

True pet stories

By Barbara Yaffe, Vancouver Sun November 28, 2009

THE CAT WHO SANG AND OTHER STORIES OF RESCUED PETS

BY BRIGITTA MACMILLAN

Ardith, 346 pages (\$24.95)

Life is a crapshoot, as much for animals as for human beings. This makes it likely readers will find elements of their own stories in *The Cat Who Sang*.

This captivating book, by Vancouverite Brigitta MacMillan, is about Katie's Place Animal Shelter, a no-kill refuge in Maple Ridge for felines and the occasional bunny rabbit.

MacMillan volunteers there.

The range of circumstances under which the creatures wind up at this portal of last hope is heart-stabbing. One cat, not the least bit ill, was left at the shelter by an owner who claimed his furry bundle was dying. Another owner was no longer inclined to house an elderly cat.

Many animals are in desperate psychological shape when they arrive. Taz was dropped at Katie's Place eight years ago by an owner who said there was an illness in her family. MacMillan writes that "the sensitive little feline ... gave her whole heart to that first person and never gave it away again."

Taz is still at the shelter.

Satchmo, picked up off the streets in 2005, "cowered in mute terror within the protective walls of his litter pan, unable to even lift his head."

Surrounded by caring volunteers, he became friendly and trusting within weeks. But being a plain black adult cat, he faced long odds for adoption -- until someone came by who "was not looking for love but wanted to give love."

The book is well written and the cats' stories are tremendously moving. MacMillan humanizes the animals with names, photos and individual details while referring to the humans as "their persons."

The Cat Who Sang is self-published and available at Ardith.ca/bookstore and other online retailers. If you choose to buy it by e-mailing Katies.place@shaw.ca, all proceeds will go to the shelter.

byaffe@vancouver.sun.com

© Copyright (c) The Vancouver Sun