

That Darn Cat

I love animals... all animals, even ones I'm afraid of like frogs. I can honestly say I would not want to see harm come to a frog even though I don't like them. I really love cats, even though I'm allergic to them. When I was growing up, I always wanted a cat, so as soon as I moved out of my parents' house I got one. I had her for over 10 years, her name was Mally, and she was a sweetheart. She passed away last January, and I miss her very much. While she was alive, I couldn't pet her as much as I wanted to because of my allergies, and that's the only reason why I haven't gotten another cat – I really like them. Except for my neighbor's cat.

When we moved in 2 years ago, we saw Phoebe the neighbor's cat roaming around and we thought it was kind of cool to have a neighborhood cat. That was before we saw how mischievous she can be. Phoebe likes to sit on our window sill because she knows it makes the dogs crazy. She also sits on the kids' slide in the backyard which is just out of the dogs reach, further aggravating them. One day, our dog Charity got loose and treed the cat. I felt a little badly although part of me enjoyed the surprised (and pissed) look on that cat's face when she was in the tree because she wasn't expecting the dog to get loose and chase her. One time, I noticed the front door was open and she was peeking in our house! Don't know how she managed that one; maybe one of the kids left the door open or something. I used to have a bird house and a bird feeder in the tree in our side yard. I would go out there and sprinkle seed, and we had a nice menagerie of creatures that would visit, giving our parrot some friends to look at out his window. But then I saw Phoebe out there stalking the squirrels and birds that frequented the tree, and I stopped putting seed out because I no longer wanted to lure animals into her lair. One day, I saw her playing with a baby bunny.

The bunny was alive, but not moving, so we scooped it up and took it to this lady who rehabs wildlife nearby. Her place is really neat; she has raccoons, bandicoots, squirrels, rabbits, geese, ducks, and even a few bears! Anyway, she said the bunny looked to be in bad shape and she didn't expect it to survive. Hopefully it defied the odds...

Being an animal lover, I was really sad when Phoebe hurt the baby bunny. I was even more sad when I saw what she did the other day. I was outside with my daughter, and Phoebe started to climb the tree in the front of our house. I thought it was really cute, so I pointed to her and showed my daughter the cat. But then I saw what she was doing – there were 2 doves sitting silently in the tree, and she was stalking them. Suddenly one of the doves flew off the branch or at least tried to. He flapped to the ground; I don't know if he hit his wing on a branch or if he was hurt before he tried to fly away, but he landed on the ground, and Phoebe chased him. He got lift a few more times, but he couldn't fly. Phoebe was chasing him until they both disappeared around the side of the neighbor's house. I grabbed my daughter and followed them, but I didn't see anything. When I got back to the front of the house, I saw the other dove in the tree, just sitting there waiting for her mate to come back. She was there all day, just waiting, and it was the saddest thing because I didn't think he'd be coming back. The next day, she was gone, so I don't know if she just gave up or what. Maybe he survived the cat attack and they found each other again... doubtful, but I am hopeful that's the case because I don't know what happened. What I do know is that I don't like Phoebe the cat. She's not even friendly; she never lets my kids pet her. I've considered leaving a note on the neighbor's door asking them to please corral their cat a little better... but I don't want to be one of *those* people. For now, I just hold onto the hope the neighbors will move and take Phoebe with them, and when that day comes, I will promptly set up my wildlife area once again.