

The kingdom of cats

By. Hide Kawabata

Bob was a big gray tomcat with black stripes. He lived with an old lady in a small, old house in the suburbs, who was always either knitting or sleeping in front of the fireplace in a rocking chair. Bob would sometimes go exploring outside the house and from the tops of tall trees or roofs, gazed at faraway towns, mountains, or the ocean, and occasionally chased the spring breeze or butterflies. Outside, he would sometimes have had rocks thrown at him by mischievous children or be barked at by large, intimidating dogs. There were times that he got drenched by the rain or the snow, but whenever he went back home, the old lady would always dry him off with a towel and served him warm milk in a saucer until he was stuffed and sleepy.

But, however nice this might seem for Bob, having the same thing happen day after day after coming home was making him bored out of his mind.

One day, Bob held a meeting with all the town cats and spoke as thus.

“My comrades, if we continue to be kept by humans, we will never be able to live a free and happy life. Let’s make a kingdom with no humans, just us, where we can live peacefully and happily and freely, let us make a kingdom of cats.”

The town cats all agreed to Bob’s idea.

“I’m being kept by a little girl who treats as a stuffed animal.” A small white queen called Mary said. “She is always is touching my head or cuddling me. I’m tired of it!”

“ At least your owner knows you exist!” One black tom called Peter snapped. “My owners spend all day watching TV and is feeding me the same cat food day after day after boring day. I’m sick of it!”

One day, all the town cats left their dwellings as one, and ran into the bountiful mountains and made their kingdom, their own kingdom of cats. And all the cats unanimously crowned Bob as king. At first, Bob wore both crown and cape and was very proud of himself. Every day, he put out a feast of food and threw wonderful parties. And he also paraded with all of the servants who worked for him. Other cats lived joyfully and happily by climbing trees, playing hide-and-seek and fishing in the streams. But, after a while, all the cats started to miss the days they were living as town cats. Mary was never able to forget the little girl’s small, warm hands. Peter too, started missing his family and even the taste of his cat food.

Bob too, wondered from time to time, “How is the old lady who was taking care of me is doing right now? With me gone, she must be worried sick.”

All the cats in the kingdom couldn’t stop thinking about the town, their owners, and how they ran off without telling them where they were. After a while, all the cats decided to move back into the town to see their owners again. And when reunited, Mary’s little girl sobbed brokenly while hugging her. And the person, whose eyes were supposedly glued to the TV screen and never cared much for Peter, was delighted to see him coming back safe and sound. And Bob’s old lady was knitting in front of the fireplace as usual, but when she saw Bob, she was jumping for joy. All the cats and their owners got along much better than before.