



## How Cats Came to Rule the Home

By LS Moyer

Long ago, when Big Cats ruled the kingdom, a baby was born that never grew up. At first she was doted upon because she cooed and mewed and loved to play with everything and everyone around her. She loved to turn somersaults with her brothers, ride on her father's back, snuggle beneath her mother's belly even though there was no more milk to fill her stomach. She loved getting her ears tickled and her neck caressed and her soft fur groomed. She did not know that she was not like the other Big Cats who were growing strong and fierce and roaring in the night time.

One day a Big Cat from a neighboring family came to visit.

Why are you so small? he asked.

I am the baby of my family, she said.

But even babies grow up, he said. I think there is something wrong with you.

There is nothing wrong with me. I am just small and you are big.

You will never find a mate, he said. You will not be able to take care of your children.

She had often wondered why her brothers and sisters no longer paid attention to her and why her mother and father found her playfulness tiring. Go play with your friends they would tell her.

But all of her friends were leaving to find mates.



She was alone.

One day while she was napping beneath a baobab tree and dreaming of chasing butterflies she felt the earth rumbling. Not like when the elephants paraded past. Not like when the zebras and giraffes danced about. And definitely not like when the kudus raced by.

On her belly she crawled through the grass to find out what was disturbing her beautiful dream.

It was a funny kind of creature. It did not have fur like she did. It did not have ears or legs or sharp claws to defend itself or a tongue to keep itself clean. It smelled funny and emitted a gray smoke out its hind end. It seemed to also have other creatures inside it. The kind that walk on two legs. Sometimes the chimps walk on two legs but they do not look like chimps.

She ever-so-quietly crawled closer.

One of the creatures with smooth skin and long hair put something in front of her eyes and looked right where she was hiding.

Mew mew, the smooth skin said.

No one had said that to her for a long, long time. Does this creature want to play? Will I get to turn somersaults and ride bareback and snuggle against its tummy? Will my ears get tickled and my neck caressed?

Slowly the little cat stood to her full height. Will this creature accept me even though I am small?

Mew mew, smooth skin said again.

Slowly they moved toward each other.

The smooth skin made herself small. Mew mew, she said. Mew mew.

The smooth skin put out her paw to greet her. She did not smell like her family but she did not smell like an enemy.

Then she said, “Hello little one. Are you all alone? What has become of your family?”

She let the smooth skin tickle her ears and groom her fur and hold her next to the warm belly.

Do you want to come home with me?

And this is how cats came to rule the home.

