

A TALE OF TWO KITTIES

Mr Barley woke and stretched in his bed. The sun shone through the window into his upstairs domain and he wondered idly what he would do today. Breakfast – always a good start, as his landlord provided it – and then a stroll in the garden. He loved the garden: there were some plants together with shrubs and trees and he enjoyed sitting under these and surveying the garden to see what intruders might come to invade his space. He would raise his face to the sun and sniff the rich bouquet of the plants that had been planted to create a scented garden. But there was one fly in the ointment.

He particularly disliked cats and there was a ginger one from across the way that seemed used his garden as a passageway to pastures greener for him but he had worked out that if he waited until the animal was within striking distance he could go from supine to springing in the blink of an eyelid and chase him across the lawn. The woman who owned the house disliked the cat as much as he did and wouldn't hesitate to chuck a stone at it, accompanied a hissing noise, as she too ran down the garden to chivvy this interloper away.

He wondered what the tenant downstairs was up to. She was a new addition to the household – very lithe and slinky and he wondered if she was a model. She had smooth shiny hair and an exotic name – Livy – and he could picture her stretched out on a velvet settee somewhere looking disdainfully at the camera.

Livy wasn't one for waking up early. It wasn't long since she'd left her mum and she enjoyed the warmth and comfort of snuggling into the bedclothes when she woke up. She preferred to wait a bit for breakfast and she knew that when Mr Barley from upstairs had come down and finished in the kitchen it would be OK for her to venture there for her first meal of the day.

She was a bit in awe of Mr Barley. He was some years older than her and walked with a dignified tread, although he couldn't half shift it if he saw that ginger tom. Ah, now he'd gone into the garden, so it was safe for her to get up. When she had arisen she set to attending to her toilette for the day. Her body must be thoroughly washed and her hair groomed to shiny perfection. She liked to start the day with some exercises so she jumped lightly down from the bed and positioned herself on the furry rug at the side. She had seen a yoga programme on the TV the other day and was very

fond of assuming various poses. She was particularly good at the plank position and was able to arch her back and maintain the attitude.

The only thorn in her side was the other occupant of the house – the dog. It was a fussy little thing – some sort of terrier cross – and also very young, so the only thing on its rather vacant little mind was play. It seemed to think that if it rushed at her the moment she came into view she would be only too pleased to join in a game of tag or something but she was far too superior for that. Fortunately, the dog was admonished not to pester her and it was quickly ushered into its crate so she would then be able to continue her languorous way to the breakfast area, where she hoped that Barley (for that's how the houseowner called him) had left something for her.

She really was getting hungry now and her stomach was rumbling. When would her landlord put the food out? she wondered and at that moment came the welcome summons:

“Breakfast”, called Peter.

And the two cats left what they were doing and ran eagerly into the kitchen.