

Cat paws trailing
in the snow



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I'm grateful to have been born in a time where I was still able to experience a picture-perfect winter outside of stories or books and had the wonderful opportunity to play in the snow as a child (or even as I grew older).

May everyone have the chance to encounter the strength and happiness a snowy winter day can provide for me, and maybe even find their very own special "Snowflake" one day.

Prologue - Finding a new home



It has been quite cold the past few days, with the falling snow slowly but surely covering everything in a blanket of white. On this day, during which the snow kept falling ceaselessly like it did the days before, a small kitten was wandering the night streets, cold and alone. It couldn't remember much anymore - whether it was abandoned by its parents, or if it never had a home to begin with. It no longer knew why it continued to walk through this city, growing weaker and weaker with every step it took. What was it trying to find? After such a long time, why continue on like this, instead of giving up?

As it continued its trek, its frostbitten paws repeatedly sinking into the snow-covered ground below, its vision turned more and more blurry as time went on, until it finally started to slow down and then collapsed to the ground. Looking ahead, with nothing but the falling snow taking up the kitten's vision, the tiny creature let out a weak mewl, its eyes growing heavier by the second, before it finally gave up and closed them after all. As the snow started to cover the kitten's body, the white colour all the more noticeable against its pitch black fur, the kitten's mind descended more and more into oblivion, until only one thought still flickered through its hazy mind.

„I don't want to be alone anymore.“

After a few more minutes that felt like hours, all of a sudden, the tiny kitten got enveloped in gentle warmth. Weak and delirious as it was, it couldn't tell that someone carefully picked it up, holding the tiny shivering creature in their right palm, tentatively wiping away the snow from its fur.

„You poor thing...“ a voice said softly, barely loud enough for the delirious kitten to notice, as the person protectively covered the small creature with its other hand as well, shielding it from the cold.

„Don't worry.“ the voice continued to speak in a soothing tone. „You're safe now.“



The kitten was far too weak to fully hear or make sense of the words spoken to it. But as the small creature got carried through the night streets, with the warmth from the mystery person's hands slowly starting to seep into its shivering body, it felt safe - something the kitten hadn't felt for a long time - and ultimately slipped into a dreamless sleep.

* * *



Trust



After an indeterminable amount of time, the kitten opened its eyes again and slowly raised its head. Trying to make sense of the unfamiliar surroundings, the kitten looked around and noticed it was lying on a fluffy blanket covering a sofa, probably situated in a living room of someone's home. The room was clean, with some decorations here and there, making it feel warm and homely. But despite that, the space still seemed somewhat sparsely furnished, like the person living here chose to only place the things they truly deemed necessary or precious in their home.

While the kitten's curiosity grew with each new thing it saw, it suddenly heard footsteps behind it, making it flinch and sharply turn its head around to what was probably the living room's entrance.

"Good morning, little one." a gentle voice said, focusing all of the kitten's attention on the person standing just a few feet away with the sound alone.

The voice belonged to a woman with long and slightly wavy hair hanging around her shoulders. The soft smile that played around her lips made the woman seem really young, despite the small wrinkles around her eyes. It wasn't like the kitten knew what was considered young or old in human years, but it still felt like the woman would either be called a "young adult", or someone "middle-aged" at most.

"Seems like you're finally awake." the woman said, playing with her hair a little, before she slowly walked towards the small kitten lying on the couch, carrying a small bowl with food in her hands. Seeing the woman come closer, the little kitten tensed up, before darting off into a corner of the room, not noticing the promise of food in its saviour's hands at all.

"Wait!" the woman shouted worriedly, slowing her steps even more before cautiously kneeling down. "There's no need to be afraid. I know you're still scared, but you have to eat something to get your strength



back.” she continued, then placed the bowl on the ground in front of her and looked at the kitten with gentle eyes. The small creature, however, didn’t move, just stared wide-eyed at the human in front of it. With that the woman could do nothing but sigh, then she slowly stood up and left the bowl of food in front of the kitten.

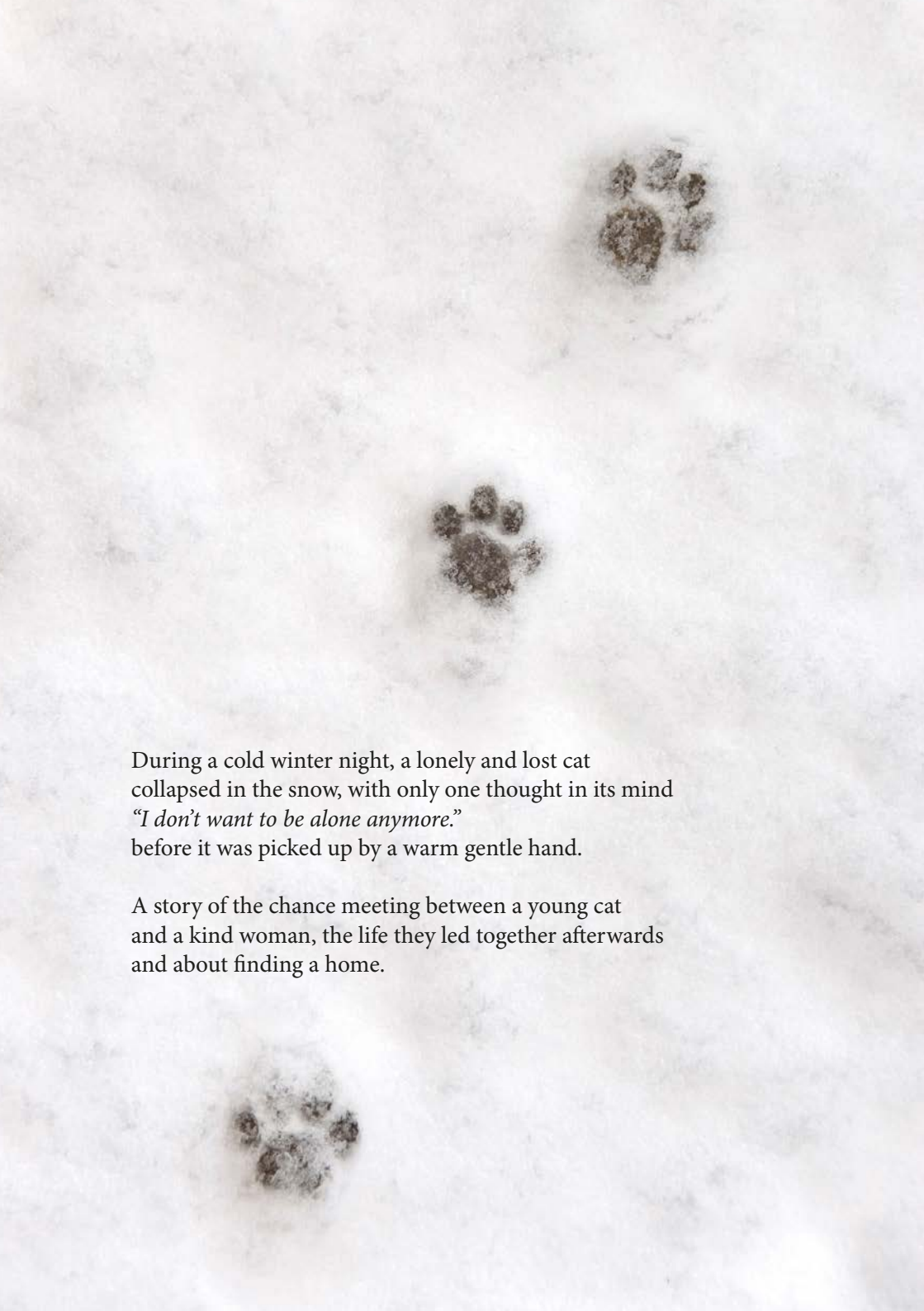
“Well, maybe you’ll change your mind later. You can take your time.” she said smiling, then slowly turned to leave the room, trying to give the small creature a little more space and time to adapt.

However, even after the women left, the small kitten was still confused. After all, why would that human want to help it? So despite being incredibly hungry the kitten didn’t dare approach the bowl.

The whole situation continued like this for the next few hours, with the woman coming back to check up on the kitten over and over, even changing out the food in the bowl multiple times and trying to coax the small furry creature again and again to eat at least a little. Until finally, nighttime fell and the kitten still hadn’t eaten a single bite.

Kneeling in front of the kitten again, another bowl of fresh food set on the ground, the woman pleaded with the furry creature once more.

“Please, you have to eat. You’re not well and need to get your strength back in order to get better.” the woman said, nothing but kindness reflected in her eyes. At this point, the kitten’s stomach started hurting from how hungry it was. But it was still very afraid, so it just couldn’t bring itself to eat something. With a sigh the woman finally tried to persuade the kitten again and reached out her hand towards it. And as if on instinct, the kitten’s body tensed even more than it had before, afraid as the woman’s hand approached its body. Until in the end the small creature’s body moved almost on its own and its small paw finally lashed out to strike the woman’s hand.



During a cold winter night, a lonely and lost cat
collapsed in the snow, with only one thought in its mind
“I don’t want to be alone anymore.”
before it was picked up by a warm gentle hand.

A story of the chance meeting between a young cat
and a kind woman, the life they led together afterwards
and about finding a home.