

Harry

*By Pete Clark*

A little over a year ago, I lost my best friend. After months of treatment, Cheetah Cat succumbed to his cancer and his essence went to join the Egyptian Goddess Bast. I was catless, steeped in sorrow. I needed to find a way back to my pathway through life. The only guide would be another cat.

I went to the Denver Dumb Friends League to look for a companion. I spent some time walking around looking at the cats in their glass cages. I happened to look up and see a long haired black and white cat lying in the corner of an upper cage, looking as disgusted as disgusted could be. He wasn't quite a tuxedo cat but he was close. It was love at first sight. I went to the adoption counter and told them I wanted to meet the cat. He was everything my companion should be. I asked them to put a twenty-four hour hold on him, because I wouldn't bring a new person into the household without talking to Judie.

Judie is a cat person and had no problem with bringing a new tomcat into our domicile. That Sunday morning I went back to the shelter, filled out paperwork, paid the adoption fee and returned home with a cat and a bag of food. His name was Patch, but he had no patches on him, so I renamed him Harry after my favorite President. Harry was eleven years old when I brought him home and he spent the first few days under my bed, coming out only to eat and use his box. He began spending more time in the open and less time under the bed. In a month or so he no longer needed refuge and his catanality came to the fore. He is a character. If his whiskers are touched, he develops a sneer that would put Elvis Presley to shame. If he wants to use my hand for a pillow at nap time he will put a large hairy paw on my arm and push it down to the correct position for his maximum comfort.

Whenever I have a bottle of Ensure, I pour some of it into the bottle cap so Harry can lap it up and splash ensure all over me in the process. When the refrigerator door is opened, it doesn't matter where in the apartment Harry is sleeping, he is immediately awake and in the kitchen to find out what he might be able to mooch. Harry doesn't like canned cat food. He wants people food to supplement his dry meals. He is very good at making pathetic pleas for us to feed a starving feline and he loves string cheese.

Harry is now my best friend and he is my confidant. He is not Cheetah Cat and I didn't expect him to be. Harry is a great cat in his own right. He filled a huge empty space in my life and he is a very generous little guy. He shares his hair with everyone.