sun. It's nice for a short while but then afterwards it becomes quite bothersome. Besides, my forefathers and foremothers came from Northern and Western European, I belong to their stock our people prefer mild summers and cold winters.

Vehicles passed me on both sides of the street, heading in opposing directions. Judging from the scent in the air and the behaviour of the drivers, passengers, and the UOL students on Waller Street many people had already begun to party for the long weekend. But to tell you the truth I wasn't sure what day of the week it was. I had to ask someone.

Although there were humans walking throughout the area, being a cat and a stranger in town, I had to choose someone who was I sensed would be friendly. To compound matters, I wasn't even a student at UOL. The last thing I needed was trouble.

Thankfully, I took notice of a beautiful young woman exiting the Lawson Women's Dormitory building. She didn't appear to be in any kind of a hurry. In fact, she gave out an aura of friendliness. She had long and shiny jet black hair, beautiful cat eyes, whitish skin-colour and scattered freckles, especially on her face she was roughly 5 feet 10 inches tall and was well-dressed.

The young woman had a beautiful smile on her face. But as I cautiously approached her I was able to cut through her aura of friendliness. My feline senses were alerting me. This young woman had some mental issues to deal with. The closer I got to her, the more powerful my feelings became.

I decided to turn and leave. I didn't want to have anything to do with her. The last thing I needed was to be hooked up with a mentally unstable young woman.

But just as I turned the young woman called out to me; she literally caught me off guard. I was so stunned I didn't know what to do, or what not to do for that matter.

"Hey kitty, what are you doing? Are you new in town?"

I had to size her up really fast. I didn't know her exact intent. One thing I did know was that for the time being, I needed a long-term trustworthy and giving friend. Following a quick brainstorm I made up my mind, "I'm fine, thanks for asking. How are you doing?"

"Kitty, I'm doing just fine too. I was just thinking about finding another female friend, and guess who shows up you a lovely cat."

I was confused. Did this young woman really think that I was a girl like her, or was she pulling my leg? With no time to waste and feeling desperate, I played along with her mistake.

"It's nice and funny too, because I was thinking of the same thing. We girls have to stick together regardless of species differences. We're all sisters, right?"

The young woman casually approached me, knelt down, took gentle hold of me and then she stood up. Following a long smile she kissed me on each cheek then told me that she loved me and wanted to be my best friend in the whole world for the rest of our lives. To tell you the truth I almost vomited. I'm not saying that I wasn't flattered by her words and gentle tone of voice, but as it is, I'll always be a male cat, a lion of sorts, and we lions don't like that lovey-dovey stuff. Maybe, on rare occasion we'll open up, but only to a member of the same sex.

I took a deep breath, paused for a moment and then slowly exhaled. "Wow, you took me by surprise. Miss, are you a student at UOL?"

"No, kitty, I'm a senior at Lambert High. Next year I'll be a freshman at UOL, I hate to say that word because there are also women in first year university at UOL; the word freshman is so misogynistic. Would you like to come home with me, I mean, would you like to be part of our family?"

Wow, I was utterly flabbergasted, a home, nice food, a clean warm bed, toys, security, and much more. I figured if I could stay in Lambert for a year or so my trail would cool off. That'll be when I'll sneak out of the young woman's home. I'll skip town and never return. Now, I don't want you to think that I'm some kind of a cruel cat, because I'm not. I'm only abiding by the law of the jungle. You must be strong, smart and cunning to make it in this world otherwise people from all ranks will poop and pee on you. Worse yet, most of them won't give a damn too.

"Where exactly do you live, Miss?"

"Oh my dear, I forgot to formally introduce myself. My name is Jenny Penny, and I'm originally from Ottawa. My parents moved to Lambert when I was 10 years-old. Although I love Lambert, I'll always consider the national capital my beloved home. And what's your name kitty?"

I exploded into a fit of laughter. I figured she was kidding me about her name. No one can have a name like Jenny Penny. It sounds quite awkward. Unfortunately, the laughter backfired on me.

"What the hell are you laughing at? My name is Jenny Penny! So, what's wrong with it? You're like those other creeps who made fun of me when I was a child, and let me tell you something, I DO NOT LIKE IT ONE SINGLE BIT!"

Jenny's face reddened then it paled. Tears streamed down her cheeks, her muscles appeared to be quite tense then she

folded her arms and stared at a nearby tree. By then, she'd already set me down on the ground.

I had to think fast. Thankfully, I was used to brainstorming in emergency situations. "Jenny, no, I wasn't making fun of your name. I was laughing because I think you have a very beautiful name, and you're quite beautiful too. I'm surprised you're not surrounded by a congregation of guys." Again, my words backfired on me.

"Thanks for the complement about my name. But as for the surrounded by guys part, what kind of girl do you think I am!"

"Huh, oh gosh, listen, Jenny, why don't we just forget about this horrid conversation, okay? We both screwed up; we got off on the wrong foot. Now, let me formally introduce myself?"

Jenny didn't say a word but only nodded her head indicating approval. "Jenny, my name is Citizen Cat, and I'm very glad to meet you and hopefully things between you and me will be quite good in the near future. Jenny, do you feel any better?"

Jenny grinned at me and then blew me a kiss. "Citizen Cat, what a wonderful name. I want to make you part of my family. I live at 755 North Danielson Street. It's a short walk north of campus. C'mon, I want you to come home with me, okay? My parents are quite wealthy; its old money not earned money. They take vacations often. Presently they're in Vancouver. They won't be back for a couple of weeks. You and I can have a ball together. I'm very excited about that."

I grinned and then pointed my right foreleg in the direction of her home indicating that I wanted to get on the move. She obliged me by facing her home and then beginning her walk.

Our stroll through campus was pleasant. We didn't say much; I focused on the beautiful campus and studied the terrain and remembered the location of important structures. Finally, after all my running and hiding I felt relaxed and content.

"Honey, we've just left campus. Look, right in front of you, this is Danielson Street. I live 15 minutes away. The farther north you go on Danielson Street the more upscale the neighbourhood becomes."

I'd inadvertently spaced out during Jenny's statement. Instantly, she let it be known. "I guess you're too pretty to speak to me. Or maybe I'm too ugly to speak to you. Or maybe, we're not meant to be with each other."

"Huh, Jenny, c'mon don't be like that! I was spacing out, okay! I want to be your friend, but if you don't desist in this jabbing behaviour I'll leave you once and for all."

Of course, I was only bluffing. She didn't know it, but I needed her more than she needed me.

"No, please, mommy and daddy please don't leave me ... I mean, Citizen don't leave me, okay! I need you I want you to live with me. My parents don't love me even if they did they wouldn't convey their love in the normal sense."

I was flabbergasted. I loved it, I had Jenny wrapped around my paw and it felt really good. Most cats love to be in control, that's why they often look away from a human who's trying to get their attention.

"Okay, don't worry Jenny. I won't leave you. But at the same time I want to be respected for who I am."

The rest of our walk was engulfed in quiet. As soon as we reached 755 North Danielson Street I felt astonishment. The Danielson Apartments were upscale, the drive-in was suited for ambassadors and millionaires, and the trees, bushes, and flowers scattered on the premises were a beautiful delight just to look at, not to mention their lovely scent.

"C'mon, let's go home. I want to introduce you to Hank, the security guard on duty. We have 24 hour guard security, a modern alarm system, and cameras strewn everywhere. We have 4 full-time guards and 2 reliefs a relief comes in when one of the full-timers is sick, on vacation, or if it's a holiday. Everything works out fine."

Jenny led the way. The apartment building was 9 floors high, very clean, and freshly painted. I couldn't have asked for anything better.

Jenny swiped her card through the scanner. A moment later I heard a beeping sound. Jenny then opened the door and entered the apartment building with me at her side. The lobby was spacious. The wall-to-wall green carpet was utterly beautiful, scattered sofas and chairs, beautiful pottery, and an artificial waterfall, the most beautiful sites being the chandeliers placed above-head. Just beyond the lobby were 4 large elevators. We continued walking through the lobby until we reached the elevators. To my right was a long hallway with rooms located on each side. At the end of the hallway was a sign that read CAFETERIA AND RECREATION ROOM. I turned back and then glanced to my left; it too contained rooms located on each side and at the end of the hallway was a sign that read SWIMMING POOL AND PATIO.

I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it with my own two eyes. I was living a dream life. I had to change tactics, being nice and sweet to Jenny was the best way to go. And to tell you the truth, I no longer desired for a brief stay in Lambert. Maybe a permanent stay was called for.

"Citizen, what do you think?"

"Oh, it's stunning."

Jenny pushed the UP button and then waited patiently for one of the elevators to descend to the lobby. A short while

later the door to elevator number three opened. Out came a short chubby bald man dressed in a security guard uniform. He was wearing thick rimmed glasses, and he appeared to be around sixty years-old. Rich folks don't like to be intimidated by muscular jock-like security guards. It gives off an aura of a dangerous place.

"Hank, we have a new family member. I want you to meet my new best friend in the whole world and sister. Her name is Citizen Cat."

Hank appeared to be bedazzled. I wasn't sure if he suspected I was a male or maybe he was stunned to see such a beautiful cat like me.

Hank checked me out thoroughly squinting to the point of bringing both eyebrows together.

"Hey, Citizen, you know something. When I first saw you I thought you were a guy. I don't know what it is. Maybe, it's because cats are so cute and beautiful. Yes, that's probably it. It's much easier to identify a male and a female amongst humans. Our differences are quite apparent. A person would have to be blind not to see them."

Hank knelt down and shook my paw. But he did something else that was quite unusual, and intrusive if you ask me. He tilted his head to the side and then tried to see my groin. Indeed, he suspected that I was lying. He wasn't able to see my dingy. I pressed my hind-legs together. He righted himself and then stood erect.

"You two beautiful gals have a beautiful day. And enjoy yourselves in the apartment. The lunch special in the cafeteria is tasty Middle Eastern food."

By the time Hank returned to his post the elevator door had already shut. Jenny pushed the UP button again, thank goodness the same elevator door opened almost instantly.

We entered the elevator happy as can be. As soon as the elevator door closed Jenny pushed the number 8 button.

I was utterly amazed at the spaciousness of the elevator. The interior was shiny and polished, beautifully scented, and modernized. The elevator gave a light beeping sound each time we ascended a floor. I noticed a tiny camera located beside the light in the upper right hand corner of the ceiling. No doubt, it was placed there for security purposes. Being in an upscale building entailed it.

As soon as we reached the 8th floor a pre-recorded voice said 'eighth floor'. Jenny exited first, I followed her without delay.

Jenny shifted her body to the left and then proceeded to walk through the hallway. She didn't stop until reaching the last apartment. We were now standing in front of apartment

number 812. Jenny unlocked the door and then entered her apartment. As soon as I was inside she closed the door and then locked it.

"Jenny, your apartment is so beautiful, everything, from the wall-to-wall carpeting, the giant screen television, the kitchen, and all that I can lay my eyes upon. How many bedrooms does this apartment have?"

"Citizen, we have four bedrooms and two restrooms."

"Do both restrooms have showers?" I asked.

"Yes, honey, both do. Of course they do. If they didn't I wouldn't be here, would I?" I understood her statement as a rhetorical question.

"Citizen, I'm tired. And you, you must be absolutely exhausted. You've been trekking for some time now, right?"

"Yes, I certainly have. I'm very tired. Let's take a long nap? Afterward, we'll find something to do."

Jenny agreed. We walked to her bedroom and then got ready to hit the sack.

"Citizen, do you want me to read you a lullaby?"

"Huh, Jenny, I may be a small cat but I'm certainly not a baby."

Jenny looked at me intently then she disrobed. I instinctively looked away. Jenny noticed what I did and didn't like it one bit.

"Citizen, why are you looking away from me? Do you think I'm some kind of an ugly witch or something? We're both girls, remember! I demand that you turn around and look at me. I can't be that disgusting."

I paused for a moment then turned to face Jenny. I looked her eye-to-eye, keeping my gaze high. But still, that wasn't enough. Jenny clenched her fists and then threw a temper-tantrum.

"Citizen, you're hurting my feelings! Do you think I don't know what you're doing? C'mon, don't be a terrible roommate. Tell me that I'm the most beautiful woman in the whole world, and that's not all, I want you to lower your gaze, please."

"Jenny, you're the most beautiful woman in the whole world." Following my statement I lowered my gaze.

"Now baby, that's more like it. Do you want a vanilla ice cream cone?"

"Yes, Jenny, I do! Let' eat a snack right now."

Jenny left her bedroom in the nude. I tried to call her back but as soon as I uttered my first letter she turned to face me, glaring at me with those teary eyes. Gosh, I closed my mouth and sat there. I couldn't chance Jenny changing her mind about the ice cream cones.

I leaped onto the bed leaning on two large pillows one stacked upon the other. I was in an incredibly comfortable position. I could hear Jenny preparing the cones in the kitchen. More so, I could smell the vanilla ice cream and the cones; I was almost certain they were wafer cones, my favourite. Waiting there all alone, drooling and frothing at the mouth I couldn't stand the waiting.

It only took Jenny a few minutes to make the ice cream cones and return. As soon as she entered the bedroom I instinctively stood on my hind legs. In my haste I'd inadvertently frightened Jenny.

"Oh gosh Citizen, please don't do that! You're scaring me. You look like a grizzly bear. I can't look at you."

I leaned back against the two pillows and then waited for Jenny to speak. Whatever she said, I knew right there and then, Jenny was a mentally ill and unstable woman. I couldn't live with her for too long. I was now thinking in terms of weeks, or maybe even days. Either way, I needed to be well-rested and fuelled before leaving Lambert. I knew that if I left Jenny's apartment I'd have to keep on going without even glancing back. She'd probably throw a fit and tantrum drawing attention unto me.

For what it's worth Jenny made an incredibly tasty ice cream cone. The cones were wafer as I suspected, better yet, each ice cream cone had 5 scoops of ice cream on it. I licked the ice cream with full enthusiasm and delight. I chomped down on the wafer like there was no tomorrow.

Things were basically the same for the following month. Jenny's behaviour was bizarre at times but I held myself in check. I was now thinking about how and exactly when to leave. I could no longer tolerate Jenny's bizarre behaviour. The last nail in the coffin occurred on a Friday night. It wasn't one single event but a culmination thereof, and just plain ole bad happenings. And there's one more thing, I didn't know how long I could hide my true gender. Every time Jenny introduced me to someone and made reference to my 'female gender' I was forced to wink at the other person. Thankfully, no one spoke about our little secret.

It was 9:00 P.M Friday, Jenny and I had just returned from a pizza dinner and a horror movie. I couldn't help but notice when we were eating in the restaurant people took keen notice of us. The same thing happened in the movie theatre. I suspected that Jenny had a reputation in town for being an odd ball, or more.

Jenny and I entered the Danielson Apartment building then took the elevator to the eighth floor. As we were walking to our room I heard some moaning sounds emanating from room number 806.

I knew what was going on inside. Mr. and Mrs. Morrison were making love. I figured they were in good spirits, considering it was Friday night.

The trouble didn't start until Jenny heard the moaning. She totally freaked out. "Citizen, he's attacking his wife, I know he is! I'm calling 911, if I don't he'll kill her!"

Jenny removed her phone from her shoulder bag and pressed the phone icon. I was shocked. "Jenny, wait a minute! Mr. Morrison is making love to his wife. You can't call 911. Please, turn your phone off!"

"Huh, what do you mean 'making love'?"

My jaw just about dropped to the floor. I couldn't believe my ears. I now had a strong urge to find out Jenny's knowledge of 'adult stuff'.

"Jenny, do you know about the birds and the bees?"

"I never heard about birds and bees being together."

"Jenny, do you know where babies come from?"

"Yes, umm, they just happen, usually after people get married. But some naughty people have babies out of wedlock."

"Jenny, you and I need to go inside your apartment. I need to tell you about the birds and the bees, okay? I promise, after I'm done you'll know exactly where and how babies are made."

We entered Jenny's apartment together. I was stressed, not knowing how Jenny would react to my birds and bees lecture. Nevertheless, she had to know. A senior in high school should not be in a situation like Jenny's. I wondered how she could've survived this long without having known the truth about reproduction.

I asked Jenny to sit on her favourite sofa. I sat beside her. After bracing myself and taking several deep breaths and exhaling very slowly I began to convey the truth to Jenny.

Unfortunately, she went ballistic on me, shouting, waving her arms in the air, and even clenching her fists at me. Her ranting rampage lasted roughly 15 minutes but believe me it felt like forever. Of all the things that she said and did one bothered me the most. It indicated a severe mental disorder of sorts.

"Citizen, you're a liar! My parents DID NOT DO THAT, that's really naughty stuff!"

I could handle being called a liar, but 'the parents' part of her statement was frightening indeed.

Following a long crying bout Jenny and I went to the bedroom and hit the sack. Normally, there'd be a snappy argument about one person or the other hogging the covers. Not tonight, we went to bed as mutes.

Surprisingly, I fell asleep as soon as I closed my eyes. At midnight my survival instincts nudged me to awaken. My heart was

pounding like crazy, I was sweating bricks, and my blood pressure must've risen to a dangerous level.

As soon as I opened my eyes I saw the most shocking thing possible. I saw the silhouette of Jenny. She was hovering over the bed. I used my incredible feline vision to see in the semi-dark. A moment later, I felt that I needed to completely illuminate the bedroom; therefore, I reached for the lamp on my left and then turned on the light.

There she was, Jenny in the nude, red-eyed and red-faced, wearing an expression of a true psychotic. But that wasn't my worst problem. She was holding a hatchet in her right hand. Worse yet, blood was dripping from the sharp end, the rest of the hatchet had dried up blood smeared on it.

I couldn't help it but I pooped and peed on the bed. Jenny was staring at me intently, the way a large predator stares intently at its prey.

"Jenny, c'mon, umm, like please what's happening here? We're friends, right?"

"What's that thing?"

"Huh, what are you talking about?"

As soon as she aimed her gaze I understood what she was talking about. Somehow, Jenny had seen 'my thing' indicating that I was a male rather than a female.

"C'mon Jenny, be a good sport."

"Damn you, you lied to me! You mocked me and you deceived me. I saw you winking at the other person whenever I introduced you as a girl. I thought you winked because you loved me."

"Jenny, please listen up. I never told you that I was a girl. You made the assumption, I went along with it. I mean, what was I supposed to do? I didn't want to hurt your feelings."

"That's all history. Now, we have to get down to business. I want you to follow me into the kitchen. I need to play butcher this early morning. You know exactly what I'm talking about, don't you?"

"Butcher, what? I have no idea what you're talking about."

"I want you to get on the kitchen table, lie down on your back, and to stay as still as a statue. I have to chop it off so you can become a girl like me."

I was in a bind. I understood that I couldn't change her mind, but at the same time I didn't want to pounce on her, she could end up with lifelong or fatal injuries.

Jenny must've suspected that I wasn't going anywhere with her. She slowly raised the hatchet until it was over her head. But just as she was about to jack hammer me she dropped the hatchet, turned pale-faced, and then fell onto the bedroom carpet. Immediately a bottle of medicine catapulted out of her

left hand. I was so obsessed with her hatchet holding hand I didn't notice what was in her other hand.

Instantly, I leaped onto the carpet to see what'd happened. The prescription on the bottle indicated a powerful anti-psychotic drug. The medicine was issued a week earlier, but there were no more pills in the bottle. I looked carefully to see how many pills were issued; it was 30. Logically, I had to assume Jenny overdosed on her meds.

I leaped onto the bedroom table where the cell phone was. I wasted no time whatsoever.

"Hello, this is the dispatcher, what is the problem please?"

"Madam, please send an ambulance to 755 North Danielson Street. I think my roommate Jenny Penny overdosed on her anti-psychotic meds. I'm guessing she took 23 pills at .2 mg each. Please hurry! Oh, and one more thing, we're in apartment number 812.

"Honey, is Penny breathing?"

"Wait let me get a little closer to her. Yes, she's breathing normally, her pulse is normal, but she's pale."

"Okay honey, the ambulance will be there in a short while. Please turn her on her side and make sure she doesn't swallow her tongue. If she has a seizure you must call me back. Another thing, will the paramedics be able to enter your domicile?"

"Madam, I'm going to open our apartment door right now. Another thing, the security guard will let them in. If he's not in the lobby the paramedics must press 800 on the computer dashboard. I'll buzz them in."

"One more thing, honey, what is your name and what is your relation to Jenny?"

I paused for a moment. Knowing that I had to leave the apartment in a few days at the most I wasn't content to give out my real name.

"Umm, my name is Robert Penny. I'm Penny's cousin."

I kept a keen eye on Jenny. Many thoughts raced through my mind. One of which was about her parents. When we first met she told me that her parents were going to be away for a couple of weeks. But it's been more than a month now. Aside from the terrible event that occurred the night before she never made mention of them not having returned.

A short while later I heard a knock on our door and then two young paramedics, a black-haired man and an Asian woman entered the apartment. I could see them from my vantage point but they couldn't see me.

"Guys, over here, please come into the bedroom."

The paramedics marched to the bedroom, asked me several questions and then they got to work. Fifteen minutes later I was

told that Jenny would be taken to The Lambert General Hospital. She'd have to spend at least a week therein. But first her stomach would have to be emptied with a tube.

The Asian paramedic leaned over to me and said something quite shocking, "kitty, please don't take this personally but your cousin Penny is a real psycho. She's known in this town as 'psycho woman'. For your own personal safety, leave as soon as you can and don't you dare come back. This Jenny girl is a ticking time bomb."

And one more thing, honey, if you want to stay with me you're welcome. I live at 400 North Danielson Street. My apartment building is only a few blocks from here. I come from a wealthy family, and umm, my parents love cats. You can come by anytime. I'll give you my phone number and email if you want. You can find me in Face-book under the name Laura Wang."

Laura and the other paramedic placed Jenny on the stretcher and then carried her out of the apartment. That was the last I heard from the paramedics. I followed the paramedics to the door and then closed it behind them.

When Laura made mention of her contact information I gave her a blank stare, indicating that I was preoccupied with Jenny's fate. That's true, but I also didn't want to make any additional friends or even acquaintances in Lambert. My eyes were set on leaving soon.

I was in an anxiety-laden bind. I loved the apartment so much but I had to leave. Perhaps I had two or three days at the most. I figured as soon as Jenny came too she'd blabber her mouth about having thrown me out of the apartment. And who knows, she may convince one of the hospital staff to call the police. Jenny may tell them that I harmed her. The last thing I needed was to be noticed by the police.

Although I was in a mess I convinced myself that the best thing to do was go back to bed and have a good night's sleep. I'd have a nice wholesome breakfast the following morning.

I stayed in Jenny's apartment for three days. My last meal consisted of a nice wholesome dinner thereafter I left for good at 8:00 P.M. I went through the same routine. Upon exiting the elevator I walked past Hank, said good-bye and then proceeded to walk, until he abruptly called me back.

"Citizen, please come here right now!"

Hank caught me off guard. Under the circumstances I had to hear what Hank had to say.

"Citizen, please don't tell anyone what I'm about to tell you. If you do I'll certainly be out of a job.

The police called me a few minutes ago. They were inquiring about your location. I told them I hadn't seen you all day. Apparently, Jenny told the police that you forced her to

overdose on her meds. That you held a hatchet in your hand and told her if she didn't swallow the remaining pills in the container you'd butcher her.

The fact that she's in the hospital, all shook up, and a long-time resident of Lambert, and you are a stranger, a cat from no one knows where, was enough for the police. They're out for blood, your blood. They'll be here any minute."

Hank pulled out a 50 dollar bill and then attempted to hand it to me. "No Hank, I'm a resident in this building here, not you. I'm supposed to tip you not the other way round."

Hank adamantly refused to retract his arm. He said that I owed him one for his heads-up to me. I swallowed my cat pride, taking the money and thanking him ever so much.

I leaped onto the counter and then I stood on my hind legs and embraced him giving him a kiss on each cheek in the process. He returned the favour. Then, I leaped onto the marble floor.

I said goodbye once more, then I bolted out of the Danielson Apartment building; and in the nick of time too. I crossed the street then entered Henderson Boulevard, a dimly lit area. Upon taking my first step I heard sirens coming from the north and the south.

I hurried to a safe place behind a dark van then waited. I wanted to see my pursuers. A short while later a whole convey of law enforcement vehicles converged upon the scene. A short while later, a couple of CBC News vans arrived at the scene.

I couldn't believe my eyes. Jenny must've told the police additional lies about me. I was now as wanted as the killer cat, or some other creepy serial killer or rapist.

The CBC News crew was ordered to stay back at least 50 yards and that included both of their vans. As soon as the SWAT Team was positioned in place, I cropped up my ears, wanting to know what was really going on.

I focused on a bald, chubby middle-aged man whose uniform indicated authority. I figured he was the highest ranking member of the law enforcement team. This man had an aura of confidence and authority.

"Men and women we have to make certain that the kitty doesn't escape from the Danielson Apartments. He's guilty of causing Jenny's death, and we were told by an anonymous source that he's armed and extremely dangerous we must act now."

The man took hold of his cell phone and then proceeded to call someone. "This is Captain Edison speaking. I want you to turn on the fire alarm. We need to get everyone including you out of the Danielson Apartments. We think that the kitty has access to explosives. We were told this by confidential sources."

I had no doubt in my mind that Captain Edison was speaking to Hank. Things were getting too crazy and dangerous for me. All it would've taken is for just one person to see me. I crept out of my hiding place and then walked south towards the UOL campus. It was 8:30 P.M. I figured the police were going to increase their presence in Lambert until the following afternoon. Sooner or later they were going to discover that I wasn't in Jenny's apartment. I could already hear people exiting the apartment building.

A short while later I reached the peripheral of the UOL campus. I hid behind a tree, not knowing if the police and campus security were patrolling the area in search of me. It didn't take long for an UOL campus security vehicle to drive by my position. A large powerful spot light was lit and used to scan the area. As soon as the light approached my position I hid behind a large pine tree. I waited attentively until the security vehicle was out of sight before leaving my hiding place.

I was forced to study my surroundings carefully. In front of me was the Oliver D. Winston Women's Dormitory Building. Now I had a good knowledge of where I was in relation to my escape plan. I'd walked past the building before, but on the other side. There was no one in sight. That being the case I continued my trek through campus. I felt the jitters for the entire duration of my walk through campus. Thankfully, I only had to leap out of harm's way once; a campus security vehicle came too close for comfort. Thank goodness, I was well-fed, watered, well-rested, and ready to go.

As soon as I left the other side of the UOL campus I looked back to make certain that no one was following me. Aside from a single raccoon staring at me the coast was clear.

Under normal circumstances I would've contemplated speaking to the raccoon. But I learned from my past mistakes. The hefty reward for my capture made everyone suspect.

I walked for an additional 3 blocks stopping again. I turned and looked intently behind me, making absolutely certain that no one including the raccoon was following me. Seeing no one in sight I turned back and then continued onward heading for the nearest highway or junction, whichever on I reached first.

Walking through Lambert for the last time was saddening. Although I'd only spent a short time therein it was home sweet home for a while.

Another thought entered my mind, this one was sharper. How terribly sad a tale, Jenny was dead by her own hands and I was blamed for it. Worse yet, the police made me out to be a mad kitty ready to blow up a sizeable portion of an apartment building that I lived in.

The entire province of Ontario was now permanently off limits. Perhaps I'd have to change my name. I'd need fake identification and personal bio information. I'd have to memorize my fake bio.

Fake identification required a secret meeting with a slimy underground character. Nevertheless, I had to do it to save my own hide. I couldn't have cared less about what anyone thought. A cat has a right to defend him or herself, at any cost if necessary.

BUGSY

As soon as I reached the 800 block of Orwell Street I spotted a large green directional sign indicating a highway and a junction. I stopped in my tracks then studied my options very carefully. What I did next would almost certainly have a strong effect on my life; my entire lifeline depended upon it.

I stared at the sign for roughly a minute before picking up the faint sound of a vehicle approaching. I turned to get a better look at the vehicle. I couldn't be sure, maybe, it was the police, or worse yet the RCMP.

Thankfully, as the vehicle continued to get closer I realized that it wasn't the law. On the contrary, it was a shiny gray-coloured van. I waited for the van to pass me, but instead the driver slowed down then stopped beside me.

I placed myself on red alert; if the driver posed a serious danger to me I could try to run away, or stay and flight.

The driver rolled down the window opposite his side, grinned at me, and then spoke. "Hey, kitty, I'm going to Quebec. If you're going that way too hop on in?"

I was adamant about going west. Till then, I thought that nothing could change my mind.

"Hey kitty, it's okay if you don't want to get into my van. But I must warn you; there's a killer cat on the loose. All the news stations are covering the big story. People in the Lambert, Ontario and surrounding areas are strongly advised not to walk alone at night until the killer cat is either apprehended, killed, or leaves the entire area.

The police and RCMP are in the process of putting up roadblocks even animal control has been called in to help. Animal control will try to go through the animal grapevine, perhaps there's an animal out there that has vital information to convey. Besides, the reward is now 2 million dollars."

Wow, this guy was really filling me in on what was going on. I really needed his information. But there was more that I needed to know.

"Sir, do the authorities know what the cat's name is?"

"Yes, they do. He goes by the name Citizen Cat. The camera in the apartment building he lived in wasn't working too well. He got lucky in this regard. But the police do have a basic composite to go by. Furthermore, they suspect he's going out west. The killer cat's brutality began in Belmont Ontario witnesses have come forward claiming to have seen him in different locations west of Belmont. Now, he's here.

Kitty, if you ask me, I'm dead certain he's going out west, maybe to Vancouver. I wouldn't do that if I was him. I'm almost certain the authorities there have already been notified."

"Excuse me sir, what part of Quebec are you going to?"

"I'm going to Astoria North. I can drop you off in the general area."

Just as I was pondering about whether to go east or not I took notice of a speeding police car, siren lights on, and siren blasting away. I had to get into the van.

"Yes sir, I'm going to Astoria too. I mean, the last thing I want to do is meet up with the killer cat, or any killer for that matter."

I took a couple of steps toward the van and then leaped into it landing beside the driver. The driver was a short man, perhaps just over five feet tall, of African descent, and had an aura of friendliness around him.

A moment later, we were off. I tried not to make it obvious but I kept shifting my gaze onto the rear-view mirror. I had to know what the story was with the rapidly oncoming police car. As it got closer and closer I became more anxious, until thank

goodness the police car passed us without incident. Apparently, there was an emergency elsewhere.

"Hi kitty, my name is Amado Bembola, I was born in Senegal. I've lived in Canada for 45 years. I came here when I was a young 20 year-old man. Back then I was handsome, had no white hairs on my scalp, and was many pounds lighter. Not to mention I was considerably healthier and more athletic. Kitty, no one can evade the aging process and don't you let anyone even a world renowned physician say otherwise.

So kitty what's your name by the way?"

I froze up, unable to say a word. I had two problems at hand, first was Amado's family name. Bembola sounded like Ebola. I was terrified; really, I wasn't being paranoid but I knew that there'd been an Ebola epidemic in West Africa and there were reported cases in the Senegal. Second, I had to brainstorm for a name.

Amado's expression changed, from a grand smile to a slight frown. He had suspicions regarding my silence.

"Umm, my name is Tommy, yes, Tommy Wilson. And I'm originally from Ontario. I'm travelling the country at present, when all is done I'll return to Ontario."

"Oh, what a joy, you and I must meet up again. I have a clear schedule. I'm a retired university professor, I taught at the University of Astoria. I have a doctoral degree in Anthropology. Unfortunately, I was so busy with my research and teaching there was no time to get married and become a father. Well, I have a couple of black cats at home. I guess you can say they're my 'pretend kids'. They're really smart.

"Janet and Eric are also my best friends in the whole world. Don't worry while I'm gone my next door neighbour takes care of my kids. I can't wait to return back home. I think the four of us would get along really well."

Underneath the sweet talk was an anxious, unsure man. Somehow, I sensed a un-ease about him. I'm not talking about hatred or anger. Amado was genuinely friendly. But I guess I may have said something that irritated him, or maybe my prolonged silence was interpreted as something bad.

"Amado I really do appreciate this free ride. You don't know how desperate I am. Can you imagine how stressful it would be for a cat to hitch a ride at night? I don't have to tell you there are many dangerous people out there, worse yet, some of them like to inflict their cruel and sadistic fantasies upon innocent cats like myself."

"Tommy, I know exactly what you're talking about. I studied about this subject in undergrad school. Some peoples practice traditions that entail burning, lynching, or torturing cats. These peoples are lost. But the individual psychopaths who

perform these acts are truly evil. As a general rule they enjoy torturing animals. Most certainly cats above all other animals, and most so black cats especially during the dreaded Halloween season. I tell my two cats to be extremely careful beginning one week before Halloween day stretching to a few days following the dreaded day.

And now, there's a killer cat on the loose. This is only going to give the cat hating community more push and drive to help weaken animal welfare protections, for all animal species especially cats and dogs. Dogs have it bad too some breeds rank over all others; the bigger and stronger and meaner they look the more vengeful society is upon them."

Amado was sincere. Beads of sweat poured down his temples. I guess he was really entrenched in his speech. Amado made one stop to get food. We each had a falafel sandwich, fries, large drink, and a jelly filled donut. Although I insisted on paying he refused outright, saying that I was his guest, therefore, he had to pay for the gas, all meals, and any other costs.

Amado turned on the radio then searched through the stations, stopping at an evening talk show. By midnight he and I had become quite groggy. I tried to stay awake but couldn't because my eyelids became too heavy for me to lift.

I fell into a deep sleep having one dream after another. I felt quite comfortable sitting beside Amado. It's nice conversing with someone from a different race. Back in Belmont I only conversed with rich white folks while living in our upscale neighbourhood.

I was abruptly awakened by the sound of motor vehicles passing us. I found myself in a strange place and strange time. It was 3:00 P.M. How strange, I wondered.

I was lying on my back on short grass beside a Metro (Subway) station. What, this is even stranger, I thought. And where was Amado? I wondered.

As soon as I began to right myself a piece of paper that was on my abdomen slipped onto the ground. Huh, what is this? I asked myself. Oh gosh, it was a letter. It was only logical that I read it.

Dear Tommy Wilson:

I dropped you off several miles from downtown Astoria very close to Metro Station X. I guess you're wondering what happened, and why I didn't wait until you awakened to say goodbye.

Well, although I love cats in general, and you specifically, shortly after you entered my van I got the feeling that you felt uncomfortable being so close to me. You took quite a long time to answer me when I asked you what your name was. And there were other peculiarities too.

I can only guess that you felt uncomfortable near me because I'm a Muslim, or maybe because I'm black or foreign born or my family name 'Bembola'. It rhymes with and sounds kind of like Ebola. You probably thought that I was an Ebola virus carrier.

Either way, Tommy, listen up! I've always prided myself as being a calm person, but I've run out of steam when it comes to enduring racism or anything related to it.

Tommy, please don't think that I'm calling you a racist; I think your problem has to do with early or maybe adult socialization. You sound very upscale and white Anglo Saxon. I'm probably the first black human that you've ever spoken to.

Tommy, I know for a fact that you were hiding something from me. And that's not all you're running from someone or something. Please, if you're running from danger always watch your back and be very careful about who you trust and open up to.

The white hairs on my scalp are testament to my life's experience. Whatever happens, Tommy, I wish you the very best of luck. And maybe if our initial meeting had been different things would've turned out right between us.

I would've loved to have you meet my two kids. I'm certain they would've loved you to death. One more cat in the family means more fun and pleasure, and variety too.

Sincerely Yours,

Dr. Amado Bembola

I was utterly shocked! How could Amado even imagine that I could prejudge him in any way, shape, or form? He gave me a free ride and fed me. I don't know, maybe Amado was becoming a bit senile in his later years.

There was no time to waste. I had to know exactly where I was relative to the downtown core. For starters I had no idea in which direction north, south, east, or west were in.

I righted myself and then approached Elm Street. Unfortunately I had no way of knowing whether the Street ran north to south and vice versa. I decided to ask a passerby. I'd have to wait until the right person came by.

Unfortunately, there were too many people walking to and fro here and there. Most of them were youngsters; school was out. I had to play predator, zooming in on a lone desperate-looking person.

I spotted a young boy who appeared to be about 10 years of age walking alone towards the metro station. Though he appeared to be in a hurry, he also looked nice.

This kid was Asian-looking, most likely Chinese Canadian, born and bred right here in Canada and from a rich neighbourhood. His school uniform signified that his parents had and were willing to put up the money to give him a good education.

I approached the kid head-on but without appearing anxious or angry. I carried a grin on my face but made certain to hide my canines exposed canines may be perceived as indicative of aggressive intent.

Initially he walked right past me, oblivious of my presence. I caught up to him right before he opened the door to enter the metro station.

I gently yanked on his pant leg using my left paw, causing the kid to stop in his tracks. The first thing he did thereafter was look back. Seeing no one he turned and then was ready to take his first step into the metro station.

"Hey, kid, I need to ask you something, okay?"

"Wow, you're a cat! I've never been stopped by a cat before. What's going on?"

By now a small crowd was beginning to form. The last thing I needed was to be noticed by a large group of people. Technically, I was still a cat on the run.

I pointed my right forepaw to a secluded place across the street and into an alleyway. The kid agreed to go there with me.

"Gosh kitty, are you lost or something?"

"Well, kind of, that's why I need to ask you some questions, is that okay with you?"

"Sure, no problem, my parents taught me to be polite to anyone who needed directions, but they also told me to use discretion. If the person appears mentally unstable or dangerous I'm supposed to walk away.

We crossed Elm Street and then walked to the alleyway and entered it. Shortly thereafter, we began to converse.

"Hey guy, thanks for taking time out to help me. As you suspect, I'm new in town. I'm originally from Ontario, moved

here several hours ago and don't know in which direction north, south, east, and west are."

"Kitty, I can show you from here. (He pointed in four separate directions and said the words north, south, east, and west each time he pointed). That's the Astoria City Park, over there. If you continue to walk through and past the park you'll reach the downtown core in about 20 minutes. If you want to find an apartment, search for one from on Granger Street heading west until the Metro Station C area. If you want, you can go a little further east, but I recommend that you stay within walking distance of this particular metro station.

Therein, you can find anything that you want. I think that you're searching for an apartment, right"

"Yes I am, but I can spend some time sleeping wherever I please, so long as it's clean, safe, and secluded. Because I'm a cat I can easily sleep in a park or any clean and safe place. But I must always keep an eye out for animal control or an over-zealous, cat-hating officer of the law. I don't stink easily like humans do. And remember, I can use my tongue as an incredible cleanser."

Honestly, deep down inside I wanted to find a decent apartment to live in. The thing is I didn't want the kid to know too much about me. Although he seemed like a very nice person, chances are he was going to tell his parents and friends about his chance meeting with an incredible cat.

The kid opened his lunch bag and then brandished a tuna sandwich, a deluxe oatmeal cookie, and a bottle of orange juice.

"Kitty, please do me the honour of taking this food and drink off my chest. One of my friends at school gave me his lunch because he had a tummy ache. I can't eat this. If my parents see this food in my lunch box they'll go ballistic."

Instantly, I stood on my hind legs and then waited for the kid to give me his food and drink. He obliged me therefore I grinned at him, and then thanked him ever-so-earnestly. He said that it was an honour then walked away.

Although I was delighted at being given a free meal by a stranger I was also sad to see him go. What an incredibly friendly kid.

Falling back on my prehistoric animal instincts I wasted no time. I ripped the wrapper off of the tuna sandwich then ate like a ravenous lion. Then, I swallowed the oatmeal cookie whole, washing it down with orange juice. I burped several times following my quite tasty meal. Whoever this boy was, one thing was for certain his parents really cared for him.

The kid crossed Elm Street, stopped, and then turned to face me. He didn't take notice of any passersby or vehicles crossing our path. It was really sad, because I could see tears

streaming down his cheeks. He sniffled then spoke, "umm, kitty, my name is Anthony Kim you can find me here every Monday through Friday when I'm going to school and returning home. I always take the Metro. You can often find me in downtown Astoria and also its beautiful city park over there. My parents take me out to eat at least a couple of times a week; the Astoria Centre food court is the best and largest indoor place to eat in. It's also my favourite eating hangout. If you see me in any food court or restaurant with my parents don't be afraid or too shy to approach us. My parents are really nice.

My father's an orthopaedic specialist, my mom's a neurologist. They love animals, well, dogs are their favourite but I think they'll love you too. You're so pretty and cute. Your body is stream-lined and athletic-looking. Bye, I'll see you soon."

Anthony turned away then continued his walk to the metro station. Thereafter, a congregation of people and a city bus blocked my view. Although I really liked Anthony there was absolutely no way I could open up to a 10 year-old boy. I had too many secrets to hide, more so I didn't know how long my stay in the area would be for.

The sun's rays were radiating on the other side of the street. As such, I stayed on my side walking due east to the Westmount Park. I needed to see trees, grass, and plants, and to relax. Besides, therein I could see other animals like myself. Many home cats and dogs go insane, I mean, their owners don't understand, we animals must see our own kind on a regular basis. We're not humans, we'll never be humans, and we certainly don't want to be humans.

While walking, passersby crossed to the other side of the street after they looked at my face. Initially, I didn't know why. I entered Astoria City Park and then proceeded to walk to a nearby pond. The fear in the eyes of passersby didn't disappear. An elderly woman on a cane almost lost her balance as soon as she saw me, and that's not all, she yelled out 'oh dear a wild animal'. She was looking right at me when she uttered those humiliating words.

I froze the expression on my face until I reached the pond and looked at my own reflection. When I saw my reflection it became apparent why passersby were fearful of me. I'd inadvertently manifested an enraged feline expression. Instantly, I relaxed my muscles, and made certain that the expression on my face appeared neutral or semi-happy.

Apparently, the loss of Anthony along with the rest of the calamities had an inherently powerful affect on my mood, so much so my facial muscles cringed without my consciously knowing so.

I raised my head then scanned the entire area making a slow carousel-like turn in the process. Humans were going about their business, but for the time being I was more interested in what the animals were doing.

A family of geese swam by me. They grinned at me, so I grinned back at them. "Hey guys, is this a safe place for a cat to spend his days and nights in, and what about sleeping in the park?"

"Kitty, just act normal and whenever you see a person wearing a security uniform don't look scared or anxious. Just give the person a short-lived smile and nod your head. Then, slowly look away. If you have I.D. and a place to live in, or you live with a human/s don't worry about animal control. Otherwise, be earnestly wary. It really depends on the officer's personality and mood when contact is made. But generally, they don't come to this part of town.

As for the Astoria Police, don't make eye contact with any one of them, male or female alike, unless it's necessary. If you make too much eye contact the officer will think you're hiding something sinister. Don't jaywalk. This is one municipal violation that'll get you to jail if you don't have I.D.

One more thing, when the sun sets watch out for teens, some of them love to torment cats and geese too. We're not allowed to take food from strangers at night according to Municipal Bylaw #11775-AB555. During the day we're requested to use common sense and concentrated discretion. Some humans get off on poisoning innocent animals. I guess they think it's really funny to sicken and kill an animal for absolutely no justifiable reason," said the mother goose.

"Madam, I've got a giant cookie in my shoulder bag. Can I toss it to you and your youngsters?"

"Yes, honey, you certainly can. But don't toss it into the water, it'll get all soggy really fast and then break up. Toss it at my beak.

I removed the giant cookie from my shoulder bag and then tossed it into the mother goose's mouth. She held it firmly in her beak allowing her goslings to eat their fill. After they were done the mother goose swallowed what little was left. I was overwhelmed by her love for her goslings. I wish I had a mother like her.

I left the bank of the pond carrying a big smile on my face. To tell you the truth I didn't know where to go next. I still had a while before sunset though, so the day was still young. I decided to scan the entire park once again. Following this, I decided to walk through and then on the perimeter of the park. I figured it would be good exercise and I could clear my mind. A clear mind can do wonders for a person's thinking.

No sooner had I taken my first step I heard someone calling out to me, "Hey, PSST, you, the cute-looking athletic cat. Come here, I've got something important to tell you."

I zoomed in on the location of the voice using my ears and eyes. It was a pregnant squirrel staring at me. Huh, I wondered. Why would this young and beautiful squirrel really be calling out to me; could she have a crush on me? I wondered.

As I made my cautious approach the squirrel she maintained eye contact, not even shifting a muscle in the process.

"Honey, don't be apprehensive, okay. I was born and raised in this park. This is my home, I never cause trouble here."

As I got a closer look at her it became apparent that she'd been crying. I felt a strong urge to help her.

"Hey, what's going on here? Did someone hurt you? If so, tell me who, I'll give that person a licking. Come here, meet me atop this bench."

We walked to a nearby bench and then leaped onto it. I braced myself for some sad news.

"Mr. Cat, what's your name?"

"My name, umm, my name is Tommy Wilson, what's your name?"

"I'm Cynthia Hammer. I called out to you because I'm very worried about that man over there sitting alone on the other side of the pond. He's sitting on the bench beside the big tree near the public restrooms, over there."

"What's the matter with him?" I asked.

"Tommy, that man's been coming here every single day for weeks-on-end. He just sits there, bows his head, palms his face, and then cries his brains out. I didn't know how to approach him. I'm a squirrel he may think my true intent is to acquire food or money from him.

Tommy, I can't stop thinking about that man. Can you go over there and see what's wrong with him? If you do I'll consider this an act of true heroism."

That was enough for me. I walked around the pond and then approached the man in a straightforward manner; there was no time to waste. As far as I was concerned he may have been suicidal.

As I made my approach I looked him up and down several times. I kind of understood why he was depressed. I mean, he was a short, pudgy, middle-aged man, mediocre-looking at best. What I mean is this is the man who'll make women's heads turn away from him in repulsion.

"Hey, Mister, are you okay? What happened to you? You come here every single day, cry your brains out, and as far as I know, tell no-one about your problems. I think it is past time that you to open up to someone. Why not a cat; cats are naturally nose-y and suspicious."

"What the heck. No one else seems to care about me. And by the way, for what little it's worth, thank you a million times over. You're the first person that stopped to take time out for me. Because you're that caring of a person, I'll open up to you.

I leaped onto the bench he was seated in, shifting my gaze and sliding closer to him. Then, I leaped onto his chest and rested my paws on his lapels.

"All right Mister, now tell me your sad story and don't leave anything out. I promise I'm not the kind of cat who likes to mock peoples' mistakes and sad news."

"Oh sorry kitty, I need to formally introduce myself before I can proceed. I can't open up to you if we don't know each other's names. My name is Walter Shorter. I was born in Astoria North, I'm 55 years old, have never been married, and can't hold a normal job for long."

"Walter, my name is Tommy Wilson. Glad to meet you, please begin your story."

"Tommy, I'm in a really big bind. You see, my story involves a real bombshell of a woman. Out of a scale of one to ten she's an eleven or maybe a twelve without exaggeration.

We were previously engaged; it lasted for 3 months before my fiancé' fell into a coma. She was in that state for about 6 weeks. The doctors said that the coma was caused by taking expired meds.

Samantha, my fiancé came out of her coma a couple of weeks ago. She's making an incredible recovery. So much so, the doctors told her family that she'll be out of the Astoria General Hospital in three days."

"My gosh, Walter, that's fantastic news! And I suppose she has no long-term physical or mental disabilities or problems?"

"That's correct, except for one matter. (Walter broke down I had to paw his face in order to get him to continue his story). She had a specific form of amnesia. The only matter that she forgot was our relationship. She doesn't even remember meeting me."

Now I was starting to get the picture. I didn't want to say this before, but considering the facts of his story, I must convey the whole truth, Walter had a stuttering problem and the right side of his jaw was slightly deformed.

"Tommy, when I first met Samantha she laughed at me with extreme cruelty and ferocity. She called me an ugly freak too. She and I passed each other regularly in this park. Then one day I found her wallet. It was full of cash and important identification and credit cards. I called her home, she came to the park to retrieve her wallet and I guess she saw the beauty in me.

Tommy, I'm scared. There's more bad news. Her parents and four siblings hate my guts. They think I'm a loser. There's no way around their hatred and mockery of me."

Still yet, I suspected that Walter had another bit of bad news but was afraid to open up to me. So, I went into cat mode. I re-cupped his face with my paws and then practically smothered my face against his. Then, I said what I had to say, "Walter, tell me the rest of your story, I promise I won't laugh at you."

"Tommy, I visited her at the hospital yesterday evening after visiting hours. I had to make sure that her family wasn't there. Otherwise, all hell would've broken loose.

As soon as I entered the ICU ward the nurse on desk duty spoke to me. She thought I was the relief janitor. I went along with it, telling her that I'd be ready for work in a few minutes. Thank goodness she believed me.

I entered Samantha's room. She was wide awake. Upon seeing me she conveyed an expression of outright terror. Her eyes bulged, out of utter fear and she cupped her mouth with her right palm. She told me to get out; that she didn't want to see any ugliness in her room, and that she was already too sick and didn't want to throw up on her hospital gown."

"Walter, thereafter you walked out of her room?"

"No, not yet, I tried to tell her who I was, but she cut me off. She shouted then screamed obscenities at me. That's when I got the heck out of her room. I took the elevator to the ground floor. I ran to the nearest exit but not before I had to ram my way past a security guard. The force of my impact dropped him onto the floor. I know for a fact that I can't go back to the Astoria General Hospital, even as a patient for at least several years.

Tommy, please be blunt in your answer, what should I do?"

I needed to see what Samantha looked like before giving a definitive answer.

"Walter do you have a picture of Samantha?"

Walter removed a picture of Samantha from his wallet. Then he handed it to me. As soon as I saw Samantha's picture I almost fainted. Samantha was a knock-out. She was just about the most beautiful human being I'd ever seen in my whole life. Now, I was ready to give Walter some good advice.

"Walter, please don't take this personally, you're a short, middle-aged, pudgy, not very good looking bald man who even under the best circumstances would have an incredibly difficult time finding an average looking woman. As for Samantha, forget about her. She's way out of your league. Guys like you can't have girls like her; that's the simple truth, and it's the law of the jungle too.

Listen, Walter, I'm sure you can get a kind of ugly looking woman. In fact, as soon as I get all settled down in this city I'll help you find that woman, there are plenty of them out there. And one more thing, look at me. I'm extra-ordinarily cute, beautiful, and athletic-looking. (I made several carousel turns so Walter could see me whole in the flesh). Be thankful that I'm your friend. Tommy, now, how do you feel?"

Shockingly, Walter reddened, his lips turned purple then he fell onto his side almost squashing me in the process. I sniffed him sharply; there was no hope, Walter had died on me. I still don't know why. Or, maybe it was because he realized that he and Samantha were history, in the literal sense.

I leaped onto the ground and then ran to a little girl, likely five years-old, standing all alone feeding a flock of pigeons. (Pointing to a middle-aged woman nearby) I said, "Honey, that woman over there, the raggedy-looking one, is she your mommy?"

"Yes, kitty, she's my mommy."

(Pointing to Walter) I said, "That man over there just died of a heart attack, I think. Please tell your mommy to call 911, okay?"

"Kitty, my mommy told me never to talk to strangers especially dogs and cats. Some of them are quite dangerous."

I was just about to throw a verbal rampage at the little girl when suddenly someone cupped my mouth. No sooner had I looked to see who it was the little girl walked away.

Cynthia was the mouth cupper. She released her grip on my mouth as soon as the girl was safely away.

"Cynthia, why did you prevent me from speaking?"

"Tommy, do you really want to scare the daylights out of that little girl? What do you think her mother will do? Yes, you got it, she'll call the police. Remember, you're a newbie. And if you don't have legal identification, watch out.

Listen, I'll call the police. But first I want you to walk away, go to the furthest part of the Astoria City Park or leave it for a couple of hours. I don't want the Astoria Police to see you. I'm a regular here I won't draw anyone's suspicion. And one more thing, try to be a little nicer when you're conveying bad news to someone. That was a little girl you spoke to, you shouldn't have told her that the man was dead sick would've been a better word."

"Listen, Cynthia, I'll go away but I need to talk to you about something very important. It really can't wait. I'll stay here until after you call the police and then the story will be conveyed quickly. Is that okay?"

Cynthia grinned at me and then nodded her head indicating an affirmative answer. She put her phone on speaker sound so I

could hear everything that was said. Apparently, she'd changed her mind about me leaving.

"Hello, this is the emergency dispatcher, how may I help you?"

"Madam, a middle-aged man has just died of a heart attack in the Astoria City Park."

"Cynthia, is that you?"

"Oh gosh Mrs. Lawrence, I knew I recognized your voice. How's everything going?"

"Well, everything was going all right, but then I heard about the bad news, death by heart attack, you say."

"Yes, he peeled over while sitting on a bench. He's located in Section H a short distance from the pond, right next to the bench."

"Okay, honey, but because there was no foul play the paramedics will arrive at the scene. They'll double check to make sure the man is dead. Following an official declaration of death they'll take him back to the Astoria General Hospital where the deceased will be placed inside the morgue section. The police will also arrive but only in a supplementary manner. They'll ask the relevant hospital staff some basic question as part of standard procedure.

And Cynthia, tell your parents I said hi, and I hope to be seeing you soon in the Astoria City Park. Today, you've behaved like a true heroin. The mayor of Astoria will want to hear about your bravery. Thanks for calling."

As soon as Cynthia turned off her cell phone I began to converse with her about my problem.

"Cynthia, I need to find out where I can purchase some fake I.D. cards; and they must look authentic. I have money, so that's not going to be a problem. I just need someone who I can rely on. Can you help me?"

"Yes, Tommy, I can. My fee will be 50 dollars."

I gave Cynthia a 50 dollar bill and then waited for her to continue talking.

"Okay, you need to go to a place near the downtown core of Astoria, beside Metro Station A. The secret place is located at 1500 Vander Street therein you'll come across a 10 floor apartment building. When you're standing in front of the building enter through the double doors and then punch in the numbers 550 on the panel, which will be on your right. A man named Bugsy will answer. As soon as he says 'who the 'F' is this', say 'be quiet, shut up, I don't want to hear it'. Presently that's our secret code."

As soon as I turned to begin my trek to Bugsy's place Cynthia called out to me. "Wait, Tommy, I'll give you your money back if you say I love you."

"Huh to who, I mean who do I say I love you to?"

"To me damn you! Just say those words and you can have your 50 dollars back!"

"Oh, umm, I love you."

Cynthia returned my 50 dollars then I was on my way. Suddenly, I developed a creepy feeling about Cynthia. She wanted me to say I love you to her, but we only met a short while earlier. I began to wonder if she had a serious mental disorder.

I continued walking for roughly 30 minutes before arriving at 1500 Vander Street. Vander was a side street with minimal. Most of the housing was suited for middle class people.

The words Vander Apartments were engraved above the door. I cautiously entered the building and then leaped onto the panel. After punching 550, I turned and then leaped onto the floor waiting patiently for Bugsy to say something.

"Hey, who the 'F' is this?"

"Be quiet, shut up, I don't want to hear it!"

"Kitty, Cynthia told me about you. I can see you on my television monitor. Come up to room #800; don't worry, the code and the room number are never the same in this building, it's to protect the residents."

After hearing a buzzing sound I pulled the door open and then entered the lobby. It was nicely furnished, the carpet was brown and clean, and there were four elevators 30 feet ahead. With no time to waste I ran to the elevators, not saying hi to the security guard sitting behind the counter on my right. I leapt into the air and then pressed the UP button. No sooner had I landed onto the carpet the elevator door opened. I entered the elevator and then leapt as high as the #8 button I punched it and then descended unto the elevator floor.

The time I was in the elevator until I was standing in front of Bugsy's door was the most terrifying period of my life. I knew Bugsy was a mobster. Nobody has a name like that without being a mobster. Furthermore, Bugsy spoke like a big shot. He must've been the kind of person who'd order the killing of an enemy on a whim. As a consolation to myself, I wasn't Bugsy's enemy. On the contrary I wanted to do some business with him.

I knocked on the door 3 times before taking a step back. I was expecting a large, powerful, muscular man with a squared off jaw-line and a terrifying demeanour.

But as soon as the door opened I saw nothing. But I smelled something. So I lowered my gaze. To my utter surprise I saw what appeared to be a midget. Was this Bugsy? I asked myself. It seems that I wasn't the first to say this to myself.

Yes, Tommy, I'm Bugsy in the flesh. Come on in before the neighbours become suspicious. They might think we're doing something illegal, like organizing a hit against a rival

mobster, but we're not because I'm a law-abiding Citizen of Canada.

Well, Tommy, aren't you going to come in? Or are you going to stay out there all night long, or longer?"

I grinned at Bugsy and then entered his apartment. It was well furnished, and contained all the essential furniture and more. It was very clean and smelled fresh.

"Tommy, follow me into this room, okay? I've done this a bazillion times before, and don't you dare worry about getting caught, because you won't."

I followed Bugsy into what appeared to be a chemistry and printing room. Bugsy was in the business of counterfeiting, and other underground activities. I braced myself, not knowing what was going to happen next. No sooner had I taken a deep breath and then exhaled Bugsy re-assured me that he was there to serve me.

Pointing to a blue sofa beside me Bugsy said, "Tommy, have a seat. Explain to me exactly what you want, okay? Cynthia had already told me but I want to make double sure that your order comes out just right."

"Bugsy, I need some legal-looking I.D. Something that even an officer of the law won't suspect as being a forgery, and I need it today because I have too much money in my shoulder bag; I'm worried about being mugged and thereby losing my belongings, or having to brandish the contents of my shoulder bag to an officer of the law.

I want the name Tommy Wilson to be on all of my I.D.s, and it must be written exactly so. I don't want the name Tommy to be written as Thomas, okay?

Specifically, I need a non-driver's I.D. with a legitimate address, a Canadian passport, social security card, and a Quebec Health Care Card. Umm, how much will all this cost?"

"Tommy, listen up. Under normal circumstances it would run into the thousands of dollars. And to tell you the truth I can, and often am a very stern business man. Mercy is something that I didn't receive as a child. As you can see, I'm a midget. I learned to be business savvy and street tough at an early age.

But underneath my rough exterior is an understanding fellow. Tommy, I know you're really desperate. And to tell you the truth I love cats. You and I must raise our gaze just to speak to the average-sized human being.

Cynthia told me that you're an incredibly nice cat, and that I should be lenient upon you regarding charges for services rendered. Well, I do convey leniency every-so-often. But I do have one strict condition that must not be broken or even taken lightly. You must not tell anyone in the whole world that you got your I.D.s from this building or from me. More so, you and I

have never met, directly or indirectly or through a third party. Furthermore, you've never heard of a Bugsy who lived in the Vander Apartments, nor have you ever been inside this building, ever, not even once.

Tommy, as I said please take a seat. I'll do my work in the room behind that door that's located next to the painting of the mountain."

I stayed put, not flinching or uttering a sound. Meanwhile Bugsy opened the door and then closed it quickly. Apparently, he'd entered a secret lab room. Honestly, he didn't have to worry about me fibbing on him. I was very thankful for his services and was ready to pay a bundle for them.

Glancing up at a clock on the wall opposite of my corner I realized that I wouldn't be able to open a bank account until the following day. It was already 6:45 P.M. Time had literally flown by.

At 7:45 P.M. Tommy exited the lab room. As soon as he opened the door a powerful noxious scent of ink and laminated plastic followed him into the room. He was carrying a small bag in his right hand, and his smile extended from earlobe to earlobe. That was a good sign. I just wanted my goods then I'd pay up, and leave.

Bugsy grabbed hold of a special low-level chair used for children and midgets. He placed it beside my sofa chair and then explained to me what I needed to know.

"All right, Tommy, this small bag contains your needed I.D.s. Put them inside your shoulder bag and then I'll explain to you the payment process."

I removed my passport and then each of the other identification I.D.s from the bag then put them into my shoulder bag. As soon as I closed my shoulder bag I stood at attention, waiting for Bugsy to tell me how much I owed him. But I noticed something unusual. I guess he was mistaken; he'd inadvertently given me a one-year apartment lease.

"Tommy, this one's on the house. I don't want anything from you. Your predicament is identical to mine when I first arrived in Astoria. But unlike you, I came here by force. I was fleeing from some very dangerous enemies. I had almost less than a dollar on me. A kind man gave me all the necessary identification papers and an apartment lease absolutely free. But there were two conditions, the first being the aforementioned condition I placed on you, the second is that one day you must help a person in need, be it a human or an animal. Now, I'm helping you, I've fulfilled my obligation. Tommy, you've likely noticed the apartment lease. It's for the Vander Apartments, room #802. I use that room on rare occasion if I

have special guests. Here's a key to the apartment. It's your legal address.

Oh, I almost forgot. I've also given you an Astoria City Library card. It's good for 2 years. Everything's in order. Do you need anything else?"

"Gosh, Bugsy, you're a really awesome guy! I promise I'll pay you back some day. And when I do, you'll be as happy as I am at this very moment, or even more so. I remember reading about an American baseball player who once said something like umm 'Right now I'm the happiest person in the whole world', well, I'm happier than he was when he made his famous statement."

"Tommy, my home is your home. You're welcome here any time. And that's not all. Because I love you so much, I insist that you go to the Astoria Bank tomorrow morning and deposit this money that I'm handing you, into your new account. And call me after you've deposited the money, okay. My number is (555) 945-8888.

"Jeepers Bugsy, you know something, when Cynthia said the name 'Bugsy' I pictured a tough, criminal, back-stabbing, criminal kind of a guy. I'd never heard of a nice guy named Bugsy. I guess I was wrong. Thanks once again and maybe someday you and I can go out to eat a nice meal, my treat of course. But I have to wait until I'm all settled down. How does that sound to you?"

Bugsy grinned, shook my paw, and then sat down. At that very moment I felt an urge to leave. I didn't want to stay too long in Bugsy's place. No doubt, he had other matters to deal with.

I got up, leaped onto the carpet and then said goodbye. I left Bugsy's place and then the Vander Apartment Building. I was so overjoyed I couldn't stay still.

After leaving the Vander Apartment Building I looked both ways east and then west. I decided to walk towards the downtown core. As I strolled past the other apartment buildings I felt a sense of calm and relief. Finally, I was able to reside in a city and call it home.

The rest of the day passed without incident. I'd walked to the Astoria Bank in order to find out exactly where it was located. Thereafter, I strolled through the downtown core of Astoria as happy as can be. Initially, the people of Astoria appeared to be relatively friendly. But then, I'd only been in their city for a number of hours. Time would tell what kind of people Astoria had, good or bad.

When all was done I returned to the Vander Apartments, went up to my room and then crashed out till the following morning. Following a decent breakfast and shower I left home heading straight to the Astoria Bank.

I took a deep breath, held it for 10 seconds, and then slowly exhaled. As soon as I entered the Astoria bank I got a dose of goose-bumps and a cold feeling in my bones. My feline senses were warning me of danger, but there appeared to be none around. I scanned the interior of the Astoria Bank, spotting there were four bank tellers, the bank manager, no one standing in line before me. That was nice I wanted to be the first person in line. I quickly went to the line and then waited attentively for one of the tellers to wave me to their booth.

Two of the bank tellers were slim, attractive twenty something women, the men were in their mid-thirties, and the manager was a fifty something, black-haired overweight woman. Judging from her complexion, I figured she was Italian or Greek.

The clock on the wall above the bank tellers indicated it was 7:59 A.M. The Astoria Bank's interior, like other banks was polished and relatively attractive.

An obviously overweight security guard exited one of the vacant rooms located next to the vault. He had a serious expression on his face. More so, his hand was on his holster. I wondered why.

As I was just about to remove my Identification and cash a problem of humungous dimensions ensued. The entry double-doors were violently opened three masked men entered the bank then closed the double-doors behind them.

"Bank tellers, put your hands up immediately, I mean right now or else!"

All the bank tellers raised their hands except for a brown-haired man wearing a gray suit. BANG!

The bank teller was shot and killed on the spot. The shooter was the masked man who made the threat.

"Listen, damn it! When I tell you to do something you do it, okay! If you don't I'll kill you! Now, all of you come here, stand next to the kitty and breathe through your noses. No one say a word to me or else I'll shoot."

The three remaining bank tellers appeared extraordinarily distressed, especially the two women. They were crying, but not saying a word.

"All right, get down on the floor face down, beside the kitty. I don't like to repeat myself."

Thereafter, the other two masked men, who were carrying large mail bags ran around the counter and then proceeded to empty out the cash registers. I was certain they'd rehearsed the operation many times before. They looked like they knew what they were doing and they were going about it too fast without shedding a drop of sweat.

The apparent gang leader approached us, hovering over us for a moment then speaking, "all right all of you reach into

your pockets and give me your wallets. As for you kitty, open up your shoulder bag and give me all of your cards, your apartment lease, passport, the 500 dollars that your friend gave you. It better be the same 500 dollars because if it's not I'll give you a bullet to the back of the head. Naturally, we gave the masked man exactly what he asked for, without hesitation.

I was shocked at his precision. How could he know what the contents of my shoulder bag were? More troubling, he didn't have the same info regarding the bank tellers or the manager. I suspected that the security guard was a confederate. The real guard must've been killed outright. Another thing, Bugsy told me that the Astoria Bank opened at 8:00 A.M. The schedule posted on the front door indicated that the Astoria Bank opened at 9:00 A.M. The bank tellers were likely counting the money at their booths.

Meanwhile the other masked men had emptied out the cash registers in record time. Following that, they ran to the vault door. One of the masked men punched in the correct combination and then inserted a key into the key hole, then turned the key clockwise until a clicking sound was heard. He opened the vault then both masked men entered it.

They were only inside the vaulted room for a minute or so. During that time I was able to scan the interior of the bank once again and this time concentrating on a lightning fast escape route.

Surprisingly, I was able to slowly slither away to a far corner. Thereafter, I had my eyes set on the vent, and by coincidence its cover was hanging from the ceiling. Part of me was somewhat confused. A voice in me said, 'it's too damn easy, isn't it'? In the confusion and anxiety of my situation I had to brush it off. There was no time to waste. My survival instinct had simply overwhelmed my sense of logic and common sense.

I made it to a sofa chair which was conveniently located underneath the vent. I leaped up into the vent then slithered through the shaft. Meanwhile, I heard gunshots, no shouting or screaming. I sniffed the air intently. I smelled the blood of several persons. My worst nightmare had come true. The masked men had gunned down all the bank workers in cold blood, and no alarm? It was an inside job, or a very professional bank robbery, indeed.

I slithered through the shaft as fast as I could, using my senses to find a convenient escape. But no sooner had I sniffed the air in the vent I noticed a giant hole a few feet ahead on the right side. I leaped out of the hole, dropping onto the ground in the process. I craned my neck and focused my eyes. Incredibly, I realized where I was; behind the bank. No sooner had I felt a rush of relief I heard the faint sound of sirens

converging upon the area. Then, I saw a dark van speeding away from the Astoria Bank.

I was so terrified to be caught up in the raucous of a gun battle and confusion it became apparent to me the best option was to go home. Therein, I'd relax for a short while and then call the police.

I walked away from the bank for 3 blocks and then headed home. By then I could see the police vehicles and SWAT Team vans fast approaching the area. Thank goodness I was out of harms reach.

A short while later I entered Smith Street. Smith Street was only a couple of blocks north of Vander Street, and it ran parallel to it too.

As I was strolling through Smith Street I overheard a couple of male raccoons chatting about the Astoria bank robbery. It must've been big news raccoons almost never come out during the daytime.

"Terrence, no, that's not right! The ring leader wasn't a masked man. The ring leader was a cat. He dropped his non-driver's license at the scene of the crime."

"Herman, a cat can't be a ring boss in a bank robbery. It's never happened before."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Instantly, I froze then my legs began to wobble. A few moments later my legs gave out. I fell onto the ground. I tried to get up but couldn't. Both of the raccoons took notice, one of them cautiously approached me. As soon as he was a foot away from my face he said "kitty what happened? Why did you collapse onto the ground like that?"

His words had a calming effect upon me. I gradually regained my muscle strength and coordination, rising in the process to a complete stand.

I couldn't tell a couple of strangers what'd happened to me, so I made up a story about why I fell onto the ground.

"Guys, I've been walking for 3 hours, exercising. You know what I'm talking about. I guess next time I'll take it easy.

Umm, what are you talking about, I mean, regarding a bank robbery and a cat being the ring leader?"

"Kitty, my name is Herman and I'm absolutely certain that the ring leader was a cat. The police and news anchors have stated that a non-driver's identification card and a passport were found at the scene of the crime. Furthermore, both pieces of identification are forgeries. The last bit of information comes from an anonymous phone call made to the police by a witness. The cat made his escape through a shaft leading to the back exit of the bank.

Unfortunately, the bank cameras were tampered with before the robbery. And the police know for a fact that several bank workers were gunned down in cold blood."

"Herman, did the police mention anything about the cat's name?"

"Yes, of course. His name is Tommy Wilson. The name is indicated in several articles of identification. But you know something, there were no photos inserted into the identification, not a single one."

I turned to my right, dangled my head, and then puked my brains out, so much so I almost choked to death.

"Hey, kitty, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare, really I'm truly sorry, and I know it is bad news. Are you all right?" asked Herman.

"Yes, Herman, don't worry, it wasn't the bad news that made me sick I'm just not feeling well. Maybe, I should go home."

Herman and Terrence nodded their heads indicating that they agreed with me. Not to draw too much suspicion upon myself I walked away from them. They called out to me but I didn't answer. I was taking absolutely no chances.

I walked for 3 blocks before I came across a mini-park. Thankfully, there was nobody there. I ran to a nearby tree, collapsing beside it.

What I came too I realized how absolutely gullible and stupid I was to believe that anyone in the world, especially a midget with a name like Bugsy, could be so kind and generous to anyone, especially a stranger cat, without demanding payment for services rendered.

No doubt, the bank robbery was a superbly planned out crime. These guys were professionals of the highest calibre. There were certainly bigger guys involved in this crime. Cynthia was likely at the bottom of the heap, Bugsy was a notch higher. They must've been waiting for a target, a target like me.

As soon as I got up, I hugged the tree, kissed it on the left side and then the right side. Once again, I collapsed onto the ground. It was the lowest point in my life. Still yet, I could hear sirens blasting from various locations in Astoria.

I decided to make a phone call before leaving town. I punched in the numbers (555) 945-8888 then waited attentively for Bugsy to answer.

"Hello, who the hell do you want to speak to, and why are you calling me?"

I figured the code word had changed, because Bugsy's hello statement had also changed. But I couldn't have cared less; I had to let out some steam.

"Bugsy, I know it's you! What the hell is your problem? I never harmed you in any way, shape or form. I took you as a

friend. How could you stab me in the back so easily and mercilessly?"

"Oh my dear, it's Tommy Wilson. Huh, huh, huh! In this world there's a fool born every second, and with the birth of that fool there's a birth of a guy who takes advantage of that fool. Huh, what the hell did you think? Since when does anyone hand out goods worth thousands of dollars, for free? Cynthia was right you're a fool's fool. Thanks a million, and I mean that in a literal sense.

Tommy, I'm going to retire to Vancouver, or maybe Victoria. I don't have to worry about rent or the cost of living in our most beautiful province. And that's not all, there's nothing you can do about it.

You better skip town, because the cops, the RCMP, and even Immigration Canada have their eyes and ears on high alert, looking for Tommy Wilson."

Bugsy hung up the phone without warning; he didn't even give me a chance to bitch him out. What a coward. And as for the thinking that I couldn't do anything about it, well, he was dead wrong.

Suddenly, I had to leap into a yard and lie flat on my stomach. An Astoria Police vehicle passed me. I was quite lucky I took notice of the vehicle in the nick of time. A few more seconds and perhaps things would've been really bad for me. One thing's good though, the camera in the Astoria Bank was tampered with. The best the police had was a fuzzy description of me.

I decided to be the offender rather than the victim. There was no way in hell I was going to allow anyone, especially a human being, or even a squirrel to bamboozle me in the manner I'd been by Bugsy and Cynthia.

It was apparent that Bugsy was going to leave town on the same day, therefore, my painful act of vengeance would be today. I cupped my ears and then brainstormed studying my options quite vividly.

Voila, I got it! I'd wait for Bugsy to exit the Vander Apartment Building, then, I'd punish him severely for his act of treachery.

I scanned the area earnestly. Seeing and hearing no danger I walked to Vander Street and then headed to the Vander Apartment Building. As soon as I arrived there I eyed a pine tree, studying it carefully for a moment then scaling it with precision. The tree was located roughly 20 feet from the apartment building exit.

I crouched down and then waited patiently. I would now play the role of a cougar on the hunt, staying hidden and still, atop a large tree branch. As soon as my prey was in sight I'd pounce on him ferociously.

I waited patiently, hour after hour seeing people enter and leave the building. But I was only interested in one person, Bugsy.

At 8:00 P.M. without knowing why my pulse began to race and my blood pressure rose sharply. My instincts were alerting me to something, but my conscious mind and my outwardly senses were unaware of any dangers or stressors. I'd been atop the pine tree for numerous hours. In fact, prior to the adrenaline rush I was beginning to feel a bit groggy.

No sooner had I wondered what was happening I realized what'd happened. I could now see Bugsy walking away from the elevators, carrying a small handbag. He wasn't alone though. He was walking with someone, a tiny person.

I waited until Bugsy exited the Vander Apartment Building before readying my-self for an awesome pounce. I took a deep breath holding it for a couple of seconds and then exhaling. I leaped onto Bugsy's neck like a true cougar. I bit the back of his neck and dug my claws into his shoulders. I heard a snapping sound; following this I released my biting and clawing grips. I leaped onto the ground Bugsy fell flat on his back. In my haste to attack him I didn't take a close look at the little person he was walking with. It was Cynthia.

As soon as she realized what'd ensued she pooped and peed onto the sidewalk. She was so terribly afraid her leg muscles did not permit her to run away.

"Please, baby, Tommy, I love you. I promise I was going to come back for you. You see, I was going to give you your share of the money. I never liked Bugsy, really."

I decided not to say a word to Cynthia. I smacked her forcefully on each side of the face, knocking her out in the process. I had to act quickly. Thankfully, for the moment there were no other persons around, neither on foot or driving a vehicle.

I opened Bugsy's handbag, then removed a good-sized wad of money from it. I made sure to leave him nothing, even going so far as emptying out his pockets. After putting the money in my shoulder bag I emptied Cynthia's shoulder bag. I had thousands of additional dollars in my shoulder bag.

But I wasn't content with that. I removed Bugsy's wrist watch taking a firm hold of it and then throwing it up against the wall. It was a very expensive looking watch, perhaps worth 20 thousand dollars. I had more work to do. I removed all of his clothing, even his socks and underwear. I shoved his clothes underneath a Dodge pickup. The curb underneath it was incredibly slimy and dirty. Bugsy's clothes were done with.

Suddenly, I took notice of 3 vehicles approaching my location. As soon as they about to pass me I laid flat on the

sidewalk face down. It was night-time and there were vehicles parked in the area making it easier for me to hide.

I got my revenge and it felt awesome. The only thing to do now was evade the law and leave Astoria. But to where, I didn't know. I had money but was alone without family or friends. I proceeded to walk towards the downtown area but away from the Astoria Bank. I was heading for the Foxhound Bus Station. I felt that the law would never expect a wanted kitty to be brazen enough to leave by bus on the same day of a bank robbery. Anyway, they didn't have a good composite of me.

My walk to the Foxhound Bus Station went without incident, but I did hear passersby chatting about the big bank robbery that had occurred in the morning. Judging from what I heard everyone in town assumed that I was guilty as sin, that's too bad. I guess it meant that most of the residents of Astoria were ignorant.

TABATHA FORRESTER

Out of nowhere a quite shocking event occurred. A vehicle zoomed through the street, stopping right in front of me, and that's not all, it was an RCMP vehicle and the siren lights were on.

I didn't know what to do. Looking left, right, behind me and then in front of me there appeared to be no way of escape. Besides RCMP officers are usually the cream-of-the-crop when it comes to Canadian law enforcement personnel. The fellow in the vehicle could probably pick me off like a wooden duck at a shooting contest in a carnival booth.

I stayed put. I figured the best way to deal with this problem was to stay calm; I was going back home to Ontario and everything was just fine.

A tall, burly red-haired man exited the RCMP vehicle but not before he turned off the siren lights. This is usually a

good sign. Furthermore, his hand wasn't on his holster and the expression on his face manifested empathy.

Nevertheless he was humungous, about 6 feet 6 inches and weighed roughly 300 pounds. I instinctively crouched down in case he was deceiving me.

"Kitty, how's it going?"

"Huh, officer, umm, I mean you're asking me how it's going."

"Yes, I sure am?"

"Oh, officer, I'm just fine. You kind of caught me off guard, cutting me off like that. I've never been cut off like that before."

"The reason I cut you off before you crossed the street was because I was worried about you. It's almost midnight. My shift ends soon. I wanted to warn you about an extremely dangerous predator named Tommy Wilson. He killed a man named Buggy and he knocked out a little pregnant squirrel named Cynthia. Cynthia is a favourite at the Astoria City Park. Even I know her. And I'll tell you something else, if I ever see the perpetrator of this heinous crime I'll clobber him to a pulp with my night stick.

Tommy Wilson is also wanted for being the ring leader in the Astoria Bank robbery. What's more, at least 6 persons were gunned down in cold blood during this heinous crime."

I had to know more about the murders; "huh, I thought he killed less persons than that. Officer what do you mean at least 5 counts of murder?"

"At least 5 bank workers were murdered, and an elderly security guard too. The security guard was a part-timer. No one had ever robbed the Astoria Bank before therefore, no one at the bank felt that a brawny young man was needed to maintain order and safety therein.

Anyway, be careful wherever you're heading too. Tommy Wilson is considered extremely dangerous. Worse yet, he's a really nice looking cat, athletic, and charming. While on the run, he'll be extremely desperate, thereby incredibly dangerous. In law enforcement this is a red flag. Imagine a wounded big cat on the run. Understand what I'm trying to say?"

"Yes, officer, thank you very much."

"Kitty, you're very welcome, and have a beautiful night. Wait, kitty, what's your name anyway?"

He caught me totally off guard. I had to think really fast. What name could I use? The first name that I could come up with was that of a hero named Corey Jameson, he passed away a few years ago. He was a brave cat who fought off several rapists in order to protect a 'rape-drugged' undergraduate student named Cynthia Corbett.

"Umm, my name, my name is Corey Jameson?"

"That's a cute name. My name is Officer Edward Lawrence. I was born in Saskatchewan. Where were you born?"

"Huh, umm, I was born in Ontario."

"Corey, it was a pleasure meeting you. Unfortunately, you and I are both in a hurry; I have to get back to headquarters, you have a bus to catch."

Officer Lawrence grinned at me and then waved goodbye. He turned away then walked back to his vehicle. I didn't move an inch until he drove off disappearing into the night.

I took several deep breaths, exhaling slowly following each deep breath then I proceeded to cross the street. I entered the Foxhound Bus Station at 11:45 P.M. nervous and confused. I had no idea where I was going to go.

I strolled through the bus station searching for the ticket booths. Thankfully it didn't take long to find them. I galloped there, stopping at the line. There were six persons ahead of me. I didn't mind waiting as long as I caught a bus leaving Astoria.

My turn came a short while. I took several steps towards ticket booth #9 then leaped onto the counter. I opened my shoulder bag, readying myself to pay for the bus fare.

"Hello kitty, how are you tonight?"

"Madam, I'm doing just fine, thanks for asking. By the way, do you have any super-specials, I mean, like a late night thing or something of a sort?"

"Well, kitty, we do. We have a special to British Columbia. If you purchase your ticket before midnight it will only be for 50 dollars, round trip will cost 85 dollars. It's an incredible deal. And you're very lucky too because the particular super special expires at midnight."

"Yes, Miss, I want it! Here's 50 dollars for a one-way trip."

The ticket booth attendant took my money and then she got to work printing out my bus ticket.

"Here you go kitty, this is your ticket, and this is your receipt. Don't lose either please. This is a non-refundable ticket. The receipt proves that you're the person who paid for the ticket. Have a very enjoyable trip and please come back; Foxhound Bus Service prides itself in being the best inter-provincial bus service in Canada."

I put my ticket and receipt inside my shoulder bag. After pausing for a moment, I closed my shoulder bag, thanked the ticket booth attendant and then leaped onto the floor. No sooner had I begun to walk away the ticket booth attendant called out to me.

"Kitty, walk straight ahead to Gate #12. Be careful."

I had no time to turn and say thank you. I could see the passengers boarding the bus. The last thing I wanted to do was miss my bus.

I hustled my way to the line. The bus driver was a brown-haired, obese and freckled-faced. He was forty-something and had a jovial appearance.

When my turn came I handed my ticket to the bus driver and then waited for him to inspect it.

"Oh my dear, kitty, you must be a big shot! The ticket booth attendant gave you a super discounted ticket that's good for a whole year."

"Huh, Mister, I was under the impression that I had to use my ticket immediately."

"Normally that's the case but not for you." (The bus driver winked at me indicating that this was an out of policy act and that I should be thankful and keep quiet.)

I obliged him by taking my ticket and boarding the bus without saying another word. To tell you the truth I felt really bad about not even having the courtesy to turn back after the ticket booth attendant gave me directions. But then, remember, I was in a real hurry.

I walked to the back of the bus then leaped onto a designated chair. I craned my neck and then studied the other passengers. I counted 9 of them; 8 of the passengers were males and one was a female. No one appeared to be out of place. They looked like typical Canadians.

I un-craned my neck then slithered my way to the window. I wanted to get one last look at Astoria before leaving. It was a given that I was never going to return. In fact, I'd probably never be able to return to this part of the province. Here I was, an innocent fugitive knowing that I could never return to a Canadian city. What a sad tale, indeed.

Nevertheless, I had pressing concerns to deal with. I understood that local police or RCMP Officers could board our bus at any time during my ride. The RCMP has jurisdiction throughout all of Canada, especially if it's known that a fugitive has crossed provincial lines. If however, I were to cross the Canadian border into the United States, the FBI and Interpol would become a 'nemesis addendum' to my ongoing problems. The last thing I needed was to be on America's Most Wanted list. In that case, I'd have to leave the entire hemisphere and live in Europe. Even in this part of the world there'd be no guarantee. With internet and satellite television people from around the world could spot me quite easily. As for extradition, hardly a government out there would raise a finger to help me. I'd probably end up living with Julian Assange. No thanks, I'd rather play it safe.

"Ladies and gentlemen on behalf of Foxhound Inc., I wish each and every one of you a safe and enjoyable journey."

A short while later we were on our way. The bus driver exited the Foxhound parking lot and then turned right. Then he headed to the highway. I made sure to see as much of Astoria as I could until we left city limits. We drove through the downtown core to Stanton Street heading east. Six blocks later the bus driver entered the ramp leading into the highway. It was over, no more Astoria forever.

Upon our entry into the highway I lost my ability to stay awake. It was already 12:15 P.M. and in a general sense most highways look the same after dark; there's not much to look at except other vehicles.

I closed my eyes, instantly falling asleep. I had a whole lot of sleeping to do. The stress and anxiety, along with the treachery, deceit, and running that I was forced to endure took a toll on me. I had one dream after another. Deep sleep and dreaming are essential for a good night's rest.

I awakened at 6:45 A.M., seeing nothing but highway I closed my eyes then fell into another deep sleep. I awakened several more times throughout the morning but at noon I awakened for the last time. We were in the Maple City Foxhound Bus Station. Maple City is in west central Manitoba. I couldn't stay cooped up in the bus any longer. By then, most of the passengers in the bus were newbie, I mean, they were fresh passengers. I'd been cooped up in the bus for many hours-on-end.

As I exited the bus I couldn't help but notice that the driver was a different person. This driver was a middle-aged, red-haired and kind of good looking woman. She had a medium build and freckles scattered throughout her body especially on her face. She had beautiful blue eyes. Unfortunately, she was frowning.

"Bye kitty, hope to see you soon!"

"Oh, thanks Miss and same to you!" Her kind words couldn't hide her mood. I didn't take it personally, driving a bus from town and city to town and city is a demanding job.

I walked to the Foxhound bus terminal. As soon as I entered the building I smelled something stinky. To my left was a wino, dead asleep. He smelled like a guy who hadn't bathed in ages and drank hard liquor often. If you've ever lived in a large North American city you know what I mean. The smell's quite repulsive, indeed.

I continued walking through the building until I reached the exit. I took a deep breath, held it for a few seconds, and then exhaled. I was now in unfamiliar territory without any legal identification. I hate to say it but I had to go about getting fake I.D. again. This time around I'd ask for a legal-

looking non-driver's identification card and absolutely nothing else. I'd pay a maximum of 50 dollars and not a penny more. And under no circumstances would I even talk to someone who appeared underhanded or criminal-like; only clean cut law-biding-looking persons would be acceptable.

Indeed, the bus driver was feeling down and out. Perhaps some cat-style therapy would help. The good news is, we both had some extra time on our hands and the bus driver was technically still in her work quarters. All she had to do was present herself in front of her bus a short while before the scheduled departure.

"Miss, listen, both of us have some extra time on our hands. We should go to the snack bar it'll be my treat; a meal, a snack, or a soft drink, coffee or a hot chocolate.

"Wow, kitty that sounds awesome. Actually, I'm in the mood for coffee, nothing else. I'll eat as soon as I arrive at my final destination for today which is Belmont, Ontario. I'm staying there for a couple of days. I have a cousin there. Linda's a very kind and courteous person, I'm always welcome in her home. One more thing, I'm bigger and older than you, therefore, the tab will be on me."

"So be it, let's go to the snack bar; coffee for two, okay?"

"Umm, Miss, by the way, what's your name?"

"My name is Tabitha Forrester, and what's your name, kitty?"

"Umm, my name is Corey Jameson."

Tabitha and I went to the snack bar and then stood in line to give our order. There were only 3 persons ahead of us. Our turn came a short while later.

"Hi, Tabitha, how are you doing?"

"Karen, I'm doing just fine. Corey and I want 2 extra large coffees, 4 creams and 3 sugars in each. Corey, is that okay?"

I grinned and then nodded my head. Tabitha paid for our order then we stood away from the line. A small crowd of people entered the snack bar, likely because a bus had just arrived.

"Here you go, Tabitha."

"Thanks, Karen, you're a sweet person."

Tabitha carried the coffee cups to a table located in a far corner of the snack bar. The snack bar's interior was well designed. The tables, chairs, napkins, and shakers were clean and organized.

We sat down, and then Tabitha removed the lid from each coffee cup. Instantly, I felt that something was missing. I focused really hard on the problem at hand; I got it.

"Tabitha I forgot to get a straw. I can't drink this coffee without a straw. If I do the cup will tip over and burn me."

No sooner had I turned to position myself to leap off of the table Karen appeared out of nowhere, "Corey, sorry about that. Here's your straw. I heard Tabitha call you Corey after she made her order."

"Thanks a lot Karen. I really appreciate you helping me in such a sweet manner."

Karen walked back to the cash register, meanwhile Tabitha was fuming. She didn't like the idea of me speaking to another girl. Or maybe there was bad blood between them.

"Huh, that little wench thinks she can snatch you away from me! Even though she's a close friend of mine, it doesn't give her the right to cross the line. If she does I'll make sure all hell breaks loose. I don't like it when women do that. They see you with a guy, and oh my, they must interject themselves into the relationship. Some of these girls are as sharp as scalpels."

At that very moment, I became certain that Tabitha was a bit off base. I couldn't pinpoint her mental health ailment though. I started sucking on the straw hoping that Tabitha would forget what'd ensued with Karen.

"So, umm, Tabitha, how long have you been a Foxhound bus driver?"

"Corey, I understand exactly what you're trying to do. Let me see, you want to try to figure out my age, right?"

"No, Tabitha, I just want to know more about you. You seem like a very nice and interesting person. Please don't take offense to my question, I really mean it."

"Oh, I'm sorry, I overstepped my bounds here. I jumped the gun like a gunslinger. Okay, I've been at Foxhound for 5 year. That doesn't make me an old hag. Some female bus drivers have been driving at Foxhound for 25 or 30 years. They're all fat, ugly, and wrinkled up, not beautiful like me. I'm the most beautiful female bus driver in the whole world, right?"

"Huh, yes, umm, you're an incredibly beautiful bus driver. And it's an honour to be your friend."

"Corey, I didn't ask you about whether I was incredibly beautiful or not. I want to know if you think that I'm the most beautiful female bus driver, uh-hum, in the whole world."

I was wrong, Tabitha wasn't a bit off base she was a total nutcase. I had to go along with her twisted thoughts and illusions.

"Yes, Tabitha, you're the most beautiful female bus driver in the whole world. And that's not all you're a very nice person too."

Following my 'correct response' I took notice of something in my peripheral vision. Karen was waving her hand, trying to get my attention.

As soon as she realized I saw her she whispered some words to me.

"Corey, please DO NOT trust this psycho case. Foxhound Inc. has given her one last chance, if she behaves like a nut case in any way, shape, or form again, especially while she's driving, the game will be over.

Tabitha's extremely possessive. Worse yet, she can't make it with a man. She may think you're her new man. Be extremely careful and DO NOT tell her where you live or divulge incriminating information."

Tabitha took notice of my diverted gaze. She quickly turned her head to face Karen. Thankfully, Karen had just turned away to serve a customer.

"Corey was Karen mocking me. If she was please tell me? I promise I won't bludgeon her to death. I'm not that kind of a girl. Oh, by the way did you see the movie Psycho?"

Considering the context of our conversation, her question about the movie Psycho just about made me poop and pee in my seat. It was the creepiest question anyone had ever asked me. I felt that answering it would lead to more creepy questions, therefore, I ignored it completely.

"Oh, umm, no, I'm sure Karen loves you dearly. Don't think badly about her. Listen, I got really strong vibes from Karen when you ordered our coffees. She may actually love you like her own sister, and she'd never hurt your feelings."

Tabitha continued drinking her coffee. I did likewise. For the following 15 or so minutes not a word was spoken by either of us. Then we finished our coffees.

"Corey, let's sit together in a far off secluded corner of the Foxhound Terminal okay?"

"That sounds like a good idea. Let's go there right now."

I leaped onto the floor Tabitha threw our coffee cups into the garbage can. Then, she turned to face Karen, waved goodbye and proceeded to leave the snack bar. I followed Tabitha, staying to her right. I had two problems. How was I going to terminate our meeting? Worse yet how would she respond? I was starting to feel quite uncomfortable around her. And I had a strong feeling that there was more creepy behaviour to be manifested.

Shortly thereafter, we arrived at a nice isolated spot. Therein was a long bench and the nearest person to us was at least 100 feet away. Tabitha and I could speak with each other candidly and without having to look over our shoulders. I never liked snoops.

No sooner had we sat down a man dressed in a dark gray trench coat, wearing shades, and a black hat sat roughly 20 feet from us. What's more, his coat collar was pulled up like the

non-cropped ears of a Doberman pinscher, if you've ever seen that rare look. And there was one more thing I could've sworn that this shady looking character was in the snack bar when Tabitha and I were there. I was just about to bring up this matter with Tabitha, unfortunately she spoke before I could even get a word in.

"Corey, I have a secret to tell you. Now, I want you to promise me that you won't tell anyone in the whole world, okay?"

"All right, cat's honour, I promise that I won't tell anyone in the whole world, neither a human nor an animal, nor even myself for that matter. Your secret shall be locked up inside me and under no circumstances shall I reveal it to anyone else, even the threat of torture, banishment, and death will not break my silence."

"Oh my dear, Corey, I love you so much! Thank goodness, I can finally tell someone my big secret. Listen up, okay, first things' first, I want you to slide towards me. You and I must be close enough to smell each other's breath and feel the air expelling from our mouths when we speak."

I found that quite disgusting. Humans do have a plethora of breath fresheners, but when they don't use them, they have the worst, most disgusting breath of all mammals. I had to slither my way out of this one without insulting Tabitha.

"Tabitha, I'm a cat, and more so, an Anglophone cat. We have a personal space beam that's larger than lovey-dovey humans. Please DO NOT take it as an insult, okay. I'll slide as close as I can to you without feeling uncomfortable. Is that satisfactory?"

Tabitha grinned at me and then waved me closer to her. Judging from her body language she took no offense to my remark.

"Corey I'm on probation from the Foxhound management. You see, umm, a whole bunch of Foxhound employees have been lodged complaints against me. They say that I'm a psycho case, that I'm unfit to drive a Foxhound bus, and that the best job suitable for me is that of assistant trainee janitor, strictly assistant toilet cleaning.

One more strike and I'm out. I don't know what to do. I don't know how to do anything else. I don't look my years, but guess what, I'm 40 years-old, have never been married and have no kids. I live alone, and beside the enemies that I work with, I have a dismal social life; Karen considers me a customer first. You're the only person in the whole world that I can open up to."

I braced myself for more freaky stuff. I felt like I was dreaming. How could any person's mind be so warped?"

"Corey, I'm on anti-psychotic and anti-depressant meds. I don't like taking my meds they have side effects that are very

annoying. I haven't been taking my meds lately. Actually, it's been a couple of weeks.

Corey, when I drive a Foxhound bus sometimes I see monsters, goblins, and creeps standing on the shoulder of the highway. I feel like swerving my bus and striking them dead cold. I become so enraged I lose contact with reality, even forgetting about the passengers in the bus."

"Tabitha, you must not drive a Foxhound bus ever again. Take your meds and please find another occupation!"

No sooner had I said those words the man in the trench coat stood up. Immediately thereafter, a dozen persons including Foxhound Inc. employees and local Maple City Police officers converged upon us. I had absolutely no clue what was going on.

"Tabitha, you're under arrest!" shouted a tall, burly policeman.

"What's going on here, I'm just having a friendly conversation with my friend Tabitha."

The man in the trench coat approached us then spoke, I'm undercover Officer Daniels. We got you on tape, every last word needed to incriminate and fire you from your job. Furthermore, the crown (prosecuting attorney) will likely seek to charge you with a whole sleuth of crimes. You're a threat to society. Corey thanks a lot for helping us."

I was shocked, unable to speak. Suddenly two stocky policemen threw Tabitha onto the floor, cuffed her, and then took her away; meanwhile, she was screaming her head off. A congregation of travellers converged upon the scene. Everyone in the arresting group left, except for the man wearing the trench coat.

"Corey, I'm going to need your full name, address, and phone number; if you can give me your email too that'll be nice. You may be called upon as a witness in a Foxhound hearing and in a court of law."

"Damn you Corey, you betrayed me! You let these goblins and wizards grab hold of me! Don't you love me?"

"Corey, listen, I have to give the officers instructions pertaining to Tabitha's arrest and where she should be taken. I need to gag Tabitha too, and she may have to be put in a straightjacket. Stay put, okay. This is an order from an officer of the law. If you leave the Foxhound Terminal you will be committing a serious crime punishable by death ... I mean incarceration."

"Okay, Officer Daniels, I'll stay put, I promise."

As soon as Officer Daniels left me I ran the nearest exit. The force of my momentum literally shattered the glass door. Everyone in the terminal, including Officer Daniels heard the commotion. I couldn't have cared less though, I was on the run.

"Hey, stop right there! Damn you Corey, I told you not to move! Come back or we'll use lethal force against you!"

It was a bluff. As soon as I ran through the exit I came across a spacious parking lot, people therein were coming and going. Too many potential innocent bystanders and witnesses meant that the police could not fire at me.

Meanwhile, I could hear the treading of feet fast approaching. Worse yet, it was one in the afternoon and there wasn't a cloud in the sky, literally illuminating the entire area. I sprinted through the parking lot then entered Yellowstone Street; thank goodness it was a side-street. I had no other choice in the matter. I ran to the end of Yellowstone Street and then leaped onto a large tree, then scaling it like a leopard. I was now atop a hefty tree looking down upon a large area.

I crouched down so no one could see me. No sooner had I closed my eyes I passed out. The stress of it all was too much for me. Upon awakening I noticed that it was dark already. Glancing up at the sky I pondered about what it would be like to live on another planet. I'm not talking about Jupiter or Neptune, or whatever. I'm talking about inhabitable planets. Perhaps it would be better for me. Unfortunately, it was impossible to get there. Unless the Gray aliens were to somehow come to Earth and then take me back with them, an impossible scenario indeed.

There was no time to daydream. My life, along with Tabitha's, were presently in turmoil. She was going to be incarcerated, I was on the run. I couldn't stay in Maple City too long, perhaps one or two days at the very most. Someone in law enforcement may put two and two together, making a connection between me and the killer cat.

I earnestly pondered about what to do next, trying to conjure up some viable options. What do I do next? This was the million dollar question that I asked myself. With no one to confide with it was all up to me to come up with an answer.

There were no police vehicles or personnel in sight, and I heard no chatter from them either, a clear sign that the coast was clear. I carefully descended the hefty tree, face down of course. I'm not a sloth or a bear.

Upon descending unto the ground I deduced that I had to stay clear of the Foxhound Inc. terminal, a dangerous place indeed.

I left Yellowstone Street, entering another one immediately thereafter. It was then that I realized that my presence in a dead-end side street could've ended up being a death sentence. There's nowhere to run. Thank goodness for trees.

It was 8:00 P.M. and for the following two hours I strolled through Maple City. A new thought pulsated through my mind. I felt really sorry for Tabitha. Perhaps, I could help her escape her tormentors.

I entered Raymond Street then headed to Jack's Restaurant. I wasn't seeking food. In actuality I was searching for an underhanded fellow. Someone who could help me; I had a game-plan in my head. All I needed was one article, a fake identification card.

My sudden desperation resulted in my lower of standards. For the time being, an underhanded person would be the only one who could possibly help me.

I kept low, staying out of the way of customers entering and leaving Jack's Restaurant. I headed to the back of the restaurant near the dumpsters.

No sooner had I arrived I saw a raccoon eating food that had been tossed away into a blue dumpster. It was no surprise, raccoons and rats are notorious for this kind of behaviour.

"Hey, excuse me do you want to make some extra money?" I asked.

Instantly, the raccoon dropped his food and then shifted his gaze upon me. He had a serious expression on his face. I wasn't sure what he was thinking, happiness or anger. He erased my suspicions as soon as he spoke.

"Do I want to make some money? Wait a second. You know what, kitty I don't want your money or anything else from you. Here I am, a lifelong resident of Maple City, living in my neighbourhood and guess what, I'm not being a good host.

Raccoons have a very bad reputation for being un-caring about anyone else. Well, it is past time we begin to convey our good side to people.

Kitty, first things first, I'd like to formally introduce myself. My name is Cameron Raccoon. And, umm, I'm delighted to meet you. Would you like to join me for dinner? It's really good food, bits of chicken, and a handful of French fries, a few bites of coleslaw, and some pop. Dessert consists of 3 half-eaten oatmeal cookies, how about it?"

Although I was astonished and flattered at Cameron's hospitality, especially since he was a raccoon, the food and drink he was eating came right out of the dumpster. Yuck, no way!

"Cameron, your offer is very sweet. Unfortunately, I'm not very hungry, and I'm too stressed out to eat. What I need isn't food or money, only good solid advice. The fact that you're a raccoon and born here makes it all the better."

I conveyed my story to Cameron, but not the part about me being the supposed killer cat. I only told him what'd happened

for the period I befriended Tabitha and of my great escape. I was desperate; desperation sometimes makes a person more courageous.

"Oh Cameron, one more thing, I forgot to formally introduce myself. My name is Corey Jameson, and I'm pleased to meet you too."

"Corey, listen up, okay. I've heard about cases like yours before. The raccoon grapevine is very long and extensive. Your beloved friend Tabitha has been taken to the Maple City Hospital, specifically the Psychiatric Ward Section A. This is where the criminally insane are housed, but only for 72 hours. Thereafter, the highest ranking psychiatrist will make a recommendation as to what happens next for the patient. I don't think Tabitha will be freed. You must get her out of that hell-hole soon or else it'll be too late."

"What do you mean? Me, I can't just walk into the hospital and then head to the psychiatric ward, hold Tabitha's hand and then casually leave the premises with her."

"Yes you can. And I know exactly how you can do it. As soon as you enter the hospital go to the information booth and tell the receptionist that you were just hired as an assistant trainee janitor for the psychiatric ward. No one will ever suspect a person of lying about being an assistant trainee janitor. You must give a name, and when the receptionist asks you for I.D. tell him or her that the Human Resources Department told you to pick up your I.D. card at the information desk in the Psychiatric Ward."

"Cameron, are you certain this will work?"

"Corey, you'll have to do a good job performing this very stressful task. Corey, I think you can do it. If you guys exit the hospital together and unharmed you must split up. You can't be together while on the run."

"Okay Cameron, when should I make my move and what do I do after we escape?"

"Both of you must skip town. When the hospital staff and security personnel find out what has happened the Maple City Police force will be notified. They will be placed on high alert patrolling the streets and all pathways in and out of town."

"Cameron thanks for the information. But there are two issues; where is the Maple City Hospital and I must ask you again, when do you recommend that I make my move?"

"Walk to the front of the restaurant and then go to Bay Street. Thereafter, go straight for about 100 yards. You can't miss it, there's a humungous sign indicating it's the hospital. As for the when question, well it's dark out. The more dark hours you have the better."

I embraced Cameron, said thank you, and then walked away. He was a good friend, indeed. Unfortunately, he and I had to part ways. I had absolutely no time to waste. Judging from the drool in and around his mouth he had no time to waste either. I'd interrupted his meal.

Upon reaching Bay Street a vehicle passed me; I instinctively ducked. My nerves were on edge. I approached a tree, resting on it until 11:00 P.M. I had to get Tabitha out of that hell-hole fast. I figured the last Foxhound bus out of Maple City was at midnight. Yes, it's true I'd somehow changed my mind about staying away from the Foxhound bus terminal. I figured it would be safer than hitching a ride.

I yawned, stretched my body, and then studied the area for possible dangers. Thankfully, the coast appeared to be clear. I walked away from the tree then continued onward until reaching the end of the block. I studied the exterior of the Maple City Hospital very carefully. It became apparent to me that the easiest point of entry and escape was right in front of me. I'd just back-track all the way to the Foxhound Bus Terminal.

Looking at the incredible building before my eyes, I suddenly felt a rush of fear and anxiety. A main gate formed the entrance to the driveway and walkway into the Maple City Hospital. This old building was spooky, indeed. It looked like a typical 19th century asylum. Did I make a mistake? Was the entire hospital a psychiatric asylum? Perhaps Cameron was lying to me.

This gothic structure was 10 floors high and as wide as a football field, that's 100 yards in case you didn't know. The gray colour and the old rectangular windows barricaded behind protective steel bars gave me the creeps.

I redirected my gaze at the main gate, whereupon I saw a large man eating a submarine sandwich and drinking a pop. I slithered by the main gate entrance then headed to the main entrance of the asylum. I was terrified of being spotted by the pre-occupied security guard. What's more, logic dictated that cameras would be placed in strategic areas.

As soon as I entered through the electronic doors I took several steps forward then stopped. I was roughly 50 feet from the information booth. The interior of the ground floor was dimly lit, scary-looking, and empty. Up and to my left and right was a pair of security cameras. I was being watched, therefore, I couldn't behave as though I was afraid hospital security had to believe I was there on business.

I approached the information booth and then leaped onto the counter. The receptionist was a middle-aged, black-haired woman who looked quite creepy. She had a large tattoo of a skull on her right forearm.

"Kitty, what's your business here?"

Suddenly, the expression on the receptionist's face turned wicked and glaring. I thought she wanted to attack me. Furthermore, her eyes turned bloodshot to the point of blocking out the white part; quite creepy indeed, making it more urgent to help Tabatha.

"Um, I'm the new assistant trainee janitor for Psychiatric Ward A. I was told to come here before midnight to begin my shift."

"Okay, kitty, go to the end of the hallway and then take an elevator to the 10th floor. Don't stop to chat with anyone and don't hand around doing nothing, go straight to Section A. okay?"

"Understood, I'm on my way."

I didn't bother to thank the receptionist her tone of voice was quite terse and offensive. She was probably a part-time witch.

I walked through the hallway to the elevators. Strangely enough, I didn't see anyone else on the entire floor, and the elevators were all on the ground floor level. I pressed the UP button initiating the opening of the double doors of elevator #5. I entered the elevator. To my surprise, there were two panels, one high off the ground, the other was low, the latter had been designed for midgets and short animals like me. I wasn't complaining or anything, but, it was quite strange indeed. I pressed the #10 button.

The elevator ascended quite rapidly. I was on the 10th floor in a jiffy. As soon as the elevator doors opened I leaped out, not wasting a single second. I looked right and then left. There was a wall and a door on my left. The door contained a sophisticated lock wherein a scanning card had to be swiped to gain entry, meaning that only special personnel were allowed therein.

The information booth was on my right. A long hallway crossed the information booth onto the left and right. Till now, the information booth nurse hadn't seen me. I had to make up my mind in a split second, should I approach her and identify myself or should I slither through the hallway in search for Tabatha? I decided on the former.

I approached the information booth head-on, like a person who had nothing to hide and was being forthright. Thankfully, the counter was only 3 feet high I didn't have to do any leaping.

"Excuse me, madam nurse umm I'm the new assistant trainee janitor for Section A. Can you please tell me where I can find the supply room?"

The nurse looked at me without blinking. In fact, she didn't even move. What? Hold on a minute. She didn't smell like a human, and her skin was hairless and weird looking. She didn't smell like a corpse either. So, what was she? I wondered.

I leaped onto the counter to take a closer look at her. After sniffing her and stroking her right forearm it became clear to me that this so-called nurse was in reality a mannequin.

I searched the area for a patient manifest. Looking desperately here and there, then leaping onto the floor behind the counter I was intent on finding Tabatha. I turned back and then leaped onto the counter again. I'd realized my mistake. The patient manifest is usually on the table just behind the counter.

To my left was a black binder. I opened it then ran through the pages until I reached today's date.

Let me see, Forrester, hmm ... there it is, Tabitha Forrester! She's in room #1015. Looking up at the directional signs, one of them indicated that room #1015 was down the hall to my right. I closed the binder and then headed straight to Tabatha's room. I had to save her, I just had to.

I walked through the hallway, peering into each room on my way. Then, I heard faint screams and cries. When I got to room #1008 I stopped in my tracks. I leaped onto a square-shaped peep window. I held the door with my claws. I zoomed in on what was happening. Shockingly, a young woman was having a prefrontal lobotomy performed on her. There were 5 persons in the room, 3 of them were observers.

No sooner had I discovered what was going on the neurosurgeon shifted his gaze onto me. The shocking fear I felt caused me to lose my grip and fall onto the marbled floor. Thank goodness I righted myself before I reached the floor. Otherwise, I would've been a dead goose.

I ran through the hallway until I found a vacant room. With no other options I ran into it. The lights were turned off. Just then, I heard a door opening and the pounding of feet. The neurosurgeon may or may not have seen me, or maybe he wasn't sure. Either way I had to hide really fast. The 'treading feet' were fast approaching.

The room contained 4 typical hospital beds. I leaped onto the closest bed and then slithered under the pillow. I curled up like a ball in order not to be seen.

I figured if I breathed quietly under the pillow no one would know that I was in the room. No sooner had I taken my first breath someone entered the room then stood motionless beside the door. For the time being there were only 2 persons in

the room. Unfortunately, I could hear the rapid treading of feet converging upon the room.

My heart was racing, my blood pressure rose sharply, and I became light-headed. I was forced to clench my paws and wait to see what would ensue. Thereafter people started to enter the room.

"Gentlemen, I'm quite certain that I saw someone looking at us from behind the window. That creep made us end our prefrontal lobotomy. And one more thing, I'm certain that it was a cat. Cameron told me that a good specimen would be entering our top secret sanatorium; a wicked cat using the name Corey Jameson."

Following a moment of silence I heard the ringer of a cell phone.

"Hello, who is this?"

The operator of the cell phone shifted the sound to speaker; that was great news for me. I could hear everything that was said.

"Dr. Caller, this is Laura, the receptionist on the ground floor. As per your command, I watched the tape, and yes, the cat that went upstairs was in fact Corey Jameson. I'm using the tape, my memory, and the detailed analysis given to us by Cameron. Dr. Caller, sir, Corey Jameson is on your floor. I don't know exactly where, but he can't be anywhere else. Specifically the elevator record indicates that he went up to the 10th floor a short while ago. The surveillance tape shows him feeling and sniffing the mannequin. Thereafter, we had a malfunction in the system.

All I can tell you is that absolutely no one else used any of the elevators after Corey. Furthermore, I've locked all the elevators. The only way out of this building is to leap off or take the stairs. Both stairwells are now under constant surveillance and patrol. I advise you to search every single room on your floor. I've already called for backup. We're going to squeeze Corey Jameson's guts out until he bleeds from every orifice. He can't run or hide."

"Good work, Laura!" That was the end of the conversation.

"Dr. Caller, sir, do you want us to begin our search in this room?" said a person in the room.

"No, this baby is mine. You guys search this floor and the roof. And while you're at it contact Laura and tell her to send someone down to the basement, just in case that creepy kitty is able to elude us."

Everyone exited the room except for Dr. Caller. Somehow, I had a creepy feeling that he was staring at me. I dared not move a millimetre nor make a sound, just in case I was wrong.

"Corey, I know for a fact that you're here. Come out so I can see you. I promise we won't perform a prefrontal lobotomy on

you. We'll let you walk out of our sanatorium without being harmed if you promise not to tell anyone about us or of this place. And one more thing, you can't tell anyone that we're holding Tabatha Forrester here."

Dr. Caller was searching through the room as he was talking to me. Would he search under the pillow? I'd never heard of anyone hiding underneath a pillow.

Dr. Caller was zooming in on my location, though, I could sense it. Suddenly, I felt a tug on the bed sheets. In a flash, Dr. Caller lifted the mattress off of the bed spring and then tossed it onto the floor.

"There you are you miserable little slime ball! You're dead meat! And as for your safe passage from our sanatorium, it was all a lie. You and Tabatha are our last specimens."

I tossed the pillow onto the floor then I focused my attention solely onto Dr. Caller. Oh gosh he looked so weird. He wasn't even a human being or an animal.

"What the hell are you?" I exclaimed.

"Corey, what I am isn't important. But I'll tell you something very important though, we're on an important mission from our own planet. We were ordered to obtain 500 specimens from Earth, then to depart. Almost all of my people departed early yesterday evening. That's why our sanatorium is nearly empty except for essential personnel and security. When we're through with this place it will be completely destroyed.

The self-destruct panel is beside the mannequin that you saw. In your haste you didn't notice the panel. The code for destruction is 77744700. I'm telling you this because I'm absolutely cock-sure that you're not going to leave this building alive. Come down from the bed then follow me to the operating room. There's no use in resisting, I'm a much larger and stronger than you, and just in case you do get the upper hand on me I'll shout for backup."

"Dr. Caller, you mean to tell me you're from another planet?"

"Of course, just look at me. I don't look like any Homo sapiens or animal you've ever seen, right? What's more our special cloaking device prevents anyone other than those whom we want, to see our sanatorium. That's why no one has ever come to the rescue of any of our specimens."

I didn't like the use of the word 'specimen'. But I was glad Dr. Caller did use it. Under the context the word indicated quite clearly what these aliens; intentions were, nothing short of evil. What's more, who's to say they won't be back for more specimens.

Dr. Caller was nearly 8 feet tall, well-built, and had a large alien head. He was bald-headed. Most freaky of all were his wide black eyes, absolutely no white in them.

I brainstormed for a moment, trying to find an adequate solution to the problem at hand. It became apparent to me that there was only one option, fight and win, find Tabatha, and then get the hell out of the sanatorium but not before I initiated the self-destruct sequence. For that, I had to use my brains because there was one aspect of the self-destruct sequence that I had to know. It was so vital, both my life and Tabatha's depended upon it.

"Okay, Dr. Caller, I've accepted defeat. You're way too strong and intelligent for me to even put up a fight against. But there's just one thing that I want to know about the self-destruct sequence; once it's initiated how much of a time delay before the self-destruction actually occurs?"

"Corey, 5 minutes is all we get. The remaining members of our race will go upstairs to the roof. Therein, we will board a special craft that'll take us to our spaceship which is hovering just beyond the Earth's atmosphere. The craft is very fast, indeed, faster than any rocket you have on Earth. Regarding the self-destruction of the sanatorium, absolutely no one beyond the peripheral of the area will see or hear the destruction. What I'm saying is, no human or animal on this planet will be alerted by the explosion or to our presence.

Corey, I know what you're trying to do. You want to delay the inevitable. It's over you must come with me right now!"

I dug deep into the primitive wild nature of my inner self. I began to drool and to froth from the mouth. I carefully studied Dr. Caller desperately searching for a visible weakness, a jugular vein or groin of sorts. I had no alternative but to attack. The attack had to be quick, massive, and totally decisive.

I couldn't locate a jugular vein; as for his groin for all I knew it could've been a non-sensitive area. Considering this I chose the obvious. Without hesitation I crouched down and then leaped unto Dr. Caller's face. The first thing I did was scratch his eyes, then the rest of his face. Thereafter, I instinctively bit his neck, making sure to sustain the bite and to not let go until Dr. Caller went down really hard.

Thank goodness Dr. Caller didn't even put up a fight. He went down as expected. I refused to release my grip on his neck. Meanwhile, blood began to spurt from the artery that I bit into. This particular alien species had blood that was a bit darker than ours; almost a red-burgundy colour.

As soon as Dr. Caller stopped breathing and I was certain that he was dead I released my grip. Then, I heard a young woman crying; she was definitely human.

Upon exiting the room I saw Tabatha walking in hallway heading towards me.

"Tabatha, where are all the aliens and how did you get out of the room in one piece?"

Just then, the alarm went off. After a brief pause Tabatha responded to my questions, "Corey, thank you very much for coming to my rescue. They were about to perform a prefrontal lobotomy on me. Almost all of the aliens have already left Earth. They're on the spacecraft. A shuttle craft is on its way.

Dr. Caller was getting ready to operate the self-destruct sequence. You see, you and I were supposed to be the last two specimens to be experimented on. The person that you saw crying for help wasn't a real patient. He was part of the trap set for you.

Corey, we must destroy this sanatorium immediately. All the valuable information that the aliens have collected is still in the sanatorium's computer base. It hasn't been transferred to the spacecraft yet. Furthermore, if we destroy the sanatorium within a short while both the shuttle craft and the spaceship will be destroyed too. They're both in the same dimension.

Oh, and one more thing, Corey, I love you so dearly!"

Although I was flattered by Tabatha's words, there was no time to be lovey-dovey. We had to get down to business.

"Tabatha, come with me to the information counter immediately and please do not ask me any questions!"

"Okay, Corey, it's all right if you don't love me back, I understand."

I ran to the information booth on our floor, I could hear Tabatha's feet pounding on the floor right behind me. Thank goodness she did as I asked.

With no time to waste I leaped onto the counter and then slithered to a spot beside the self-destruct panel. With no time to waste I turned on the self-destruct sequence, followed the user friendly instructions and then when asked to I entered the numbers 77744700. A red light flashed thereafter, and a warning asking if I was 100 percent certain that I wanted the self-destruct sequence timer to begin. After pressing the YES option the timer began. With only 5 minutes till destruction I quickly explained the details to Tabatha. We ran to the nearest elevator and then Tabatha pressed the DOWN button. Shortly thereafter the elevator double doors opened, shocking indeed. Laura lied to Dr. Caller about locking the elevators, likely resulting from her fear of him.

Tabatha and I heard a raucous at the end of the hall. We'd been spotted by alien security forces.

Tabatha pressed the L button (Lobby). Thankfully, we arrived at the lobby and the elevator double doors opened. Immediately thereafter, the alarm stopped. Then, our elevator door closed. Worse yet, all the elevators went up to the 10th floor. We'd missed being captured by a hair.

"Corey, let's get out of here immediately!"

We ran to the exit. As soon as we reached the electronic doors someone began to fire a heated laser gun at us. The glass beside us instantly melted. We exited the sanatorium, running to the main gate and then past it.

No sooner had we turned to see what'd ensued behind us we saw a white flash. Thereafter, the white flash disappeared. What was left was empty land devoid of life or activity. We'd made it out. If the world only knew how heroic Tabatha and I were. Perhaps, I'd no longer have to be on the run. But as things went, that wasn't the case.

"Corey, what do you want to do now?"

"Let's take a bus ride. Tabatha, I really do care about you. But as things go, I hope you understand that we must split up. You and I are both on the run. If we stay together it'll make it that much easier to be captured."

"How about we compromise? This is what I'll do I have a pair of universal Foxhound Bus keys on my person. I can drive us through junctions and side streets for hundreds of miles. Thereafter, we can split up. But as things go, we must leave Manitoba immediately. You and I need each other; two brains are a hundred times better than one brain, really."

"Okay, Tabatha. Let's go to the Foxhound Bus Terminal and choose a good bus to ride in."

"No Corey, not that way, that's the dangerous way, we'll be spotted and apprehended almost immediately. This is what we'll do we'll go to the Foxhound Bus garage. The Maple City garage closes at midnight. It's already 12:30 A.M., and it'll take us 15 minutes to get there.

We'll sneak into the garage, get into a bus and voila, we'll be on our way. The garage opens at 6:00 A.M. unless there's an emergency. By then, you and I will be in Saskatchewan driving on a junction or a relatively unknown road. As soon as we get to Alberta I'll ditch the bus in a secluded forested area. By the time the authorities figure out what'd ensued we'll be long gone. How does that sound?"

"Wow, Tabatha, you're a very smart woman. And, umm, there's something else too. Your behaviour has changed. What happened?"

"I'm not a weirdo, and I'm not a mental case either. The creatures that I told you I saw on the highway were aliens like

Dr. Caller and his kind. For some reason I was able to see them while other humans weren't. I feel both vindicated and cured. I no longer have mental distress and anguish. I now know for a fact that what I saw on the highway was real. Just because no one else saw them doesn't mean they weren't real."

"Fine, Tabatha, let's go to the garage. We can't waste any more time in this city."

Tabatha and I began our walk to the Foxhound Bus Garage. It was a pleasant night, beautiful stars, a shiny full moon, and hardly a breeze felt. Better yet, there was hardly any traffic in the area. I was no longer jittery every time a vehicle passed me at night. My mind was focused on getting out of Maple City and heading west. However, there were two issues at hand; it was a gnawing feeling I had. First, if I reached British Columbia in one piece should I search for Mr. and Mrs. Williams? Second, I felt a powerful vengeance-like feeling in my heart. I wanted to close down at least one puppy mill to avenge what'd happened to me and to all the dogs and cats out there who were suffering immensely in these hell-holes. Anyway, I had to focus my attention on the issue at hand.

As soon as we reached the Foxhound Bus garage Tabatha raised her hand indicating that we should stop walking. We were standing in a semi-lit area just across the street from the garage. A very large tree helped to hide our presence just in case someone inside the garage was focusing his gaze in our general direction. Contrary to what Tabatha said about the garage closing at midnight there's always a chance someone's doing some overtime work.

"C'mon, Corey, crouch down a bit and stay behind me. I know there could be a security guard in the garage or maybe someone's working late. Either way, the buses are on the other side of the building.

What we have to do is cross this street and then sneak up to the information office just behind the sidewalk. There's a big sign that reads Information Office over there at the far left hand corner of the building."

"Oh, Tabatha, I see it."

After crossing the street we slowly approached the information office. The lights were off indicating that there was no one therein. I shoved my face on the window then scanned the entire interior of the main office. Thankfully, there was no one inside.

"Corey, I think it's safe to assume that the coast is clear. Now all we have to do is go around this building on the right side."

I followed Tabatha like her own shadow. Soon, we were standing in front of our entry point. Tabatha reached for a tiny

square-shaped black box beside the door. She turned then scanned the entire area like a peacock. As soon as she turned back to face the box she punched in the numbers 5500987, then we heard a short beeping sound.

Tabatha opened the door to the garage and then walked in. We saw a total of 6 Foxhound buses. Neither of us was a mechanic so we decided to ride the bus that looked the cleanest and healthiest on the outside.

"Corey, that bus over there, umm, bus #915. Do you see it?"

"Yes, Tabatha, let's get into the bus before someone decides to enter this garage. Please, we have to get on the move right now!"

"Corey, I know that! What, do you think I'm stupid?"

I frowned at Tabatha but didn't give an answer. If I'd spoken my mind a heated argument would've ensued. There was no time for that, perhaps later, but not now.

Tabatha walked to the back of the garage to a control panel on the wall. She pressed the open button then 2 large doors opened wide. By then I was already in the Foxhound bus. A short while later we were on our way.

"Corey, the silent alarm has likely gone off. Every Foxhound garage has an alarm system installed in it. I don't know the alarm prevention code for this garage. No problem, by the time the police and Foxhound investigator arrive we'll be long gone."

I sat in the front passenger seat. Aside from the driver's seat this seat gives the best view. Tabatha drove 4 blocks and then turned into a semi-deserted road.

"Tabatha, what's the name of this road?"

"Ironically, it's called Deserted Road. It's rare to see anyone drive or walk on this road. I was once told about it by an ex-convict named Bertrand Rose. He did hard time for armed robbery. After serving 5 years in a Nova Scotia penitentiary he realized that crime doesn't pay.

Bertrand was riding in my bus heading from Windsor to Toronto. I wasn't fearful for my life because the bus was semi-full. There were literally too many witnesses and he appeared to be somewhat rehabilitated. I don't know why he told me about this road; perhaps he felt that someday I would evade the law, who knows?

Corey, we're going to drive all the way to western Alberta. As soon as we cross provincial lines into British Columbia you and I must have a serious talk about our future together."

Tabatha glanced at me; I showed no response. To tell you the truth I felt that it was time to call it quits. A couple more hours of driving and then I'd ask Tabatha to drop me off on the shoulder of the road.

I awakened a short while later. Although I was still a bit groggy there was something that I had to give Tabatha.

"Tabatha, slow down please, I need to give you something very important."

"Huh, you do? Okay, go ahead."

"This is a Foxhound ticket that's good for one year. It'll take you to Vancouver. Please take it I have no use for it. I'm a cat, I can live in places where you can't. Furthermore, I can run, hide, climb, and leap better than you can. As for food and water, on the run I can acquire it easier than you can."

Tabatha grinned then she took the ticket. Following a brief pause she whispered the word 'sleep'. I closed my eyes and instantly fell asleep.

I awakened at 3:00 A.M., lying on my back on shoulder of the road. I had no idea where I was, worse yet I was alone. Where is Tabatha? I asked myself.

As soon as I stood a piece of paper that was placed on my abdomen slipped to the ground. Quite unusual, I thought. Nevertheless, I had to read the letter. It had to have been written by Tabatha Forrester.

Dear Corey:

You know that I love you so much. But do understand that being together would have an adverse effect on both of us. We are wanted criminals, more so now because I spotted at least half a dozen surveillance cameras in and around the Foxhound Garage.

Corey, please be well and watch out for who you trust. There are many backstabbers out there, thankfully, I'm not one of them.

Thanks a million for the bus ticket. As soon as I get to Vancouver I'll search for a place to stay. Don't worry, I have enough money to get by.

Best of Love,

Tabatha Forrester

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Wow, Tabatha's letter came as a shock to me. I was wrong, thinking that she had a dependent personality. Well, what can I say? I had to move on.

I craned my neck then did a slow 360 degree turn focusing on every single object that I possibly could. I didn't want to miss anything. During my turn I sensed animals nearby. And there was something peculiar about them too. Perhaps they were crying, or in pain. I was certain that they weren't happy. I craned my neck once more, trying to get a precise fix regarding their location.

Voila, there was a dirt road just up ahead. It turned right, and that was the general direction the animals were in. I walked to the dirt road and then turned right heading straight to the animals. I figured they were just over a mile away behind a vast forested area.

Thank goodness I'm a cat. Moonlight and the bazillions of stars in the clear sky were enough to aid me in getting around. I continued walking on the dirt road until I reached the peripheral of the forested area. Thankfully, a well-paved path was embedded into the forested area. All I had to do was follow it, because it appeared to lead to the animals.

The closer I got to the animals the more anxious I became. Something wasn't right, but I didn't know what it was.

Further in my walk the scent of cats and dogs began to fill the air. Now I was certain I was hearing faint cries of agony. I sped up my pace, but that wasn't enough. I now felt an extremely powerful drive it was like a giant magnet was pulling me towards this place. The scents and sounds were now overwhelming me. As soon as I was near the peripheral of the source of my stress and anxiety I felt a powerful rush of dizziness, puked like crazy and then passed out.

I must've been out for an hour. Upon awakening I discovered that my worst nightmare had struck twice, a lot worse than being struck by lightning twice. Even if it happens in a complete lifetime it's still quite strange and unusual.

In front of me was a fenced off puppy mill. A sign above and near me read MORRISON PUPPY MILL. The name Morrison conjured up an instant, but somewhat fuzzy memory.

Where did I hear that name before? I had to know. I closed my eyes and brainstormed intently for roughly a minute before remembering a name from my past, Vincent Morrison. It was a horrible memory. Considering this I put two and two together. Somehow, the Morrison Puppy Mill was tied in to my childhood. I had to investigate.

Then, in a flash, I remembered! Vincent Morrison was a ruthless criminal, a very shady un-trusty character and he most certainly is the worst animal tormentor in all of Canada. He is a disgrace to what Canada stands for, for most of us.

The Morrison Puppy Mill had the design of a real-life puppy mill hell-hole. I could see three tower guards in the facility. They were carrying high-powered hunting rifles. No doubt, they were ordered to kill anyone who tried to escape, dog or cat, it makes no difference.

The facility was lit by 6 overhead lights. Nevertheless, I felt that I could enter the facility during the night hours. As I was pondering about how to enter the facility a revolving search light came close to flashing its light on me. Thankfully, I was able to scurry behind a tree an instant before the light illuminated my position.

As soon as the search light passed my position I walked towards the fence and then searched for a good entry point.

Roughly 50 yards to my left was a main gate. In my anxiety-ridden state I hadn't noticed it earlier.

There was a man inside the main gate booth along with a Doberman pinscher. No doubt, they were guards. Any unauthorized entry or exit would be met with extreme aggression.

Just as I was focusing my attention on them I heard the treading of 2 persons, a man and a dog. Shifting my gaze to a specific location beside Shed #3, I took notice of a large man wearing casual clothing wearing a holster. He was very powerfully built, had a squared shaped jaw, and an expression of extreme anger on his face. By his side was a German shepherd dog.

I could see roughly a dozen sheds in all. Mostly dogs and also cats therein. I heard moans and groans, barks, meows, and shouts of agony; I didn't have to see them to know the people therein were in excruciating pain.

I could smell blood, rotten flesh, puss, vomit, urine, fecal matter, creepy organisms, rubbing alcohol, and powerful medications. This place was a true hell-hole. And there was some fecal matter and urine scattered outside of the sheds. Taking into consideration the hidden nature of this facility the owner wasn't licensed.

I crouched down as soon as the man and his dog passed me. There was something about this man that made me think about my early days in the Belmont Puppy Mill.

I sniffed the air intently and concentrated on studying him. What the hell! I remembered him! He was the administrator of the Belmont Puppy Mill.

Instantly, my muscles tightened. I wanted to rip this sorry excuse for a human into pieces. Unfortunately, there were other workers in the facility; not to mention his ferocious guard dog.

Dawn was fast approaching making it unwise for me to attempt an entry. I'd have to wait until sunset the following day. Remember, I needed the maximum number of darkness hours. Furthermore, waiting until the following day meant that I'd have time to think of a game-plan. I could also study the daily routine of the facility.

I turned back, walking for roughly 50 feet into the forested area. There was nothing to do but sleep. I chose the closest tree and then scaled it. To tell you the truth I don't even remember closing my eyes. But I do remember awakening from a long pleasant sleep. It was just past noon. Wow, I never dreamed that any cat could sleep for this long without interruption more so, I couldn't remember a single dream.

I descended the tree and then approached the peripheral fence of the puppy mill. There were humans and animals walking through the facility. In addition, I saw 2 dark vans enter the

main gate. I could hear the cries and shouts of fear and agony emanating from within. Unfortunately for the time being I was pre-occupied with another problem; I couldn't help them. On a positive note, I had an incredible escape plan for the animals in the puppy mill.

I stayed low crawling beside the peripheral of the facility, counting the sheds and studying the activities of the workers therein.

What bothered me most were the canine and feline Uncle Toms. They worked for the oppressors, trying to appease them for goodie points. I have the utmost hatred and disgust for this category of animals. At the bottom of the heap are foxhounds and any other dogs who hunt poor animals. Every foxhound that sells his own kind for human companionship should be ashamed of him or herself.

Regardless of my escape plan, I could never forget the tower guards or the search lights. They were likely the two most annoying nemesis I had to tackle.

The goal of my escape plan was to free every single captive animal in the puppy mill. Furthermore, I couldn't leave the area without completely destroying the puppy mill. And one more thing, I had a hard time keeping my anger and rage under control. A big part of me wanted to literally destroy the slimy puppy mill administrator. No doubt, he'd committed numerous crimes against the animal world. Sadly, the authorities either didn't care or didn't want to know about the puppy mill's existence and internal on-goings.

The administration office was located in a far eastern end corner of the puppy mill. This place is the heart and mind of the puppy mill. And no doubt the administrator's office would in this small building.

I continued to walk for an additional hour circling the entire circumference of the puppy mill. Along the way I studied what I could, and not forgetting to dive out of harm's way whenever I saw a dog or a cat worker.

I waited attentively until sunset. It wasn't as easy as planned. I had nearly a dozen case scenarios running through my mind. I couldn't choose the best one.

As soon as the sun set on the following day I decided to waste no time thinking and wondering about what to do. I cautiously approached the main gate but was forced to stop in my tracks as soon as I took notice of a dark van. The driver slowed down and then stopped.

I crawled to the underbelly of the van. Not wasting any time, I took a firm hold of the underbelly of the van, thereby guaranteeing myself entry into the puppy mill facility.

"Hey, Mickey, how many suckers did you snatch today?"

"Tim today was incredible. I snatched 14 suckers. And you know what, I used the same line on every single one of them, told them that their parents were involved in a car accident, and that I wanted to be a sweet Samaritan; I'd give them a free ride to the Williamsburg General Hospital.

You know something, Tim, in today's world there's a sucker born every second."

"Mickey, I agree with you wholeheartedly. Keep up the good work. The administrator will likely give you a bonus for today's catch."

That exchange got my blood boiling. I felt like tossing the van into the air and then going into combat mode, beating the daylights out of every single human being in sight, and double so to the Uncle Tom animals aiding them.

Mickey chuckled and then he drove slowly into the puppy mill grounds, and I could hear the oft-repeated lines of despair from the suffering animals, 'I want to go home, what did I do to you, I'm hungry, someone please help me, mommy daddy where are you', and more.

I waited until the van stopped. From my vantage point I could see a small shed containing about 20 cages. No doubt, this was the place the dogs and cats were registered in before being sent to their respective sheds.

Mickey exited the van along with a massive Rottweiler. The Rottweiler exited from the passenger's side indicating that he was a co-worker of Mickey's, and not his subordinate.

Mickey hurried into the shed, but the Rottweiler stopped then turned back to look at the van. He raised his head and then sniffed around. The expression on his face signified worry and suspicion.

"Hey, Andy, what's wrong? C'mon, the administrator wants us to sort out the animals so we can have them sent to their sheds."

"Mickey, something's wrong here. I sense that there's someone here who's not supposed to be here. I smell someone that I didn't smell before we arrived at the puppy mill. Let me take a look."

I just about pooped and peed onto the ground. Certainly, it would've been a dead giveaway. The Rottweiler would've known for a fact that I was underneath the van.

"C'mon Andy, you're all jittery for nothing. We've got so many animals in this puppy mill, and don't forget the previous ones we brought here in that same van. It's more than likely that you're scenting a previous captive. I don't doubt that you smell something, but I do doubt that it's from one of the dummies inside the van now."

"Mickey, you're absolutely right. I'm hungry and thirsty too. Maybe, that's it. All right, we'll sort out these dummies and then we can go to the administration office and grab something to eat and drink. Thereafter, I'll perform a general patrol of the premises, you can go back home to your wife and kids."

What, Mickey, the creep has a wife and kids. I wonder how he treats them he's likely an abusive husband and parent.

Mickey and Andy entered the shed. Mickey began to do some paper work while Andy counted the cages and studied the interior of the shed. I kept a keen eye on both of them, not making a move until the coast was clear.

A short while later Mickey and Andy entered a booth located inside the shed. This was perhaps my only chance to slip out from underneath the van, and that's what I did. Not only that, but I circled to the back of the van, leaped onto the door handles and then slowly opened one of the double doors.

I didn't give anyone inside the van a chance to be startled by my presence. The first thing I said to the animals therein was 'SHHHHH'! Do not say a word, not even a whisper, and breathe through your noses. Don't even sneeze or hiccup, okay'?

The 14 dogs and cats in the van nodded their heads in appeasement. Thank goodness they didn't cause a stir it would've alerted Mickey and Andy.

No sooner had I spoken I was repulsed by the awful stench therein. It was so powerful I was catapulted several feet back falling onto the dusty ground.

I was dazed for a moment, but as soon as I regained my composure I righted myself. Following a brief pause I approached the van and then leaped onto the opened door. I was catapulted by the stench for a second time.

The third time around I stayed several feet away from the back of the van.

"Guys, please have hope. I'm going to do whatever I can to free every single cat and dog in this facility, and if possible, I'm going to clobber some heads. It'll be quite chaotic. Just go along with the game plan. And under no circumstances can you smile or indicate that you're happy or have received good news. It'll be a dead giveaway, resulting in suspicion amongst the facility workers.

I was just about to close the van doors when suddenly one of the occupants spoke to me.

"Hey kitty, I know you told us not to speak, but I've got some important information that you can use. Three of us are captured escapees. The normal punishment meted out by the administrator for this kind of offence is a public whipping and shaming. It'll most likely occur tomorrow. It's never done on

the same day because the administration must organize the event. All the workers and animals in the facility are ordered to watch the whipping and shaming.

The good news is that the 3 of us Beagles know the daily work routine and weak points of this facility. If you can enter the administration office and reach the administrator force him to order the release of all the animals in the facility, it will happen. No one in this facility has ever disobeyed the administrator.

But getting to him will be quite difficult. He's got an array of bodyguards. Only a really smooth cat that's able to climb the roof of the Administration Office building then slither down the chimney without being noticed may be able to do the job, or maybe there's another way in. But if you do get this far and you force the administrator to free all the inmates at some point in time you'll have to brutally attack and perhaps kill him in the process. At the very least, you will have to disable him long enough for all of us to escape.

And remember, the administrator is a very large and powerful man. He won't hesitate to kill you. You may have to go for his jugular vein. I mean do as your big cat cousins would do."

I was flabbergasted by the Beagle's statement. No sooner had I grinned at him I heard a sharp voice calling out to me.

"Hey, who goes there? What are you doing talking to those animals? Stay where you are, do not move!"

I turned to face the source of the shouting. To my utter shock it was Andy the Rottweiler. I felt like I had a tire lodged in my throat. Nevertheless, I had to think fast.

"Umm, Andy, I'm a new recruit here. I was counting the animals, making sure there were 14 of them. We wouldn't want any of them to escape would we?"

"Oh, how's it going? Kitty, thanks for counting the animals in our van. We were supposed to make another head count as soon as we entered the puppy mill grounds, but forgot to do so."

I leaped onto the ground and then approached Andy and Mickey in order to alleviate any suspicions they had, regardless of how minor.

"Guys, I need to get back to my other duties. I'm scheduled to work in the Administration Office. I can't wait to see the administrator. I heard he's a really large and powerful man, a man with little or no mercy on his enemies."

"That's right, and if you work directly for him watch out. He's been known to strike animal workers who screw up on a task," said Mickey.

"Umm, I wasn't told if I needed a pass or a key to enter the administration office."

"Listen, Kitty don't tell anyone that I told you this, punch the numbers 66990, wait for a beeping sound and then punch the numbers 999000. The administrator has double combination protection," said Andy.

I couldn't help but wonder why Andy would trust me so easily. I mean, c'mon, giving me the double combination protection code? It was quite odd indeed.

I had no time to waste pondering about any topic, so I thanked Andy and Mickey then went on my way. The walking paths of the puppy mill were like dusty roads, made quickly and as cheaply as possible. I didn't care about this anyway, I had more pressing concerns. Not making it too obvious I glanced up at the watch towers. The 3 armed guards were directing their gaze at me. I got the creeps, so much so I walked closer to one of the sheds out of their line of vision then pooped and peed. I couldn't help it. But I also noticed something else there was no urine or fecal matter on the walking paths. Everything slimy and stinky was indoors. Except for the scent, not all of the sheds were closed. The place had been cleaned overnight.

I hustled away from my urine and fecal matter, not wanting to be spotted having done my thing. The last thing I needed was to be noticed by an employee of the facility.

I continued walking to the administration office passing several workers along the way. The humans were oblivious to my presence. I guess they couldn't imagine an unauthorized animal would be brazen enough to casually walk through the grounds, without showing any sign of fear too. Fear and anxiety emanating from a person is a dead giveaway.

At least a dozen vehicles entered the compound while others left. The ones that left were driven by customers who were oblivious or did not care to know where their new companion animal had originally come from, nor how much it suffered in the puppy mill. How shameful, many of these customers knew quite well what was going on in this hell hole.

As soon as I reached the door of the Administration Office I took a deep breath, held it for a moment and then slowly exhaled. Then, I directed my gaze at the moon and stars above. Thank goodness for their beauty; these precious gems helped calm me down. Don't get me wrong although I was able to control my outward persona internally I was quite anxious and fearful. I knew quite well what would've happened if the puppy mill workers discovered my true intent. No doubt, my punishment would be extraordinarily cruel and sadistic.

I was startled by a quite rugged and offensive person's voice. I knew who it was. He was speaking to me by intercom.

"Hey, what are you doing here? I don't know you."

"Umm, Mr. Administrator, how are you doing? I hope, umm,

everything's fine? Umm I'm a new employee in this facility. I was hired by Rufus. He said many good things about you. Sir, please, just let me say hi to you. Meeting you in person is a dream, come true. You're a hero to many dogs and cats."

I figured every puppy mill facility has an enforcer with a tough name. The first that came into mind was Rufus.

"Now that's what I like! I love it when people say good things about me. Kitty, what's your name?"

"My name is Corey Jameson."

"Wait a minute! Are you the same Corey Jameson that tried to defend an undergraduate student from being gang-raped by a group of studs?"

"Oh no, Mr. Administrator, no way, I'd never defend a woman under those circumstances; you and I know that whoever this girl was, she liked what she got and certainly deserved it too."

I didn't mean what I said, but I had to say it in order to obtain the administrator's trust.

"That's my boy! Ha, ha, ha! You have an incredible sense of humour too. I know all about that little tart. Her name was Cynthia Corbett. She was the biggest you know what on campus, tried to pose as a respectable virgin, but you and I know that wasn't the case.

Kitty, come on in. You can be my special guest. I'm going to ask my 5 canine body guards to leave us alone. I'm in the lounge room. As soon as you enter the building walk past the administration office which will be on your left, then continue walking through the hallway until you reach the end. The lounge room will be on your right. Would you like me to fix you a drink?"

The word milk almost left my mouth. I had to cup my whole face to stop myself from being a fool, and perhaps giving away my true intentions.

"Mr. Administrator, just give me a moment to punch in the double entry code, okay? (I did this to offset any suspicions that the administrator had, just in case).

Instantly, I heard a beeping sound then I punched in the numbers to the second code, following the second beep I opened the door, entered the building and then closed the door behind me.

I followed the administrator's directions. I studied my surrounding carefully while continuing to walk through the hallway. As soon as I reached the end I shifted my gaze to the right. Craning my neck, I took notice of a bar, 4 pool tables, a ping pong table, an oldies juke box, chairs and sofas, a large screen television monitor, and more than a dozen dining tables scattered throughout the lounge.

The administrator was sitting in a black-coloured leather lazy-boy chair. He was snacking on peanuts. A large glass of hard liquor was placed in a cup holder on the left armrest signifying that he was a southpaw. I had to remember that in case a physical confrontation ensued. Unless I could somehow knock him out or neutralize him in one or two lightning-fast blows. Fighting a southpaw, is not the same as fighting a right handed person. Southpaws are usually more difficult to fight and they move awkwardly too.

The administrator was watching a 'dirty movie'. Now, let me explain to you something that is vitally important when using the phrase 'dirty movie'. Humans automatically think that the aforementioned phrase relates to porno movies. Maybe so in the human world, but not in the animal world; in the animal world the phrase entails 'animal abuse movies'.

"Hah, hah, hah, Corey you've got to see this hilarious spectacle. This stupid elephant is being tormented with a bull-hook. She's too damn stupid to learn basic commands and tricks without being harmed. Back in the olden days they used to generically call performing elephants Dumb-o. The name says it all.

You should've seen the previous clip it showed a really cool seal hunter brutally bludgeoning a baby seal to death, now that's really funny. Saturday night is movie night. We make sure that all the shed occupants watch a 10 minute clip about animal brutality. If our inmates are becoming restless and defiant we show them additional animal brutality clips. Sometimes, the clip suits a specific purpose. For instance loud mouth, barky dogs are shown a clip about debarking of dogs. Cats that scratch our workers are shown a declawing clip, and so forth. We have clips to suit every kind of rebellion or defiance.

Corey, the best way to control our inmates is through fear, intimidation, brutality, and apathy."

The administrator waved me over to him then told me to watch the next clip. Horrifyingly, I saw a baby elephant, strapped down and being beaten. He was being broken in, to be controlled by his mahout and several other persons. The clip was filmed in India. None of the tormentors showed any sign of shame or empathy towards their victims. They simply didn't give a damn about the poor baby elephant and they knew as a whole their lawmakers couldn't care less either.

I'd just about exploded with anger and rage. Lucky for the administrator he turned off the television.

"Corey, sit on my lap. I think you and I are going to be good friends. I need to explain to you the ins and outs of this facility. I need someone exactly like you. Do you know how rare

it is to see a cat guard in a puppy mill? Indeed, it's quite uncommon.

I scanned the lounge room carefully, but not too obviously. I didn't want the administrator to become suspicious or to doubt my intentions. All he had to ask is who hired you? Although the name Rufus worked with Andy and Mickey the administrator couldn't be fooled that easily. Perhaps he knew Rufus on a personal level in this regard he may ask me specific questions about him.

From my vantage point I saw 2 possible exits. The first was the location that I entered from the second was inside the lounge room, a sliding door leading to a patio. Beyond the patio was a swimming pool. Wow, this guy lived like a prince.

There was no way around it; I had to force the administrator to make a favourable announcement regarding the inmates of the facility.

"Corey, I said sit on my lap!"

Suddenly, the administrator's tone of voice and demeanour became hostile and aggressive. His eyes became bloodshot he clenched his fists, and then began to pant heavily.

Instinctively, I stood my ground, crouching down, baring my teeth, extending my claws, and tightening my muscles. I was so pumped I felt like the Incredible Hulk.

"Wait a minute, damn it! There's something unusual about you. I know you from somewhere. You smell familiar too. Haven't I seen you somewhere before?"

I was too enraged to try to squirm my way out of this particular predicament. Furthermore, it became quite apparent that the administrator had suddenly become too suspicious of me. Sooner rather than later he'd ask me how, where, and by whom I was hired.

"Yes, Mr. Administrator, you and I have met before, but it was a very long time ago. I want you to think really hard back to when you were the administrator of the Belmont Puppy Mill. Do you remember a cat who your workers named Citizen Cat? They called him Citizen because he was born in Canada hence he was a citizen. They used the family name Cat because he was a cat."

"You, I remember you! You once bit me really hard!"

"Yes, Mr. Administrator, you do remember me. But to tell you the truth I don't remember ever biting you."

"Open your mouth I want to see your teeth!"

I opened my mouth, baring my teeth especially my massive canines.

"You're Citizen Cat! I remember those awfully dangerous teeth of yours. No other cat in the world could ever bite me that hard."

The administrator stood up, but not before I leaped to a position 10 feet away from him, not out of fear but to be able to lunge or leap at him. I needed space to do that.

The administrator quickly removed his shirt showing an incredible array of muscles throughout his upper body. He didn't have to remove his pants for me to take notice of his massive muscular legs.

Gosh the administrator was a lot stronger than I'd expected. I'd likely just placed myself in a fight to the death. Honestly, I felt like a lion in a Roman arena getting ready to fight an armed slave. In this fight only one person is permitted to walk out alive, the other has to be killed or must be completely incapacitated.

In a show of strength and bravado the administrator grabbed hold of a chair beside him. He turned over the chair then proceeded to bend and then break off each steel leg, one at a time. More terrifying was the fact that he barely drew a sweat. When the fourth leg was destroyed he tossed the remainder of the chair, doing so like it was a box of Kleenex.

"C'mon Citizen, bring it on! Give me an excuse, even an awful one, to kill you right here and now!"

I took 3 steps towards the administrator and then leaped onto his chest digging my hind legs into his belly and throwing as many punches as I could at him.

Meanwhile, the administrator was throwing his own punches. Following a brief intense skirmish he managed to throw a powerful right cross which literally catapulted me at least 15 feet. I dropped onto the bar counter and then dropped roughly a foot onto a large utensils casing.

"All right Citizen, now I'm going to finish you off."

By then both of us were wounded. I had a black eye and a bloody nose, he had a black eye and both of his cheeks were visibly swollen. Furthermore, I managed to scratch his left ear. It was bleeding moderately.

But like other arrogant people, especially fighters, the administrator took my injuries and inability to launch an offensive for granted. Worse yet, he didn't even bother to cover his face or protect his abdominal area.

As soon as the administrator reached over the counter to grab hold of my neck I reached for the nearest steak knife and then jabbed him in the left thigh. Believe me, I had an open shot, I could easily have jabbed him in the jugular vein, heart, abdominal region, or groin, but I didn't because although I hated the administrator's guts, I wasn't a killer like him. I had to be better than him. I couldn't understand this fact about my inner self until the right moment came.

"Damn you, you freaking bastard! My body guards are already on their way. Being the dummy that you are you didn't notice when I pushed the hidden alarm right before I stood up. I have secret alarms placed in designated areas throughout the puppy mill facility.

My 2 most monstrous and powerful body guards will arrive here first."

I decided to escape through the sliding door. Thereafter, I'd run like crazy, straight to the main gate and then into the forested area.

For that to happen I couldn't allow the administrator to tell his bodyguards how I escaped. The administrator fell onto the carpet.

Seeing that the administrator was defenceless and on his back, I leaped onto his chest and then smacked him once, just enough to knock him out for a short while.

As soon as I leaped off of the administrator's chest I picked up scent of canines fast approaching, and judging from the treading of their paws there were 2 of them. I followed the scent, shifting my gaze to the main entrance into the lounge room.

Suddenly a couple of very massive, mean-looking black dogs entered the lounge room. Their breed type was unidentifiable. But I did know one thing for certain, they were bred to fight and kill. Each dog weighed roughly 200 pounds. Wow, how was I going to get out of this mess? I earnestly wondered.

Both dogs stood in front of the door glaring at me intently. Worse yet, they didn't blink once or shift their gaze away from me. There was only one thing to do, talk my way out of this horrific predicament.

"Guys, c'mon, don't you think it is past time that you quit working for the administrator? I mean, how many dogs and cats have you seen in this facility that were stolen from good homes, and then forced to suffer immensely until they were sold to whoever had the money.

No offense you two guys are kissing the very same asses of the humans who torment these innocent animals. C'mon guys don't be Uncle Toms! For once in your lives do the right thing! Help me free all of the animals in this facility, please! I don't want any money from you. I want to help these poor animals. I was snatched by a creepy fellow and then transported to the Belmont Puppy Mill when I was only a kitten, but the ordeal is still having an adverse effect on my life."

"Listen up kitty! You don't have much time. The silent alarm was turned on. Soon, the other guards will converge upon this area. Listen, we're going to set the animals free, every single one of them. We're brothers. We've been working here for 3 years

now. And to tell you the truth a person can only ignore the cries of pain, agony, and sadness for so long, thereafter, it's quite difficult to do so.

The administrator is out cold. His wounds appear serious but not life threatening. Escape through the sliding door. Run back to the main gate and then sprint away from this hell-hole. Don't stop running until you've cleared a considerable distance.

And by the way my name is Rufus, this is my brother Norman. I know for a fact that you've met my friends Andy and Mickey."

I could hear people converging upon the administration building. It was time for me to leave.

"Guys, thank you very much for the help. I'm sorry I can't hang around for long, and thanks a million for the good advice."

Rufus and Andy redirected their gaze to the sliding door. I got the message. Without saying a word, I turned to face the sliding door and then ran to it. I the door open and then squeezed my body through the gap. I was in a state of panic. I didn't know where to go or what to do. Worse yet, I could hear puppy mill workers talking about the killer cat (oh gosh not that title again) on the premises. No doubt, they knew what I looked like; puppy mill surveillance cameras are usually sharp and manifest the images in colour.

Upon exiting the administration building I felt a need to stop in my tracks and rest. My heart was racing and my blood pressure had risen to a dangerous level. Besides, I needed to listen in on what my pursuers were saying. I stayed put for 10 minutes before realizing that I'd just been bamboozled by the 2 black dogs. Just around the corner on the other side of the administration building I tuned in on an interesting conversation in progress.

"Guys, listen up! I just heard that Mr. Administrator was stabbed in his right thigh by the killer cat. We must try to capture this kitty alive in order to set an example for others. But, at the same time you're requested to use brute force, so long as you don't kill this horrible nemesis. Two workers are taking Mr. Administrator to the nearest hospital.

We're calling in our Bloodhounds. The killer cat has visible wounds on his face.

The Bloodhounds' duty is to sniff out his blood. Following this person's statement I heard a voice on the intercom system.

"Men, women, animals, listen up! This is not a drill. There's an intruder on the premises. He's responsible for stabbing Mr. Administrator in the thigh. Do whatever you can to capture this cat. As Acting Administrator I have changed the order regarding the capture and punishment of this killer cat. Immediately following his capture we will drag him to the center of the puppy mill grounds. Thereafter, we'll make certain that

everyone can see his punishment. As you all know, I'm the biological brother of Mr. Administrator. I shall personally punish the killer cat. We've just found out that his name is Citizen Cat."

Oh gosh, I'm wounded, but not badly. The problem is I have blood smeared on my face thereby making it easier for the Bloodhounds to track my scent. I had to act fast. Following a brief brainstorm I came up with an idea. Though it was quite disgusting I had no other option.

I spotted 3 dumpsters within 30 feet of my location. I ran to the nearest one, leaped into it and then literally smothered myself with the scent of garbage. But that wasn't enough. I leaped onto the ground and then casually walked through the ensuing mayhem. Not a single person realized who I was; more so, no one even took notice of me. I guess they thought I was just another pathetic dilapidated cat.

I don't know how it happened but someone, or some persons had opened all of the cages. I know this because I heard a massive cage rattling sound right before I saw countless dogs and cats running out of their respective sheds. Unfortunately, many other animals were too sick to even leave their cages. Sadly, I had no time to worry about them.

The garbage had remarkably camouflaged my natural scent. And thank goodness many of the animals were escaping. If that hadn't been the case I would've had to smear my body with fecal matter and urine, further camouflaging my scent.

I backtracked, knowing very well that the puppy mill workers weren't going to find me. I casually walked to the main gate and then exited the facility then entering the forested area.

My plan was to stay in hiding for several days, until the situation calmed down. As soon as I was able to rest on a tree branch a horrific fire broke out, then another and another. By then all of the able-bodied animals had already escaped. Many of them ran through the forested area.

Puppy mill workers gave up on the search and just a short while later they began to leave en masse. That's when I decided to re-enter the puppy mill grounds.

I descended the tree and then ran to the main gate and then headed straight to the Administration Office. It was the only building that wasn't burning. I leaped through an open window. Apparently, the alarm system had been turned off. Something was going on here.

I searched my way to the shower room, entered it and then cleaned myself thoroughly. Then I dried up and exited the room.

As soon as I exited the shower room I heard a commotion further down the hallway. My suspicion drew me to the particular room like a powerful magnet.

I stood beside the entry door and then craned my neck. My two large black dog friends and a German shepherd dog were stuffing their shoulder bags with cash.

"Guys, listen up please! I'm almost certain firefighters and the police are already on their way. Too much smoke and fumes are emanating from this facility. I advise you to end your business immediately and then leave the facility, permanently."

The German shepherd dog turned to face me, grinned and then nodded his head indicating agreement.

"Citizen, come here please," said the German shepherd.

I did as he asked, though cautiously. He stuffed some money into my shoulder bag and then said goodbye. After thanking my 3 friends I scurried out of the room and then headed to the forested area. Almost all of the inmates who were able to escape the facility had already done so. I heard the cries of many sickly animals but couldn't help them. I felt horrible about that but was helpless to do anything. I had a hard time taking care of my own self let alone even one sickly animal.

As soon as I reached the peripheral of the forested area I detected the faint sound of sirens. I was lucky to have escaped the facility in the nick of time. Meanwhile the fires in the puppy mill grounds were raging ever so strongly. Then suddenly, I stopped hearing the cries of the trapped and sickly animals. They were dying off from smoke inhalation, later their bodies would be burned to a crisp. Out of instinct I looked back, something made me do it, I realized what it was as soon as I focused my gaze upon a new fire. Yes, indeed, the administration office was now burning away, likely done by someone who didn't want to leave any incriminating evidence pertaining to the illegal puppy mill operation.

Not wanting to be spotted by anyone I moved deeper into the forested area, scaling a very large tree. I'd entered the forest just deep enough to not be seen but from my high vantage point I could still see the on-goings in the puppy mill. But there was one thing that struck a deep nerve inside of me it was the sharp smell of burning flesh. I have no idea how many dogs and cats burned alive versus those who died of smoke inhalation. Either way of death is extremely excruciating.

Soon the area was engulfed in people. Two fire trucks a half dozen police vehicles one of which was a SWAT van, one RCMP vehicle, and shortly thereafter the news crews arrived. This was a big story; more importantly I had to know what was going on. I focused my gaze upon the area and cropped up my ears. The latter resulted in me hearing the crackling of flesh and bones. By now, none of the trapped animals were alive. Death had overtaken every single one of them.

"Viewers what you see behind me is a horrible catastrophe. The dreaded Morrison Puppy Mill is now history. Many animal activists living in the region are ecstatic as a result of the puppy mills' destruction. But they, along with many of us are very saddened by the large scale loss of life therein.

The man nicknamed 'Mr. Administrator' died an hour ago as a result of injuries to his thigh, chest, abdomen, and skull. The chief of police is calling it a cold-blooded murder. It is believed that a cat named Citizen Cat committed the heinous crime. And that's not all this heinous murderer may in fact be none other than the ever-so-wanted killer cat in the flesh.

Don't get me wrong. No one at the BC supports the deceased's actions in the Morrison Puppy Mill; murder is murder. As you know, the killer cat is wanted by several local and provincial police forces and the RCMP.

Local police have a general composite of Citizen Cat. Captain Monahan stated that this composite will be compared with that of the killer cat. It will be done through sophisticated computer technology."

Oh gosh but I didn't commit those other acts of violence against Mr. Administrator. Someone brutally attacked him after I left the scene. I didn't need to think hard to know who'd done it. Once again, I'm being framed for a horrible crime I did not commit. There was nothing else to do but wait it out until the following evening; I no longer had the patience to wait several days. My next stop would likely be Vancouver. Therein, I'd have to keep a low profile, no fighting or any trouble whatsoever. I'd need new identification along with a fresh name.

Maybe it was the stress and anxiety of it all, but suddenly I felt a strong urge to contact 'my mommy and daddy'. I couldn't help it but I shoved my right paw into my mouth and began to suck on it like a little kitty. I'd somehow regressed.

I heard one more bit of information before dozing off. And thank goodness I heard it.

"Officer Dore, does your department have any idea where the killer cat, if that's who struck here, is heading to?"

"Don, I'll tell you what, if, and I repeat if it is in fact the killer cat who killed Mr. Administrator, he's likely heading west. Remember, he started his killing spree in Ontario and has moved westward ever since."

I couldn't take in any more bad news. I closed my eyes and then fell asleep. I was lucky indeed, because no one in the area even contemplated that the killer cat was nearby.

I awakened at noon, refreshed and ready to take on the world. Meanwhile, there were crime scene investigators sifting through the area like Bloodhounds, trying to figure out exactly what'd happened.

I was kind of lucky though, because the magnanimity of the destruction of the Morrison Puppy Mill had now temporarily overshadowed catching the killer cat.

I descended from the tree and then headed in the opposite direction, out of the forested area. While walking away I felt a powerful rush of sadness. My original intent was to go to Vancouver, stay low for a while, and then try to contact my parents. Although I had some animosity towards them I'm not made out of steel.

Upon exiting the forested area I continued walking for an additional 4 hours. Then, I reached a crossroad in a literal sense. In front of me was a 4-way intersection, no traffic lights, but stop signs. I had to choose which direction to head in. After pondering about my possibilities I chose to go eastbound. With the law following my tail westward what other choice did I have?

I walked for 15 minutes until I reached the peripheral of the Canada Railroad junction. A short distance away was my ticket home. All I had to do was to sneak aboard one of the train carts heading east. My final destination was Montreal or anywhere in the metropolitan area.

Montreal appeared to be a good choice. I didn't know anyone there, and the authorities would never suspect that a hard-line Anglophone cat on the run would live in a non-Anglophone province.

EAST BOUND

I just wanted to get the hell out of the area, many miles away due east. As soon as I entered the junction I took notice of a dozen cargo trains. I had to find one that was heading east.

I decided a new approach, direct. An elderly man in light green-coloured overalls was the closest train worker to me. The sun was beating down on the area making it that much more urgent to go indoors.

"Sir, excuse me. How are you doing?"

"Huh, nobody ever asks the train conductor how he's doing. But I'll answer your question since you asked it.

I'm doing just fine. In my 70 years of experience living on this pathetic planet there's one thing I discovered, if a stranger asks you me how I'm doing, I must be careful, especially if he or she is a cat, no offense intended. This

person more than likely wants something from me. Exactly what do you want from me?"

"Sir, I'm too tired and anxious to give you a run-around, I'll give you a straightforward answer. (I pulled out a couple of 50 dollar bills from my pocket then made the conductor a sweet offer) sir, I'm going due east and I don't want any trouble with you or your superiors. Also, I don't want to end up rooming with a filthy, stinking, drunkard wino. I want a private train cart with the basic amenities and I'm in a big hurry to leave. Do we have a deal?"

"Kitty, you're very lucky, because today is my last day working for Canada Railroad Inc. I went 5 years over the 65 year-old retirement age because I wanted to make a little extra money. I've been working as a train conductor for over 50 years now. My pay totally stinks and I'm always lonely when operating a train.

I want the 100 dollars! And this'll be between you and me. I don't want Revenue Canada getting its canines or claws on my beloved money. As far as I'm concerned Canada owes me a lot more than the 100 dollars that you're going to give me.

As for heading east, look over there, cart number 500100-A. Go there, that train's going due east as far as eastern Quebec. Here, take this piece of paper. It contains the list of towns and cities it'll stop in. Put it in your shoulder bag. And above all else, you and I have never met."

"Thanks sir, but I can't understand how you just happened to have this particular piece of paper on your person."

"Kitty, my replacement is going to be conducting that train. If I hadn't been retiring I would've taken you to your destination in person."

"Oh, thanks a million sir, and umm, when's it leaving?"

The conductor pointed his finger at the train. I redirected my gaze onto it, immediately noticing that it was starting to move. I handed the conductor the money, grinned at him and then said goodbye. Without a moment's delay I sprinted to the train zooming in on my particular cart and then leaping into it, and I must say in the nick of time.

Upon landing into the train cart I studied the area well. There were piles of boxes stacked on the right side. The center and left side of the interior of the cart was empty. I could smell food and I saw boxes of bottled water within the stacks.

I felt an awe of respect for the conductor, he was a man of his word and thank goodness for that.

I craned my neck and then sniffed the air making sure that there were no other persons in the cart. I didn't want to take any chances whatsoever. Thankfully, I only detected the faint scent of animals that were previously in the cart.

Noticing that the train was gradually picking up speed I walked to the sliding door, and then closed it. Believe me it wasn't an easy task. I had to use every single muscle in my body to do the job. That was good for me because I didn't want anyone to board my cart while I was resting or sleeping.

Soon after, I began to feel claustrophobic, thereby feeling a strong urge to alleviate my discomfort. I walked to the sliding door and then opened it several inches. That was enough. I could feel a slight breeze entering into the train cart.

I walked to the boxes and then sat down leaning on one particularly large box. I closed my eyes for a short while and then opened them for a short while alternating this behaviour pattern on and off for the following several hours. I had to be patient. It was a long trip.

When it was time to eat I sniffed and searched through the boxes looking for something tasty and wholesome. I opted for 3 cans of salmon, crackers, fruit salad, and then grabbed a bottle of water. I enjoyed my meal in the privacy of the train cart. To tell you the truth it was the first time that I'd ever had a meal in real peace and quiet. The real world's full of good, neutral, and hostile stimuli, but hardly any real peace and quiet. But in the train cart I had none of those stimuli to deal with, only calmness and tranquility.

I spent the following 2 days eating drinking and sleeping, spacing out, and waiting attentively to arrive at my determined destination. The train stopped every few hours. This was the most dangerous time for me because my train cart was opened on 3 separate occasions. I understood why, the Canada Railroad employees were performing random checks. It was understandable, considering that free loaders are often a problem. Not me though, I didn't urinate or defecate inside the train cart. What I did was shove my butt into the small opening of the train cart door. Everything came out just right however, I think some of my fecal matter and urine may have splashed back into the train. It really didn't pose a problem because everything already dried up by the time the train stopped.

Thank goodness, I finally heard that beautiful word, a Canada Railroad worker said 'Montreal'. I opened the train cart door, sniffed the air and then studied the area carefully. The coast was clear. I leaped onto the ground and then slithered and searched my way to an exit.

I found my exit after 10 minutes of hard work. It was roughly 100 yards away and there was a large 2-way street just beyond it. Vehicles were travelling in both directions. Figuring this, I decided to hitch a ride off a motorist. I was so far away from western Canada no one would ever suspect that I was wanted for several horrible crimes.

I walked to the exit but stayed low too. I wasn't taking any chances. I did this for 50 or so yards then felt confident that there was no danger in sight. I was wrong though, because someone began to shout at me.

"Hey you, what the hell are you doing here! You don't belong here! Stop or I'll call the police!"

Whoever this person was, he had a very rugged voice. I didn't even turn back to see who it was. I ran like crazy beyond the border of the Canada Railroad junction and then onto the shoulder of the street.

I shifted my position right, and then ran like crazy not stopping until I was far enough away to feel safe. The shouting man, whoever he was could no longer see me. I was now behind a small rocky mountain. This being the case I crossed the street and then hitched a ride in the opposite direction. Just in case the shouting man had called the police. He last saw me heading in one direction, now I intended to head in the opposite direction.

I stood on the shoulder of the street, desperate for a ride. One vehicle after another passed me. It seemed that no one cared about me. I had to change tactics. I got up on my hind legs like a grizzly bear and then began to roar and hiss.

At first, vehicles began to honk as they passed me, but then they started to slow down and give me a thumbs-up. Finally, a young woman roughly 20 years-old parked her gray-coloured Ford beside me.

"Honey, do you want a ride?"

"It depends on where you're going. I'm going to Montreal or anywhere in the greater metropolitan area therein. Are you heading in that direction?"

"Honey, yes I certainly am! Come on in!"

I approached the Ford with extreme caution. I didn't know this young woman, perhaps she was a hard-line cat hater. Maybe, she had pepper spray in her hidden arm, or worse yet something quite noxious or poisonous.

I sniffed the air intently as I was approaching the Ford. Nothing dangerous appeared to be in the air. With no other viable alternatives I decided to take a chance. But I did place myself on yellow alert just in case. My claws were extended and my canines were ready to bite deeply into human flesh if needed.

As soon as I leaped into the Ford I was met with a handshake. Still yet, I wasn't sure what the young woman's intent was. Perhaps she wanted to squeeze my paw really hard. Or maybe, she wanted to neutralize one of my forelegs. Regarding her physical appearance she was a total knockout. She had beautiful shiny jet black hair, shiny blue eyes, milk white skin, and freckles scattered throughout her body especially on

her face. And she was quite tall too I mean for a woman, perhaps 6 feet and had the build of a super athlete.

"Hi honey, how are you doing?"

"Umm, Miss, I'm just fine thank you. Are you an undergraduate student?"

"Yes honey, I'm a psychology student at Concordia University. Have you ever heard of my school?"

"Yes, I've heard of it. And, umm, from what I know you have 2 campuses, the main one is in the hub of downtown Montreal, right? The other campus is west of it.

"Yes, honey, you know your stuff. And umm, I'm a fourth year undergraduate student too. When I graduate I'm continuing my education, maybe at McGill University or The University of British Columbia. I'm not ending my schooling until I get my doctoral degree. I want to be a clinical psychologist like my mother and father."

"Miss, where in Montreal are you from?"

"Honey, I'm from Montreal North, I'm Italian. Have you ever spoken to an Italian Canadian before?"

I almost said 'duh'. Thankfully, I cupped my mouth with my paw just in time. And this girl wanted to be a clinical psychologist. Was she that naive and stupid or was she just trying to be funny?

"Honey, I'm only teasing. Of course you've spoken to someone from my ethnic group before. Canada is made up of numerous cultures and traditions, it's a multi-cultural society.

Oh my dear, honey, I forgot to formally introduce myself. My name is Sandra Cantaloupe. It sounds different in Italian though. Honey, I opened up to you. Now you must tell me what your name is and where you're from."

"Hey, move your fat ass bitch!" shouted a motorist behind us.

"I'm not a bitch! All right, I'm talking to my friend, okay!"

Apparently, Sandra and I completely forgot about traffic. An aggressive driver had had enough of Sandra's stationary vehicle blocking the street.

"Sandra, I think it's time for you to resume driving."

Sandra shifted into DRIVE then off we were. But there was something different about her demeanour now. She had an expression of rage on her face. More so, she slowed down and then waved on the belligerent motorist to pass her. Maybe Sandra was trying to be nice. But I wasn't going to put up with him.

As soon as the motorist was parallel to us he reached down into his pants. Well, I knew quite well what he was intending to do. Not wanting Sandra to totally freak out I stood on my hind legs and then yelled out a very menacing roar. Instantly, the

motorist went into shock causing his blue Chevy Pickup to dive into a ditch.

Sandra and I knew that we couldn't go back to help the motorist. If we had the police would literally crucify us. More so, I was a cat on the run.

Sandra continued driving, stopping once to fill up her car and to purchase a couple of 1 litre cartons of 2 percent milk. We guzzled our milk cartons, and then Sandra resumed driving.

"Honey you haven't told me your name yet. And by the way, don't try to lie to me. I've read a lot of psychology books, and I'm an ace in the program. I can tell if someone's lying to me. I don't like it when people lie to me. My parents used to shove pasted red pepper into my mouth whenever I lied to them. Now, you don't want me to do that to you, right ... I'm only teasing."

I had to go into psycho mode. I had to behave like I was mentally disturbed like Sandra. Otherwise, something really terrible and ominous would likely happen. The fact that Sandra floored the gas pedal wasn't helping any.

"Oh Sandra, I love you so much! I think you're the most beautiful woman in the whole world. I think you and I will make a good pair.

As for that bothersome motorist, please, don't think about him. We were in the right. He came to us for some trouble, not the other way around. Sandra, there were no witnesses; please don't be afraid.

Sandra, why don't you just slow down, okay? I know you're the best and safest driver in the whole world, but I'm a cat. Cats don't like to be in speeding vehicles.

I'm looking forward to us being best friends in the whole world. I'd like to be your roommate. Are you living in an apartment or in the dorms?"

My words had a soothing effect on Sandra. She slowed down her vehicle to normal speed.

"I live in an apartment located within the McGill Ghetto."

"Huh, you're poor?"

"No honey, that's what they call the area near and around McGill University; I'm referring primarily to the residences."

Now tell me your name, please."

"Umm, my name is ... umm, Tommy Baker."

"I'm feeling some creepy vibes here. Are you sure your name is Tommy Baker?"

"Sandra, my name is Tommy Baker, really. And as for your vibes, umm, maybe it's because you've never had a cat in your car before."

"Oh my dear, Tommy, I think you're onto something. You are the first cat that I've ever given a ride to. Now, c'mon, baby, tell me what your real name is."

"Sandra, I promise, umm, cat's honour I'm being honest with you. Why don't you believe me?"

Sandra slowed down to a halt and then shifted into PARK, a moment later she turned off the ignition. She parked on Sherbrooke Avenue beside a small, but beautiful park.

Following a brief period of silence, she leaned over practically pressing her face against mine then she said "okay Tommy I understand."

Sandra had an evil expression on her face. To make matters worse she began to shift her gaze back and forth, to the glove compartment and then to me. Perhaps she had a gun in the glove compartment.

"Umm, Sandra, why don't we take a nice stroll through the park? You've been driving for quite a few hours. Your legs are probably feeling cramped. C'mon, parks like this one always have an ice cream cart in the area; ice cream's on me."

"Tommy or whatever your name is, I know exactly what you're trying to do. Exiting my car will give you a chance to run away from me. You're like every single guy that I've ever fallen in love with, damn you!"

Sandra's hair became spiky, and her scary expression became even scarier. It was like, umm, she wanted to snip my thing off; like that weird woman who you hear about every decade or so, the one who slices off her husband's you know what."

As I was just about to pull the door handle to leave I heard a clicking sound. Yikes, Sandra had locked all 4 doors in the car.

"Sandra, c'mon, why are you being so nasty to me. I thought we were good friends. I never did anything bad or harmful to you, right?"

"Why do guys hate my guts? Just tell me why no man has ever loved me!"

I swallowed a large chunk of saliva then I hiccupped. What was I going to do? After a brief brainstorm it became apparent that I had knock Sandra out without throwing a punch. She gave me no other alternative.

Without warning I leaped onto Sandra's neck and then clenched my teeth on her neck, making certain that I cut off the air and blood supply.

Sandra's head bobbed to the right, then to the left, and then flopped forward. Anyone who saw her would think that she was sleeping. It wouldn't draw any suspicion.

I exited Sandra's vehicle and then galloped deep into the park. I hid behind a tree in order to see what would ensue.

Roughly an hour later I saw Sandra's head move. Shortly thereafter, she gradually regained her composure. She drove off, never to be seen again.

I stayed within the confines of the park. After 24 hours therein I walked to the western peripheral of the park to read the park sign.

I didn't see a park sign. I approached a young blond girl who was about 15 or 16 years of age. She was wearing a high school uniform.

"Excuse me, umm, how's it going young woman?"

"Umm, kitty, my parents told me that I can't speak to strangers."

"Please don't be afraid of me. I'm a cat, not a creepy guy or gal who wants to hurt you. Please tell me exactly where we are."

"Kitty, I'm only talking to you because you're really cute. Listen, I'll tell you where we are on condition that we take a bunch of USIES together."

I froze stiff, so much so I thought that I'd turned into a corpse. A USIE; what if this little girl decided to show the USIE to her family and friends. I was terrified at the prospect of my face being recognized by anyone as the killer cat.

"Kitty, c'mon, let me take a USIE of us. I know you want to do this deep down inside? Don't you want us to be good friends? My teachers tell me that I have an incredibly high IQ."

I agreed to the teen's request. Soon I realized that I'd gotten in over my head. The little girl took 20 USIES of us and in one of them I was obligated to kiss her on the cheek.

"Kitty, I need to know what your name is. It's not normal for 2 people to speak to each other like we are and not be able to call each other by our names.

"Umm, my name is Tommy Baker, and I'm very glad to meet you. Now that we're opening up to each other, what's your name?"

"Tommy Baker, that's a very beautiful name. My name is Cassandra Davis. And I too am glad to meet you.

Tommy, you and I are on the west side of town, specifically in Westmount. This is Westmount Park. I live on the hill just northwest of our present location.

"Cassandra, thanks for the info. Now I need to know where the downtown core of Montreal is."

Cassandra shifted her body to the right and then pointed straight ahead. She signified that downtown was east of our location.

"Tommy, let's walk over to the pond. We'll find a good place to sit in. I need 3 things, a pond, a bench, and a big tree."

Cassandra and I walked to a designated bench. We sat down and then froze our gaze at the pond. We could hear the birds singing and the leaves rustling from the mild breeze. Soon, the sun would begin to set. I wasn't going to stay in Westmount Park for too long. I had important things to do.

"Tommy, do you want to have some fig bars?"

"Oh yes, I love fig bars. Me mindful that I have a big appetite, give me a half a dozen fig bars, or don't give me any."

You're lucky because I have 2 packets of fig bars. Each packet contains a fig dozen bars."

Cassandra opened her back pack and then removed both packets handing me one of them. I almost felt embarrassed by her incredible generosity.

"Cassandra, I'm so shy, but I'm a cat too. Thanks for the fig bars."

We ate our fig bars with delight, taking our time and watching people walk by in both directions. Everyone that passed us said hi, people were in a good mood for some reason.

"Cassandra, those fig bars were incredible. As soon as I settle down I'll make certain to repay the favour."

Cassandra gently held me in her arms then she gently pulled me towards her face. As soon as I was close enough she kissed me on each cheek. Then, she cradled me as though I was a baby perhaps she wanted me to be her baby.

Cassandra sang me several lullabies before I instinctively shoved my right paw into my mouth and then began to suck it. Almost instantly my eyelids began to feel quite heavy. It became a strenuous task for me to keep my eyes open. I fell into a deep sleep. Much of my sleep consisted of consecutive dreams. I loved it because every single dream that I had was good.

I awakened at 9:00 P.M. refreshed but alone. Furthermore, I was on a bench in another part of the park, near the public restrooms beside a very large overhanging tree. Perhaps Cassandra had to go home, and she moved me for safety and security reasons. I had no way of really knowing unless Cassandra explained the details to me.

As soon as I started to get up I felt something unusual on my abdomen. It was a piece of paper. I held the piece of paper with my right paw and then I stood up. Looking at the paper more intently I realized that it was a letter from Cassandra. I had to read it.

Dear Tommy Baker:

I am sorry to have left you all alone without saying goodbye. As such, it is imperative that I explain why things turned out this way. Tommy; you fell asleep shortly after I sang you a lullaby. My maternal instincts took over, making me rock you gently, stroking your back and sides, and then kissing you on each cheek doing this for roughly half an hour. Unfortunately, I had to go home. As such, I stood up and then walked to the safest place in this park for a sleeping kitty to be in. More so, I noticed a couple of squirrels nearby. They were beside a tree each eating what appeared to be a strawberry. Because there are no strawberry trees in this entire area I'm certain a Samaritan gave them the strawberries.

During our brief but enjoyable meeting initially I didn't trust you (I apologize for that). Somehow, I felt some unusual vibes, like umm, you weren't being honest with me about your name. Thank goodness, the more we spoke the weaker my distrust of you became. Now, I wholeheartedly trust you.

Tommy, I really think you're an awesome cat. I want you to be my best friend in the whole world. More yet, I want you to meet my parents. My phone number is (514) 555-8800. Please wait a few days to make your call. I've got a whole bunch of school exams, term papers, and at least one pop quiz in math coming up within the next few days.

After all is done, perhaps you can be part of our family. My parents live in a really big home located at 955 Bumble Bee Street. Our home contains 6 bedrooms, 4 restrooms, a T.V. and game room, a study room, and more.

The first thing we'll do is take you to a good veterinarian to have a complete physical examination. Then, we'll take you out to the movies, the mall, and for a tasty meal.

You can have your own bedroom, HD television set, stereo system, and privacy, unless you want to be my beloved roommate.

*Anyway, I must be off now. Please, don't forget to contact me. By the time you read this letter my parents and friends will know all about you. I couldn't help it but I posted our **USIES** on my Face book page. I've already gotten over a thousand **LIKES** on my Face book page and many good comments, a few of them were bad ones though.*

Best of Wishes.

Cassandra Davis

Oh gosh my face was plastered on Face book! Now what do I do? Everyone in the whole world will have an opportunity to see my cute 'wanted face'.

I stretched and then retracted my body. I pondered for a few minutes wondering what my game plan would be. I decided to stay in the area including Montreal and the nearby Boroughs for a few days. And, there would be no phone call to Cassandra. She had inadvertently ensured that I would stay away from her, forever and ever.

To tell you the truth a big part of me still wanted to go out west. I couldn't help it. Well, west is west, everyone wants to go there, even Americans dream about going out west.

Anyway, enough with the daydreaming, I needed to contact my parents. I wanted to know exactly why they left me all alone in the airport, and what they were up to. I still love them. And although I tried to absolve myself of being their son it only worked for a short while. But the fact is my love for my parents was so great it would take a lot more than what they did to make me hate them.

Time elapsed like a speedy stallion, days turned into weeks, and so forth. Every so often I saw Sandra or Cassandra nearby. That's when I ducked really fast and froze stiff. I felt bad about what I did, but at the same time I knew that it was the right thing to do. I had to worry about my own safety first, before anyone else's.

On a cloudy Sunday afternoon I decided to take a nice stroll through the downtown core of Montreal. I walked to the eastern corner of Westmount Park, studied my surroundings carefully, and then entered Maisonneuve Boulevard heading due east.

Being on the sidewalk, every so often I came across someone walking his or her dog. Most of the dogs glared at me but one particular mutt, a Poodle-Dachshund mix threw an incredible tantrum. His owner was an elderly man who could barely pull back him back. I don't know why, but some dogs have a horrendous hatred and enmity towards cats. It could be about envy, jealousy, and competition. In the looks department we win almost all the time. There's hardly a healthy cat out there that's ugly. Cats are the most beautiful and certainly by far the cutest animals in the whole world, everyone knows it.

I continued to walk despite getting bad looks from some dogs and humans. As soon as I reached Atwater Street I noticed that the traffic light was red. I stayed put, the last thing I

needed was to get a ticket for jaywalking. In this regard, you need to show identification.

I waited until the world famous white-coloured 'man image' appeared before I crossed Atwater Street. Regardless, I still looked both ways. Cats are smart, we know that there are drunk and distracted drivers out there and cyclists too; it doesn't matter what time of day it is or on what street you're walking on, be careful.

After crossing the street I took keen notice of an all too familiar vehicle. It was a dark-coloured limo. For some reason the driver had passed me several times earlier. I first noticed the limo when I was in Westmount Park. Whoever was in the limo wanted something from me, or perhaps I was going to go head-to-head with a cat hater.

The driver continued onward heading east for several blocks before making a right turn. I chose to run as fast as I could to the downtown core. I doubted anyone would try to kill an unarmed kitty in broad daylight in front of many witnesses.

I ran until I reached the intersection of Guy Street and Maisonneuve Boulevard. I was panting heavily. Then, an overwhelming feeling of nausea engulfed me. Then I became dizzy, finally I puked my brains out. Passersby looked me over with content, one young man appeared to be worried about me, and a group of Concordia University students mocked me. A young blond woman amongst them wearing a university T-shirt took many pictures of me.

I wasn't going to take this mistreatment lying down or puking either. My nausea eventually dissipated.

I followed the students to Mackay Street. There were other people in the area. I studied my surroundings, and upon seeing no police vehicles I approached the students directly as a predator would a prey; there were six in all.

I puffed my body, glared, bared my teeth, extended my claws, and hissed and roared. Five of the six students moved out of my way. The only one left was the wicked young woman who took the humiliating pictures of me.

"Lady, put your mobile on the ground right now! I'm not going to repeat myself!"

The young woman did as I ordered. I grabbed the mobile and then erased every single image of myself. I focused my glare at the young woman then I tossed the mobile clear across the street. Mind you, I made sure to toss it high up into the air.

As soon as the phone dropped onto the ground a loud, sharp blasting sound startled everyone within 100 feet of the of the area.

"Damn you kitty! You broke my phone! What the hell did I ever do to you?" she shouted.

Just as I was about to respond an elderly man on a cane intervened. "Young lady, you should be ashamed of yourself. Cat-bite your tongue a hundred times over! What do you mean 'what the hell did I ever do to you'?"

I was standing across the street when you decided to laugh your brains out and take pictures of this poor kitty vomiting. How would you like it if someone did that to you? Huh, c'mon, young lady, give me an honest answer."

A crowd was beginning to form. Most of the people appeared to be sympathetic towards me. I think that's why the young woman's face turned red and then she shed a few tears. What a hypocritical cry baby. I don't like people like that. They think it's all right for them to make fun of other people, but woe unto those persons who make fun of the mockers. We each went our own way. The crowd shrunk and then disappeared.

Just in case there was trouble brewing, I changed direction, going south for a few blocks to Rene' Levesque Boulevard. This boulevard was wide and open. I began to walk in a westward direction.

Traffic was persistent on both sides of the boulevard, but not as busy as on a weekday. I wasn't complaining.

I continued walking until I reached the intersection of Fort Street and Rene' Levesque Boulevard. To my left was a curved entrance ramp leading into a major highway. What a beautiful sight. People going to and fro some motorists would be driving a long distance to get back home, others were coming to Montreal.

I enjoyed looking at the many trees lining Rene' Levesque Boulevard. To my right was a grassy area behind it was a beautiful building. But there was one problem though. Within the grassy area was a couple playing with their golden Retriever. They were throwing a tennis ball, their dog was retrieving it. Most cats wouldn't do anything of the sort.

Without warning, the golden Retriever dropped the tennis ball that was in his mouth. Instead of seeking approval and love from his human owners he shifted his gaze unto me.

I returned the gaze, staring him down without even blinking. He took one step towards me but not before his male owner scolded him. Apparently the golden Retriever had been trained to ignore cats.

I continued to walk until I reached the parking lot of the Montreal Children's Hospital I heard an all too familiar voice.

"Hi baby, Tommy Baker, I'm ashamed of you. You never called me."

I followed my gaze to the origin of the voice. "Umm, Cassandra Davis, is that you? Actually, I was just about to call you. You know that I love you ever so deeply."

I couldn't believe my eyes. How did Cassandra suddenly appear out of nowhere? After pondering about my situation it dawned upon me that Cassandra may have been in the limo. She probably hid so I wouldn't be able to see her.

"Tommy Baker, I want to know why you didn't even bother to leave a message on my answering machine."

Oh my dear, not another mentally unstable human being. Why are there so many of them out there? I had to respond to Cassandra's question without delay, or else.

"Umm, Cassandra, I was just thinking about you, really?"

Cassandra was wearing a tight, short blue and white dress. It was somewhat provocative even by Montreal standards. Instantly, I noticed passersby gawking at her. I felt quite uncomfortable being associated with her. Before I could think of another lie as an excuse to leave, the limo slowed down to a complete stop parking parallel to me.

Someone in the limo rolled down a window. I saw the face of what looked like a hardcore criminal. The man behind the window was roughly 55 years-old, had jet black hair combed backwards, a boxer's face, and a very large body. I'm not talking about muscles here I'm referring to fat and large bones. He looked like the boss of all bosses.

"Hey, kitty, you got a problem with one of my girls?"

I wasn't sure what he meant. Was she one of his daughters, or one of his 'workers'?

"Hey, smarty pants, I asked you a question!"

Two more of the limo windows on the passenger side rolled down. Now, I saw the full extent of my problem. The limo was full of Wise Guy-type enforcers, perhaps 8 of them.

"Umm sir, I don't quite understand what you mean. Can you please elaborate?"

"Listen, Tommy, my name is Bongo that should be enough."

"Uh, sorry sir, I'm new in town, never heard of Bongo before."

One of the men in the limo appeared to be reaching for something inside of his coat pocket. I was fairly certain that it was a gun.

I had to think fast. The fellow wore a wicked smirk-grin on his face. I guess he wanted to blow my kitty brains into pieces.

"Wait a minute Bongo. Umm, I know who you are. You see, I've been travelling to and fro and I'm kind of exhausted. That's why I didn't remember you at first.

Mister, you're a known man throughout Canada, a very powerful and influential man, indeed. And umm, a lot of people look up to you because you're an awesome bone breaker I mean you're an honest to goodness, law-abiding Canadian."

"That's my boy, kitty. You better make Cassandra your best friend in the whole world, and as such, she'll make you her second best friend in the whole world."

"Bongo, no freaking way, if I make her my best friend in the whole world she has to do likewise to me!"

Bongo didn't have to say anything a short glare by one of his enforcers was enough to convey a sharp message.

"Umm, okay Bongo, you know something, you're right, I can be her second best friend in the whole world. I guess that makes you her best friend in the whole world, right?"

But there's something I'm confused about. What is her relationship to you?"

"Tommy, let's say she brings in special clients, married men, engaged men, single men, lonely men, rich and wealthy men, and even women of all sorts too. Do you know what I mean?"

"Oh, Bongo, you mean naughty stuff, right?"

Once again, the same enforcer glared at me. This time he brandished a firearm, pointing it right at me.

Bongo signalled the limo driver to move on. Meanwhile, Cassandra approached me, getting to within a few inches of me. She was wearing a self-righteous expression on her face. Leaning over me she said "huh, you thought that you could get away from me?"

"Cassandra, how long have you been working for Bongo?"

"Since I was 12 years old, he really loves me. He gives me a lot of money he's a lot better than my parents ever were. They were always complaining about my behaviour, and they were very strict about their curfew too. I'm one of Bongo's favourite girls.

And that's not all, there more too. My daddy was touching me in strange ways and places. He was a pervert. I didn't like him. Bongo does the same thing but he's not my father, so I guess it's all right.

"Since you were 12; and exactly how old are you now?"

"I'm 13 years old."

It is true girls that do this kind of work, especially street girls, age much more rapidly than girls who live in a decent home. Cassandra was way too young to be with Bongo's kind. Remember, in my first meeting with her I thought she was in her mid-teens.

"Cassandra, I want to ask you a personal question. But I don't want you to take offense to it, okay?"

"Have you ever heard of the birds and the bees?"

"Of course, what do you think I am? I've already been broken in. I'm no longer an innocent little girl. I'm a woman now."

"Cassandra, please tell me why you lied to me. You made it seem like you were from a wealthy family, and you told me that you were living in Westmount."

"Actually, I wasn't really lying. I do live in Westmount, and the address that I gave you was correct. Bongo is my boyfriend, caretaker and caregiver. He serves every purpose that I need. He told me that the other girls in our home are second grade compared to me."

"Wait, you mean to tell me that the address that you gave me was correct?"

"Yes, it sure was."

"Well, then why did you and Bongo choose me as a target?"

"Because you're a very cute cat, Bongo wants you to work for him. You can bring in many more clients."

"You mean Johns, right!"

"Yes, but don't worry about that. You're going to get a sweet cut you'll be very rich soon."

I sensed that something was wrong. I shifted my eyes left to right. That's when I noticed the same limo parked several blocks west of my location in a conspicuous corner. I understood that I had to go along with the routine, or else. But I did have a game plan. There was no way in hell I was going to let Bongo continue on with his heinous acts. More young girls would certainly be snatched in the future. There's always a runaway teen to found in a big city, just go to the bus and train stations or to the sleazy parts of town. These youngsters have an expression of naivety on their faces. A pimp like Bongo, and also his enforcers can recognize a target from a mile away.

"That's beautiful, Cassandra, but I want Bongo to give me a couple of days to prepare for my new job, okay? I'm really excited about it. Does he pay in cash or in checks, and how often?"

"He pays daily if you want, in cash always, never checks or other forms of payment. But he expects a minimum bring-in of money at the end of each working day."

"That sounds just fine. I know what your address is. Now all I need is your home phone. Is it the same as Bongo's?"

"Yes, Tommy, it is. Bongo screens all of my calls, I'm forbidden from speaking to anyone unless Bongo gives me an okay. See, he really cares about me. And umm, he told me that when I turn 18 he's going to marry me, and umm, I can have his babies too. But till then, it's a big secret. I don't go around telling any person that Bongo loves me, you and the newbie girls are the only ones."

I sensed that Cassandra wanted to tell me more. Judging from her mannerisms she was too shy to do so. So, I went ahead and pressed the right buttons.

"Cassandra, I'm getting these jibes; you want to tell me more, right. Don't be shy or apprehensive, just spurt out what you want to say."

"Okay, I'm sorry. I wasn't being totally honest with you about the kind of work you're going to do. Well, actually, I was but not in its totality. You're primary work will be in the luring of animals into one of our vans."

"What do you mean, I don't understand?"

"We have 3 enforcers who are also bunchers. We snatch purebred and other expensive dogs and cats and then sell them to a secret puppy mill."

"Huh, what puppy mill are you talking about?"

"Now, Tommy, don't you dare tell anyone, especially Bongo, okay. If you do he'll get really mad, and umm, I'll have to be punished."

"What do you mean punished; how is his punishment meted out?"

"He really loves me. I mean, whenever he punishes me, I deserve it."

I knew exactly what she meant by being punished. As for the deserving it part, no way! But I had to find out where that stinking hell-hole of a puppy mill was.

"Okay, where's this secret puppy mill?"

"I don't know exactly where. But we have a couple of purebred Schnauzers at home. They're set to be sent there tomorrow at 7:00 A.M."

"Don't worry, I promise I won't tell anyone. Just give me a couple of days, okay? I'd love to work for Bongo."

We said goodbye to each other and then went our way. I alternated between walking and resting for the following 5 hours. Instinctively, I went back to the only safe haven that I knew, for the time being, Westmount Park. I wanted to see the other parks in the area but not before seeing justice served.

The following day passed lethargically. I spent hours-on-end thinking of how to end the tragedy of Cassandra's life and to finish off Bongo once and for all.

At the stroke of midnight a game plan flashed in my head. First, I wouldn't call Bongo or Cassandra. Second, I'd wait for a whole week bobbing and weaving my way through the days, making sure that Bongo, Cassandra, and anyone in their influence would not see me.

Thankfully, I survived an entire week without being spotted by my arch enemies. I slept a couple of nights in Vinet Park located near Lionel Groulx Metro Station. Those 2 sleeping nights were the best I'd had since my departure from the Williams mansion.

It was noon Sunday when I decided to carry out my game plan. I spotted a pay phone near Lionel Groulx Metro station. I studied the area very intently making sure that not a single one of my arch enemies was watching me or was nearby.

I made certain not to look at the street signs. It was a safety measure, because under no circumstances could the person I was calling know where I was.

I entered the phone booth and then leaped onto the phone. I studied my surrounding once more to make certain the coast was clear.

I picked up the receiver and then dialled 911. The dispatcher answered after 2 rings.

"Hello, this is the police dispatcher speaking. How may I help you?"

"Madam, listen to me very carefully, okay! I know exactly where Bongo is hiding. He's living with several young girls and they're underage; the address is 955 Bumble Bee Street.

Bongo is using these girls for prostitution purposes. His girlfriend's name is Cassandra Davis she's only 14 years of age, too young to be with a two-bit pimp. And there's more, Bongo's in the business of snatching pure bred and other expensive dogs and cats from peoples' homes and gardens; even strays are potential game.

Bongo's phone number is (514)-555-8800. And one last thing, Bongo loves to be driven in a brand new limo, license plate #8895544."

"Honey, do you know that there's a one million dollar reward for information leading to the capture and conviction of Bongo. More so, it's tax free, guaranteed by the Prime Minister of Canada! The authorities have been trying desperately to nail Bongo. It's been a very long, painful, gruelling road for all Canadians, not just Quebecers.

Please give me your name, address, and phone number. You're going to be rich and famous. I think you'll receive the Order of Canada award too.

By the way, are you a little boy?"

"Huh, what do you mean by that?"

"Well, your voice is so soft and child-like."

I hung up the phone, not wanting to answer any questions about myself, or to give the dispatcher my real address. I did my job as a Canadian. Now, the 3 branches of the criminal justice system including law enforcement, corrections, and the courts will determine what'll happen to Bongo. As for Cassandra and the other girls Bongo has in his domicile they need to be treated by a counsellor, and certainly, a full physical examination must be performed by a physician, with special emphasis on identifying STDs.

I wasn't certain how long I was on the phone for, but either way I left the area immediately, walking due north on Atwater Street. As soon as I reached the intersection of Atwater and Lincoln Avenue I began to hear the faint sound of sirens fast approaching the area in and around the phone booth that I used for making the call. Thank goodness I was no longer there, and as far as I knew no one in the entire area, including strangers even noticed me.

As soon as I reached Lincoln Avenue I froze still, not knowing where to go. Meanwhile, the sun was beating down on me with a magnificent ferocity. I was forced to cross the street and head for shade.

Well-shaded, I was now light years away from trouble. Every so often a pedestrian or 2 passed me. As for the motorists not a single one even glanced at me.

A strong feeling of disquiet suddenly ran through my entire body. Although I was certain that no one had been eyeing me when I made the phone call to the police dispatcher there was an eerie feeling inside of me, like umm, someone with stronger and better vision than me could've been watching me, beyond my field of vision.

But I knew that no human being could ever see as well as me during the day or the night, with or without corrective lenses. But who or what could it be? Perhaps, a cat was hiding behind a tree, or maybe a squirrel. I pondered about this problem for a few minutes, but then brushed it off entirely once and for all. I didn't want to preoccupy myself with paranoid or delusional thinking.

The following 3 days passed without incident. It wasn't until I went to the Eaton Centre located downtown that my life appeared to have flipped over.

I was strolling through the Food Court circling it over and over again, waiting for the food line at Burger King to thin out. I had my heart set on a large vanilla ice cream cone. But standing in line for food wasn't my cup of tea. I imagined myself slobbering at the mouth, craving for that beautiful ice cream and the cone supporting it. I didn't want to slobber like a dog in front of other people, mall security hates that.

Without notice 4 large screen televisions that were situated within the Food Court, turned on. Within a jiffy people started to gather around each television. There was an important broadcast by CBC News. Initially, I thought we were entering World War 3. Naturally, I defecated and urinated on the floor. Seeing this, I made certain to quickly leave my section. I had to know what was happening.

"Hello viewers, this is Walter Johnson reporting from the CBC News. The RCMP and the Montreal Police force have just

issued an official statement regarding the capture and arrest of the notorious Bongo.

We're standing in front of the Montreal Court House located at Notre Dame East Street awaiting the appearance of the notorious Bongo. No reason to fear him now, CBC News has received a tip from a reliable source that Bongo is bound and shackled. But he will be given a chance to make a brief statement.

Perhaps the crown wants Bongo to open his big fat mouth. Maybe, he'll be stupid enough to incriminate himself. Viewers, I ask that you forgive me for not being able to control myself. This Bongo fellow has terrorized and tormented many people throughout the entire span of his criminal career which has lasted decades-on-end.

Bongo's first arrest involved an attempt to strangle a Bengal cat to death. Thankfully, a police vehicle had been patrolling the area. Both officers intervened, but the poor kitty had been traumatized for life.

Bongo is the epitome of hardcore criminality and hoodlumism. He's been implicated in the prostituting of adult women and under-age girls too. In addition, drug production and distribution, and sales have also been connected to Bongo's criminal enterprise. And let's not forget, counterfeiting and the snatching and abducting of pure breed dogs and cats from law abiding Canadian families; these poor helpless animals are then sold to underground and so-called legitimate puppy mills.

We have word from an anonymous informant who works in the justice system that Bongo will be facing hundreds of charges. The crown appears to have a good case against him.

But the biggest tip occurred by phone 3 days ago. We must thank the anonymous caller for doing his civic duty. The dispatcher thinks the caller is a cute little Anglophone boy. But for some reason, he hung up the phone on the dispatcher. Maybe the tipster doesn't want to reward money or publicity.

Oh gosh there he is! It's Bongo in the flesh! He's coming out of the courthouse, bound and shackled, and escorted by a dozen armed men and women in uniform, and 4 other persons who are in plain clothes."

I leaped onto the shoulder of an unsuspecting man. I was so smooth and slick in my movements he didn't even know that I was standing on his shoulder. I could see Bongo being escorted to the police paddy wagon. On his way there he was allowed to stop and say a few words to Walter Johnson.

"All right, listen up. I know exactly who made that so-called anonymous phone call. Don't try to fool me; I'm too smart for that.

Tommy Baker, know that I am making you a promise, soon you'll take a thorough brown bath. When Bongo makes a promise, he upholds it by whatever means necessary. Even if you do survive the brown bath I guarantee that you will have to look over your shoulder until you die.

I have something to say to my beloved residents of Montreal and other Canadians too. I'm innocent of all wrongdoing. I'm a law-abiding Canadian who loves his country and have served it for decades-on-end. I don't know why the crown prosecutor, Anna Paulson, hates my guts. I've never done anything to her. She's a fucking slut!"

Immediately following Bongo's profane outburst of the escorts yanked Bongo away from Walter Johnson and the rest of the CBC News crew.

I leaped onto the Food Court floor and then proceeded to walk away. Believe me, I was terrified. Bongo gave my alias away in front of the entire nation, or perhaps the entire world too. It was possible that there were enforcers nearby. Not wanting to be noticed, I speed walked to the elevator, pressed the UP button and then waited patiently.

As soon as the elevator arrived the double doors opened. Thank goodness the elevator was empty I entered it and then waited until the double doors closed. I leaped onto the panel and pressed the #3 button. I felt like a zombie for the following hour. I must've gone through normal rituals without being aware of them.

Without being aware of it I inadvertently walked east. When I reached the National Public Library located near Berri UQAM Metro station I decided to enter it.

I went through the revolving doors and then followed the people in front of me. I entered the library and then walked up the steps until reaching the Level 1.

I ignored the people that were in the area, all of them except for the floor receptionist. I cautiously approached her and then stopped within 2 feet of the counter. I readied myself and then leaped onto the counter coming face-to-face with the receptionist, who by the way was a beautiful blonde haired and blue eyed woman. I guessed she was in her mid-twenties, and although she was seated, appeared to be about 6 feet tall. She had an athletic-looking neck and was wearing a beautiful long, brown dress.

Madam, could you please tell me where the fiction books are. I mean, I want to sit down and read a nice story or two."

(Pointing to her right) she said, "It's over there. I think you'll enjoy reading in that area. It's a bit isolated.

I reached my destination in a very short time, I studied the area intently. Noticing an empty grey sofa chair in the back

I hustled there and then leaped onto it. There was a stack of fiction books on the arm rest. Thankfully, they were all in English. I took hold of the first book on the stack, and then I opened it and began to read. I did this for several hours, until I had a very hard time keeping my eyes open. That's when I called it quits.

The clock on the wall read 7:30 P.M. The library was scheduled to close at 10:00 P.M. I had much time, so I took it upon myself to sleep for a couple of hours. By then there were significantly less people in our section. Looking around, I waited until the right moment to slither underneath my sofa chair.

Being hidden underneath the sofa seat was ever so relaxing. I closed my eyes, instantly falling asleep. I may have been snoring, but thankfully no one heard me.

Upon awakening I noticed something quite unusual. Wanting to investigate I slithered out from underneath the sofa chair. Wow, the clock on the wall read 2:00 A.M., and there was no one in sight. Well, what the heck, I had the entire library to myself.

I walked to the graphic novels section and then grabbed hold of one graphic novel placing it beside me. I did this a total of 6 times. Knowing that I didn't have enough time to read them all, I'd chosen graphic novels that had minimal writing. The art within these graphic novels was superb.

I stayed in my spot for roughly an hour. Then, I returned each graphic novel to its correct place.

I decided to stroll through Level 1, then each of the other levels up to Level 4 then take the elevator down to the children's section. I'd save the best for last. Unfortunately, my plans were thwarted by a sudden shocking event. While walking through Level 1 I heard a very sharp voice calling out to me.

"Hey kitty, what the hell are you doing here? The library closed at 10:00 P.M. You are an unauthorized intruder. Stop in your tracks right now! I'm calling for backup."

As soon as I turned to see who it was I defecated and urinated onto the carpet. Before my eyes was a large, well-built security guard. He appeared to be a hardcore cat hater. I know his kind I'd seen many like him before.

After calling for backup he pulled out what appeared to be a black can of mace. Worse yet, I could see a pair of zip cuffs attached to his belt.

The veins on his biceps, forearms, and forehead appeared to be engulfed in blood. Furthermore, the expression on his face indicated violence; since there was no one else around I was obviously the chosen target of this act.

I felt a rush of fear and anxiety running throughout my entire body. I looked around in desperation searching for a way out. On my right were book shelves, in front of me was a drinking fountain and a long corridor that led to a dead end. Behind me was a wall, and there appeared to be no opening for an escape. How was I going to get out of this horrible mess? I wondered.

By now, the security guard was only about 6 feet away from me. It was a situation that entailed 2 options, fight or flight. I chose the latter but didn't know where to run to. Worse yet, I could hear the treading feet of numerous security personnel converging upon the area.

I brainstormed for a split second. Voila, I came up with an escape plan, but it would be extremely risky. With no other options I went through with it.

I ran to the security guard squirming between his ankles, towards the fiction books and graphic novels section. Yikes, my plan backfired. It wasn't until I got there that I realized how terribly wrong I was. A whole congregation of security guards were running to my location. I totally went nuts, running towards the first security guard I saw and then leaping onto his chest thereby causing him to fall onto the carpet.

Seeing that there were at least a dozen security guards running towards me, I knew there was no chance of winning a head-to-head fight. I ran to my right, passing through a book shelf and then out to the other side. I continued running, knowing very well that I was now being hunted down.

There was only one thing to do, run to the higher floors and then jump through one of the windows. I reached the stairwell running 2 floors. As I was about to ready myself to run up another stairwell I noticed a shiny light emanating to my right. Turning my head to locate the source I noticed an entire section full of windows. Although I was on the 3rd floor and the drop would be potentially lethal I simply had no choice in the matter.

Then, a well-built Asian security guard threw his flashlight at me. Another inch to the right and he would've smashed my head.

Without delay, I ran to the nearest window and then leaped into it, shattering the glass into countless pieces. I was now 3 floors above ground readying myself for a horrendous fall. Thankfully, I landed on a library security vehicle. Thank goodness I was more than able to endure the shock of the landing.

The building alarm went off thereby causing me to become more anxious and desperate. I shifted my gaze from left to right and vice versa, doing this about a dozen times before realizing

that my best option was to run due south and then to figure out what to do as soon as I got to Rene' Levesque Boulevard.

I sprinted to Rene' Levesque Boulevard, hearing sirens converging upon the area. I had no time to even glance back at the scene that I'd just left.

Upon reaching my first destination I studied my options carefully. I decided to walk due west and to stay very close to the inner side of the sidewalk. This way, if a police vehicle were to approach me I could duck and hide away.

I walked for 4 blocks before a convoy of police vehicles coming from the east part of town, came rushing towards my location.

I leaped into a dark area next to the nearest building to me. I stayed low, quietly breathing through my nose and not twitching a single muscle. The police must've gotten a tip from someone because as soon as they were within a block of me the passenger in the police vehicle flashed a very powerful search light using it to better search the area.

"Kitty, if you can hear me come out and turn yourself in. There's nowhere to hide, and trying to do so will only make matters worse. We know for a fact that you couldn't have gone too far without public or cab transportation. Kitty, the National Library security has numerous clear images and tapes of you on their surveillance cameras. More so, we know that you've committed other crimes in the past. Kitty, don't force us to chase you down like a rabid dog, honestly, you won't like it."

I tracked the movement of the police vehicle with my eyes until the coast was clear. Seven other vehicles passed by without incident. I figured the tough talk was guess work on the part of the police. It can work some of the time, but certainly not all of the time.

I continued to walk on Rene' Levesque Boulevard crossing Guy Street and then continuing onward, all the while worrying about being captured by the police. The further I walked the more pathetic and downtrodden I felt. Somehow, I began to think I could never live freely and happily in this world so long as humans were the undisputed and unchallenged alpha species. It seemed like trouble for me was always right around the corner; to tell you the truth I'd just about had it.

I wondered, perhaps I should become a wino; no way that's too disgusting. Or, perhaps I should become a hardcore criminal, maybe I could take over Bongo's position. I could command respect from many citizens of this city, and Canada too. I'd have all the money that I ever dreamed of and much more.

People would address me as 'Sir' or 'Mister'. No, that's not right. I had to be myself. My mind and body belong to me and

absolutely no one else. I've always been an inherently good
kitty, and very proud of it too.

DOUBLE CROSS

I spent the following month living on the edge; the edge of sanity that is. I was very careful to always take my walks during the night-time and resting and sleeping during the day.

Whenever a police vehicle passed by, I got the jittery-jumps. It was a very stressful and confusing situation to have to endure.

Another month passed before I could no longer take it anymore. I needed to talk to someone that I truly loved with all my heart; it would have to be reciprocal.

On a star-riddled Friday evening I decided on what to do. I needed to call my parents. There was a possibility that they still loved me. And technically, I had no idea why they left me as they did.

I took the train to Angrignon Metro station. As soon as I exited the station I walked to Angrignon Park, but then I backtracked. I remembered that I decided to go to this

particular metro station because I didn't want anyone to recognize me. Angrignon Park is a beautiful place, but all it would take is one person therein to recognize me. Anyway, I had to make a possible life changing phone call. Although there was a payphone in the metro station I didn't want anyone to snoop in on my personal conversation. Besides, there were too many passersby near the phones therein.

I sat down on a nearby bench, worried as crazy not being able to decide what to do. Following 30 minutes of intense thinking and the emergence of a horrendous headache I decided to go ahead and stroll through Angrignon Park. I needed to see nature's beauty, and to relax. Following 2 months of extreme anxiety, I needed the rest and relaxation.

Cats love nature more than humans do. It's outright cruel to keep a cat indoors for extended periods of time without taking him or her outdoors. Outdoor walks and fun should be a daily activity for so-called 'house cats'.

I'd like to ask a human that has an indoor cat one question, 'how would you like to be all cooped up and jailed in your domicile like the cat that you purport to love so much'? I guess this kind of a question takes the one who's questioned by surprise.

I walked deep into the park before deciding to rest in. As I was studying my surroundings very carefully I heard someone call out to me.

"Hey, kitty, why don't you come and join me?"

Tracking the origin of the voice I saw a tough looking man, dressed in black, wearing shades, and brandishing what appeared to be a half pound burger, all dressed of course. To tell you the truth I had an eerie feeling that something was awfully wrong. There were people nearby but no one appeared to have taken any notice of me or the strange man.

The man began to wave the burger left to right, and then spoke softly to me.

"Kitty, c'mon I know you want to eat this beautiful half-pounder. It was made just for you."

Now that was very spooky. Why would a stranger say that to me? Unfortunately, instinct took over. I fell into a sort of hypnotic state, unable to stop walking towards the burger. Then, out of the blue I heard a thumping sound. Instantly, everything went blank.

I don't know how long I was out for but when I awakened it became apparent to that I was shot with what animals refer to as 'the dreaded tranquilizer gun', invented by a non-animal (of course), the notorious, and hated by many animals, Colin Murdoch.

"Tommy Baker, guess what. You're going to be taking a brown bath very soon."

"Hey, where am I, What is this place, I demand to know. I know my rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights."

"The Canadian Charter of Rights doesn't apply to you. You're with us now. Mickey and I are enforcers. Guess who we work for?"

Wow, towering giants with humungous muscles and fighters' faces were hovering over me; strangely enough they were wearing surgical masks. The men were wearing black clothing, dark sunglasses, and dark hats. I didn't have to actually see the veins on their biceps to know they were very big and strong.

It dawned on me. There was a horrid stench in the area. So terrible it was almost choking me. I was having difficulty breathing.

We were in some kind of an indoor facility. Upon turning my head to the right I saw a humungous pool containing a mixture of fecal matter, urine, and other noxious substances. As soon as I turned my head back to face the 2 enforcers I understood why I was in the sewer facility.

Only one of the two enforcers spoke. The other enforcer held what appeared to be a .357 Magnum in his left hand.

"Fecal matter and urine will be on your face, and entire body kitty! Don't you remember what Bongo said on T.V.? When Bongo makes a threat he always carries it out, and by whatever means too. (The enforcer brandished a sophisticated stop watch; I had no idea why, but under the circumstances I wasn't going to ask).

"You're going to dive into that cesspool of poop and pee."

Gosh, I was so overwhelmingly terrified. I ran through this scenario in my head. Okay, I'll take a deep breath, dive in, and then quickly come up for air. I'm certain my game plan will work.

As I was just about to turn and dive into the cesspool I was ordered to stop and listen. Apparently, there was more bad news to come.

"Don't you dare dive in until I tell you the reason I have this sophisticated stop watch in my hand. Following your dive into the cesspool, you must stay submerged for a total of 2 minutes, not a second less. If you emerge at any time before the 2 minute minimum I shall blow your head off with my .357 Magnum."

"C'mon guys, look, I'm just a poor little kitty. I've never harmed anyone in my whole life. C'mon, have a heart. Please, umm, what if I give you guys all the money in my shoulder bag? I've got tons of money, and umm, it's all clean, no counterfeit bills, really. You can tell Bongo that I died, I'll leave the

province and never come back, or if you want, I'll move down to the states, okay?"

"No excuses. You need to dive into the cesspool immediately!"

"Wait a minute, if you shoot me the security guards in this facility will certainly hear the banging of the gunshot."

"There are 3 security guards on duty; all of them have been given 'very special bonuses' for the day. No one will come to your rescue, we promise."

"C'mon fellows, please wait, okay? What about the surveillance cameras. These facilities always have surveillance of the interior and exterior of the property."

"The surveillance cameras have been neutralized. Now, are you going to dive in or shall I blow your head off?"

"Okay, I just need to know one thing. How will I know that the 2 minutes are up, I mean, it's not like I'll have my own stop watch down there. And even if I did, I certainly can't see anything therein. Can I use your stopwatch?"

"Bongo's orders, this is your problem not his or ours. I'm going to count to 5, so help me if you don't dive in when I finish counting consider yourself a corpse."

I had no choice in the matter but to ready myself for the creepiest dive of my entire life, and hopefully the only one of its kind. I held my breath, closed my eyes crunched my ears. Closed my nostrils then dove in.

Upon entering into the cesspool I heard the ugliest thud-like splash sound. The force of my dive caused material to enter my mouth, nose, ears, eyes, and anus. I tried my hardest to keep my sanity. As time elapsed I became more and more desperate for air; and believe me every second felt like an hour. Twice I had to open my mouth, material entered my mouth and unfortunately my swallow-reflex was activated.

Soon I began to feel dizzy, gradually losing consciousness until I only had enough strength to emerge from the filth I was dunked into.

As soon as I emerged I took in several deep breaths desperately gasping for air, each time I did so more filth entered my mouth and nose. Luckily, both enforcers had just turned and readied themselves to walk away. Upon hearing me breathe, the speaker turned to face me.

"Kitty, you barely made it in time. Two minutes and one second on the nose. If you'd emerged a couple of seconds earlier I would've shot and killed you. No one would've known the difference. And one more thing, if you dare to ever tell anyone what ensued we'll come after you again. Next time you'll have to stay down for 3 minutes, go it?"

The enforcers walked away, not waiting for my response. Meanwhile, I mustered every ounce of strength that I had, pulled myself out of the cesspool and then puked my brains out. I must've done so for nearly a half an hour. Although I shook my body to rid myself of the filth on me, much of it stuck and then dried up, granting me an ugly, stinky appearance.

As soon as I stopped puking I began my long trek out of the facility. Every step that I took was difficult to perform because my mind and entire body had been overwhelmed by the shocking even that I was forced to endure. Nevertheless, I couldn't give up.

I found myself in such a horrid state the only persons that I could think of was my parents. This horrible trauma brought out the extreme hidden love for my beloved parents that I couldn't brush off. Now, I was quite certain that they'd take me back after I told them my story.

Upon leaving the facility grounds I turned back to see the name of the hell-hole. A sign just above the entrance read MONTREAL SEWER TREATMENT PLANT #4. I made certain to never forget that name.

I was in an area that contained factory and warehouse buildings scattered throughout a large area. And, considering it was dark I was lucky. I walked on a long road leading to the downtown core. I was miles away because the buildings that I could see on the horizon appeared to be no larger than ants.

Only 2 vehicles passed me in the first half hour of my walk. A short while later, when I'd lost all hope a motorist pulled his dark green Volkswagen beside me.

As soon as he lowered the window of his vehicle I knew for certain that I stunk beyond belief.

"What the hell, kitty, you stink like poop and pee! Take a freaking shower, will you, before some crazy motorist decides to run you over, and if he does he'll be doing the world an awesome favour!"

He drove off never to be seen again. I continued walking until I reached a congregation of homes. I stayed low, not wanting to be seen by anyone. I began my search for a swimming pool. Unfortunately, so long as I had the pasted fecal matter and urine stains on me my olfactory sense was neutralized. In a nutshell I couldn't sniff the area for chlorine. Therefore, I crooped up my ears and looked intently at my surroundings.

The more that I walked the more upscale the homes became. This is exactly what I needed. Upon entering Raymond Boulevard I heard the faint sound of swimming pool water gently moving side to side. I tracked the sound until I reached a mansion located at 8860 Raymond Boulevard. It was my ticket out of this stinking predicament.

I slithered into the mansion grounds, leaving a trail of stench and discolouration behind me. I passed a beautiful grassy lawn, reaching the back of the mansion. On my left was a beautiful patio straight ahead was a pristine swimming pool. With no time to waste I ran to the pool, dove in and then emerged. Then I submerged then emerged repeating this behaviour many times over, making sure that I stayed away from the brown-yellow coloured filth on the surface of the water. By the time I exited the swimming pool most of the surface area was covered with filth. Although I felt sorry for the owners of the pool, I had my own skin and hide to think about. Nobody knew how I felt, but me.

I galloped through the front lawn of the mansion until reaching the sidewalk. Studying the area intently, I saw no pedestrians, motorists, or peeping Toms, thereby, I continued my trek.

Judging from the appearance of the stars and the moon it was midnight. As soon as I reached Atwater Street near Lionel Groulx Metro station I chose to use the same payphone that I used to turn Bongo into the authorities.

I leaped up onto the phone dropped several quarters into the slot and then proceeded to call the Vancouver operator. The coins in my shoulder bag had been well washed by the chlorine in the swimming pool. However, my bills were a different story. I had to wait until they dried before using them. No problem, I wasn't going to need a lot of in the near future.

"Hello, this is Shirley the Vancouver operator, how may I help you?"

"Madam Shirley, can you please give me the phone number of Carter and Andrea Sumner-Williams.?"

"One moment please."

"Honey, do you have a paper and pen, or a mobile that you can use to jot down the phone number?"

"Don't worry about it I have a good memory for phone numbers."

"Umm, honey, are you a little boy?"

I didn't want her to know anything about me, so I answered in the affirmative.

"Yes, Madam Shirley, I'm a 6 year-old boy. I need the Williams phone number because their son Greg and I were best friends in the whole world. The Williams' recently moved from Montreal to Vancouver. Unfortunately, our family was on vacation when they moved hence, I couldn't get Greg's phone number."

"Oh my dear, I guess I should treat this as an emergency. Well, I have a phone number for Andrea Sumner-Williams, but there's no record of a Carter Williams. Perhaps, Greg's parents used Andrea Williams' name for phone billing purposes?"

Anyway, their number is (555) 690-5509. Do you need anything else?"

"No, Madam Shirley, and thank you very much and have a very beautiful day, goodbye."

"And the same to you doubled."

I felt that something was terribly wrong. My father was a hard-line lion-of-the-house kind of a guy. He'd never allow my mother to use her name for any utility bills. It was a case of divorce, separation, or worse yet death. Any of the 3 options were terrifying to me. I'd already been through enough suffering. How could I cope with an addition to a series of catastrophes?

Following our polite goodbye and have a nice day line, I froze stiff for a minute. I felt my heart pacing and my blood pressure rise. Still yet, I was very excited about calling my mother, even though I felt that there could've been something wrong. When the time came, I called my mother, memorizing the entire number by heart. After 4 rings that seemed like they were a year apart my mother answered the phone.

"Hello, who is this and how can I help you?"

"Mom, is that you?"

"Huh, is this Citizen?"

"Yes mom, it is. Mom ... please (the line suddenly went dead).

I called my mother again, unfortunately, the same thing happened. Following a dozen repeated calls, my mother finally spoke to me. I was certain she hung up the phone in my face because she was overwhelmed by love and joy, I just couldn't imagine the other case scenario it would've been shocking to me at the very least.

"Mom, it's me, Citizen, your beloved son. Please don't hang up on me again, I'm running out of coins.

Mom, I'm in Montreal, close to the Lionel Groulx Metro station. I miss you and dad so very much. I'm excited about the prospect of seeing you very soon. Can you give me your home address? I'll fly to Vancouver; we'll meet at the airport if you want."

"Citizen, I'm sorry to say this, and I guess there's really only one way to tell you, bluntly; your father recently passed away from bone cancer. Chemotherapy and the best medicine available couldn't save him."

"Mom, no way please tell me that dad's still alive and you're only teasing."

"Citizen, I wish I was only teasing."

(I heard a man's voice in the background). "Honey darling, come to bed. I want you so very much. When are you going to finish talking to that annoying squirt?"

(I know for certain that my mother muffled her receiver using the palm of her hand, she'd forgotten about my incredible feline senses). "Honey, I'll be there in a jiffy. Wait until I finish talking to this snot of an excuse for a son."

"Mom, just hear me out please, okay? I need to tell you what has happened to me since you left me all alone in the airport. Please, be patient, if you don't want to see me ever again, say so after I'm done conversing with you. Are we in agreement?"

My mother reluctantly agreed to stay on the phone and listen to my detailed description of my on-goings during our separation.

"Citizen, honey, I love you so much. We don't have anyone else but each other. You know what why don't I visit you in Montreal. I never told you that I was born in the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal."

"Mom, you really were?"

"Yes, honey, I was. Actually, I spent the first 10 years of my life living in downtown Montreal with my beloved parents. My familiarity with the city will make it much easier when I come to visit you. Perhaps I may move back to the beautiful city I was born in."

"Mom, that's a very good idea. When can you come and where should I meet you?"

"Citizen, I can be there in a couple of days at the very latest. I'm looking forward to seeing you, really."

"Mom, that's terrific!"

"Citizen, please call me tomorrow at noon. By then I'll have more details regarding my departure and arrival times. Understand that we must meet in the downtown core, in front of Tim Horton's beside the statue of Norman Bethune, close to Guy Metro station. Is that okay with you?"

"Mom, it's fantabulous. Mom, I love you very much and I missed you ever so dearly. As for dad, I'm really bummed out about not being able to see him, even once, that would be incredibly satisfying."

We reviewed our meet-up instructions one more time just in case we didn't get everything right the first time.

As soon as I hung up the phone, I fell into a state of anxiety that lasted until 6:00 A.M. the following morning. In a sense, I was too overly-excited about the prospect of meeting my mother. Furthermore, I began to wonder whether my mother and I were going to embrace. For a change, I wanted to get really touchy and feely, leaping unto my mother's chest, kissing her cheeks many times over, and saying sweet things like I love you over and over again. Somehow, I felt that it wouldn't be quite as reciprocal as expected.

Worse yet, a small part of me felt that my mother didn't want to have anything to do with me. By 11:00 A.M. I fell into a stupor, feeling like a guy who was suffering from bipolar disorder. I'd gone from a terrific high to a horrible low in a short period of time. Perhaps, I was in denial; denial about what? I wondered.

At 11:15 A.M. I was sitting in the Pepsi Forum, waiting for the time to pass before I began my nervous walk to the meeting place. A short balding and pudgy middle-aged man approached me wearing a big smile on his face. I wasn't in the mood to speak to anyone, besides, I was pressed for time.

"Hello kitty, do you like the Pepsi Forum?"

"Beat it! Scram! I'm not in the mood to speak to anyone, okay!"

I didn't mean to be so nasty to the man but there was no way in hell I was going to converse about anything, with anyone. Indeed, I was getting ready to leave and my nerves were quite racked.

No sooner had I spoke the man brandished a small black device. He punched a few buttons and then waited attentively.

Moments later I saw 4 security guards wearing typical white shirts and dark pants fast approaching our position. I shifted my gaze to the man. He was grinning fiercely at me.

"Hey kitty, guess who I am?"

"Umm, I don't know."

"I'm head of security at the Pepsi Forum. We've had too many complaints regarding snotty, aggressive patrons at the Pepsi Forum. If you know any better, you'll run out of the forum and never return."

I chose the nearest exit to run to and then exit the Pepsi Forum. Following a 50 yard sprint I slowed down to a walking pace. I stayed on Maisonneuve Boulevard and continued heading due east to our meeting place. On my way there I saw what could've been a horrendous accident. There's a bike path on Maisonneuve Boulevard, unfortunately between Atwater Street and Guy Street there are left turns for motorists heading west. Many motorists don't watch out for cyclists, they're attuned to other vehicles. Even pedestrians are easier to spot than cyclists. Worse yet, some cyclists think they're in the Indy 500, and still others go through red lights and stop signs thinking that they own the entire street and that everyone must get out of their way, everyone including pedestrians and motorists too. But believe me, the worst amongst this clique are the ones who ram their way through traffic lights even though they see a motorist turning in front of them. In this case scenario, the cyclist has the right of way, but a person on a bike must think if there's a

collision between me and a motorist who will get hurt? Duh, that's a no-brainer.

Before I arrived at our meeting place I noticed something peculiar. There were considerably more police vehicles on Maisonneuve Boulevard, I also noticed 7 police vehicles parked on the crossing streets.

As soon As I got St. Marc Street I couldn't help but notice that the area around Guy Metro station was literally dead in activity. So much so, not a motorist could be seen. Guy Street runs two ways and is a major passageway that leads to another major street, Cote des Neiges.

After crossing Guy Street I shifted my direction slightly to the left then entered the Norman Bethune Square. A moment later, I was seated on a bench beside the statue of Norman Bethune.

Although I was situated in front of Tim Horton's there wasn't a soul in sight, even after I turned to face the restaurant I could see no one inside. Tim Horton's opens 24 hours a day it caters to a bazillion students, residents, passersby, workers in and around the area, and whomever. I didn't understand what was going on.

I studied my surroundings very intently, noticing a lone pigeon perched atop Concordia University's Library Building. He was so high up that I could barely see his unusual wing flapping. Come to think of it he was making some kind of a distress call or signal, or maybe he was trying to warn someone. Wait a minute, was this lone male pigeon trying to warn me about some imminent danger, I wondered?"

Suddenly, I felt an eerie feeling inside of me. I studied my surroundings very carefully once more. Seeing nothing dangerous, but sensing danger confused me.

As I was pondering about what to do next the Tim Horton's door behind me swung open and then at least a dozen officers of the law charged me, like raving bulls. Moments thereafter, additional law enforcement personnel exited buildings in the vicinity. Every single person amongst them had his or her gun drawn and pointed at me. As soon as they surrounded me one of the officers radioed in for backup. That's when I heard sirens blasting in every possible direction. I instinctively curled up into a ball, keeping my eyes slightly open.

"Hey un-curl yourself, do it right now or else we'll shoot! After you do that, stand on your hind legs and keep your paws open, retract your claws and don't you dare bare your canines!"

I did as ordered and then waited attentively for whatever to happen to happen. I couldn't run, hide, or put up any kind of a fight. I actually thought that nothing worse could possibly happen to me. Boy was I wrong!

"Honey, please follow their orders to the letter. Honey, mommy loves you so very much."

Huh, what the hell is going on here? Oh gosh, umm, it's my mother; she was gently ushered to the front of the hovering crowd.

"Mom, you double crossed me! Mom, you don't love me! Mom, you never loved me! You want the reward money, don't deny it!"

"Honey I really do love you that's why I turned you in. Listen, baby, there's a 2 million dollar reward for information leading to your arrest and conviction. I want, I mean, I need the money really badly. Honey, I want to live like a beautiful princess, and you're such a sweet son by helping me acquire the reward money. Think of it this way, you're making your mother very happy. Citizen I'm proud of you."

I couldn't bear to hear any more of my mother's garbage talk. I raised my forepaws and readied to cup my ears.

"Citizen, don't move! I don't want you to cup your ears. I have more to say. Citizen, you need to be behind bars for the rest of your natural kitty life, you need some serious long-term therapy too. I don't want you to harm anyone, especially yourself."

I totally lost it, not caring about anyone in the whole world except myself. I knew right then that Andrea Sumner Williams was no longer my mother, in fact, she was my worst enemy in the whole world.

"Andrea, 'F you', and there's one more thing, you'll never be a beautiful princess because you're always going to be an ugly witch!"

"Citizen, may cat bite your tongue, no I take that back may a lion bite your tongue off! Officers, you heard what he said, you know for sure now, Citizen is a violent offender. I want you to put him away for life with hard labour and without any chance of parole. And umm, by the way, is the reward money tax-free?"

Following my verbal rampage I was unceremoniously held by 2 large policemen. I understood that resisting arrest was futile and would make things worse; unfortunately, I was so enraged I began to scream my head off.

"Let me go damn you! Leave me alone, I didn't do anything! I'm not a criminal, I was framed for every single crime that the crown has charged me with! I demand my rights as a Citizen of Canada! Where is the Canadian Charter of Rights? Why doesn't it apply to me?"

I attempted to continue screaming but was brutally gagged by a third policeman. He smothered my mouth with black masking tape and then grinned, signifying that he enjoyed what he was doing. Following this, I felt the need to flail and punch and

scratch wildly. I was briefly able to free myself from the powerful clutches of the 2 large policemen.

Meanwhile, I could see my mother smirking at me. She knew that it was only a matter of time before I was fully restrained. Additional police officers worked to restrain me. I was eventually bound and gagged, like an out of control psychiatric patient, which, by the way I wasn't.

As I was being whisked away to a dark-coloured paddy wagon I could hear my mother speaking her mind to me.

"Honey, there's no use in resisting. I know you remember what Seven of Nine from the series Star Trek Voyager used to famously say, 'Resistance is Futile'. I wish she was here to see this beautiful spectacle."

I'd always known that Andrea was an airhead, but following her statement I considered her mentally deranged.

I was roughly tossed inside the paddy wagon. Before closing the doors the police officers allowed local, national, and international news crews to film and take pictures of me. I was lying on my back, bound and shackled, like a defeated animal. I understood that the game of 'runaway cat' was in a literal sense, permanently over.

I spent 3 days in the local jail, was fed low grade food and housed with the rabble of society. I literally had to fight for my food. I had no friends therein, and I didn't like the way some of the inmates were looking at me, looking at me with their crazy bloodshot eyes.

At noon on my third day in jail I was removed from my cell and then taken to the courthouse. As soon as I was taken out of the paddy wagon I was bombarded by questions, cameras, and photos. I glared at everyone around me resulting in most of the people to back off.

"Hey, Citizen, how does it feel like to be the killer cat? You're the most notorious killer in Canadian history. I guess you're really proud of yourself. Look around you, there's Paparazzi here," said a young female reporter.

"I don't want to give a long speech, okay! I'm innocent, and that's final!"

I was carried to the court house by a couple of obese policewomen. Both women wore short hair combed backward, and they weren't attractive in any sense whatsoever. No doubt, these women were chosen for this particular task in order to add insult to injury.

Upon entering the court house the policewomen placed carried me through the metal detector; oddly though, they swung me back and forth making certain that I wasn't hiding a dangerous weapon deep. Then, they placed me on an airport-style

conveyer belt. Nothing could be hidden on a person; it would show up as soon as it passed the scanner.

As the policewomen were carrying me to the specific courtroom I was scheduled to be in 3 additional police officers joined us. They stopped in front of Courtroom #9. One of the policewomen called the police station to confirm that we'd reached the courtroom.

Following her phone call I was carried into the courtroom. The first person that I saw was an RCMP officer. The policewomen gently placed me on the carpet floor and then untied the zip cuffs on my legs. Then, I was picked up and carried to a table situated on the left.

The room was full to capacity. Onlookers appeared to be unsupportive of me, glaring and frowning at me whenever I looked at them. I didn't receive a single smile from anyone in the courtroom. I guess that was a terrible sign, indeed.

The policewomen backed away and then turned and walked to the back of the courtroom. Shortly thereafter, a bald midget entered the courtroom carrying a smile on his face. This guy looked like a real clown, dressed in red pants, a yellow shirt, and purple shoes. I didn't bother to look at his sock colour.

He strolled right into the courtroom seating him-self beside me. Huh, what the hell! I wondered.

The midget extended his right hand and then said, "Citizen Cat, I'm very delighted to meet you. My name is Herman Grump, I'm your court appointed attorney.

Listen, this is not a trial, it's kind of like a hearing to determine if there's enough evidence against you to warrant a trial. Citizen, I've looked over your case file very carefully. In my legal, honest opinion, you shouldn't go to trial. If you do and you're found guilty, which I'm almost certain you will be, it'll result in a death sentence, perhaps you'll be hanged, placed inside a gas canister in an animal shelter, or maybe you'll beheaded.

My recommendation is that you plead guilty to all charges, tell the judge and court that you're very sorry to have terrorized the people of Canada, and that you'll never kill another Canadian again. Wait, there's more, you must also say that you love this country very much and have the utmost respect for its entire criminal justice system, and that you'll behave well behind bars, and that you'll never opt for a parole hearing, and that umm, you'll except whatever judgement the court imposes upon you."

I just about bit Herman; "What are you, the court appointed attorney or the damn crown prosecutor? Even the crown prosecutor couldn't have scared me into pleading guilty better than you just did."

Herman put his handbag on the table and then removed my file. He opened it up and then showed me the contents, describing in detail every single crime that I was being charged with and showing me the damning evidence. Furthermore, I was told that my mother would be the first witness for the crown.

I just about puked my brains out, right on the table. Wow, that would've been some scene. But then, I thought, well it can't get any worse than this. I made up my mind, a trial it would be. Unfortunately, there was more bad news on the horizon. It appears that Bongo was telling the truth about Anna Paulson.

Getting to within earshot of me Herman whispered something quite terrifying, "Citizen, the notorious Anna Paulson, the fucking slut will be personally going head-to-head with your defence team, that's me in totality. And let me be quite clear, just look at me, I'm a short, pudgy, middle-aged ugly good for nothing attorney."

Wow, the crown prosecutor really knew how to screw me over. I guess someone in the Canadian Justice System had to do a lot of research to find this schmuck. Although I was terrified at the prospect of being executed, I decided to plead not guilty on all counts. I absolutely had to stand up for my rights. Besides, I was innocent.

"Herman, listen, I plead not guilty on all counts; it's a matter of principle. I'm tired of being a cat on the run, and I don't want to spend any more time wondering about when I'm going to be captured. I want to bog down and fight. No more evading my enemies or the law. I have to go head-to-head with Anna Paulson, if needed.

"Okay, Citizen, its 12:35 P.M. Your court hearing is scheduled to be at 1:00 P.M. You're lucky because we have a lunch break soon, otherwise the judge would probably be in this courtroom right now."

I waited attentively until 1:00 P.M., nothing happened. I laid my head down and then closed my eyes. I was abruptly awakened by the voice of the bailiff saying 'everyone rise and that includes you, sleepy head, the Honourable Doris Andrews residing'.

For some reason Herman was nowhere to be found, or seen for that matter. What was I supposed to do? I decided to wait until Herman returned.

The judge was a very heavy set middle-aged woman. She had hazel-coloured eyes, white skin with scattered freckles on it, a prominent Roman nose, and puffy lips.

By now, I was a wreck feeling all bummed out at the prospect of not being represented in a court of law. Judge Andrews glared at me for a moment, then she frowned, and then she looked away. As far as I was concerned, I was doomed. But

still, I wasn't going to plead guilty. I had honour and dignity on my side.

The door to the courtroom was forcefully opened causing it to make an unusual sound. Most of the people in the courtroom turned back to look at what was going on. Wouldn't you know it; Herman strode into the courtroom carrying a smile on his face. For a moment I thought he was going to get me out of this mess, but then logic dictated that I wasn't going anywhere, it was only a matter of time.

Herman ran to our table and then climbed onto it. He was sweating bricks, looked quite confused, and then turned to face the judge.

Honourable Judge Andrews, may I please have a minute with my client. I was held up in traffic."

"Wow, Herman, that's an old one. Can't you think of anything more genuine than that? That's a rhetorical question, by the way. You can have 5 minutes if you want, but not a second more."

Herman smothered his mouth against the side of my head and then whispered into my ear, "Citizen, please, if you plead guilty to all counts you'll be granted mercy by the court. I wasn't exactly the first choice for representing you. A total of 25 attorneys refused to take the job before me. The vast majority of Canadians want you put to death. The television networks are referring to you as the captured 'Killer Cat'.

The Canadian Justice System can and likely will do whatever it can to have you tried and convicted of every single charge put forth against you. Everyone wants to see you executed, and I do believe that your mother is nasty enough to testify against you. Your inheritance is gone, I'm really sorry about that.

Citizen, please, I really care about you. Plead guilty and request incarceration on Asteroid X. On Asteroid X you'll have a roommate I guarantee that he or she will be a non-violent offender.

If you plead not guilty and are found guilty, you will face 2 possible outcomes, the most likely being execution, the second which is less likely is a life without parole in the Yukon Federal Penitentiary. This hell-hole is reserved for the most violent and monstrous criminals in Canada."

Just as I was opening my mouth to speak Herman cupped it. Then he looked at the judge, gave her a 2 fingers up signifying a 2 minute extension. Thankfully, she agreed.

"Citizen, there's some major corruption in our legal system. If you do time at The Yukon Federal Penitentiary your 'beloved cellmate' will be none other than Bongo in the flesh. I will not be able to help you in this case scenario. Please, do

as I ask you to do. I know it's not a perfect deal, but on Asteroid X you'll be sent supplies every 3 months."

(I decided to take the deal) "Your honour, please, I want to plead guilty on all counts, but on condition that I be sent to Asteroid X. Do you accept my guilty plea?"

The judge ordered everyone out of the courtroom except for essential personnel. Herman informed me that he'd fill out the required paper work and that I'd soon be escorted straight to The Canadian Space Center (Quebec Division). He assured me that there would be no delays. Everything was already set. And I must say, it was quite odd, indeed. It was as though Herman was one of the conspirators.

Barely a minute later a couple of tall and muscular uniformed men, entered the courtroom. They were wearing shades and dark clothing. It didn't take long for them to reach me. Both men were heavily armed and stoic in nature.

One of the men said, "Citizen Cat, we're going to take you to The Canadian Space Center. You will not resist, nor try to escape. Lethal force will be the reaction on our part if you attempt to deviate from being docile. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sirs, I sure do? And umm, how long will it take to get to the space station?"

Neither of the 2 men answered my question. What's odd though, is that the courtroom had somehow emptied out. One of the armed men exited the courtroom for a brief period of time. He re-entered the courtroom carrying an animal carrier.

It was a humiliating scene I was placed inside the animal carrier, hustled out of the courtroom and then carried through a long corridor and then out of a secret backdoor. This backdoor was probably used to whisk away sensitive prisoners, defendants and witnesses.

Though my vision was limited because most of the animal carrier was either fenced or plastic covered, I know for a fact that I was placed inside a large school bus.

What better way to hide a sensitive prisoner. Following my unceremonious placement on a bus seat I was taken out of the animal carrier.

There were 6 RCMP officers on the bus. Each one of them was stoic, looking straight ahead and not saying anything. More troublesome was the fact that there were no windows on the bus. Everything was shaded in black.

Before I could contemplate the gravity of the situation the bus driver began his drive to The Canadian Space Station.

One of the RCMP officers stood up and then approached me. He was grinning.

"Guess what, you're going to a far off asteroid, and you're going to have absolutely no friends there. Most criminals who

are sent off to an asteroid return with major mental illnesses. I hope that same thing happens to you. Citizen, you've left a trail of tears and destruction."

Thankfully, the RCMP officer left following his terrifying statement. It took such a toll on me I began to feel groggy. I stayed awake for roughly an hour before something quite odd happened. Everyone on the bus suddenly brandished and then wore a gas mask. I was overwhelmed with terror. Was I going to be gassed? I asked myself.

Before I knew it my eyelids became heavier and heavier. Then, everything went blank. I was out for perhaps 12 hours. I was rudely awakened by a guard who was previously sitting behind me. He'd stood up and then took a couple of steps forward in order to stand beside me. He shook me quite violently.

"Hey, wake up you sleepy head, okay! We've reached The Canadian Space Center."

I grudgingly opened my eyes then rubbed the crust and tears away. It took me a minute or so to focus my vision and to comprehend what'd ensued. I couldn't believe it! I finally made it to The Canadian Space Center.

"All right, listen up, Citizen, hereafter, you're officially labelled as an 'Exiled Canadian Prisoner' (ECP). You no longer have whatever rights you enjoyed in Canada. Right now you are a no-body. You'll stay that way throughout the entire duration of your incarceration."

"What the ... hell! I never enjoyed full rights anyway!"

"Hey, Citizen, do you want to mouth off to me again? If so, I'll club you over the head with my night stick. Now, shut your ugly mouth and do as you're commanded! Get back into your animal carrier right now, or else."

I slithered back into the animal carrier and waited for the RCMP officer to close and lock the door behind me. But for some reason he didn't.

"Citizen, get out! I just wanted to make sure that you were willing to take orders. Now, leap onto the bus floor and then slowly walk to the front and then leave."

I was escorted out of the school bus and to my horror and astonishment what I saw around me was mind boggling. It was a humungous air hangar, probably about 20 football fields long and as wide. I can't tell you how high the ceiling was although I suspect that it was at least a couple hundred yards. This was something out of a space movie, or maybe The Twilight Zone or something of the sort.

I saw a plethora of aircrafts, a very small spacecraft, and 2 spaceships nearby. What caught my attention though was a very small spacecraft named CANADA MINICRAFT AR-555. There were 4

well-armed men standing beside this spacecraft, the door leading into it was open.

The spacecraft was gray-green coloured, although not the same shape as an airplane had the volume and mass of a 727, made to load a few persons and light cargo.

The RCMP officers who escorted me walked away. Now, I had to deal with a new breed of armed men; these guys and gals were Canada Space Center security staff naturally, they were armed and potentially dangerous.

A security guard standing beside the small spacecraft withdrew his gun from his holster. He was glaring at me; but that wasn't the worst of it, a moment later he pointed his gun at me. Any gun that's pointed at you looks menacing, I don't care how brave or heroic you think that you are. The muzzle of a gun is a fierce glare, indeed.

"Citizen, come to the spacecraft but do so slowly and don't make any unnatural or sudden moves. You will enter the ship without any hesitation whatsoever. If you do not behave accordingly, I will shoot you in the head."

I did as told, slowly walking to the spaceship. Three of the armed men entered the small spacecraft while the fourth waved me in with his gun.

I entered the small spaceship and to my shock saw a giant cage therein. Worse yet my name had been posted on the door to the cage. I looked at each of the armed men in the face to know what was going on. I couldn't believe that I'd have to spend the entire trip in a horrible cage. Two armed men exited the small spaceship. Immediately afterward, one of the 2 remaining men walked to the control center and then punched some keys, resulting in the closing of the door. Then, he approached me.

The higher ranking officer spoke to me, "Citizen, I'm Captain Hammond Jefferies, this is Officer John Mason. We're special pilots for the Canadian Air Force. Unlike other pilots we fly people to selected asteroids.

This is a Level 5 spacecraft. In case you don't know, it is the lowest grade ship the Level 1 is the highest. On a higher scale are the spaceships, the ranking system is the same.

For this voyage you will be the only ECP on this ship. We're taking you to Asteroid X. It'll only take us 6 hours to get there. Our ship is very fast. Unfortunately, for technological security purposes I can't tell you how fast. Believe this, you're going to be very far away from Earth, and there's no way back. Your sentence reads 150 years on Asteroid X. If you decide to return to Canada you will be executed within an hour of your arrival. In this case scenario there is no appeal nor can you change your mind again.

Citizen, because you've been deemed a terrible danger to all Canadians, you will have no roommate on Asteroid X. It is common sense I'm certain you agree.

A small spacecraft will land on your asteroid every 3 months to resupply you. There's already a surplus of supplies from our last shipment."

"Wait a minute! I don't know what's going on here, really. I'm being sent to an asteroid that's a bazillion miles away from Earth but why? Don't get me wrong. I'd prefer this over doing hard time in Canada. And certainly, I don't want to be Bongo's new boyfriend. It would be quite dangerous indeed. Either I would have to kill him or the other way around."

"Actually, Citizen, this way is much cheaper. The supplies we'll send you have been subsidized by The Government of Canada.

"Okay, now, so what's the gig? What's the big secret; I know there's more to this than meets the eye, I mean, umm, c'mon, isn't it supposed to cost a huge fortune to send someone to an asteroid?"

"Citizen, Canada has discovered a new energy form that's astronomically cheaper than using petroleum. That's how we're able to transport ECPs to various asteroids."

"Wait a minute! Why don't you tell the world about this amazing discovery?"

"Because the geopolitical elites need petroleum to be purchased, transported, and used throughout the world, otherwise, they'll lose their control of this world."

"I see who came up with this idea about transporting ECPs to asteroids?"

"Actually, it, umm, I really don't know, umm, it was a secret organization within our government, even the Prime Minister of Canada doesn't know. I guess we're becoming like our neighbours to the south. Anyway, we shall be taking off soon. Oh, the cage is a deterrent for you. If you misbehave you'll be placed inside it until we reach our destination.

Captain Jeffries pointed to the specially built seats then said, "Citizen you must sit in one of those seats, buckle up and then wait for your food and drink. Regulations state that we must feed and water every ECP that boards this spaceship."

I walked to the seats and then leaped onto one of them. Immediately afterwards, I fastened the seat belt and waited attentively for takeoff.

Captain Jefferies and Officer Mason went to the control room and then sat down to prepare for takeoff. I couldn't see everything that they were doing, but it looked very sophisticated. The computer system and control panels were far more advanced than anything I'd ever seen.

Takeoff became imminent soon thereafter. Officer Mason left the control room walking past me and through the corridor to the back of the mini spacecraft. He returned a short while later holding a tray of food and drink. The tray was covered with a thick plastic film covering.

"Citizen, you can eat at any time, including takeoff. Technology has come a long way. Don't be embarrassed about using your claws or canines to rip open the thick cover of plastic wrap. And just between you and me, the food that you'll be eating on the asteroid will be clean relatively bland. No one in Canada cares about how much you'll suffer on the asteroid. And water is clean too. This will be the best meal you'll have for the rest of your life, so enjoy it.

Try not to think of the days, weeks, months, and later the years and decades that pass. If you do you'll go crazy. Just be thankful that you'll be receiving supplies every 3 months, and there's no crime or predatory fear on any asteroid. Gosh you're going to have absolutely no enemies in your new home."

No sooner had Officer Mason turned and walked back to the control room I plunged my dagger-like claws over the plastic film cover ripping it wide open. Then, I shoved my face therein and pulled the plastic film cover away from my tray.

I finished everything on my tray including the milk and orange juice. I don't know exactly when it happened but I literally collapsed. I was definitely drugged.

EBOLA X VIRUS

I must've been out cold for at least 12 hours. Upon awakening I sensed that something was quite odd. Looking around me I noticed no other persons. Furthermore, the mini spacecraft wasn't moving. Not wanting to waste any time I exited the mini spacecraft. To my utter shock and dismay I saw a dozen dead bodies strewn across the hangar. Worse yet, the victims appeared to have bled inside out, their bodies looked very sickly, and there was a slight stench in the air.

Disgustingly, the blow flies had already begun to do their work on the corpses, maggots were on one body. I wasn't sticking around. I took several steps towards the exit but fell onto the ground beside a corpse. I needed some time to recover from the drug in my system.

Having been so close to the corpse I studied it very carefully, even the skin appeared sickly.

I shook my head and then continued onward until reaching the exit. I was literally out in the middle of nowhere. For one thing I didn't know which direction to go in. Roughly 50 yards in front of me was a long street. I couldn't see when it ended in either direction.

Looking to my left and then to my right all I saw was sand and dirt. I wanted to know what was behind the facility so I walked to the long street. As soon as I got there I turned around and looked. Once again, there was nothing but sand and dirt behind the facility. And still, I felt a bit woozy.

It was mid-afternoon and the sun was hitting down on me like a ton of bricks. There was no way I was going to trek anywhere until later in the day. I backtracked, walking to the facility but not entering it. I lied down in front of the entrance; it was shady and a bit cooler there.

I closed my eyes, instantly falling asleep. I awakened late in the afternoon, stretched out, and then headed for the long street. Now, I had 2 options, head left or head right. I scanned the entire area searching for clues as to which direction was better. Seeing nothing on the horizon for either way, I chose to go right. Most people are right handed, so why not go with the majority.

I walked for roughly 2 hours before spotting a distant object. It wasn't moving but looked like it was built by humans, in other words it wasn't a naturally occurring inanimate object.

I felt a rush of anxiety and excitement. I sped up my walking pace. You don't know what it feels like to be all alone, and considering what I'd been through the effects were magnified.

As I got closer and closer to the object it became clear to me that it was a vehicle. But this vehicle was partially submerged into the sand and dirt just beyond the shoulder of the street. I deduced that a vehicular accident had ensued.

Shockingly, I saw what appeared to be a person in the vehicle. Getting even closer, I was able to determine that the vehicle was a green-coloured Volkswagen bug.

When I got to within 25 feet of the Volkswagen instinct commanded me to stop. There was some kind of danger looming nearby. I had no idea what it was though, but nevertheless I instinctively knew it was there. Naturally, I had to investigate however caution was the rule of thumb.

I stood on my hind legs and craned my neck kind of like a grizzly bear standing his ground. I sniffed the air and tuned in to any sound therein.

Lo and behold, a man perhaps in his mid-60s was inside the Volkswagen. He appeared extremely emaciated and had horrible looking blood sores throughout the parts of his body that I

could see. Although I couldn't see his hips or lower extremities logic dictated that they were in bad shape too.

As soon as the man took notice of me he opened his mouth and then tried to speak. My intent had suddenly changed. Because the man looked like he was on the verge of dying I found it necessary to approach him and hear what he had to say to me; perhaps it was a doomsday-like warning to me.

I cautiously continued my approach to the Volkswagen keeping my eyes and ears attuned to my surroundings. Then, I leaped into the Volkswagen landing beside what appeared to be a man who'd been struck by a horrible plague.

It was too late for me to escape. I was either infected or not, or perhaps my immune system prevented any adverse medical effects on my body.

"Kitty, please listen to what I have to say, it is extremely important! My name is Dr. Walter Conrad I'm a physician and scientist at the Centers for Disease Control."

This man sounded funny. He had a very strange accent, like a southerner or something of the sort. Instantly, I felt suspicion, maybe he was a foreign spy or an alien from another planet. Having no control over my immediate response I winced in disgust and then pulled my head back, like I'd just seen something awfully disgusting.

"Kitty, please don't be offended by my accent. I'm not a hostile foreigner, nor am I an alien from outer space. I'm an American from Atlanta, Georgia. Do you understand why I 'speak funny'?"

"Oh, sorry Doctor, you had me worried for a while. Okay, you're legit. Now, please continue with what you were saying, I'm all ears."

"Listen, the entire world has been hit by a new, more deadly form of the Ebola virus scientists have labelled it Ebola X."

"Why has it been labelled Ebola X?"

"The 'X' stands for the destruction of our planet's inhabitants. Kitty, Ebola X has managed to spread throughout the whole world, worse yet it has also struck the animal world, even factory farmed animals.

Tens of billions of land animals have already died and its worse for the birds. Regarding the latter it struck pigeons first then spread to city birds and seagulls. Lastly, the migratory birds were hit. The latter helped to spread this deadly nemesis to other birds and animals in far off places.

Ebola X most often but not always kills its human host within 2 or 3 days. For animals, it depends on the particular species and overall health of the individual.

Kitty, where have you been for the past week?"

"Huh, I mean, I slept for several hours and then awakened. As for the past week I saw and heard nothing about Ebola X."

"Wait a minute! I know who you are, you're the killer cat. Don't worry the rule of law within and amongst nations no longer exists. Almost all the humans have died, and for the most part the ones that are still alive are like me, awaiting death. Individuals who have natural immunity to Ebola X are extremely rare, perhaps one in every several or many millions.

Your legal name is Citizen Cat, right?"

"Yes, Dr. Conrad, that's my name."

"Were you in The Canadian Space Center?"

"Yes, I was,"

"Citizen, actually, I was coming here. This is a secret base. I'd heard that they had special medicines and vaccines for these kinds of things."

"Dr. Conrad, I don't think they have either. But anyway, how did you get infected? I mean, being a specialist in this field, didn't you follow standard protocol?"

"Yes, I did, and so did others like me. Unfortunately, Ebola X had a characteristic that no other virus that I know does; it eats its way through the material of the biohazard suit.

Citizen, I'm not going to make it. As you can see, I'm getting sicker by the minute. Listen, I suspect that you slept for an entire week. Perhaps you were drugged or maybe your body destroyed the virus during your sleep state. That's why you apparently slept for an entire week."

"Wait, Dr. Conrad, I need to know exactly where I am. I want to go back to Montreal. And, how's Montreal?"

"If you go there you'll see countless rotting dead bodies strewn across the entire city and boroughs. And one more thing, stay clear of the blow flies and maggots, and anything else that looks creepy in or near the dead bodies.

Oh, before I forget, some persons, and this also includes animals and birds, go crazy following infection. And watch out for ferocious dogs, raccoons, rats, and whatever.

(Pointing to his left) he said, "Citizen, walk in that direction for 6 hours. This will get you to the Greater Metropolitan area of Montreal. I have a feeling you're not from Quebec. You sound very Anglophone, like you're from an English province."

"Dr. Conrad, you're absolutely right, I'm from Belmont, Ontario. And to tell you the truth I really miss it. I wish I could go back and see my childhood mansion and my beloved friend Randy, he's an incredible squirrel."

Dr. Conrad's tongue dangled to the side and then he closed his eyes. I didn't have to check his pulse to know that he had

just died. I lowered my head as a sign of respect, keeping it in that position for several minutes.

Upon raising my head I studied my surroundings very carefully. The best option was to do what Dr. Conrad had said. I had no reason to doubt his sincerity.

I leaped out of the Volkswagen and then began my long trek to Montreal. The sun pounded me for the first 4 hours of my walk causing me to slow down significantly. Nevertheless, I continued walking. At the 7 hour mark I reached Cote Vertu Metro Station. During the final stretch of my walk to the metro station I began to see corpses scattered in just about every place. Many of the corpses had already had their skin and flesh eaten away, others were relatively fresh, and to tell you the truth some of the bodies were those of persons still dying, but they were well beyond repair. In this kind of a torrential situation a person barely has enough time to care about one particular body let alone a stockpile of them.

Then, I took notice of countless dead birds, many of them had fallen to their deaths, too weak to continue flying, others were perched on trees, a third category were on the ground perhaps foraging for food or doing something else.

Vehicles were frozen in place most of them had dried or semi-dried blood splotches and stains on the interior and exterior. I couldn't but help ponder about the horrible chaos that ensued. Thank goodness I saw this particular metro station, I was now able to direct myself due south to Westmount and then east to the downtown core of Montreal.

But really, I couldn't ignore one important fact, many of the dead humans appeared to have been violently killed, some of them killing others, no doubt. There was an ominous aura in the air. I suspected that many humans and animals had gone crazy before dying.

For the time being, I could hear nothing but the rustling of leaves on trees thankfully a light breeze added some semblance of life in the area. Ebola X can never be harmful to plants otherwise most of the trees would've begun to or would've died already.

I was careful not to step on any of the corpses, and certainly to stay clear of any blood, blow flies, and maggots. Just in case, I didn't want to be infected with yet another mutated strain of Ebola. I lucked out the first time, and I surely wasn't going to gamble on my life this time.

After much walking I made it to Vendome Metro Station before deciding to take a long rest. It was strange to be the only person walking around.

I studied the area intently, noticing a large beautiful tree nearby I crossed Maisonneuve Boulevard. Following a brief

pause I leaped unto the tree scaling it high until reaching a large tree branch. I wasn't taking any chances. I didn't know what to expect at nightfall.

I closed my eyes, instantly falling into a deep sleep. A few hours later I was awakened by the roaring and grumbling voices of humans fast approaching, they were walking through area. I crouched down in order to stay hidden. Shockingly, the people that I saw looked like zombies. Previously, I never believed in 'monster people', but after seeing these creatures with my own 2 eyes I now did. They'd been infected with the Ebola X virus, and would die very soon. Under the circumstances, it was safe to assume they were extremely dangerous.

Individuals, pairs and clusters of zombies walked passed my tree without giving me any notice. Then, I saw something quite shocking. A man and a woman began to howl like werewolves, turning to face the nearest person. They ran to him and then launched a horrific attack. The unsuspecting victim went down really fast. Thereafter, each of the attackers reached for a nearby stone then began to smash the victim's head. Following this, they smashed other parts of his body. When all was done, they continued walking.

I almost lost my balance in all the confusion. My micro movement caused one of the attackers, a woman, to direct her gaze in my direction. I quickly curled up into a ball, even closing my eyes tightly.

I used my incredible feline hearing and sense of smell to determine the location of the woman. She stood in her place, not moving for a whole minute. Being a predatory animal myself I knew to stay still, and to breathe quietly through my nose.

After the couple left the area I began to terrorizing roars and screams. But this time many more persons were involved, it sounded like they were fighting each other. I figured they were one of the last remnants of humans who were alive in Canada; though I understood that I could be wrong. And there were certainly mentally ferocious animals too. Thankfully, it looked like time was on my side and against the zombies. They were dying off. I had to weather the storm, holding out for perhaps a couple, or 3 days at the most.

Every single zombie appeared sickly and gross, blood seeping from different parts of their bodies, and a pungent smell that could scatter even the toughest of hogs or skunks.

I waited a total of 3 hours before deciding to descend to the ground. Being on the west side meant that I had a long walk ahead of me. I made certain to walk on the side of the sidewalk closest to the grass, this way I could leap into hiding in a moment's notice.

As soon as I reached Westmount Park I craned my neck and then sniffed the air intently. I smelled many dead humans and animals, but there were live animals therein too. Not satisfied, I stood on my hind legs like a giant grizzly bear and then raised my head as high as I could, I sniffed the air with every ounce of strength I had. When I finished my investigation I deduced that there was a live monkey and a squirrel in the park.

Suddenly, I felt a rush of loneliness run through my entire body. There was only one thing to do, find the monkey and the squirrel then befriend them.

I chose to walk through a pre-treaded path leading to a beautiful pond. The ducks therein had already died off. But I wasn't interested in them I had more important business on my mind. I cropped up my ears to hear any movement or speech then continued to walk until I reached the area near the public restrooms. As I studied my immediate surroundings intently someone called out to me.

"Hey, kitty, are you feeling well? Or are you Ebola X positive?"

As soon as I heard the first word I meowed loudly and was catapulted off of the ground, perhaps 5 or 6 feet. The speaker caught me off guard.

Turning to see who was speaking to me I caught sight of a monkey perched atop a tree. He was grinning at me, thankfully without baring his canines. Then, he waved at me. I didn't move. Following my inaction the monkey waved me over to him once more.

I sniffed the monkey studying him intently. I wanted to determine if he was healthy or sick. To tell you the truth, I simply wasn't sure. I was receiving mixed signals, but then, I was so desperate for a friend, whatever suspicions I had were promptly regressed deep into my psyche.

It was time to see if the monkey had good or evil intentions. I noticed that the monkey's patience was running out. He appeared to be genuinely friendly. Suddenly, he descended from the tree and then hopped and skipped towards me.

Instinctively, I arched my back, hissed, bared my teeth and extended my claws. I'd never seen a real live monkey before.

As soon as the monkey was within a foot of me he extended his right hand in an act of kindness. I slowly extended my right paw. We shook hand and paw. As soon as we retracted our appendages the monkey began to converse with me.

"Hey kitty, I'm very happy to see you. You don't know what it's like to see people all around you sickly and dying. Not to mention their bizarre and often monster-like behaviour.

And oh, by the way, my name is Chip Walker. I was born in Vancouver. My parents came here a couple of years ago; my mother was born in Belgium, my father was born in Germany.

Kitty, I think it would be logical if you and I became best friends in the whole world to each other. We have no one else. We must stay together at all times. Do you agree with me? And that's not all we can watch each other's back, until the ugly zombies all die out. Following their deaths the blow flies and maggots will eventually die off too. They need food like everyone else. Sooner or later nature will clear these corpses away."

"Chip, my name is Citizen Cat. I guess that's a given, I'm the killer cat, wanted in all Canadian Provinces, and hailed as one of the worst serial killers in our history. I guess it doesn't matter now, the rule of law and order has disappeared. Gold, silver, and money are now worthless. The only articles that are of use are food items, water, shelter, safety, and decent companionship."

Suddenly, we heard the treading of feet nearby; whoever it was, he or she was fast approaching us.

(Pointing to his right) he said, "Quickly, Citizen, you must scale that tree over there, go to the highest branch and then curl up into a ball. Don't move or say a word, and don't forget to breathe through your nose."

We scaled the tree and then quietly perched on a branch that was roughly 50 feet high. Lo and behold 6 zombies walked through our area, howling and searching for something. Then, they sniffed the air. One of them focused his gaze upon us; the others followed.

"Citizen, they know we're. We must descend from the tree and then run for our lives. Please, don't go anywhere until I've laid out a game-plan. I live in this part of town so I know what I'm talking about.

We must run through the soccer field. Now, I know for a fact that there will be zombies therein. It's either the soccer field or we run up steep hills. By the time we reach the top of any one of those hills we'll be exhausted. We can't be in that state, not when there are zombies everywhere."

"Wait a minute, Chip. Why do the zombies only come out at night?"

"Citizen, their eyes and skin are sensitive to sunlight. However, I must inform you that not all zombies refuse to come out during the day. You and I must be able to weather the storm. If you happen to run faster than me don't wait up. Another thing, the moment you take notice of a zombie in the soccer field you and I must split up. Keep running east on Maisonneuve Boulevard until you reach Westmount Square. Descend the steps and then enter through the doors. Go to the restrooms on your right. You'll have to enter through a pair of black-coloured doors they're pretty hard to open. Once you're in the restroom

hide and wait for me. If I beat you there, I'll do the same thing, okay?"

I followed Chip down the tree. By the time we were on the ground the original zombies and many more had begun to take interest in us. They roared and screamed literally signalling an alarm call. A moment later, we heard many other zombies roaring and screaming. It was at that moment I suspected many of the zombies weren't going to die off as fast as Chip and I presumed. Perhaps, they'd built up partial immunity to the Ebola X virus, but only after considerable damage to their bodies and brains.

We hurried to the soccer field, all our senses highly attuned to our surroundings and ready to run like crazy. As soon as Chip and I entered the soccer field we heard a horrendous onslaught of shrieks, roars, and screams, noticeably worse than before. Unfortunately, we hadn't planned on running through a maze with so many zombies. We expected them to be scattered in various parts of the soccer field.

Thankfully, Chip and I had good night vision. We glanced at each other, Chip spoke to me, "Citizen, what the hell are we supposed to do? There are so many zombies, and look, they're fast approaching us. C'mon, Citizen, you're a cat. Use your incredible feline genius to find a way out of this horror story, before it's too late."

I did a 360 degree turn, like a live carousel, studying the entire area thoroughly but quickly.

"Chip, cutting through the soccer field is out of the question. We'll be sitting ducks. Playing the part of a prey animal, I surmised it would be best to run up a very steep hill or two, with the hopeful expectation that there will be no zombies in the place where we pass out from exhaustion. Remember, capture would certainly result in being eaten alive, me first because cats are much cuter and attractive than monkeys."

We turned to our left and then ran through the north end of the park. Meanwhile, we could hear the screams and treading of a multitude of feet. I was under the assumption that zombies lacked endurance. As soon as we passed the peripheral of the park we crossed Sherbrooke Avenue then ran up a very steep hill as fast as we could.

Believe me, it was one hell of a workout even for a very cute, stream-lined athletic cat like me. Chip's breathing became quite laborious he lagged behind in the process.

"Chip, listen, please look behind you, my hunch was right. Zombies don't have good endurance."

As soon as I finished my statement Chip collapsed onto the ground, thankfully, we'd made it far up the first hill. The zombies had actually stopped their chase just beyond the bottom

of the hill. They were staring at us with their evil, wicked, bloodshot eyes.

But just as I thought that the coast was clear, the zombies shifted their gaze to Chip. Instinctively, they knew that this could be an easy 'kill and meal deal'. The stronger zombies amongst them attempted to speed-walk up the hill, with the intent of reaching Chip. I tried in desperation to wake him up but to no avail.

"Chip, please, if there was any time in your life when you had to get on your feet and run, it's right now! The zombies are approaching us with strong resolve."

I feared that Chip wouldn't be able to get on his feet and run. With no other options, I heftily scooped him off of the ground and then carried him on my back. I speed-walked away, like a donkey carrying a heavy load. Carrying Chip blocked my ability to turn my head to see where the approaching zombies were. Therefore, I was forced to use my auditory and olfactory senses to compensate.

As soon as I cleared the second steep hill I almost collapsed from what I saw; it was another steep hill. I knew that there was no chance of scaling another hill while Chip was on my back. The good news was, the scent and sounds of the zombies had faded away allowing me to gently place Chip onto the ground. Believe me I was delighted to see the zombies end their chase.

Almost immediately afterward, I crossed the street and then started to puke my brains out. I'm certain all of the contents in my stomach had been catapulted onto the ground. I walked away from the puddle of puke, opened my shoulder bag and then removed a pack of breath mints. I yanked off 3 pieces, then put them in my mouth and chewed on them. I had no time to suck on them. I put the remainder of the pack of breath mints back into my shoulder bag.

Following several few minutes of heavy panting I was able to determine that there were no imminent dangers in the area, I dragged Chip to a nearby tree then mustered much of my remaining strength to carry him for an entire block and a half. I stopped beside a beautiful tree located at the peripheral of a very nice, spacious old-style mansion. Without delay, I went into 'leopard mode' carrying Chip to a high-level branch and then securing his body on it, making sure that there was no chance of him falling onto the ground.

I slithered to another branch on the same tree literally collapsing then losing consciousness. I awakened the following day at 3:00 P.M.

I rubbed my glassy eyes and then fixed my gaze upon Chip. He was still in the same spot.

I chose to carefully drag Chip off of the branch and then descended to the ground, holding him tightly with my powerful canines. As soon as we reached the ground I sensed that something was terribly wrong.

I noticed that Chip had blood seeping from at least a dozen different parts of his body. In spite of this, he was mumbling about something. I had to investigate.

"Chip, what's going on here? Are you all right?"

"Citizen, I'm not going to make it. I think I have the Ebola X virus. Some people don't manifest any symptoms until days or up to a couple of weeks following infection. I'm burning up inside, and I'm having a hard time breathing. Please stand at least 25 feet from me and if I die don't approach me. Say what you must from a safe distance.

Citizen, I love you so dearly. Please, don't forget me. I don't want you to wait up for me. Go to the downtown core. I was told there are more survivors there. Also, there's an underground group called 'The Surviving Few' who have a secret hiding place to live in.

Listen carefully zombies can smell their own kind and the dying from a good distance. There are probably zombies in the vicinity, and they don't have to scale a hill. Please get out of here right now!"

I stayed clear of Chip as instructed, but felt a strong urge to approach him. I knew better though. But I was determined to get a few words in before I left.

"Chip, I also love you so much. That's not all, I think you're a real life Canadian hero, and thank you ever so dearly for the precious information, I shall never forget you."

Chip's head flopped over, and then his tongue dangled to the side. He started to froth at the mouth, his nose and ears were now bleeding; finally, his eyes closed for good. I knew it was all over. What a sad way to end your stay on this planet.

Knowing the possible danger but not caring, I embraced Chip with all my might, holding my position for at least one minute. When all was done I rose to 'my feet' I walked to the other side of the street, and stayed there for an hour before realizing that I just couldn't leave my pal Chip.

I roared, hissed, and screamed, unable to control my emotions. I stayed in the area for 3 whole days, not eating or drinking, or even urinating or defecating.

Following my 3 days, I entered the nearest yard, where I proceeded to relieve myself. I had a giant load of fecal matter and urine to dispose of.

As soon as I finished doing my thing I took one last look at Chip before heading off. I was lucky the zombies didn't

return. Being as it was, my primary goal was to get to the downtown core. People like me who had complete immunity to Ebola X were to become my new brethren and sisters. I couldn't be alone, it would've been suicidal.

I chose to stay on the mountain rather than descend to Sherbrooke Avenue. The mountain was for the time being, a place where I was safe from zombie.

Throughout my walk I had an eerie feeling of being watched. Furthermore, I smelled live squirrel, constantly nearby despite my continuing to walk. In fact, it was the exact scent that I smelled before entering Westmount Park. What's going on here? I said to myself. Was there someone actually trailing me, or was I losing my mind? Being all alone and considering what had happened to me, going mad appeared to be a state I was heading to.

Upon reaching Atwater Street I noticed that the sun was descending; I had to stay alert though. Although I heard zombies here and there these particular pockets of individuals and tiny groups were a safe distance away and likely on their last stretch of being alive.

I turned south on Atwater Street until I reached Maisonneuve Boulevard, thereafter I headed due east. This part of town was more dangerous than the hill. I could hear zombies nearby, some of them fighting to the death inside apartments and business establishments. The police had literally been erased from existence. Our military was nowhere to be seen, likely erased too.

When I reached the intersection of Maisonneuve Boulevard and Fort Street I heard a zombie child's voice. Instantly, I stopped then turned to my right tracking the origin of the voice.

As soon as I made contact with the child he screamed his head off, staring at me with his cruel bloodshot eyes. Soon zombies began to converge upon the area. Till now they were oblivious of my presence. The situation worsened quite rapidly, soon dozens of zombies appeared out of nowhere. In effect, they were trying to block my way. Worse yet, I heard zombies behind me too. They too were heading to the middle of the street.

This entire group of zombies move a lot slower than other zombies, no doubt, they were near death's door.

I crouched down and then sprinted due east as fast as I could, literally knocking down 3 zombies in the process. But as I was descending to the ground one particular zombie was able to grab hold of my right hind-leg. He yanked me towards his chest, catching me off guard, causing me to be catapulted into his chest; he opened his mouth, drooling on my head in the process. I was so terrified there was nothing to do but survive. I

smacked him on the head using both paws, and repeating this action over and over again

Gushes of blood began to ooze out of the areas that I struck. Now, I had zombie blood on my face and chest. I smacked the zombie 4 additional times, causing him to fall hitting the back of his head and back smack onto the ground. I heard a powerful thud and then the zombie's head split open. Now, blood was streaming from his brain. I had no time to admire the gooey red stuff the other zombies were converging upon me. I leaped out of harms' way and then sprinted all the way to the corner of Maisonneuve Boulevard and Stanley Street. Turning back to see where my pursuers were I was delighted that they'd given up on the chase.

I headed due south on Stanley Street until I reached the YMCA. I studied the interior of the ground floor from the sidewalk, not wanting to take any chances being cornered by zombies. It was bad enough that I still had stained and drying zombie blood plastered on my face and chest.

Seeing that the coast was clear I cautiously entered the YMCA through the main entrance, following the directional signs to the showers. Thankfully, I only saw a few scattered corpses. The flesh had already been eaten away; someone or something had already begun to gnaw on the bones of the dead bodies. That was all the better; the sooner the bodies disappeared the better for me. Dead bodies carry potential pathogens and other immunological and medical problems unrelated to Ebola X. I likely didn't have immunity to many of these viruses and bacteriological agents.

Upon entering the shower room I headed to the nearest shower stall. I washed my entire body with soap, rinsed it off with water, and then repeated the process using shampoo. When all was done, I dried up; coming out of the shower as clean as a whistle. I headed back to Stanley Street.

I walked south on Stanley Street. There were cars scattered throughout the area. A parking lot nearby was a perfect reminder of the, perhaps permanent loss of motorized vehicle technology to our beloved planet.

All of the dead bodies had had their flesh eaten away. But one particular person interested me the most. As soon as I crossed Sainte Catherine Street I approached the body stopping just inches away from it.

The person had been a policeman, and I was shocked to see that even in the last moments of his life he was clutching a jaywalking ticket. Beside him was a dead puppy, likely a Beagle. It appeared that the Beagle puppy was getting a ticket for jaywalking. Well, laws against jaywalking were now obsolete. Come to think of it I could do anything that I wanted to, rob a

bank, steal a car, or vandalize property. But no, I wasn't going to do that, I couldn't do that, ever.

I looked back because something caught my attention. There was a button still dangling on the policeman's sternum it read Libre Negro. I wondered what it meant. I'd seen other police officers and public transportation workers wearing these buttons, furthermore, I'd seen numerous stickers on police cars, fire trucks, ambulances, and inside the city metro trains, reading the same phrase. But I soon lost my attention regarding this matter.

I almost broke down. The stress and sadness of it all took a very heavy toll on me. Suddenly, I lost all hope in myself and in life, and in the planet Earth too. What was I thinking; Chip told me about a heroic group called The Surviving Few. Like, they'd suddenly save what was left of the world, or they'd bring things back to what they once were, fat chance, indeed.

No, there was no way around it, our planet's time was almost up, or perhaps it would survive but the living beings therein wouldn't. Maybe, we'd end up extinct like the dinosaurs. If that was the case, then who would replace us, the insects or maybe other tiny creatures?

I sat down on the sidewalk beside what used to be a parking lot. I lied down on my back, glancing around every-so-often just in case a zombie tried to sneak up on me.

I laid there for roughly 30 minutes. Suddenly, I was abruptly catapulted into the air. I was certain that someone was sneaking up on me. Normally, that's the action of a predatory animal stalking a particular prey.

Upon landing unto the sidewalk I arched my back, bared my canines, and extended my claws. Fearing my response wasn't enough of a deterrent I hissed and roared with extreme ferocity.

"Citizen, it's me, Randy!"

"Huh, who ... what, no way in hell, it can't be you!"

"Yes, it's me. I followed the story about you, and I've done a lot of snooping around, that's how I found you."

"By golly, it is you! Randy, how are you, and umm, I'm so incredibly glad to see you."

"Well, Citizen, aren't you going to give your best friend in the whole world a big hug and a kiss on each cheek?"

Without saying a word I ran to Randy, almost knocking him onto the ground but holding him up at the last second. We then embraced each other tightly and each of us kissed the other on both cheeks. We stayed close to each other for roughly a minute in total silence, and then we each took a step back.

"Randy, c'mon tell me the truth. Exactly when did you initially spot me?"

"Citizen, well, umm, roughly 50 yards before you entered Westmount Park. I didn't approach you because I was hiding, and also because I wasn't sure if you were infected with the Ebola X virus. Thankfully, I know for a fact that you and I are okay. If a person hasn't manifested any pronounced symptoms of the virus by now it means that he or she has complete immunity.

That's not all Citizen almost all of the people who manifested symptoms have died. A scant few are at death's door. We just need to wait it out a little more. Anyway, I can faintly hear a few straggler zombies who just don't want to give up and die; the truth is it would be better for them.

It's dark now, and as such, I recommend that we leave this area and head straight to the secret hideout of The Surviving Few. Therein is a colony of healthy persons. Allow me to be the first person to break the good news to you, the colony is made up solely of animals, it looks like humanity is on its way out, yeah! Whatever this Ebola X virus is it infects without discrimination, however, humans don't seem to have the same level of immunity or resilience to it as we animals do.

Citizen, we have to continue walking due east until we reach the Jacques Cartier Bridge. Prior to crossing the bridge we have to make sure that a trap hasn't been set for us. Understand that if there are zombies hiding behind us and others at the south end of the bridge we will be easy targets, the zombies are able to block off the bridge from the either the northern entry point or the southern exit point we will be trapped. The only way out of the predicament would be to leap into the Saint Laurence River. And oh gosh would that be terrifying! I don't think either of us could survive that kind of trauma."

I nodded my head, signifying agreement. Thereafter, we began our long trek eastbound. It took us roughly an hour to reach the Jacque Cartier Bridge.

"Citizen, you and I need to be aware of our surroundings at all times until we reach the colony."

Randy and I used our keen senses to the best of our ability. Thankfully, there were no zombies in the area. Now, we were ready to begin crossing the bridge. At no time would we be able to doze off even for a moment. It could lead to disaster.

Even without zombies, crossing the Jacque Cartier Bridge was a terrifying experience. There were many vehicles on the bridge dried blood was a very common sight. But the sheer height of the bridge and the fact that it was over water really gave us the creeps.

"Randy, I feel like running across the bridge. What do you think?"

"No, we must cross the bridge at a walking pace otherwise we may inadvertently run into a bunch of zombies. Although almost all of them have died, we must be patient before lowering our guard. Soon, there will be no human or animal Zombies anywhere on this planet."

Shortly thereafter, we were within 50 yards of the southern exit point of the Jacques Cartier Bridge. Randy and I focused our attention on the immediate surrounding area using our senses to lookout for any kind of movement or zombie scent.

Thank goodness, we were able to cross the bridge without incident. As we continued walking to the colony we spotted a lone, freshly deceased zombie. The other zombies were worn down to the bone. As I continued walking it dawned upon me that most of the zombies were stark naked, not only here but practically everywhere. Where were their clothes? I wondered. I didn't convey my suspicions to Randy I figured he was already exhausted as is, why add more misery to his life.

But as we continued to walk southbound there was one thing I felt, Randy and I could give our opinions about.

"Randy, umm, what do the word Libre Negro mean? You know the ones that are plastered in countless places.

"Umm, Citizen, I think it's umm, it's written in Italian, or maybe Spanish, or wait a minute, umm ... Portuguese?"

"Randy, maybe it's written in Latin, or no, in Greek?"

"Citizen, come to think of it I don't think it's written in a foreign language, I mean, umm, it's written in Canadian script, so maybe it's a typo of sorts."

"Voila, Randy, I know what it means! Randy, you're a genius Libre Negro is in fact a typo. What the printers meant to write is 'Liberate Negro'. Wow, it goes to show you, two brains are a hundred times better than one brain."

We continued walking until we reached a beautiful park. It wasn't large by provincial or federal standards but considering we were literally surrounded by urban development it was nice.

"Randy, what's the name of this park?"

"Citizen, this is Jean Drapeau Park. This will be our new home for however long it takes for animal kind to rebuild a relatively normal life on this planet."

We continued walking until we reached a large open field. Thereafter, Randy scanned the area very intently, making sure that absolutely no enemies were nearby. As soon as he deduced that the coast was clear he led the way, through the open field and then deep into the wooded area. Shortly thereafter we came across a group of animals that appeared to be roaming around. But in actuality they weren't doing this.

"Fellows, I want to introduce to you my beloved best friend in the whole world, Citizen Cat. And I'm very pleased to say

that he is one of us, totally immune from the horrors of the Ebola X virus.

(Glancing over at me he said) Citizen, soon we'll be entering the secret underground facility."

"Huh, I don't understand, Randy, why do we have to enter a secret underground facility? It's not like we have to run away from a nuclear holocaust or something of the sort."

Nobody answered my question they stood there with their mouths shut. Instead, the animals turned and then walked to an area that was deeper in the woods. A raccoon opened a secret door leading to an underground passage. I was excited at the prospect of seeing the facility. But still, the question of 'why' was still buzzing in my head.

As soon as we entered the secret door one of the animals closed it behind us. Then, Randy explained to me why we needed to have a secret facility.

"Citizen, didn't you notice something unusual about the corpses?"

"Huh, Randy, please be more specific. Your question is too broad."

"Citizen, didn't you ponder about why almost all of the corpses were in the nude?"

"Randy, you know something I did ponder about this unusual occurrence; I'm certain no healthy person in his or her mind would've even touched the clothing of an infected person, let alone take them.

But you know how it is, Randy, we've all been under an incredibly amount of stress, having to endure it in a relatively short period of time. Each one of us has been through a series of nightmares. I brushed off my suspicions because I had more imminent problems to deal with."

"Citizen, we're presently being invaded by aliens, umm, aliens from another Galaxy. They call themselves The Gray Masters. Their name says it all. Anyway, they've already landed on our planet but in limited numbers. Amongst their people is a specially designed cleanup crew. Their intent is to rid this entire planet of the 'filth', that's us, if you don't know it. Even to the point of killing off blow flies and maggots everywhere, and many insect species too. In the following days, you'll notice that many pest-like insects will simply disappear.

The Surviving Few expect a massive full-scale invasion of our planet very soon. Till now, there have been occasional sightings of their spaceships, in the sky or in semi-remote regions in Canada and other large countries. But when the last zombie dies our skies will likely be filled with their spaceships."

"Randy, wait a minute! Aren't we going to put up some kind of a fight? I mean, we're not humans, we know how to play the predator and prey game. We must go on the offensive or be subjected to slavery and/or torture and macro genocide. And one more thing, The Gray Masters may consider us food. In that case we can't be taken alive, under any circumstances whatsoever. I don't think they'll enslave us, if they wanted to do that they wouldn't have annihilated so many of us."

As soon as we entered what I was told was a facility to my disappointment it was only be quite large and spacious cave-like room, no doubt built by numerous burrowing animals. At the moment, there were 20 animals therein.

Is this all we have? I asked myself. We won't survive too long with only this many persons. Naturally, I had a few important questions to ask.

"Randy, how can we even survive with only this many defenders?"

"Oh, no, Citizen, there are other survivors sorry to have deceived you earlier. I made it sound like there were only a few of us, but I hope you understand I had to make absolutely certain that you could be trusted. This is a special hideout away from the hustle and bustle of urban life. Most of our hideouts are in urban areas. We'll fill you in on the whereabouts of the other hideouts, nothing on paper of course. You must memorize their locations by heart just in case The Gray Masters get hold of you."

"Huh, what do you mean by that?"

An opossum abruptly entered our conversation.

"Citizen, don't you know what's really going on here? Randy, c'mon, why haven't you told Citizen the whole truth yet?"

I turned to Randy then said, "Randy, I thought that you and I were best friends in the whole world to each other. How could you keep a humungous secret from me?"

"Citizen, I was going to tell you, I promise, really. I mean, c'mon, I approached you, you didn't approach me, remember. If I didn't want you to be part of our resistance I would've stayed clear of you, right?"

"Okay, sorry, Randy. Please, allow me to converse with the other ... wait a minute. What are you talking about, resistance?"

"Listen, guys, before Citizen is formally introduced to you let me take him for a long walk. I'll fill him in on everything that's happening, okay?" asked Randy.

The congregation nodded their heads in approval. I pointed to the exit signifying that I wanted to begin our walk immediately. We exited our hideout and then began our walk through the park. The walk itself was quite enjoyable. There was

no hustle and bustle but every-so-often we saw someone patrolling the area.

"Citizen, we have insider information pertaining to the upcoming massive attack by The Gray Masters. Insertion of the Ebola X virus on Planet Earth, the confiscation of clothing, and the killing off of blow flies and maggots included the first wave of attack on Earth. The second wave involves a full-scale military assault on the survivors of the Ebola X virus and the tiny creatures herein, but with limited infrastructure damage. Perhaps they'll use much of the remaining infrastructure for their own benefit. It's apparent they want to colonize our entire planet."

"Randy, I was already told about the full-scale invasion now tell me something, how do you suppose we can put up any kind of a formidable offense, or defence for that matter? I know we have many brave warriors out there, but instinct tells me it won't be enough, really."

Randy didn't say anything more for the duration of our walk. But as soon as we returned to the facility he spoke to the people therein, but by then there were only 4 persons to speak to.

Randy motioned to a skunk that had just finished drinking some water out of a bowl. The skunk looked up at Randy, and then approached us with complete confidence.

"Citizen, my name is Robert Skunk. I'll tell you what needs to be done. Lie down I want you to be comfortable."

Randy walked to the other end of the facility and then lied down. He closed his eyes instantly falling asleep.

"Listen, the full scale invasion of our planet will most likely occur within the next 24 hours. Please don't ask me how I know; it's a matter of security. We have a game plan that'll allow us to annihilate The Gray Masters.

We've rounded up 7 rabid and sickly animals including 2 dogs, a cat, 3 raccoons, and the champion of them all an adult male sewer rat. We've already notified surviving migrating birds to spread the message of our counteroffensive measures to other animals around the world. The resistance therein will use the same method of mass attack. I'm confident The Gray Masters have absolutely no immunity to rabies and the other communicable diseases we'll throw at them. Our sources tell us that The Gray Masters have concentrated their destruction plans on humanity. Considering that humans held the most strength in this world it was the logical thing to do. Thank goodness, in this case, logic will lead to their utter annihilation.

We shall do to them as they have done to us. We shall infect them, and in the process have absolutely no mercy upon any of them, and we shall be brutal and ruthless in the process.

Furthermore, if we have the capability to inflict cruelty and sadism upon them, we shall do so. It is either us or them, and we are fighting for the planet Earth. They came here looking for serious trouble, now we will give them exactly what they were looking for and a lot more.

Somehow, I was under the impression that Robert and the other animals in the facility wanted me to make a special sacrifice on behalf of the animal kingdom and the planet Earth. Soon, I'd realize that my hunch was correct.

Three days passed without incident; I was stunned, having been told it would've been 2 days earlier. But as I pondered about what I was told it dawned upon me that there may have been spies working for The Gray Masters. Perhaps that's why I was given the incorrect date of the onslaught.

At exactly noon something unusual happened, I heard air raid sirens sounding the alarm from different locations in and around the greater metropolitan area of Montreal. Something was going on, something very dangerous, indeed.

At the time I and 5 other persons were in the facility. Within a few minutes the number had swelled to 100 persons. I was shocked, stunned, and flabbergasted the full-scale invasion had begun. Soon thereafter, I began to hear laser-like sounds, no doubt emanating from the numerous spaceships engulfing our skies. On this plain we were totally defenceless. We had to be patient and confident, never losing site of the idea of absolute victory, to defend the Planet Earth and to completely annihilate The Gray Masters.

But no sooner had I begun to ponder about our primary objectives the laser-like sounds hit home. Now, I was hearing explosions from within Jean Drapeau Park. We were literally being destroyed. With no time to lose I ran out to see the devastating effects of the onslaught. Horrible, indeed, I could see clouds of smoke in at least a half a dozen locations within the downtown area alone. Worse yet, the Jacques Cartier Bridge had been destroyed to the point of never being used again. These aliens had a sophisticated and well-established game plan. We had to strike them very soon or else we'd have no chance of living in this world.

I ran around like a headless chicken, searching for someone who could direct me to the rabid, sickly animals. Following 10 minutes of exhaustive running and worrying I heard a voice calling out to me.

"Citizen, come here, it's me, Robert!"

Wow, how unusual, here I was, a cat, glad to see a skunk. The world had already been altered a great deal.

Robert was roughly 30 yards north of me. I ran to him as fast as I could. As soon as I was within a foot of him I stopped, panting like crazy but attentive to what he had to say.

"Citizen, please follow me! The 7 rabid, sickly animals are waiting anxiously to meet you. Please, don't ask me any questions on the way. There's simply no time to waste."

I followed Robert deep into partially wooded roughly 50 yards away. As soon as we were parallel to a beautiful pond Robert told me to stop.

Immediately, the 7 animals came out of a nearby hideout. They really looked sickly. My first instinct was to bolt. However, I held myself in check, because I understood that we had an important mission, worth more than all of our lives combined.

"Guys, this is Citizen Cat, hopefully he shall become the most incredible hero the Planet Earth has ever had. He will be known as a Cat from Canada; the cat that saved the world.

"Citizen, please bear in mind that what I'm about to ask you to endure is for the benefit of the entire animal kingdom that is left on Earth.

Each one of these 7 individuals must gently bite and scratch you. Your skin must be pierced and at least one drop of blood must be shed by you. Citizen, I'm sorry, but you must be the person who infects The Gray Masters.

We heard about your resolve escaping the law and changing your identity as needed. And later yet, you were exonerated. Can you do this for us, please?" asked Robert.

"Guys, c'mon, there's no time to waste. Please get to the point, right now!" I exclaimed.

"Okay, Citizen, following your infection you must hide out for a couple of days, in order to allow the infectious agents to spread throughout your entire body. You must be a true carrier but must not manifest any visible symptoms, otherwise, you will be killed outright and the mission will be a failure.

Citizen, the plan is for you to go to the downtown core of Montreal and to be conveniently captured by The Gray Masters. In effect, you'll be taken aboard one of their spaceships to be experimented on. As far as we know they're taking no prisoners and have no use for enslaving us. Are you in, or do you want to walk away?" asked Robert.

"I'm in now let the biting and the scratching begin!"

"Citizen, listen up, okay? Following the biting and scratching by each of the 7 sickly animals you must swim across the St. Laurence River. I know it'll be one hell of a tough and rugged swim but as you know the Jacques Cartier Bridge has been destroyed. When you reach the river bank on the other side leave the area as fast as you can and then walk due north to

Sherbrooke Avenue. Once there, head due east until you reach the Honoure' Beaugrand Metro Station. Thereafter, walk due south for a block and then head east until you arrive at the The Andre'-Laurendeau Park. Therein will be a humungous spaceship. You can't miss it.

Now, here's what you must do. Make it look like you've come across the spaceship by accident. Approach it and behave as though you're naive. The Gray Masters must never even suspect that you're a plant. Otherwise, they'll likely kill you on the spot, if you're lucky."

"Robert, what do you mean, if I'm lucky?"

The Gray Masters are colonizers. Do I need to say any more?"

"I got the message, Robert. What's supposed to happen next?"

"Citizen, the alien spaceships have incredibly sophisticated security systems. You'll be 'approached' by armed security personnel. You'll be apprehended and promptly taken inside the spaceship. If you're ready to take your chances, let's begin the process. Otherwise, forget about it."

One person after another bit and scratched me. Afterwards, I left the area and then headed to the Saint Laurence River.

Apparently, the roving spaceships in the sky didn't take any notice of me a lone cat posed no danger to The Gray Masters. Nevertheless, the airborne attacks did not abate.

I stood on the bank of the river for about 10 minutes before building up enough courage to dive in. The water was freezing. But considering the importance of my mission I had no time to ponder about the temperature of the river.

I swam like crazy, using every ounce of energy that I could muster up. It seemed like forever. Upon reaching the other side of the river, I collapsed outright. I must've been out cold for 4 or 5 hours. It was now late afternoon and for some unknown reason the airborne attacks had ended. I certainly wasn't complaining.

I stood up and then left the area heading due north to Sherbrooke Avenue. Looking around me I didn't see any corpses or live persons. The entire metropolitan area had been turned into a ghost town.

The only sound that I heard was the wind and the rustling of leaves on trees. Nonetheless, I made certain to walk on the side furthest away from the street this way I could leap out of harm's way in case a dangerous situation developed.

I continued to walk for the following 2 and a half hours until I reached the south exit of the Honoure' Beaugrand Metro Station. Thankfully, I'd memorized the directions perfectly.

A big part of me wanted to walk to the spaceship right there and then, but I remembered my directions. Across the street was a nice house. One of the windows was broken, thereby allowing me to leap through it and to stay inside for 2 days. I ate from the fridge and relieved myself in the back yard, making sure not to be seen by anyone, just in case.

Two days later I trekked towards my target. Shortly thereafter, I spotted the giant spaceship. I was so happy to be in the right place at the right time.

I stopped walking and then slithered underneath a Gray Ford pickup. I wanted to study the area well before I made my move.

I was underneath the Ford pickup for roughly 45 minutes. I only saw 3 persons during this time, they were all security personnel.

It was 6:00 P.M., time to be apprehended. I decided to walk parallel to the spaceship and to maintain my gaze in the opposite direction, making it appear as though I was oblivious to the presence of the spaceship. This was my plan, rather than make eye direct eye contact with the spaceship.

With the corner of my eye I noticed a group of Gray Masters fast approaching me. One of them pointed what appeared to be a weapon and then fired.

The next thing I remember is being cornered by an alien surgical team. There were roughly 2 dozen of them. 10 feet to my right was an operating table with straps and powerful overhead lights. Worse yet, the surrounding area consisted of a large circular window, behind which were numerous Gray Masters. I knew what this was, it was a classroom the gawkers behind the circular glass were students. In a nutshell, I was in an animal experimental facility. I was the 'subject' to be experimented on.

I didn't even try to escape, where would I run to if I could leave the area? As far as I knew the spaceship could've been miles up into the atmosphere, or in another part of Earth.

Randy, Robert, and the rest of the crew knew quite well what would happen to me following my capture. Nevertheless, they were still my brethren in arms, and the fact that they chose me to be the world's hero-in-arms was quite flattering.

Suddenly, the person who appeared to be in charge spoke to me, "Kitty, I'm the chief surgeon here. The Gray Masters you see hovering over the table are the very qualified surgical team, and the persons you see standing away from the table are interns. The Gray Masters gawking at you from behind the circular window are medical students. We need to know more about the Earthling specimens. We've already studied humans, now it's your turn."

"C'mon, Doctor, I mean, sir, guys, fellows, beloved friends, don't you know that I have feelings too? Your experiments will cause immense pain, agony, and torment upon me. What will you do when I scream in agony?"

The chief surgeon grinned at me and then at every single person in the experimenting room and the medical students. Soon, all of them were grinning.

Suddenly, the expression on his face drastically changed, changing into a fierce glare. His lifeless, almond-shaped black eyes, his hairless gray coloured skin, and his unusual scent only made matters worse.

"Kitty, we're not going to do anything that the Earthling humans haven't done to your brethren or other animal species. Of course, we can't use any pain killers that would offset the correct results of our experiments. As for you screaming, we'll block it off. You're not the first animal we've experimented on, and you certainly won't be the last."

"Wait a minute, considering I can't go anywhere anyway, I'd like to know about your plans to colonize our planet."

"Listen, it's no longer your planet. It's now ours for the taking. We've eradicated the entire human race now all we need to do is take in more specimens, for scientific purpose of course.

We're a lot more powerful and sophisticated than your peoples therefore; we have the inherent right to take this planet for our own selves in the manner we choose.

Earth's name will be changed, of course. I don't know what the new name will be, that's up to the political elite to decide. Now, I'm going to describe to you what the experiments will involve.

First, we must carefully remove both of your eyes then we must remove your eardrums. Thereafter, we must perform a prefrontal lobotomy. Following this, we must remove your genitals, skin you, and then open you up. Don't worry, I'm a certified surgeon. You can scream all you want to, we simply don't give a damn some of us may find it quite amusing and comical. Isn't this the attitude of many of your experimenters? So don't blame us, we're just like you Earthlings, but in a much stronger fashion."

"LEAVE ME ALONE! LET ME GO! I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU!" I shouted.

It was all an act; I clearly understood that the goal of infecting The Gray Masters was the best and only option. It was more important than my life and well-being. And come to think of it, even if I screamed my head off, sooner or later I'd pass out. And one more thing, the Earth's animals were worth saving, even if it meant for me to die a slow and agonizing death. The

entire Animal Kingdom around the world would know that A CAT FROM CANADA had saved them from total annihilation. Yeah for Canada!

“Okay, Doctor, but just remember one thing, I promise you, I shall have the last laugh, even if I die screaming in the process.

The Doctor and his surgical team looked at me in astonishment, but I sensed that underneath their facade was a fear, a fear of the unknown. Indeed, I had performed my duty to the entire world. The Gray Masters would soon be completely annihilated by contagions they have little or no immunity to, or treatments for. Alas, I was a happy, screaming kitty.