

Sonia
HOLLIMON

(Not so) cool cat

It's one hair-raising experience after another

He has a body like a panther: sleek, long-limbed, bonelessly agile. Expressive green eyes in direct contrast to hair blacker than jet. Some find him precious — adorable



even. Personally, I think he's dangerous. However, no matter what your opinion of him, he'll always leave his mark. That's why I've been trying to get that

freakin' cat declawed. So far, he's left a mark on my ear, my ankles and my arms. To say that I can't stand the cat is an understatement — I have ex-boyfriends I like better. I'm no Cruella DeVil. I like four-legged fuzzies quite a bit, it's just that I prefer the kind that bark and lick your face to the kind that deliberately snub you after you feed them. Actually, in this case, a kid (as in baby goat) would be preferable to the terror that is Kitty.

Calling the cat "Kitty" may not sound very imaginative, but we do it because we're trying to give the cat some kind of identity reinforcement,

“*When he got his paw stuck in my Jell-O, that was the last straw.*”

because, unfortunately, Kitty thinks he's a dog.

I'm not sure how that happened. My aunt found Kitty at a grocery store, and true to form, brought him home, feeling sorry for the little bag of bones. Not even Mother Teresa could love this cat, but somehow, Aunt Bunny found a way. I wasn't there the day Kitty came home, but he must have thought he'd hit the jackpot when he met our four goldfish and the bird — our house must have looked like a kitty combo plate.

Like any good canine, Kitty enjoys drinking out of the toilet. And if that doesn't work, he'll get in the tub. Imagine my surprise to step into my nice, relaxing bubble bath and see a big fluff of dark hair sliding around in the water. Kitty, you're no Dean Cain.

The rest of my family seems to love that cat — even my cousin who currently has a long "love bite" down her right cheek, but I personally torture the cat whenever I get the chance. Besides, he started it.

When he ate my lunch from Taco Bell, I was upset but understanding — after all, I'm the human, and I shouldn't have put temptation in his way. When he tore a chunk out of my tuna sandwich and put a snag in my favorite J. Crew sweater, I said "Bad Kitty!" and put him outside.

But when he got his paw stuck in my Jell-O, that was the last straw.

I'm not really mean to Kitty. We just have a love-hate relationship. He seems to love me for no reason (probably because I'm allergic to him), and I hate him for plenty. So, when he jumps into the kitchen sink to try and lick the bowl after I make

pasta salad, I just turn on the water — oops! Just a butterfingers I guess.

My new best friend in Kitty-warfare is the spray bottle. He hates that even more than he hates it when I spray Glade Lasting Fresh scent by his tail. I even put him outside on Halloween. I figured, a black cat on Halloween — what could be better? We only got two trick-or-treaters. Talk about your plans that backfire.

Every now and then, when it's just Kitty and me at home, I'll slip him some tuna, or his favorite: macaroni and cheese. Sometimes I'll pet him — but only after I pull my sleeve down over my hand. I have secretly dubbed him "Kitty, purveyor of all evil" and I put him outside every chance I get.

Deep down — I mean *really* deep down, in the caverns of my heart — Kitty and I are pretty good buds. We're kind of like siblings. It's OK for me to torture him, but if you mess with him, I'll be mad.

But, if you're nice, I'll show you how to play "Spin the Kitty."

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Anthony
NGUYEN

Between the covers

Some friends are nearer, dearer than others

I've noticed as of late I've had little time to enjoy the company of some of my closest friends. Not the friends who I go out with who enjoy the machinations of the "Low-



Tolerance Man-Defender of the Stupid" — sorry, long story. This isn't a story about those friends.

This is a story about the friends of mine who share my bed,

my kitchen table, my bathroom, my car, my living room, and sometimes — if I can manage — my shower. No, this isn't about any of my perversions or predilections to sex and whipped cream. No, these friends of mine are very, very special. Who are they? Books.

Right now, you're probably thinking one of two things: "Wow, how did Anthony know to write about such a timely and informative topic? He must have his finger on the public pulse!" Or "Soooo *this* is what a no-significant-other-not-even-at-the-station-let-alone-ride-the-train-less person thinks about on Friday night, huh? Next thing you know, he'll be talking about self-stimulation (the big M-word) and eating cheese-cake!"

Well, stop thinking bad things about me.

But you've read it correctly. Books. And I'm not talking about the 50-pound variant you lug to biochem or your lit classes. But the kind you'd like to open and read. I know, books are the *last* thing you want to talk about with a break coming up and

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finals just a short time away. But this makes it all the more appropriate.

A few weeks ago, my friend Sean and I were at Barnes & Noble perusing the shelves. (I just love that word... perusing, not shelves, sheesh!) Well, it's not a regular thing we do, but we end up going there once or twice a month — if not to buy something, then to waste time productively. Usually we check out the latest magazines, then we move onto The Aisle. You know, the corridor down the middle of the store, where the latest fiction and nonfiction paperbacks as well as some themed tables are arranged.

We're both seniors, and although he has nuke power school and I have grad school next year, we're both looking forward to some respite from the daily grind of a university education. I can't stress the number of times we've complained about not being able to read a particular book because of a lack of time. But, like I said, a big break looms on the horizon, and during that break I plan on catching up with some of my old friends.

I consider books my friends because, like friends, they don't see or care about the color of your skin, they don't care about how rich or

poor you are, and they certainly don't comment on your appearance. Well, OK, sometimes I do look hideous (unlike the photo that accompanies this column — not!), and my human friends will make sure I'm "aware" of it. But all in all, with books you can share one of the most endearing and everlasting forms of friendship you can have.

So what bugs me is that, during school, I am unable to keep in touch with these friends on a regular basis. Whether it's exams one week or lack of sleep the next, I seem to come up with or am burdened by the excuses from hell.

Truthfully, it's partly my fault. I still remember the summer when I went through the blank verse translations of "The Odyssey" and "The Iliad," read all the Michael Crichton novels through "Congo," as well as dissected literature on Schrodinger's Kittens (no pun intended, ask your physics prof). Why, I even read "Don Quixote" on my volition. But now sleep seems more important — or sitting around watching television. And that makes me scared.

But don't let me mislead you about some books you might encounter here on campus.

I still remember "Pamela and Joseph Andrews," "Catch-22" and "Room with a View," and "Even Brook Trout Get the Blues" (a good book, but overkill on fly-fishing). I read all of those during the context of a course.

I really enjoy reading, and I have an unnatural zeal for gathering information that complements this. Unfortunately, this zeal only manifests itself with topics I'm interested in — fortunately I'm an eclectic person.

But being in school has taught me that a number of authors out there need to get a grasp on writing — especially ones in the scientific disciplines. For those of you who have the misfortune of not taking a science class, you won't really comprehend what I'm about to say: **Most science textbooks are dry enough to be used as kindling.** Then again, you've probably got some candidates for "Dry Book of the Year."

But this isn't about those books. What I hope to get across is this: If you don't want to lose these friends, make sure you take some time out to "talk" to them. Because on cold wintry nights, they can take you places you've never been or will never be — all in the span of a few hours. In a few pages, they can tell you things that you know or weren't even aware of. But best of all, they'll always be there as long as you have the desire to read. So take time out after finals week and catch up with all your friends.

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