

## Learning to Love Cats

*By CC Huffhines*

Dogs have been in our family for many years, the most recent being a cute and feisty Peekapoo named Elvis. It was with great sorrow when Elvis passed on to Dog Heaven, leaving an empty space in all our hearts. All that remained was a collection of Elvis photos, reminding us of our great loss.

One day my daughter was shopping at a flea market and observed a little cat wandering the area. Though cats have never been part of our pet experiences, Lisa immediately felt a connection. She asked the person in charge who owned the kitty. "It is a stray animal, claimed by no one," the manager answered. Lisa decided at once to claim the cat, and loaded her in the car, where she remained calmer than expected.

By the time Lisa and the cat returned home, the feline had a name: Cleo. We made a quick trip to the store to purchase cat food and placed a bowl of water and the food on the floor of the kitchen. Cleo wasted no time in approaching the water and food. Our next decision was getting a poo house with litter. (It has become my daily job to clean this important structure).

An unexpected event occurred when Cleo had a baby kitten in our kitchen. It was a beautiful black kitten. Now what do we do? We decided to keep the kitten until it was older and then give it away to someone else. Instead, we fell in love again. She and her mother, Cleo, were playing together in earnest.

We now sported two cats. This had turned into love for cats, a new revelation to us. Cats, we discovered, choose you, not the other way around. Cleo follows Lisa from room to room. June (that's her name) greets me each morning as I arise, she meows mournfully until I turn the water on from the sink spigot. When they brush against your leg to show their love, they melt your heart.

Cats have great curiosity about all things around them. They enjoy sitting in our large bedroom window, watching the activity four floors below. They cuddle together on the bed when the west sun shines brightly. They are unusually agile as they jump up on a bureau loaded on the top with small curios, and not knock over any. They leap from furniture top to furniture top with the greatest of ease. Cleo enjoys being held and petted. June seeks petting but denies it when you touch her ... she only responds to head and neck rubs.

Without a word, you both know that love exists between you and the cat. We still remember Elvis with love, but the cats have taught us to love all animal pets.