

Suddenly the Cat

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Suddenly The Cat

A true story by Clayton Bess
(Well, mostly true.)

My cat's name is Suddenly because that's how she is. She's all white and has one blue eye and one yellow eye. That's so she can see better in the dark.



Here is a picture of her that I drew. I can draw. That's one thing I can do. Sometimes.

The first time I ever laid eyes on Suddenly, she was on our roof. Suddenly! She was a stray! She strayed onto our roof from ... I don't even know where.



So I ran into my room and grabbed my camera and snapped these pictures. I have a good camera that my mom and dad gave me for my birthday. I love it.

But there was a storm, it was coming, and Suddenly was on the roof, thinking she'd be safe up there, but oh boy was she wrong!



This is a picture I took of Suddenly turning around and around to watch the storm clouds gathering. And here's she is sniffing the air to smell the rain coming.



And then the rain came! Suddenly the storm was on us, and the lightning was so bright and thunder so loud I dropped my camera and it broke. So I ran to my room and got my sketchpad and started drawing this picture.



I wish I could get it better, how the storm clouds looked just before they broke open, with the lightning cracking through the clouds and

pouring down the rain like a waterfall. It was really really scary. I'll keep trying, but this drawing gives you a little idea of it.

And then I heard a yowling at my window! And there was Suddenly, suddenly at my window.



This is a picture I drew of her later, from memory, and it was a really sharp memory, too! But right at that second I was too busy to draw. I had to get her dry, and warm.

“Meeeeeeeee-In!” Suddenly yowled again. So I let her in and started drying her off fast with my bed sheets. And suddenly Suddenly started telling me her story, all about how when the rain hit, it hit so hard that it washed her off the roof and... and... and into the river! And how she had to swim to a tree that had fallen into the river, and how she had to climb onto the tree and... and... fight off the... cougars and bears and... and... and sharks! that tried to climb onto the tree with her and take it away from her!



And how suddenly Suddenly had remembered our house, and how with the lights on it looked so warrrrrrrm inside.

And so she suddenly made her decision, and she jumped back into the river and swam all the way back upstream, back past the cougars and bears and sharks and the raging rapids and whirlpools and sudden death, back to reach my window, and yowl.

Well, actually, all Suddenly really said was, “Me-ow!” That was her only word, but she said it, like, a hundred times, and so it was very clear what she meant. She was very convincing.

By this time, I had Suddenly pretty dry with my sheets, and so I got my camera working again and took this picture of me vacuuming her the rest of the way dry.



They tell me that most cats run away from vacuums, but not Suddenly. She loves it.

“Well, okay, you can stay here,” I said, ”but only until the storm passes.”

“Oh, yeah?” she said, and gave the fur on her shoulder a little lick. And there was something about the look in her eye —especially that blue eye— something about what she was thinking. Then she blinked in a know-it-all kind of way. Trouble ahead.

“See, it’s my mom and dad,” I said. “They can’t stand cats—“

“Can’t stand cats! What kind of barbarians live in this house? I am a beautiful orphan princess from a royal cat family, a Petolemy of ancient Egypt.”



She made up some pretty good stuff. “Why, in ancient Egypt,” she said, “cats are treated as gods and goddesses. Why, in ancient Egypt— oh, but first, I’m starving! What’s to eat in this joint? Got any caviar?”

“Caviar? I don’t think so.”

“Cream then? I prefer my cream whipped.”

“We’ve got milk.”

“Meeeeee-Owk!”

“Maybe I could go next door and borrow a can of cat food from the Murphys. The Murphys have two cats.”

“Food from a can? You offer a beautiful orphan princess from the royal Petolemy family of ancient Egypt food from a can? Moi! Oh, just bring the me-owk.”

So I snuck past my mom and dad’s room and snuck Suddenly back a little bowl of milk which Suddenly lapped up. That was pretty sudden, too. And not even a thank you.



Suddenly suddenly yawned and stretched out on her back and said, “Pet me! Tell me I’m beautiful!”

So I petted her and told her she was beautiful. After all, she is a royal Petolemy orphan.

Then she made herself more comfortable on my comforter and purred, “This is purrrr-fect, kid! Let’s get some shut-eye. And don’t be stingy with the blankets, baby.”



The next morning it was hard to keep my mom and dad from finding out about Suddenly, especially since she jumped up on the breakfast table, demanding caviar.

"What's that?" my mom screamed. "A cat!"

"A catalytic catalog of catamount catastrophes!" my dad said.

"That's Suddenly. She's a royal orphan."

"She's a royal pain—!" my dad began, but he stopped when Suddenly suddenly blinked and cried. "Mew! Oh, mew!"



This was when I found out that Suddenly doesn't talk to them the way she talks to me.

"Well....," my mom said, and my dad laughed, and then they winked at each other and scratched Suddenly behind the ears and said "goo-goo" and Suddenly said "mew-mew" and "purr" and all that regular kind of cat-talk.

"All right," my mom said, "you can keep her, but you have to take responsibility for feeding her." Suddenly agreed that would be fine.

"And you have to keep her out of my garden," my dad said. Suddenly was not so sure about this but said she would think about it.



"Now you make her behave!" they said to me.

"Now you behave!" I said to Suddenly.

Suddenly said, "Moi?" and gave the fur on her shoulder that little lick.

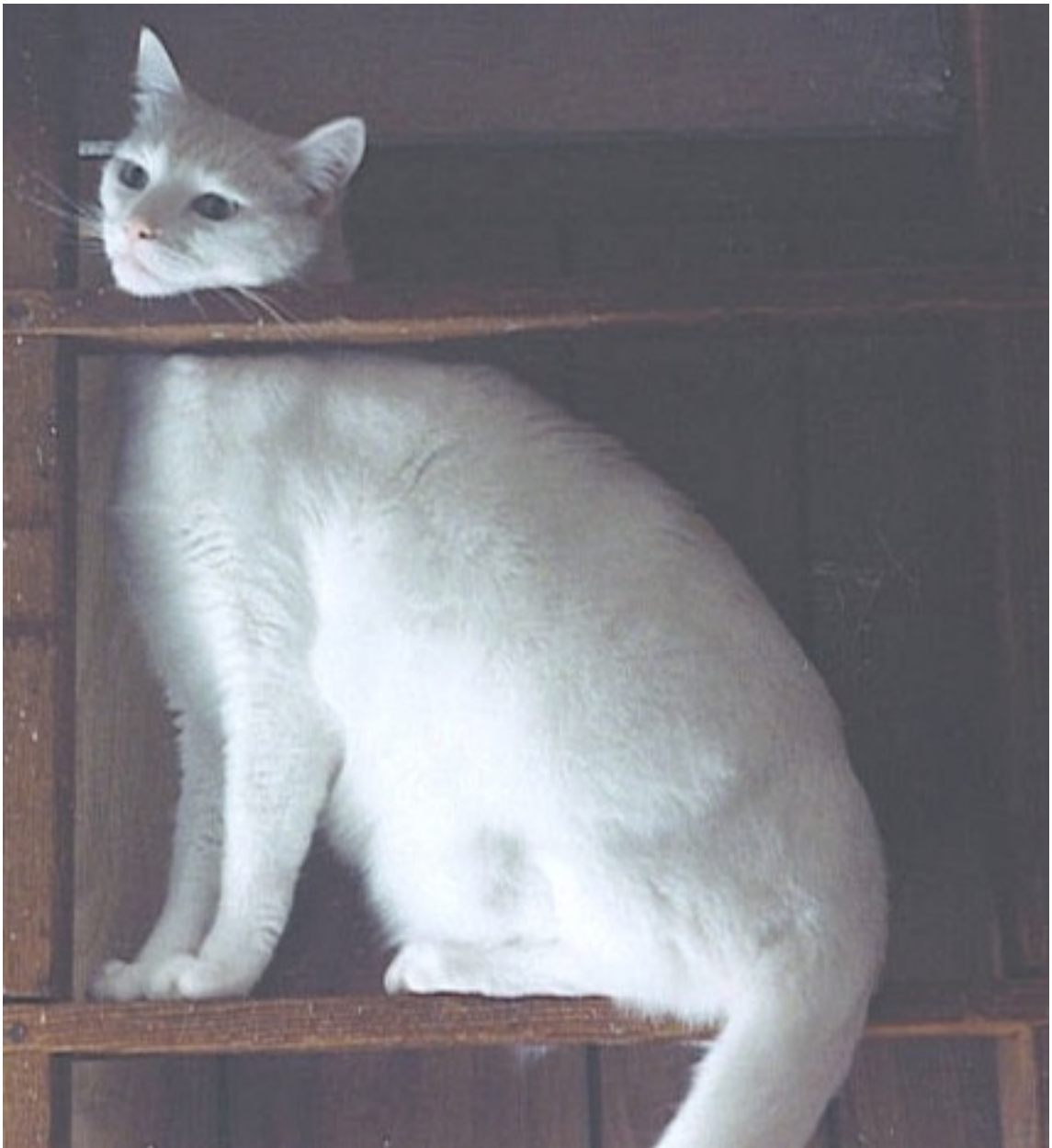
“And keep her away from the fish in the fountain!” my mom said. So the fountain was the first place Suddenly headed, pretty suddenly.



“And keep her out of the attic!” my dad said. So the attic was the next place that Suddenly headed.



That's when I found out how much Suddenly likes to climb. Suddenly can climb the ladder to the attic in no time. So my dad had to put bolts on the trap door, which Suddenly thought was pretty mean.



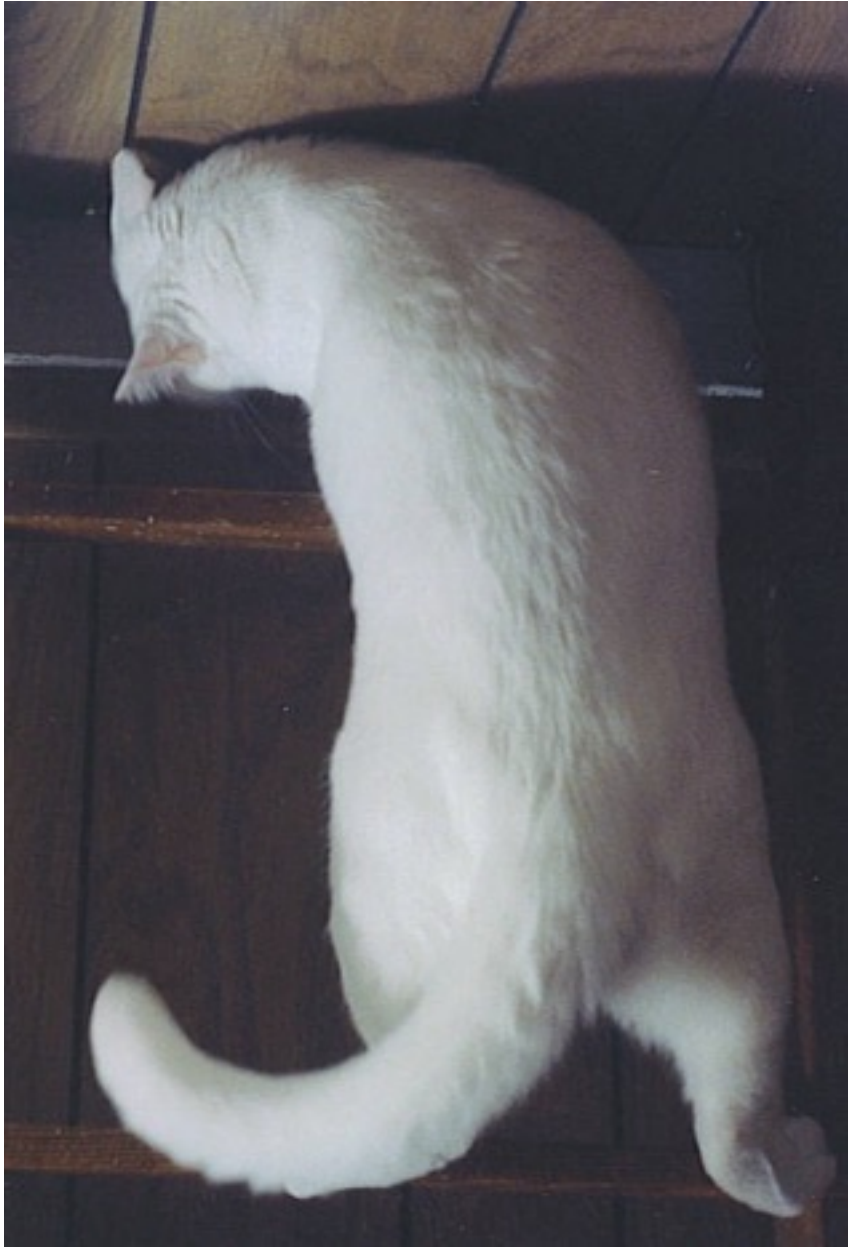
Suddenly couldn't seem to be able to figure out how to work the bolts. She made her examination, but there's this thing about hands.



She doesn't have any.



And try as she may...



Oops.



Big oops.



Oh well, there are other ladders.



Suddenly loves a ladder.



But it's not just ladders that Suddenly likes to climb. She likes the big trees and even jumps around in them.



From the branches of the big trees Suddenly can survey her kingdom.



But Suddenly likes to climb little trees, too. She thinks she looks particularly good in the Dogwood tree because of the red berries.



Suddenly loves to climb the telephone pole and look over the fence at Ralph, Mrs. Gardner's dog. Suddenly is very fond of Ralph. Suddenly is very fond of driving Ralph nuts. She calls to him when he's trying to sleep, "Raoul! Oh, Raoul! Raouuuuul!"



Ralph lifts his head and looks around. "**HUH?**" Ralph is not a smart dog. When he sees Suddenly Ralph gets all furious. He tears up his doll to show Suddenly what he wants to do to her. Then he runs to the fence and jumps and falls back and jumps again and falls back again and runs in circles yapping. "Ralph ralph ralph ralph ralph!"



Suddenly just looks down at Ralph. **AND YAWNS!**

IN HIS FACE!



Well, this drives Ralph even nuttier. He runs and runs until he wears himself out, then flops down in a puddle, panting. That's when Suddenly suddenly makes her move.

She jumps off the pole, runs across the yard, gives Ralph a whack on the nose and is back on the other side of the fence before Ralph knows what hit him.



Oh, she has fun.

But don't think Suddenly fights with all the animals in the neighborhood. Suddenly loves Napoleon, the squirrel who lives in our trees.



Suddenly and Napoleon like to play chase.

This looks to me like a pretty dangerous game, but they seem to enjoy themselves.

And Suddenly loves Peachy our lovebird, and makes a habit of sleeping in Peachy's cage. Peachy likes that. Suddenly loves it. Suddenly loves sleep, too.



Suddenly loves to sleep anywhere. On rocks.



Anywhere.



But remember how my dad told me to keep Suddenly out of his garden. Well, I just can't get Suddenly to agree to those terms. She's always going out into the garden and sitting there, and she does not approve, not at all.



Suddenly thinks a garden is for hunting in.



And for jumping in.



But then it looked like Suddenly was a goner because right after I took that picture Suddenly landed flat in my dad's flowers, and my dad came running up yelling: "That does it! Off she goes!"

And my mom, too, because right after that Suddenly went hunting in the garden and caught a gopher. The gopher was a surprise gift from Suddenly to my mom. Suddenly brought the gopher into the house and dropped it into my mom's cereal bowl when my mom wasn't looking. I'm really sorry that I didn't have my camera then because the look on my mom's face was really good. I'm going to try to draw a picture of it, but I'm not sure I can capture the exact expression of surprise on my mom's face when she had that big spoonful of milk and gopher up to her mouth. And when she saw what it was? Boy she was surprised! In fact she screamed: "Out she goes!"

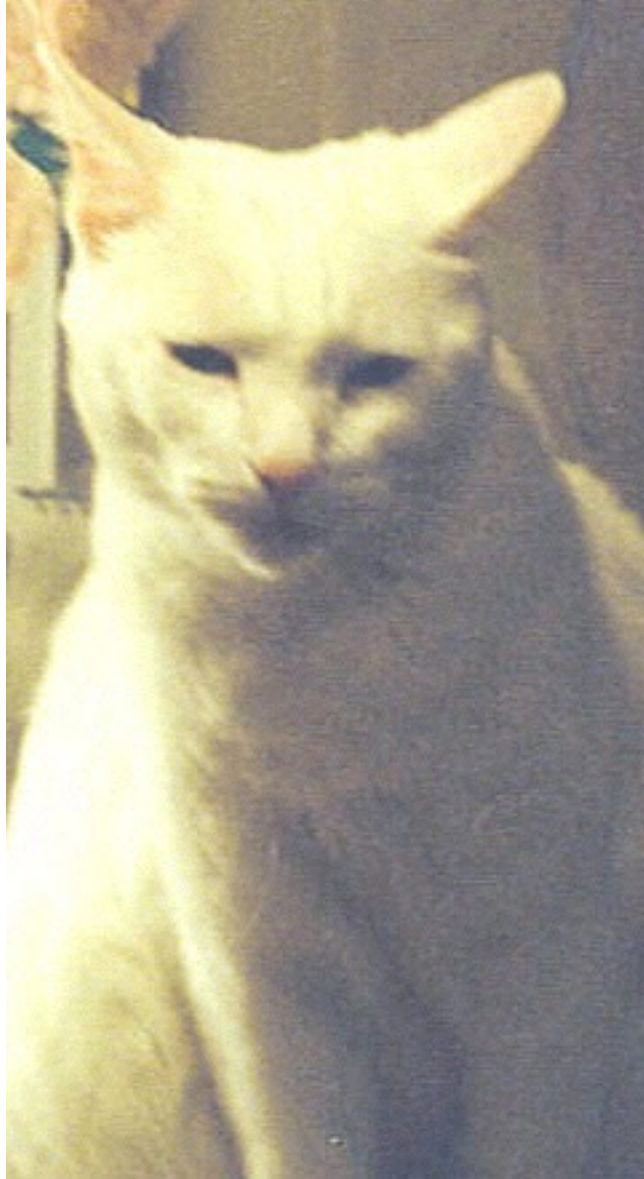
Suddenly ran away at all the yelling and screaming. So I went looking for her, practicing what I had to say. Here's how I would begin the bad news. "Suddenly, you've got to go."

"Moi?" she would say. "A beautiful orphan princess from a royal—"



But I wouldn't let her get away with that stuff this time. I would say, "You'll have to hurry, Suddenly, if you want to catch the next tree downriver."

But then I knew what would happen. Suddenly Suddenly's eyes would fill with tears.



No, I couldn't do it. Sure she's selfish. Sure she drives everyone nuts, especially Ralph. But that's how she is! I can't change her! I would talk to my mom and dad. If I had to, I would get down on my knees and beg.

I went into our room and found Suddenly in bed with five little kittens punching at her. I said, "That was sudden!"

She said, "For **you** maybe! Let me introduce you: this is Suddenly The Second, Suddenly The Third, Suddenly The Fourth, Suddenly The Fifth, and Super Suddenly. They are too young to travel, so I have agreed to stay on here and take care of them for you."

"Oh, Suddenly! This only makes it worse!"

"Well, I didn't do it on purrrr-pose!"

So then suddenly the house and garden were crawling with little Suddenlies.



And my mom and dad were climbing the walls. But what could they do? They couldn't toss an orphan-mother out on her ear. So they said Suddenly could stay but only if I found homes for all her kittens.

I said, "Yeah, yeah!"

And they said that Suddenly had to get fixed. Suddenly said, "Meee-Owwwww!"

I said, "Anything, Mom. Anything, Dad. Just so long as I can keep Suddenly."



And I did find really good homes for Suddenly 2 and 3 and a different home for Suddenly 4 and 5, but Super Suddenly! He's a

handful. But guess what! My mom and dad really grew to like Super Suddenly, especially when suddenly Super Suddenly suddenly got as big as Suddenly.



And what my mom and dad like about Super Suddenly is that he can jump!

See, here's a picture I took of all of us playing with Super Suddenly.
See Super Suddenly jumping like the dogs? See my dad's hands holding



the picture? See my mom's hand, swinging the jumping toy? See Suddenly in the chair back there? See her ear? She is proudly watching

her son jump. And he jumps really really super suddenly, too, just like his mother.

And now, Suddenly and Super Suddenly get into everything together, just like twins, but my mom and my dad think they're really cute like that.



And me? Well, I'm the one making the pictures of all of us living happily ever after.



The End



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