

With her kitty, it was love at

By Anna Behrens
Special to the Item

My love story begins almost four years ago, when my husband and I lived in Dover, Delaware. We recently settled in Hamburg where he teaches at Reading Area Community College's new branch campus.

One evening in March 2000, a friend and I were chatting by my driveway when I noticed a blur of white and tan fur by the back tire of his car.

Recognizing that the blur was a small cat, I went over, scooped him up and set him down on the grass out of harms way. I went back over to my friend and resumed our conversation, barely noticing that the cat had followed me and had stationed himself by my left foot.

All of a sudden, our little visitor sprang straight up from the ground (about 4 and a half feet) and landed squarely on my left shoulder,

purring loudly. This was the most beautiful and friendly cat I'd ever seen. It was over. This feline Acrobat had leapt onto my shoulder and crawled into my heart.

The cat remained purring loudly on my shoulder as my friend pulled away in his car. Against all common sense, I brought him in to show my husband, who absolutely did not want me to take in any more cats. Our 10-year-old half Siamese, Maggie, was Queen of the House, totally independent and aloof, definitely not the welcoming sort. My husband corralled her on the back porch off the kitchen.

As the enchanting white and tan stray munched gratefully on kibble and milk, Maggie literally began throwing herself at the porch door, howling in indignation. My husband and I had a short discussion on whether or not I could keep our new friend.

"Listen to Maggie," he noted wisely, "She won't stand for it. Call

the Humane Society."

Maggie's and my husband's negative votes propelled me into practical mode; it would never work to try to keep these two cats in the same house, I reasoned. Dutifully, I placed the call. An officer came to pick up the little cat. My new friend gazed up at me longingly with his soulful golden eyes as he was put into the cat carrier.

That night I awoke from a dream of the little cat locked up in a cage, calling for me to come and get him. I was very sad the next day, but tried to comply with my husband's wishes. I had the same dream the second night. The third night the dream won out. When I got up in the morning, I walked slowly up to my husband with a face full of tears. Before I could even begin to plead he said, "Oh, I know you're going to go and get that cat back, go ahead."

Tears gave way to little songs of joy as I made plans to leave work at lunchtime to rescue the cat. On my

way to the informed me number of this particular mats down a cold.

The pound papers, questions and even make sure sl er cat. Th When they his carrier d counter, he purring. I b "What a him?" the fr asked.

"Mishak tion, "bec out the fire like the B boys, Shat Abednego, the fiery th explained. This na appropri

As love at first leap for Behrens

Society.”
and my husband's neg-
repelled me into practi-
would never work to try
two cats in the same
isoned. Durtfully, I

ll. An officer came to
the cat. My new friend
me longingly with his
eyes as he was put
rier.

I awoke from a dream
locked up in a cage,
to come and get him.
the next day, but tried
my husband's wish-
me dream the second
ird night the dream
en I got up in the
ked slowly up to my
face full of tears.
even begin to plead
ow you're going to
at back, go ahead.”
ay to little songs of
ns to leave work at
ue the cat. On my

way to the “pound,” my girlfriend informed me that, due to the huge number of strays and lack of space, this particular facility put the animals down as soon as they caught a cold.

The pound required me to fill out papers, question me of my intentions and even called our landlady to make sure she would tolerate another cat. Thank God, she agreed. When they fetched the cat and put his carrier down next to me on the counter, he immediately started purring. I believe he recognized me.

“What are you going to name him?” the friend who drove me there asked.

“Mishak,” I replied without hesitation, “because he has been pulled out the fire and rescued. You know, like the Bible story of the three boys, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who were thrown into the fiery furnace and God saved.” I explained.

This name turned out to be very appropriate indeed, as “Mr. Meesh” came down with a very bad cold the day after I brought him home. Antibiotics and lots of rest and love



Oh, I know you're going to get that cat back, go ahead." I gave way to little sops of tender plans to leave work at home to rescue the cat. On my

like the Bible story of the three boys, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who were thrown into the fiery furnace and God saved." I explained.

This name turned out to be very appropriate indeed, as "Mr. Meesh" came down with a very bad cold the day after I brought him home. Antibiotics and lots of rest and love quickly took care of that. The vet told us he was already eight months old and weighed a lean 12 pounds.

Mishak has delighted us with his athletic prowess over the years, from ably fetching toy mice to literally running right up the corner of a room to the ceiling and hanging there for a few seconds before dropping down unscathed...sometimes we swear that cat can fly. When we throw a toy mouse over his head, he will crouch down, then jump up and do a little back flip as he tries to catch it, and usually succeeds.

He is also the *only* cat we've ever known that picks up his food piece by piece and puts it into his mouth with his paw. Meesh follows me around like a dog and loves to cuddle for naps. He has brought many chuckles and much joy to our household.

What about Queen Maggie, you may wonder. Very soon after Meesh came to live with us, Maggie quit howling and decided to ignore him. Both cats have their own space in our home and are very content.

So that is how Mishak Behrens, a.k.a. Mr. Meesh, stole my heart and came to be a very important part of our family.

The author resides with her husband of 22 years, Ken, in Hamburg.



Mr. Meesh, ow