

Qitwra Muhammad

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A Furry Miracle

A heat wave loomed over Queens as summer was just entering its peak season. I've been at home, bored. It was two months since I quit my mundane teller job in the city. My boyfriend and I rented a room at his aunt's house. With so much time to reflect, I concluded that adulting wasn't really something I was good at. Ironically, this concept made me content. My phone vibrated loudly, knocking me out of my ascension toward a daydream. I looked without enthusiasm and thought, 'Hopefully this is a new job'. I answered my phone, and it was Capital One reminding me that my credit card was due.

Frustrated I turned on Netflix and began to watch "that 70's show", but I wasn't watching it. I could hear the sounds and the laugh track in the background. I remember the faces and the smiles, but it wasn't a direct thought that entered my mind. I was tired as hell, and the dimness in the room only made me want to sleep further, but before I could fall asleep, I needed to eat. I ordered Dominoes and lay still, trying not to think about anything, but I felt a wave of sadness. I've never been a complacent person; movement was essential to being productive and successful; however, I couldn't move. I felt stuck.

Weeks went by, and slowly I became inaccessible to my friends. The only communication I tolerated was conversations in the morning when my boyfriend would leave for work; and when he returned from work, I would pretend I had a full day of productivity. "How

“was your day babe? Filled out a lot of job applications?” he would ask as he embraced me in the evening. “Yes, I got a lot done today. I feel something good coming soon.” I would say with a plastered smile. This routine of watching Netflix, eating, sleeping, and pretending went on for a month. I accepted that perhaps there was nothing to look forward to, or so I thought.

Like most good things, you don’t realize them when they are in front of you. Given my current mood, I especially didn’t recognize them. One Thursday morning, however, I got up before the sun was out. In an effort to feel like I was contributing to the household, I was disappointed; I went to throw out the trash. I stumbled through the dark blue backyard that was slowly being touched by sunlight. I tossed the garbage bag forcefully onto a larger pile. Suddenly I paused. I could feel something outside with me, and that’s when I heard her. It was a “purr” that was so lonely and sad. Confused I tried to look around, but I couldn’t see anything. It was still dark, so I decided to go back inside the house.

The purr ruminated on my mind for the rest of the week. When Sunday night came, I eagerly prepared the garbage again for the early morning. I knew it was a cat I was looking for, but the real question was why? We already had a cat at my boyfriend’s aunt’s house that I didn’t like named Coco. She was a brute, and terrible. I wasn’t particularly interested in cats, but it was something about this cat’s moan that resonated with me.

I began to think and ponder on what could have been wrong. I went to bed early that night in hopes I could satisfy my curiosity. When the morning came, I grabbed the garbage and started my ascension across the backyard, looking into the darkness for anything I could find. I

saw nothing. For some reason, this caused me to frantically search the area because I couldn't accept that the cat I saw, wasn't real. I searched in the darkness. Corner to corner, through the grass, I searched, and just before I was just about to give up, I saw her. A black little furry ball with glowing green cat eyes. Those eyes fixated on me and then turned away. She lay back down and started to cry. I looked at her tiny body. I didn't know how to help her. I surely wanted to try to help, but I didn't know how. 'I know what might help,' I thought to myself. I went back in the house and took a can of cat foot from the pantry; I went back out in the yard and lay a can beside her. She looked up, saw the can, and then laid back down. Unsure of what to do, I retreated to the house to think of what to do next.

Once it was light outside, I searched the backyard again. With my boyfriend at work and the house empty, I returned to the same spot where I had left the cat food. The cat was still there, lying down. I examined her optically and assessed that she wasn't physically hurt. I went into the house, gathered some sheets, and without touching her, I scooped her in my arms through the sheet and held her. I'm not sure if it was instinct, but something told me that she simply just needed to be held. So that's what I did. I held her in my arms through a sheet for a long time. Rocking her back and forth, talking to her gently. At first, she cried and whimpered, and eventually, she looked at peace and fell asleep. I placed her back down and left a new can of cat food, and eventually went into the house for the night.

I kept my little secret to myself. She became my little friend, so I named her Jasmine because she reminded me of jasmine from the Disney movie Aladdin. I would go outside and spend time with her. Until one day, there was no Jasmine. Oddly, this made me sad and

concerned. As I was about to leave the backyard, I heard the grass moving behind me and a little cat body jumped out playfully from the grass. Taken aback by this newfound energy, I smiled. “Hey girl,” I said relieved. I brought her a new can and she playfully paced around me as I began a new conversation with her. It seemed like we understood each other; and so, for weeks this was our routine.

Jasmine’s mood drastically changed which was inspiring. Giddy and energetic; she took delight in playing on the small tree branches in the backyard. On this particular day, she clawed onto one branch of the weeping trees in the backyard. It began to snap and slowly separate while she was grasping at the bottom of it. She was literally hanging by a thread, and just as it was about to totally break apart and drop her, she moved onto another branch. I gazed silently. She turned and looked at me with a sly grin. ‘Okay, okay, I get it.’ I say mockingly to myself, understanding the very thing my new friend was trying to show me.

It wouldn’t be long after that day that Jasmine would eventually move on and stop visiting me. I would take out the trash in the morning and no longer find her in her corner waiting to be fed. Ironically, I wasn’t disappointed; I was happy for her. The value in good company is seldom to be experienced nowadays, but surely it was a miracle to be provided such a lesson. Caring for Jasmine allowed me to take better care of myself. I started to realize I was experiencing a mild form of depression and took the proper channels to aid me. Luckily, as I cared for Jasmine, my boyfriend and his family cared for me. It wasn’t an easy process, but I took my time and eventually, I found the movement essential to be productive again. Although that moment wasn’t a long one, it was impactful. Through much work and effort, things turned

completely around. Not only did I find a new job, but I got many promotions and had many wonderful experiences. Most importantly, I made a lifelong- furry friend that I can only be thankful for.