

Cats

by Jack Swenson

One morning I go outside, and there are a cat and seven kittens in the field across the street. My wife and I organize a roundup. We trap the mama cat, then we capture the kittens. It takes us all day.

We put the kittens in a dog crate. We give them food and water and some toys to play with. They pounce on a tiny mouse and tear it to bits. There's nothing inside but plastic. The kittens are not happy. They squeal and squirm when we pick them up.

We find homes for five of the kittens and keep two. One of the ones that we keep is the runt. He is a tiny gray tabby with big ears. We name him Gorgeous George.

We bring in the mother cat, too, and she tries to kill her son. A week on valium solves that problem. No, we don't take the valium; we give it to the cat.

George grows up to be a bruiser. The other one is a delicate long-haired calico. We call her Monica. She has none of her namesake's traits, however. She hates boys. Indeed, she hates most everything. She is an ornery cat.

My wife and I are cat people. Indeed, that's how we met. We met at a wake. The widow was once a sort of girlfriend of mine. I'd get together with her now and then, if you catch my drift. She and my wife went to nursing school together. At the wake, I ducked outside for a smoke and found a stranger petting the widow's cat. It was love at first sight.

