

Two Families in One Home

A couple, Mark and Marnie, and their daughter, Marissa, moved from near downtown Houston, Texas to Katy, Texas, a growing suburb. They brought their two lynx-point Siamese cats, adopted from the ASPCA as kittens, with them. The family enjoyed their new home with plenty of room with Connor and Serena and near wooded area and environment and the new creatures that surround them, from rabbits, raccoons, sociable opossums and even appreciated the owls, falcons and even the surprisingly friendly vultures. They were also happy that neither of their cats wanted to go outside with the raptors, bobcats and coyotes waiting outdoors for prey.

None of the family had noticed any cats in the area in the beginning. However, once Connor crossed the rainbow bridge on Easter day, within a month of his passing, a beautiful, long-haired black cat showed up on the edge of the brush with two beautiful grey kittens about six-weeks-old. The family brought some cat food out in a bowl with some water for the mama cat and her babies, but they presumed that she had an owner, and the cats were just outside for fresh air and to expend some energy.

Although the family, especially Marnie, was mourning Connor, they couldn't refuse when the mama cat and her babies came again the next day. Again, the family fed them. This beautiful feline family was too lovely to be ignored, especially when they returned the following day. Since they were going to feed them any time that the cats came, Mark and Marissa went and bought kitten food and bowls for the cats and began to offer them some canned food each time, as well.

Soon, as the kittens continued to grow and were getting to know the family, the food and water was out for the little ones every morning and every evening, including a can of wet cat food, as well. With Serena aging, at ten-years-old, and starting to enjoy being the only cat in the house, and the little cat family not showing any interest in coming into the house, things continued until it got old enough for concern for the mama cat, Duchess, and the two kittens, now about 10 months old. Grayson is a soft, grey-colored tabby with long hair and Marble is a lavender tortoise shell cat with long hair, as well.

Southeast Texas in the winter is not the coldest place to be, but when the cold hits, it hits very hard. Being concerned about the young furry family being outside, Marnie bought them a large house outside with a heat warmer as a carpet in the house to keep them out of the cold, especially when Serena was inside where she could enjoy the fireplace and sleeping underneath the warm comforter on the bed.

They put the waterproof house out for the winter, warm water and warm canned food for the cats whenever the temperature dropped below 50 degrees, as they had endured extreme heat in the summertime, to the point of adding ice to the cats' water bowl and chilled their canned food. To Mark and Marnie's relief, Duchess, Grayson and Marble used

the house, cuddled up with each other, as warm as they could be. When the temperatures dropped below 40 degrees, a warm blanket was placed on the house for more warmth and a second blanket at freezing or below.

Once the kittens reached right about a year-old, Grayson was missing for three days. Marnie called and called for him. Usually, Grayson was the one to come to the door to call for her to feed them at both breakfast and dinner. Grayson would get Marnie and walk her to where Duchess and Marble would be waiting. He came to get her for breakfast, but she had not seen him since.

Marnie was beside herself and both Mark and Marissa were quite worried but mainly tried to keep Marnie calm. She had decided to go to the woods to call for Grayson if he didn't show up for dinner that evening. To her relief and her horror, Grayson had dragged himself up onto the back step, badly injured. When she saw him, Marnie scooped him up and immediately took him into the house. Marissa helped her to find a box and a small blanket to place Grayson in and they rushed him to the Emergency Veterinarian.

It appeared that an unknown raptor (owl, hawk or falcon, likely for the area), known to pick up larger prey like a cat, then dropped them from high to injure them to immobilize them, had done so with Grayson. His left back hip was dislocated and the fur on both sides of his middle were pulled out or snipped down, which raptors also do to remove the fur of their prey. No one knows how Grayson escaped, but everyone was relieved that he survived. He will likely have arthritis in his hip in the future, but the veterinarian was able to save his leg.

Once they left the veterinarian, Marnie and Marissa got Grayson into his box and she slept. Marnie slept on the couch to be by Grayson, and she would lift him gently to place him in the litter box from time to time to relieve himself. He would bring him food and water in intervals, as he couldn't get up on his own to each.

After about a week, the family's hearts leapt with joy to see Grayson gingerly limp to the litter box near him, and back, on his own. He went right back to his box, but he was more alert and bent over the box to eat and drink. Slowly he recovered, but no one was willing to allow him back outside. He still looks outside and has a favorite window in the house, and his fur finally grew back over months, but he does not even attempt to go outside. It had to be a traumatic experience for him. Duchess and Marble would peek inside the door for him, but they were still too feral to come inside, so they remained outside but did see that he was safe.

The family never saw the male cat that must have found Duchess in heat, but she was still not ready for them to take her to the veterinarian to be spayed and nor was Marble. By mid-August, it appeared that Duchess was again pregnant. She grew and grew until September 30, she came to the front door for help and her water broke. It was amazing that she just came inside the house when Marnie opened the door. It was though she had walked through that door a hundred times.

Marnie and Marissa watched over her as she gave birth to two beautiful babies, again a boy and a girl. Simon is a dark brown tabby with dark black stripes like Duchess, with short hair. Raven is a beautiful glistening black, short coat that looks like black velvet. They were born inside the house, and they have never been outside of the house except for the car ride to the veterinarian and home. Marble was not at the door when Duchess came in, but she asked to come into the house within a week of Duchess.

Mark, Marnie and Marissa came to Katy with only Connor and Serena. Within two and a half years, they lost Connor, but Serena is still there, now with Duchess, Grayson, Marble, Simon and Raven, and have adopted formerly abused Perry, miniature schnauzer, who loves all of the cats. Serena never had any kittens herself, but she and Raven are amazingly close, too.