

## Jenny's Gift

Things went downhill when Mrs. Winnibar's black striped cat brushed against little Jenny's bare ankles purring affectionately, then taking off beckoning her to follow.

"Wait for me kitty!" Jenny yelled.

The chase came to a halt when the cat landed all four paws on the gooey frosting atop the carrot cake, freshly baked for Mrs. Winnibar's pinocle party.

"Boy, you've been a bad kitty—look at this mess you made!" Jenny scolded.

Jenny's mother rushed in to find Jenny and the cat sitting on the floor licking all the sweet frosting off themselves.

"What happened here Jenny?" Blurted her mom!

Mrs. Winnibar screamed, "MY CAKE!"

Jenny's mother had an extended day of housecleaning, delaying their Christmas shopping at JC Penny's. When arriving, Jenny was surprised to see Santa sitting in a big chair.

"Please Mama, can I go tell Santa what I want for Christmas?" Pleaded little five-year-old Jenny.

"Well, Little Missy, what would you like Santa to bring you this Christmas?"

"I've been real good Mr. Santa and would like to have a cat, just like Mrs. Winnibar's! But

Kitty was a bit bad today, got sweet gooey frosting all over the kitchen!"

Santa replied, "Well, Is there more on your list?"

"No Mr. Santa, heard daddy telling mama it's hard times, so all I want is a cat! Oh! I have an older brother Billy, that won't stop teasing me... I guess you'll put coal in his sock?"

Early the next morning, all were asleep in the small four-room house when the phone rang.

Jenny's mom quickly answered, "Hello!"

"Mrs. Ellsworth, this is the day foreman at Yellow Transit. I know this is Clyde's day off, but when he wakes up, please tell him it's important he come back to the dock, thank you."

Billy opened the door to leave for school, and turned back to Jenny, "See you later-Alligator! Shame you're too little to go!"

Now Jenny was alone thinking, *"I wouldn't mind a little teasing if it meant someone to play with, but I'd rather have a furry friend, like Mrs. Winnibar's cat."*

Jenny's dad awoke and her mom relayed the call. He left immediately for the dock.

"Glad you're here Clyde; your Christmas gift is giving us grief! That biggest one of yours has taught the others to climb over the top, take it home before it gets killed!" declared the foreman.

*"What am I to do now, Christmas is still a week away? I hope it's weened?"* Jenny's dad pondered. He took the kitten to their garage where he was sheltering their chickens. He placed her in one of the cages, blanketed with straw, hanging a large light bulb overhead with plans to bring

her warm milk after supper.

Christmas soon arrived, the kids were excited and joyous as they gathered around the tree. Jenny squealed with delight when she saw the cute kitten with a red bow around her neck. She picked her up carefully petting her. She thought, "*Santa got it just right, she looks just like Mrs. Winnibar's cat!*"

Summer came, Jenny and her new furry friend whom she called "Kitty" were inseparable. She dressed her doll and kitty in the new dresses and bonnets her mother made, pushing them around in an old baby buggy. Kitty didn't mind, as Jenny was kind and gentle, giving much love.

One day Jenny complained, "Mama, Kitty's eating too much, it's getting harder to lift her into the buggy!"

"Well, let's have a look." her mom observed. "I think Kitty is going to be a mama!"

Jenny pampered Kitty with much love and extra food right until she gave birth to five little long-haired kittens. Two were just like Kitty, two gray and one yellow.

Three more school years rolled around. Jenny grew taller, while Kitty's family grew also, becoming harder to find adoptions.

One day Jenny couldn't find Kitty. They searched everywhere. Days turned into weeks, then months. Jenny's heart was broken, praying that she was safe and happy wherever she was.

It was two summers after Kitty went missing that she heard Billy shouting, "Jenny, Jenny, co

me - look!"

Down the alley appeared a thin black striped, long-haired cat making loud sounds of meows.

"Kitty is this really you?" Jenny cried, rushing to her. The cat meowed and purred wrapping herself around Jenny's legs. "Yes, it is my Kitty!" She scooped her up giving her lots of love. Her prayers were answered. Kitty was safe and back home again.