

Harry Potter and the Pampered Feline Kitty

"What the bloody hell was that?" a very startled Ron Weasley asked.

"It was either a very fat cat or a quite small furry pig," said Harry.

"The bloody thing almost trampled me. Where's Hermione?" Ron picked himself up from where he had stumbled following the collision with the deceptively massive creature.

"Probably getting her owl."

The pair of Gryffindor's made their way from the pet shop out into the crowded street in front of the Magical Menagerie. They waited only a few moments, before Hermione Granger came out of the shop, but rather than carrying the expected owl, her arms were clamped tightly around a very flabby orange cat.

"You *bought* that monster?" said Ron, his mouth hanging open.

"He's *gorgeous*, isn't he?" said Hermione, glowing.

That was a matter of opinion, thought Harry. The cat's orange fur was thick and fluffy and had black stripes, but it was definitely a bit bowlegged and its face looked grumpy and oddly expressive, as though one could read the cat's emotions from its face. The cat was purring contentedly in Hermione's arms.

"**I like this girl, she has good taste** ." A voice with an American accent said. Harry quickly looked around, and couldn't identify the speaker. Neither Ron nor Hermione gave any indication that they might have heard the voice.

"Hermione that bloody beast nearly crushed me!" said Ron.

"He didn't mean to, did you, Garfield?" said Hermione.

"**Sure I did. He squealed like a girl,**" the voice spoke again.

"And what about Scabbers?" said Ron, pointing at the lump in his chest pocket. "He needs rest and relaxation! How's he going to get it with that thing around?"

"**Show me a cat that would eat a rat, I'll show you a cat with bad breath** ."

"That reminds me, you forgot your rat tonic," said Hermione, slapping the small red bottle into Ron's hand. "And stop worrying, Garfield will be sleeping in my dormitory and Scabbers in yours, what's the problem? Poor Garfield, that witch said he'd been in there for ages; no one wanted him."

"Wonder why," said Ron sarcastically as they set off toward the Leaky Cauldron.

Harry sighed. He was hearing voices that no one could hear. Again. This was going to be a long year.

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The ride on the train was relatively uneventful, if you discounted the incident with the Dementor and the fact that a psychotic murderer was on the loose, which frankly Harry did not. The welcoming feast was punctuated with the abuse heaped upon him for his extreme reaction to the Guards of the Azkaban. In short, it was turning out to be just another year at old hopy Hogwarts.

In his bed, Harry was hovering just on the edge of sleep, when suddenly a large heavy orange *something* landed on his chest. Groping for his glasses the all too expressive face of Hermione's new cat sprang into sharp focus.

"**Yo! Four Eyes, time to feed the kitty** ."

That voice again. This couldn't be good. Hearing voices like this. Harry reached up to scratch behind the cat's ears. The best way to deal with hearing voices was to ignore them and hope they go away.

"What are you doing here fella? Are you looking for Hermione?" Harry whispered.

"I believe I was pretty clear Four Eyes. It's time to feed the kitty ." The cat looked around Harry's four-poster bed, raised his front right paw and extended his claws. **"Nice bed you've got here... It would be a shame if something were to... happen to it. "**

"It's you? You're the one I keep hearing?"

"Well, duh!" The cat rolled his eyes. **"Why do you think I'm here? Those weird elf things won't feed me, so, you're my ticket to a midnight snack ."**

"But how...?"

"Look kid, I don't know and I don't care. All I know is that you can hear me, and you're going to get me some lasagna, or things might become... unpleasant ."

Looking into the oddly expressive face of the fat cat, Harry decided that he really didn't want to know what the cat meant by 'unpleasant'.

Dressing quietly, Harry pulled his father's invisibility cloak from his trunk and grunted as he hefted the cat.

"Bloody hell cat, you weigh a ton!" he whispered.

"And you're ugly Four-Eyes, but I could go on a diet if I wanted."

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The trip to the kitchen was as uneventful as any trip under an invisibility cloak while carrying a squirming twenty kilo cat could be. Dobby was deliriously happy to prepare a pan of lasagna for the porcine feline, and agreed to deliver one to the Gryffindor Girls 3rd year dorm three times a day for the kitty.

It was on the trip back the trouble started. Carrying the now twenty-**three** kilo cat under his cloak, Harry was musing about the horror that must be this beast's litter box when he started up the final stairway and came face to face with Filch's cat, Mrs. Norris who immediately began sniffing the air while looking right at them.

The Orange Cat suddenly stopped squirming. **"Well, hello Nurse !"**

Mrs. Norris froze in apparent confusion as she looked about for where the voice had come from.

Garfield managed to free himself from Harry's grasp by way of a paw full of claws suddenly being forcibly raked along Harry's left forearm. Landing on the landing next to Mrs. Norris with a light 'thud' he spoke. **"Hey Baby!"**

"Who are you?" Harry was surprised that Mrs. Norris' voice seemed to have an oddly Irish lilt. *"Where did you come from?"*

"The name's Garfield baby. I've come from heaven to make all your dreams come true. "

"Hmph ." Harry was shocked that he could actually see the expression of disgust on Mrs. Norris' face. Since when did cats have expressions? *"You own one of the students don't you? You reek of Gryffindor, and not a first year either. Why haven't I seen you before? Tag along to get away from your mate for a while?"*

"No baby, you've got me all wrong! I'm a bachelor. In fact I come from a long line of bachelors ." The orange cat said as he rubbed his flank along Mrs. Norris' side.

"Well..." Mrs. Norris appeared to be torn. *"You are kind of cute, in a hugely massive sort of way..."*

"Now you're talking baby! Let's go make some beautiful music together ."

Mrs. Norris giggled and turned to run up the stairs. Garfield looked to where Harry was standing, still under his cloak. **"I won't be needing you anymore tonight. Get some sleep. "** Then the fat orange cat loped up the stairs in pursuit of his new paramour.

Harry stood staring open mouthed after the pair of cats. Mrs. Norris giggled? That fat cat had just given him the rest of the night off? What the hell was going on, and how did he get involved?

Harry made his way back to the Gryffindor dorms, and his bed, mutter all the way trying out the various forms of profanity he had learned from Vernon and Dudley over the last few years.

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A bleary eyed Harry Potter dragged himself to breakfast in the Great Hall the next morning. He slumped into the seat next to a very angry Hermione Granger who appeared to be directing her famous 'Dirty Look #4' (guaranteed to peel a potato at 10 yards) alternately between Ron Weasley who sat across from Hermione and her new cat who sat to her left. Both of the dirty look recipients were ignoring her and doing what they did best.

Eating.

Apparently Harry had accidentally stumbled upon an eating contest. Both the competitors had their eyes fixed upon the other, while their fore-paws were in a blur of motion shoveling whatever breakfast foods that was in reach into their respective masticating maws. The House Elves evidently

took exception to the concept of anyone or thing could possibly eat more food than the Hogwarts Kitchens could produce, so more and more over flowing platters of food kept replacing those emptied by the unstoppable eating machines. Worse than that, Hermione was getting sprayed by bits of food from both of them.

"Ok." Harry said shocked out of his fatigue. "That is more than a little bit disturbing."

"It's worse than that, it's disgusting." Hermione corrected him. "Ron, stop this right now. You're going to provoke poor little Garfield into hurting himself."

The youngest Weasley male ignored her. Harry shook his head. Ron would pay for that later. "I don't see how that cat could possibly be hungry. He had a full pan of lasagna last night at around 2 am."

Hermione rounded on him, bits of breakfast flotsam flying from her as she did so. "Why did you feed Garfield at 2 am? You could have made him sick!"

"It wasn't my fault!" Harry said defensively. "That bloody cat showed up on my bed and demanded that I get him some lasagna. I took him to the kitchen and asked Dobby to deliver a pan to your dorm for each meal."

"He demanded? Come on Harry."

"It turns out I can talk to and understand cats."

She raised a single eyebrow. "You can talk to cats?"

"Oh I see, I can talk to snakes, no problem, but you've got problems believing that I might be able to talk to cats? I was privileged with seeing and hearing your bloody cat chat up Mrs. Norris last night. As a result I am now scarred for life. Why would I make something like that up?"

"Mrs. Norris?"

It was then that the aforementioned caretaker's cat leaped onto the bench beside the large orange Tom and rubbed her head against one of his many chins. "*Oh Garfield, last night was amazing.*" And then she began to purr.

"**Can't talk, eating.**" Was Garfield's only reply.

"See? See?" Harry said pointing.

Hermione stared at the pair of felines in open mouthed amazement. Ron was so shocked he actually stopped eating.

"**Ha!**" Garfield said finishing off the final platter of bacon. "**I win. Amateur.**" The fat cat issued a delicate belch that rattled the windows of the Great Hall.

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After Transfiguration class finished for the day, Hermione approached her favorite teacher.

"Professor, is there a name for someone who can speak the language of cats?"

"You know someone who can speak to cats?" The older woman appeared to be enraged. "Who is it? Tell me!"

Surprised at McGonagall's reaction Hermione decided against the truth. "No, no... I just ran across a reference to someone speaking to cats in a book in the library. I thought if such a thing existed, you, as a cat animagus would know. I was just curious."

McGonagall forced herself to calm down. "I'm sorry Miss Granger, a visceral reaction on my part. Yes there are those who can speak to cats. A speaker of cat language is called an 'Ailuro-mouth'."

"And the language its self is 'Ailuro-tongue?'"

"Yes."

"I couldn't help but notice your reaction..." Hermione said hesitantly. "Do Ailuro-mouths have a reputation for being dark like Parselmouths?"

McGonagall shook her head. "No, not exactly dark... but you should never trust one."

"But why?"

McGonagall's brogue thickened with her emotions welling to the surface again. "Because they're bastards. All of them."

Hermione's eyes widened. "Oh. Ok then. I'd best get to my next class." The bushy haired girl slowly backed away toward the door

McGonagall turned away from her student, and leaned over her desk supporting herself on her arms. She continued on, almost too softly to be heard. "Oh, they say they'll call, but they never do. Bastards!"