

A Home for Christmas

by Diane Cooper



She crouched in the corner of the dark porch under the edge of the tarp that covered the stacked firewood and tried to stay out of the cold wind. Abandoned and unwanted, she had spent another long day of traveling until she had found herself here. Her sore feet and warm coat, which no longer kept out the chill of the cold night air, almost made her forget her incredible hunger.

From the other end of the porch she heard a door open, and, peeking out from under the tarp toward the square of light that spilled into the darkness of the porch, she saw a man headed her way.

As he reached the wood pile and began to remove the tarp, she quietly slipped out of her hiding place and headed along the wall toward the square of light, drawn by the variety of tempting aromas that drifted out of the door on a wave of warm air. She remembered being inside, being warm and well-fed and loved. It was a strong memory, a powerful memory, one that made her forget all the times people had chased her away. Glancing back at the man busy loading pieces of wood into his arms, she quickly slipped through the door.





Once inside, she crawled into the first hiding place she could find - the space beneath the old wood burning stove where it was warm and dark. (No one would ever find her here. Still she remained alert and ready to run. The man came back inside, closed the door, and placed his armload of wood in the corner then turned out the light and left the room. Safe and warm at last, she curled up and fell asleep.

Hours later she woke, stretched, and ventured out from under the stove. Quiet filled the dark house but outside she could hear the world begin to stir as dawn approached. Her explorations took her to a large tree filled with decorations that stood in one corner and had a few small bundles arranged beneath its branches.

She walked under the tree, batted at an ornament, circled the trunk and then...





satisfied it was a safe haven, stretched out among the packages and fell back to sleep.

“Oh Mommy, Daddy,” the little girl whispered as she peered under the tree, “a kitty.” She reached out her hand and gently stroked the cat. Cautiously the cat opened her eyes. Instead of an angry face or a broom she saw a little girl smiling at her and felt a small hand softly rubbing her cheek. Memories of kindness and love stirred within the cat and she began to purr. The other presents were forgotten as the little girl pulled the cat into her arms. “She’s all I wanted for Christmas. Thank you, oh, thank you.”





Her parents looked at one another, bewildered by the gift that they hadn't been able to place beneath the tree but grateful to see their daughter so happy.

The cat never told them who she was, where she had come from,
or how she found them. And they never asked. Instead they named
her Noel, gave her a home, and thought of her as their very own
Christmas miracle, for she brought them the gift of love and joy.



The Beginning

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