

My Favorite Alley Cat

by ReadWorks
ReadWorks dedicates this story to Hapi, the cat.



Rosie knows not to feed stray cats. Even if they are cute, she isn't supposed to. She can't give them tuna. She can't give them milk. She can't give them even a little cat food. Her mother says, "No!" So when a cat slinks by Rosie's front porch, she waves hello, but that is all. When a cat creeps under her window at night, Rosie says, "Good night, Mr. Kitty," but that is all. When a cat approaches her on the playground at school, she shows it her math homework, but that is all.

There is one exception. His name is Frankie. It's okay to feed Frankie, because he isn't a stray. Nobody knows it, but Frankie is Rosie's cat.

They met on the Fourth of July. Rosie was at the park with her family watching the fireworks. Rosie was bored. Each firework was the same. One was green, and one was red, but they were all just loud noises to her. As the whole town looked to the sky, Rosie looked at the ground. Frankie was waiting for her.

Like everyone else in town, Frankie was watching the fireworks. A skinny little tabby cat with a tail that went *swoosh-swoosh-swoosh*, he liked the orange fireworks the best. Rosie whistled-she had just learned to whistle-and the cat came to say hello.

"Hello," said Rosie. "What is your name?"

The cat didn't say anything. Rosie would have to name him herself. She thought about the Fourth of July. She thought about the founding fathers. She remembered her favorite: Benjamin Franklin.

"I'll call you Frankie," she said.

While her family watched the fireworks, Rosie held out the end of a hotdog bun. Frankie ate it right up. She offered a potato chip, and Frankie ate that too. Finally, for dessert, she gave the cat half of her hotdog. Frankie meowed to say thanks, and Rosie knew they would always be pals.

That summer, she fed Frankie every day. He came each day at three o'clock. She would take him whatever she could find-anything her mother wouldn't notice. Frankie was not picky. He ate cheese straws, tater tots, and corners of grilled cheese sandwiches. Once, on a very hot day, she let him eat the end of her Popsicle. As always, he *meow-meow-meowed* to say thank you. She did not know where he went after lunch, but she knew he would always come back the next day.

When the weather changed, so did their routine. The first cold month, Frankie only came five times a week. Next month, he only appeared every third day. By the time her school let out for winter break, Rosie hadn't seen her cat in two weeks. She prepared a special treat for him on Christmas-sardines, right from the can-but Frankie did not come.

Rosie was scared. It's dangerous being a stray cat. What if something

happened to Frankie? Each day of her vacation, from three o'clock to three fifteen, she stared out the window. When no cat appeared, she got gloomier. By New Year's, she was so gloomy that she couldn't hide it any more.

"What's wrong?" asked her mother. "You look pretty sad for a girl on winter break."

Rosie couldn't help it. She told her mother everything: about the fireworks, the meowing, and even the Popsicle! She was afraid her mother would be angry, but Mom just smiled.

"I think," said Mom, "that your friend Frankie is a snowbird."

"A snowbird?" said Rosie. "No way, Mom. Frankie is a cat."

"A snowbird is a person or animal that goes south for the winter. When it gets cold, they go to a warmer state like Florida. I think Frankie will come home when it warms up."

"Yeah?"

"And when he does, I think you should invite him to move inside."

Rosie waited until the first warm day to get her hopes up. When spring came, she asked her mom to fix her a hotdog. She ate most of it, and then she took the last few bites outside on a plate. She shut her eyes and hoped. At three o'clock sharp, she heard a meow. The hotdog was gone, but Frankie was there. His tail swooshed against her arm.

"Hello," she said. "Tell me about your trip."

Bobby Gets a Doggy

by Vinnie Rotondaro



Bobby loves doggies. He loves big doggies and small doggies. He loves doggies that are soft and even doggies that aren't so soft. Bobby loves all doggies, except for mean doggies that bite people, because really, nobody likes mean doggies that bite people.

But Bobby doesn't have his own doggy. He can only look at other people's doggies and wish he had one for himself, and sometimes at night, after his parents tuck him into his bed and turn off the light, he sighs and thinks to

himself about how badly he wants one.

Bobby is a good little boy. He doesn't complain, and he never whines about how he doesn't have a doggy. But Bobby's mom and dad know how happy a doggy would make him.

One day, Bobby's parents drive over to the pet store and look at the different doggies for sale. All the doggies are small and young. They are puppies. One puppy has fuzzy white hair with a brown patch over its eye and floppy ears. Another has tall pointy ears and a coat of hair that is red and black. Another still has long, wispy hair that is all white.

Bobby's parents look at each of the puppies. They pick them up and pet them and let them lick their faces. There is one puppy that they haven't seen, though. This puppy has grey hair with some white in it, and little black eyes. It is in the corner of the puppy pen with its head down, and it is looking out at Bobby's parents with a cute look on its face.

"What is that puppy's name?" Bobby's father asks.

"That puppy's name is Lucy," says the pet store man.

Bobby's father picks up Lucy. She is very, very soft, and very, very nice. Bobby's father and mother know that this is the dog for Bobby. They pay for her and take her home with them, and hide her in the bathroom.

Bobby comes home from school, takes off his backpack, and sits down on a couch in the living room.

"Bobby," his mother says. "How was your day at school?"

"Oh, it was fine," he says. But Bobby's mother knows that he is secretly wishing he had a doggy.

Bobby's dad quietly opens the bathroom door and scoops Lucy into his arms. He sneaks up behind Bobby and very quietly lowers Lucy onto his lap.

Bobby yelps with joy!

"What is her name?!" he asks his parents.

"Her name is Lucy," they say. "And she is all yours."

And that's how Bobby meets his best friend.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Use the article "Bobby Gets a Doggy" to answer questions 1 to 3.

1. What does Bobby wish he had at the beginning of the story?

2. What does Bobby sometimes do after his parents tuck him into bed?

3. What can you conclude about Bobby's personality from his thoughts and actions in this story? Support your answer with information from the text.

Use the article "My Favorite Alley Cat" to answer questions 4 to 6.

4. What does Rosie do the first time she sees Frankie?

5. What does Rosie do every day for Frankie during the summer?

6. What can you conclude about Rosie's personality from her actions in this story?
Support your answer with information from the text.

Use the articles "**Bobby Gets a Doggy**" and "**My Favorite Alley Cat**" to answer questions 7 to 8.

7. Compare the character of Bobby with the character of Rosie. Support your answer with information from both stories.

8. Contrast the character of Bobby with the character of Rosie. Support your answer with information from both stories.
