

Kittens and the Hands of God

by J.A. Pak

“What's her name?” Penny asked him. She was mesmerized by the cat, unable to take her eyes away.

“I don't think she has one,” Peter said, trying to be kind. “Why don't you give her a name?”

“Kitty,” she said, laughing.

“Let's name her Spook,” Megan said. She picked up the cat and pointed her finger at its face. “Spook! You're called Spook!”

Eye to eye they stared at each other. The cat seemed to know who she was. Megan couldn't believe it. “That's the most extraordinary—”

The cat jumped straight into Penny's lap. Thrilled, Penny captured the warm kitten in her hands. The kitten had such a tender face. Her paws were so delicate. Penny wanted to lick her up. She seemed to understand every word Penny said, her knowing eyes pulling Penny's words deep into her.

At bedtime, Penny wanted to sleep with the cat but Helen wouldn't allow it. Spook was to stay in the kitchen. Lying in bed, Penny thought of Kitty, alone in a new house, sad, lonely, puzzled at the future of things. She only had the box Peter had provided and some newspaper. Penny got out of bed and slipped downstairs. She opened the kitchen door; Kitty was looking up at her.

“Hello. Were you waiting for me? I had to wait first. To make sure everyone was asleep.” Penny scooped the kitten up, the furry warmth so wonderful in her hands. She smuggled the cat into her room.

From the top of her toy shelf Penny took down a doll's cradle. She removed the doll, a porcelain baby whose eerie life-like features had always frightened her, and put Kitty inside the cradle instead. There was a pillow and a blanket, all in eyelet cotton, so Kitty would be

very comfortable. Gently, Penny tapped the pear wood cradle and let it rock, quietly humming until the kitten seemed fast asleep. Penny couldn't take her eyes away. She fell asleep on the floor, curled next to Kitty.

Penny was a light sleeper and often woke up several times a night, but that night she slept soundly, the most wonderful serenity hugging her throughout the night. She only remembered one dream, of a gentle, powerful breeze lifting her high into the night sky. As the breeze slowly died, another breeze brought her back up, one breeze after another like the hands of God carrying her through the sky. It was the most exhilarating feeling, being lifted up, floating down, lifted up again, her self circling the globe over and over.

