

Erstwhile Visitor  
by Marilyn Reeves

She was a cute little tortoise shell kitten. I had seen her in my yard a couple of days in a row and figured she must belong to one of my neighbors, but she ran up to me so eagerly that I thought she might be hungry. There was no cat food in the house – it had been a number of years since I had had a cat – but I did have some of Cindy’s dry dog food, which I gave to her ... outdoors, as I didn’t want to bring her in, in case she belonged to someone. She ate it eagerly. She *was* hungry! Poor little thing, she was so cute – how could I not try to help her? Then I realized she was wearing a tag with a phone number on it.

“Hello,” I said, “I have great news! I have found your kitty.”

“Oh no!” the lady said. “I live in Westminster and I’m pregnant and don’t want to have a cat around the baby. So we gave her to some friends who live over there in southeast Aurora. They said they would take her.”

She gave me the name and address and I contacted the people, but they told me the kitty wouldn’t stay put. Every time they opened the door, she would run away. If I would like to have her, I would be welcome to her.

So, the decision was made. For some reason the kitty had adopted me and my home, so I let her in and went shopping for some cat food and a litter box.

My little dog Cindy wasn’t quite so delighted with the new arrival, however. And the kitty, who I had now named Muffet, did what kitties always do when confronted with a strange dog – she scowled and hissed and struck out with her claws, drawing blood from poor Cindy’s nose! Cindy ran and hid under the bed.

Then when Muffet would come curl up in my lap, Cindy would look at me with her sad brown eyes, as if to say, “I thought I was your pet! Who is this intruder?”

Oh dear. What was I thinking? Cindy was family and I loved her dearly. I hadn’t intended to replace her. But I had hoped that the two of them would get used to each other and in time become friends.

The clincher came, however, when Muffet decided that my potted plant made a better bathroom than the litter box. Day after day I found dirt scattered all over the carpet, and the place began to reek like a cat house.

So I placed an ad in the paper: “Pretty tortoise shell kitten seeks loving home.” To my surprise, I received three or four responses, and gave her to what I hoped would be a loving family.

Then things got back to normal again, after what turned out to be a short visit from a cute little kitty who was looking for love. And Cindy curled up in her usual spot in my lap and heaved a huge sigh of relief.