

Once upon a time, in the Land of Cherry, a family was blessed with gifts of chaos and joy. These gifts came wrapped in fur and started a happy chapter in their lives.

### **Day 1 - The Arrival**

It was an ominous day when the tiny creature arrived - the first day of the new year for the matriarch of the palace (i.e. her birthday!). The little speck was called Buffy (and sent out the telepathic message it wanted to be called Buddy).

Buffy/Buddy was dusty from adventures best left untold and was promptly given a sponge bath. The kitten felt weirded out with the new look. No one knew her age. The village psychic said she was 8 weeks old. The palace folk and villagers ignored the psychic's wisdom, but it was later validated by the local medicine man (peasants call him 'the vet').

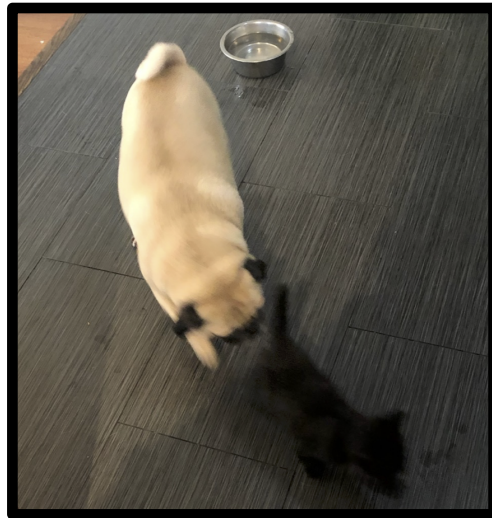


Buffy was scared of the new situation yet still explored and worked to release the shackles of terror from her being. A cat relative and influencer (Swiper) suggested bird videos to ease the transition. Swiper is the sort to tell others to do as he says, not as he does. He snubs this type of mind candy and prefers reading books instead. Buffy figured it out and found a happy place on her own: the lap of one of the palace residents. She discovered that food also gets her into a happy space. That night, she slept in her new mom's office with food, water, a litterbox, and a dog bed.



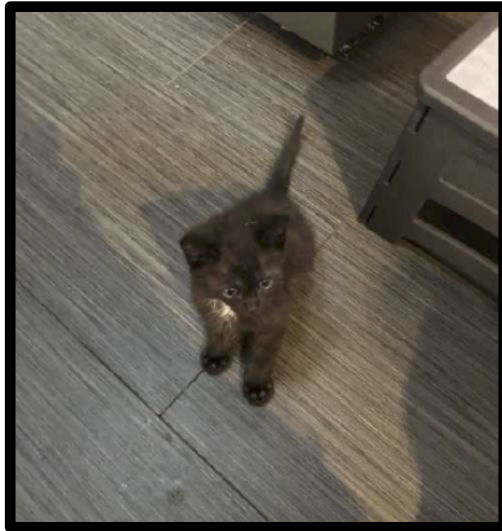
## **Day 2 - Buffy Gets a Bitch and a New Identity**

Buffy continued to explore her new stomping grounds and acquired a steady shadow in the form of Muffin, the resident dog. Muffin wasn't sure what to make of this little usurper, but she soon decided it was in her best interest to embrace the curious roommate. She had been a bit out of sorts since the passing of her late leader Bubbles the Great (another pug) and craved a fresh direction in her life. Muffin is very subservient and needs an alpha creature around - a friend and boss rolled up into one. Given the chance, Muffin would join a cult. She felt it better to give up her seniority to a cute kitten than the folks at the village smoke and tattoo shops.



Buffy started to indoctrinate Muffin into her ways. She kept Muffin busy all day with her fast and energized movements throughout the palace. Muffin hadn't ever moved so much in one day and was exhausted by nightfall.

A surprise came on her 2nd day at the palace - an updated moniker! Esmerelda. The name Buffy was banned in the kingdom. Although some peasants resisted the name, the patriarch of the palace insisted. He always wanted to name a boy animal Esteben but was presented only with female animals. Esmerelda is sort-of close to this preferred name; at least they share the first two letters. The peasants called her other names in secret - Princess of Walnut Land and Snookum were a choice few whispered around the land.



### **The First Week**

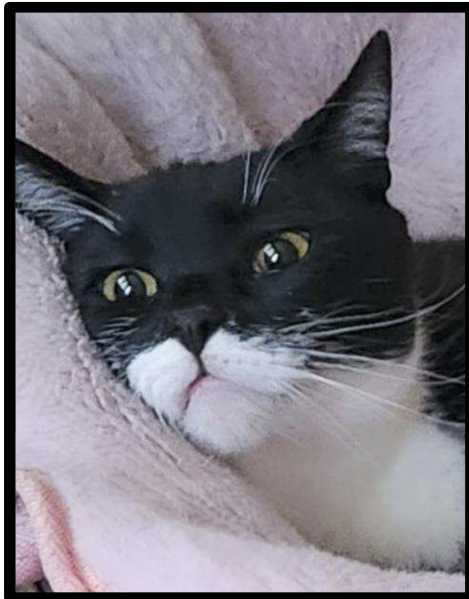
Esmerelda continued to find her place in her new world. She evaded the nefarious attempts of local paparazzi trying to take pictures for the tabloids, although they did publish a few photos.



She disliked that they captured her scrawny tail and decided to exert authority elsewhere. Esmerelda showed Muffin who was the new tiny boss by continually pawing at Muffin and sampling Muffin's food. She marked her territory nicely. Esmerelda even took over a favorite rope toy of Muffin and was quite pleased with this action. She dared anyone to say anything. Nobody did.



Not everyone was pleased with this behavior. Swiper showed concern over this little whippersnapper. Enough so that he came out from his hiding place under the bed to give a face to his displeasure.



She found new favorite things to do like sit on the kitchen stool and meow for food.



She soon lost the last vestiges of terror by challenging herself to reach beyond her comfort zone and small stature. The first challenge she offered herself (and then accepted) - reach the kitchen counter. Esmerelda intuitively knew she needed another perspective to fully embrace life. She wasn't afraid of the patriarch who tried to block her goal; she clawed her way up his legs to reach the summit. Success!

Swiper had to bow down to Esmerelda for this stroke of ingenuity - and fearlessness.



Esmerelda continued to overtake the household. Her next prize: Muffin's bed. She found comfort in this cozy spot at night while she slept apart from the rest of the household. Her safe space/panic room kept her from being stepped on in the middle of the night while she acclimated. Her ninja moves forced all to stay on their toes.



### **Week Two - Esmerelda's secret is revealed!**

During her first visit with the local medicine man, the palace discovered a secret Esmerelda had been hiding - she was a boy!



Esmerelda toyed with keeping the same name to show his inclusion of all genders. He wished to represent the kingdom of the Bay Area. The peasants protested and started to call him Esteban since this is what the patriarch said he'd call a boy. However, soon a royal decree was issued with his new (4th?) name: BATMAN!!

Everyone in the land soon learned his new name was very fitting as Batman had superhero quickness and a sneakiness in his aura. One day the matriarch went to get some liquid crystal from the icebox (peasants call it 'water') and discovered Batman had quickly disappeared from

the room. She started to wonder if his superpowers included shifting to alternate dimensions while she and the patriarch searched for his whereabouts. They soon heard a faint meow - Batman was in the icebox! After toying with the idea of baby latches (and quickly dismissing it), a royal decision was made to get him a collar with a bell.

Soon after his narrow escape from the cold and dark icebox, he snuck into another cabinet! However, this time the residents were onto his wily ways and found him right away. That collar can't come soon enough!

### **A Mystery is Solved!**

Much to Batman's chagrin, the local medicine man asked the residents to keep track of his bathroom trips. The residents were concerned something was wrong with Batman as there wasn't much solid evidence of his trips to be found. Something sneaky was going on; they suspected Batman was trying to thwart their attempts to catalog his movements.

It turns out it wasn't Batman being sneaky; it was Muffin! The palace residents discovered an icky secret and sent out a query to the village. They asked why their dog eats cat poop. Muffin kept quiet as she came to terms with being found out. The palace looked to find a dog proof litter box.



Toys were brought in to help them all forget about this unpleasant episode. Batman liked playing whack-a-mole with his ball contraption and flipping around in his cube. He also loved, loved, loved the boxes the toys came in!



Muffin continued to watch Batman and play with him. Batman didn't judge her poop-eating habit; Muffin felt both ignored and loved at the same time.

Batman also got his new tracking device - the bell collar. His response was one of resignation.



The peasants started asking Batman to show others his place as their new leader. They felt the palace had become a three-ring circus and needed reassurance. They looked weak to neighboring kingdoms and called for better representation. They demanded a cape. Their cries went unheeded.

### Week 3 - Auntie Visits

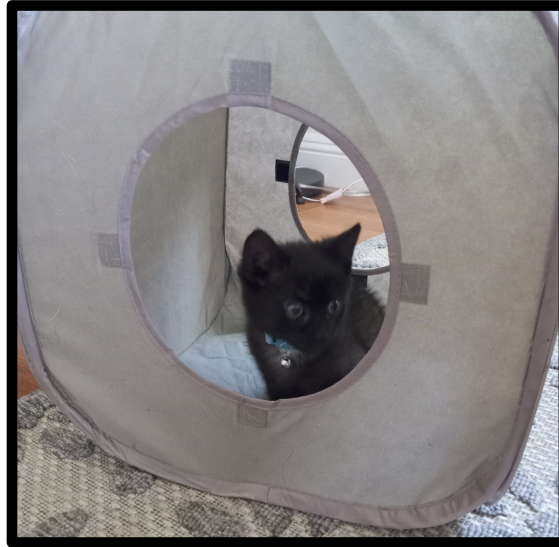
As soon as she walked through the palace door, Auntie (a.k.a. the village psychic) was greeted by a barking and wagging Muffin. Muffin was all up in her space for a long time: sniffing, wagging, and climbing onto her for attention. Muffin thought Auntie was someone who did not know of her snacking secret. Muffin was mistaken. After Muffin calmed down, Batman came over to investigate.



Since Auntie was busy with the new kitten, Muffin decided to check if a snack was baking. It was not. Batman was inspired and had a shoelace snack.



Suddenly, Batman was caught off guard by some creature from another dimension. He was so distracted, he allowed his picture to be taken. He didn't care as he was receiving orders from the mothership and had to pay attention.



During the visit, Muffin thought the mailman was at the door and was disappointed to find out he was not there. She decided to scare Batman to cover her sadness. Muffin looks forward to the mailman's visit every day.



## **Stinky Business**

As the days went by, both animals discovered they enjoyed working together to foul up the air around the palace matriarch. Muffin led the odorous revolt and Batman followed suit. Batman was pleased with Muffin's initiative. They both pretended it wasn't them causing the stink!



## **Cliffhanger!**

What did they do? Nobody knows, but everybody knows they did something. They look too guilty.



We may or may not find out later as their adventures continue...