

A Cat's Perspective...

The year has 365 days. And for most of the year, 364 days to be exact, I am happy. But there is one day of the year that I dread. The day when *Mom* comes to visit.

My name is Oliver. I split my time between catching mice and eating because those are the two things I do best. I live in the *oh-so-lovely* house on Elm street with my two-legged friend, Jeanette. Jeanette is a great helper in my daily life. Timely water bowls and treats, back-rubs, scratches under the chin.... And best of all, my privacy. But there is one day that everything changes. When Jeanette isn't there to meet my needs. Where regards to my privacy are forgotten.

Riiiiing!

I was on my feet in an instant, my eyes alert and I darted them around the room. It was a familiar sound that I heard everyday and I turned my glare to the cause of the noise. Jeanette, sensing that the vibrating black mouse was interrupting my afternoon nap, moved to silence it.

"Hello?" She says.

Cross that I had been woken so early, I tiredly began to groom myself.

"Hey, Jessie!"

I paused to give Jeanette a disapproving glance. I wish humans would maintain the same level of sophistication as cats, sometimes. Always squealing, whining, and mostly sounding like they always have a hairball.

"Oh yes, the party is at 6. But mom won't be getting here for another three hours. There's just so much to do..."

At this point I leap off the couch. Jeanette shoos me away and I know that I haven't misheard. Soon she will be yelling at me for trying to play with her or attempting to get a better view from the TV table. She has given me the signal that it's time for me to hide—it's the word "*Mom.*"

It wasn't until many hours later that trouble arrived, however. I, being the clever cat I am, had already hidden myself deep inside a pile of blankets.

"Oliver!" Jeanette laughed when she found me. "So that's where you've been.." She rubbed her nose against mine and I tried to move my face away from hers. Suddenly she paused as if something had occurred to her. "Why, we've got to hide you right away. We can't let mom know you are here."

I growled in frustration. *What had I been trying to do?*

I didn't notice that Jeanette had left the room until I heard the sound of the door clicking. Immediately, I was alert. I remembered the last time the door had made that sound. It had refused to open for over three hours afterward.

I lowered myself down to the floor and crept up to the door slowly. I pushed it gently with one paw.

Nothing. I threw myself at the door hissing and yowling, but it didn't move an inch. Tired out, I circled around the room once before trying again. It was then that I realized that my worst nightmares were coming true. Mom really was coming to visit. Which meant that I was to remain in this room until Jeanette came to let me out. I hissed angrily at that thought. I longed to know what happened outside door while I was locked inside of this room, year after year.

Agitated, I paced the room trying to find a way out.

Then, I spotted the open window. I climbed onto the bed to try and get a better view. It would be a tough jump, but this is what cats were made for. I turned and padded to the edge of the bed before bounding across the bedspread and leaping, paws outstretched for the windowsill. I missed, and my claws raked the wall until they found a stable grip. I extended one paw slowly before latching onto the windowsill. Slowly, I pulled myself up.

Triumphant, I jumped out onto the grassy lawn. I knew in the back of my mind that Jeanette wouldn't be too happy about the marks on the wall, but I was too excited to think about that. I bounded across the

lawn towards the main doors when I suddenly came to a stop. There on the front porch lay a tiny sleeping figure.

I pad up to where the figure lies. It's only a miniature terrier sort of dog, with a comical long coat of grey and white hair. He suddenly lifts his head and I stop, ears flattened against my head.

"Back back back!" he yammers. "Back back back back back!"

Typical dogspeak. So uncouth! He skids to a halt, facing me. Like all miniature dogs, he's pretending to take up as much space as if he was a real proper-sized dog.

"Well, well, a stranger," I say. "What's your name, little fellow?"

You have to know how to treat dogs. I know all the best ways of making them mad with rage. This one is about to burst a blood vessel.

"Witzer! Witzer by name and Witzer by nature! Witzer! Witzer! Witzer!"

"Did you say Witzer? Was that it?"

"Go back to your own garden."

"This *is* my garden." I hiss, arching my back and rising up on my legs. I lift a front paw and unsheathe my claws. But Witzer doesn't retreat. I consider the options. *A double cut and thrust, with passado and swipe to the nose? Or a slick left-right slash, feint, then a jab to the ears?*

Only trouble is, I'm not sure if Witzer is the sort of dog that drops back when he's overcome by superior speed and weaponry Or the sort of dog that ignores his scratches and keeps fighting. I hate dogs that don't recognise when they're outclassed.

"This is my territory, I have every right to be here." I move forward a few steps. "You on the other hand..."

"I'm on patrol. It's my duty." He says *duty* in that doggy way, like it makes him so important.

I give him a yawn. "You're boring."

His eyeballs are popping, he's almost having a fit. He barks and pants at the same time.

"Idiot!... Idiot!....Idiot!...Idiot!" He yaps.

I'm a coiled spring ready to burst into action. The passado *and* the left-right slash. The ears *and* the nose. That's when an old lady comes out, probably attracted by Witzer's loud yapping. She reaches down and pats the dog's head. "Hey, boy, what's the matter?" She asks. Then she sees me. "Jeanette!" She screeches, falling back onto a lawn chair. "Jeanette!"

Witzer begins yapping incoherently and I jump back, unsure of what is going on.

Jeanette appears in the doorframe and I bound towards her. She catches me mid-leap.

"Jeanette, who's cat is that?" The old lady demands. "The neighbours? Ms. Perkins? She did say she had a cat.... Maybe it's lost. Or..." She pauses, glaring at Jeanette. She looks at the way I am snuggled in her arms.

"... Is it yours?" She demands, her eyes narrowed in a dangerous manner.

"What- I... I-I um..." Jeanette takes a moment to compose herself. "Well, mom I was just about to tell you about it."

"Tell me about what?"

"Oliver." She says, lifting me up so the lady can see. She sputters and leans away. "Jeanette, my allergies!"

I growled. I'm not *that* unclean. I glared at the terrier at her feet. In the presence of his master, the dog displayed complete loyalty and sat snootily beside the old lady.

"I've had him for three years now," Jeanette continues, ignoring the lady's cries. "Mom, you aren't allergic to cats! You've come here many times and you've never had a problem."

"Jeanette!" The old lady objects loudly. "Jeanette, how could you? You know about my breathing problems!"

"But mom, Oliver's no trouble! He's completely independent and doesn't ever bother you lest you disturb his naps." I snuggled deeper into her arms and purr contently.

The lady doesn't seem too happy, but she doesn't say anything. Witzer stares up at her in a confused manner. I almost pity the poor thing. It probably has no idea what's going on. The growl of a car draws Jeanette and the lady away from the porch. I can still hear them arguing as they walk away. Witzer is glued

to his master's side and he trots alongside her. His little legs are pistoning up and down, but you can see he'd rather drop dead than fall behind. I laugh from my comfortable spot. Witzer leaps around in circles angrily in response.

"This isn't over!" He yaps. "Not yet! Not ever! No! No! No!"

I ignore him and sassily walk away with a swish of my tail. Leaping onto a party table, I sit down. I'll never have to hide again during Mom's visits. I'm not sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing though. I watch Witzer trip over the back stairs. I smile. Only time will tell.