

# A 'cat'-astrophic friendship

Apr. 9, 1986

Brenda never had a pet before. "I think we have mice," she said one day, pointing to some brown specks on a ledge behind the refrigerator. "Look, those are mice droppings."

Knoded. "Let's get a cat," she said quickly.

I love cats, so I agreed. I told my parents, and soon some friends with a barnyard litter had donated a kitten to the Brenda-never-had-a-pet-we-think-we-have-mice cause.

He was cute that first day, and Brenda fell in love with the warm, fine-boned, beige ball of fur.

He stumbled, splay-footed, out of the cat-carrying-cage and into our living room.

The drive had left him woozy, but he still had curiosity enough to sniff, meowing, around the living room, attack the length of string Don threw at him, and then devour a whole bowl of Kitten Chow.

"Oooh, it's so cute!" Brenda cooed. "What should we name it?"

Since we weren't sure whether he was male or female (nothing had developed yet), we decided to call him Ed Buffy after a friend of ours who had recently left for seminary to become a traveling evangelist.

We figured we could call him Ed if he were a boy, or Buffy if he were a girl.

The Brenda-Ed love affair ended within the week.

I'd wake up in the morning to shrieks of pain and anger as Ed attacked yet another pair of stockings Brenda was trying to put on.

With a crazed gleam in his eye, he'd climb the back of her bathrobe to reach her belt and then swing from it as she ironed her clothes.

To Brenda, Ed had become not the cute, cuddly, and adoring little pet she had expected, but a raving yellow monster with sharp teeth and claws, the ability to scale tall buildings in a single bound, and leaping talents that surpassed any possessed by major league basketball stars.

"Let's get rid of him," she said that Friday.

I looked at her. "How?" I asked. "What do you want to do — throw him off the porch?"

She realized how silly her sug-



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gestion was, gritted her teeth, and prepared to "grin" and bear it until the time when Ed would finally calm down.

Admittedly, Brenda was handed the raw end of the deal.

For some reason, Ed took a liking to the blue shag rug in her bedroom.

Although he had a litter box, he felt he could bury his messes just as well in the rug. It took weeks to break him of the habit.

I often lost patience with this "kitten" myself.

When I patted him, he had a habit of suddenly wrapping his paws around my arm, digging his claws in to pull me close, and then sinking his teeth into my wrist.

The only way he would let go

was if I hurled him across the room. That just made Ed hungry for more. At the end of each of these attacks I looked like a suicide victim.

Ed swung from the curtains, knocked over vases, and tore the trash can apart.

He also loved Brenda's fluted cake pan.

We'd open the door of the porch to let him in, and he'd make a beeline for the kitchen, run to the shelf, and leap up into it.

He wouldn't leave it alone until we turned it over so he couldn't climb into it anymore.

We hoped he would calm down when he was neutered in November, but after sitting around in stunned silence for a few days, he was as crazy as ever.

One night Brenda had a nightmare about him.

"You and I were living in a house somewhere," she told me. "I stepped downstairs for something, and Ed was standing by the front door.

"He was so huge, he was blocking our exit.

"I didn't know if he was going to let us pass by," she said. "He was

standing there, purring, and his tail was swishing like he wanted to play with us."

I have to admit, Ed isn't all bad.

Any visitors are subjected to brief periods of Ed-watching whenever the conversation slows down; he's as loyal as a dog; and we have had no sign of mice since he was carried through the door.

Brenda was convinced she wouldn't miss him a bit when she moves out of the apartment in June to get married, but a few weeks ago, he began growing calmer.

"Donald and I were just at the mall," she told me one afternoon, "and we walked by a pet store where they had these adorable little kittens in the window.

"I think I'm really going to miss him," she said, surprising even herself.

A little while later I heard a shriek rise from her bedroom. When I ran back to see what was wrong, Ed came flying out the door at me.

Brenda sat on her bed with a tattered pair of stockings in one hand as she rubbed a scratched ankle with the other.



# Two bad calls at High Court

WASHINGTON — One case before the Supreme Court involved an Orthodox Jew who wanted to wear a yarmulke. Another case involved some high school students in Pennsylvania who wanted to form an extracurricular club for Bible study. The high court

agreed that Goldman's headgear violated Air Force regulations on uniformity of dress. Gregory ordered Goldman to take off the yarmulke and to leave it off, even in the hospital. Goldman protested the order and eventually brought suit. He charged that the order vi-

must accommodate sincerely held religious convictions. Goldman's yarmulke was inconspicuous. The dissenters agreed that military uniformity is a reasonable requirement that might be enforced against the next saffron robe that came along, but as O'Connor said,



Conservative View

James Kilpatrick