



## Introducing 'Boots'

Do you like cats? Even if you don't, please keep reading, because I think that even those who would prefer to read about dogs will still enjoy this story!

Since my children grew up and left home, I have lived alone. Some friends and family have at times suggested that I get a pet, but I have always resisted - I spent many years with a family around me, and these days I'd rather not have the responsibility of worrying about taking care of a pet, for example, during those times when I am away from home.

But ... as I write this, Boots the cat is asleep on 'her' chair next to my desk. About a half hour ago, she jumped off the chair, went out through her special cat door in the entranceway, and returned a short time later. She then spent an enjoyable few minutes washing her face, cleaning off the remnants of her lunch, then rubbed against my legs looking for some attention from me. After realizing that I was working and wouldn't pay any attention to her, she jumped back up onto her chair and went to sleep.

What's going on? Didn't I just tell you that I don't have a pet? Yes I did ... and that was true - I don't! Boots-chan belongs to one of my neighbours, but it seems she doesn't understand well about such things as fences and borders and 'ownership'. She is usually here with me for about 23 hours in a typical day, only returning to her official home to eat!

I have spoken to her owner about this, and we both realize that there is nothing much that we can do about the situation. Boots has decided that my house is where she wants to spend most of her time, and as is well known, people don't choose cats, cats choose people!

I can understand how this situation developed; over there in Boots' owner's home, there is nobody there for most of the day - the mother and father are out at work, and the children are off at school. So Boots started 'hanging out' at my place - I'm here 24/7! To be honest, I did nothing to encourage this - I have never given her food, for example - but there is no doubt that Boots likes being here as much as I like having her here. She has a wonderful character; she is quiet, keeps herself very clean, and is polite and friendly to my visitors (she especially likes the attention from TV film crews who visit my workshop).

I have been wondering though, just who she thinks of as her 'owner' - me, or the people next door who feed her? This past summer, I came to understand the answer to that question. How do I know? It's easy; with the coming of summer, the fields and gardens near my home are full of small creatures to be hunted - mice, frogs, snakes, moles, etc. And to whom do you think she brings her 'presents' after capturing them?

Yep, it's me!

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