

Always beside you

It was the first snowfall of winter. George was lost in memories of a time when he and his beautiful wife shared this walk together when they were both young. They had chased one another through the winter trees, carefree and sure footed as they danced over the frosty carpet that gathered on dead leaves and twigs. The dark branches had slowly become dusted with snow and their world had been black and white. There was no sound and they had been the only people in it.

George held himself more upright, tilting his walking stick at a jaunty angle so that it looked part of his accessories and not a necessary aid for helping him keep his balance. He put his face up to feel the snowflakes tickle his cheeks, trying to recapture the moments when Jane had called out to him to hurry up. They were playing hide and seek and she was getting cold waiting for him. Of course, he had pretended he couldn't find her and she, in turn, had pretended that she couldn't be seen. He imagined he could hear her calling "Cooee..can't catch me.."

Concentrate, George told himself, pull yourself together or you'll be falling flat on your face. There is no-one around so you could be lying in need of help for a very long time. Even speaking sharply to himself didn't quite overcome the sadness and sense of loneliness that he felt.

The snow was falling faster and settling deeper on the forest floor. It was time to turn back; he couldn't walk any further. Jane wouldn't want him to be sad, so to cheer himself up he decided to retrace his footprints in the snow as they had once done together, pushing and shoving each other. As he looked down concentrating on putting his feet in the right place, he noticed another set of footsteps beside his own. They were smaller, daintier, closer together. How curious, George thought, looking around. There hasn't been anyone else here.

A gust of wind unsettled the trees and flakes of snow caressed his shoulders. Did he hear a little laugh or was it a trick from the winter sounds of the forest? George really couldn't be sure, but he felt warm and comforted as he followed two sets of footprints on his way home.

Marnie



Face the Fear

I am Pashca and I come from another time zone, where many of us choose to enter the body of one of your more highly developed domestic cats. As in my case, and my twin Kaini, for a specific purpose, in this instance to help Sue overcome her fear of cats, which she has carried around with her for 50 years. We are a race of beings called 'Paschats' from a small planet in the solar system of Sirius. We communicate telepathically. For 6 years I have been going through domestic abuse with an Earth family, while at the same time my twin Kaini was paving the way for my connection to my mistress Sue, who I have shared most of my life with, supporting, loving and healing each other. But it took a lot of planning to reach that stage. Sue and I are sharing this story so you, the reader (listener) can get a better perspective from both sides, as to the complexity of this whole operation.



My phobia has caused me many years of anxiety and embarrassment. My husband had even erected a high garden fence to help me feel safe from attack. I would have nightmares of being mauled by a tiger and saw any feline as a predator. So you can imagine my terror whilst relaxing in the garden one day, when a stray cat strode confidently into my 'safe space'. My initial reaction was to flee indoors, but something stopped me. I felt pleasantly paralysed. A sense of calm washed over me as this beautiful feline cast a spell on me. She visited me daily just sitting staring at me and almost telepathically reassuring me that 'all was well'. By day 4, as if in a trance and hearing the words in my head 'feel the fear and do it anyway' I invited her to come and sit on my lap.

My twin Kaini arrived unannounced in Sue's garden when the first stage preparation was complete. Using telepathy we guided Sue to read a book called 'The Lion People', which planted a seed of inter cosmic communication. It was time for stage two, getting Sue over her fear of cats. Kaini was playing her part perfectly and within a few months had completely transformed Sue's attitude towards cats from fear to love.☺

Each day this cat slipped further into my heart. what all my family were witnessing was nothing short of a miracle. After 50 years of being afraid of cats they were observing this stray cat hypnotise me, and making me feel completely comfortable in her presence. Over many months we became inseparable. I had fallen in love with her. She had done what no other human or animal had ever come close to, and that was to get me over my fear of cats.

Stage two was complete. Sue was no longer afraid of cats and we knew it was time for Kaini to leave, setting the stage ready for me to enter Sue's life.

The hit & run traffic accident had left Kaini a paraplegic, so on the advice of the vet, after ten days of making her as comfortable as possible, it was agreed that she would be euthanised. That was the saddest day of my life, but in my heart I knew Kaini had come into my life for a purpose – to get me over my fear of cats- mission accomplished, and for which I would be eternally grateful. Two months later, and still mourning the loss of my feline companion, a friend informed me of a new cat at the cattery that was waiting to be re-homed. I knew Kaini's death could not be in vain, and that it was all part of a bigger plan, and my instincts were telling me I had to follow this through, so off I went to the cattery. The moment I saw her my heart skipped a beat, and when I looked into her eyes I saw Kaini looking back at me. I knew immediately she was going to be my new feline companion.

It didn't take long for me to become part of my new family. I listened intently to all Sue's troubles, kissing away her tears, and there were many, and healing her with my perfect pitch purr. Human scientists have finally discovered that us cats purr at a frequency of exactly 26 hertz, which corresponds with the frequency that scientists use in vibrational therapies, to deal with many things, including pain & joint mobility. Sue had been diagnosed with arthritis many years before I came into her life. One night she had been in a lot of pain and could not sleep. I knew I could help her, so I jumped up on the bed, and lay on the affected hip, giving it the loudest purr for as long as I knew it needed. She fell asleep, and woke pain free, never complaining of it again. Sue and I spend fifteen magical years together until at age 21 earth years, it was time for us to part, and for me to return to my home planet and prepare for another worthwhile assignment.

This is a true story that I tell with great love and memory, of how a phobia can be cured by the feared thing itself. Fear is nothing but an acronym for False Evidence Appearing Real.

Sue H

It was really only a thought!

Alison hated shopping. She couldn't believe that some of her friends enjoyed going into stores for just a couple of bits and pieces.

The trolley began to fill up. Alison wished life wasn't so boring. Her husband was a good man, but he was dull. Much as she loved them her children didn't seem to notice her; always buried in the latest technology which they imagined was real life. Jostling for a place in the crowd around the "reduced items" section, a mad idea came into her head. When she arrived at the checkout why not make a mad dash, using the trolley as a battering ram. She could saunter up to those 'do it yourself' machines – you know, the ones where a few smart people somehow managed to make them work. When she got there, instead of stopping she could keep going. With any luck she would reach the exit and carry on barging down the street with her full trolley. At least the thought of it cheered her up. But, as she obediently joined the end of a queue, there was a smile on her face.

They moved forward slowly – one person in front of her was searching for his card. He had been standing lined up long enough, why didn't he have it ready? At last, Alison's turn. Lifting and placing her shopping on the belt, cashier routinely scanning items.. tweet...tweet.

Suddenly a loud buzzer sounded, the lights in the shop flashed on and off, on and off and a man was standing in front of her. Good grief! Had they known what she had been thinking? You can't be prosecuted for just thinking about shop lifting – it was only a joke – she wasn't actually doing it. She was paying!

"Congratulations" shouted the man "You are the millionth customer to pass through the checkout since the shop opened." More staff appeared, clapping and smiling at her. "All the groceries in your trolley are free. You have a complimentary bottle of Champagne and four tickets to a London show of your choice".

Blow me, thought Alison, perhaps shopping is not so boring after all. I only wish now that I had filled up more than one trolley.

Marnie



A Memorable Phone Call

A friend and I had just watched a play at the theatre and was lining up to buy tickets for the Rocky Horror Show.

Then my phone rang and it was number withheld. Reluctantly I answered, a woman's voice asked, "Is that Elaine?". I replied, "who wants to know?" The reply was to send me in a spin of disbelief. I had waited over eighteen months for this day, this phone call was it really happening? "My names Ellie from Canine Partners".

Immediately my attitude changed. I got out of the queue and repeated what she said. My friend couldn't concentrate.

Ellie then asked if my circumstances had changed. I explained nothing had changed, I had a dog bed, someone on standby to make a pen in the garden for the dog's toilet area but just needed my dog.

She explained they thought they had a possible match. First she needed to run some dates passed me to see if I was free. Without knowing the dates I said I'd be free. We spoke about the dates the 2nd Dec till the 13th, I confirmed I could attend and stay for onsite training.

She then went onto say it was a Golden Labrador 18mths old called Bentley. We then went onto arrange the match visit for the Tuesday 23rd October. We left the theatre I kept saying to my friend, "Did that really happen?". In the end she said, "for the tenth time 'yes', I need to go now to get my bus".

The next five days I was like a child waiting for Christmas.

On the Tuesday after travelling to Chichester, then getting a taxi I was on my way to Hayshot training centre. In the taxi I was filled with nervous anticipation today was the day my life could change. What happened if he didn't like me? What happened if I didn't like him? What happened if the phone call was a mistake?

The taxi pulled into the car park. Should I say sorry I needed to go home? With butterflies in me I wheeled out of the taxi and over to the main entrance.

In reception a woman was making a drink she said she would tell Ellie I was there. -

A young woman came down the stairs cheerful, she said, "you must be Elaine?". I replied croakily, "yes". "HOW are you feeling?" "Nervous", I replied. "You'll be fine", she said.

She opened the door to the training room. There were two dogs on beds on the right-hand side. I said, "They're not my boy". At this a head popped up from behind a desk. Excitedly I said, "There's my boy". It was love at first sight.

We worked for four hours to see if we were compatible. At the end of the time Ellie took him back upstairs Bentley tried to come with me. That's when I knew it was a perfect match.

Elaine M.

