



Cat Flap

(Here we are again - first thing in the morning - and Dave is just coming down the stairs to start the day. As he gets to the last few steps, he notices a few scraps of paper scattered on the floor in the hallway, and knows instantly what has happened; one of the neighbours' cats has again made a raid into the house during the night. These papers must have been pulled from the wastebasket during the hunt for something edible. Dave walks into the kitchen, picking up bits of garbage as he goes. Boots the cat is curled up on a chair in the next room ...)

Dave: Boots-chan, look at the mess in here this morning! What happened last night?

Boots: How should I know? While I was in my sleeping place in the back of the closet I did hear some scratchy sounds in the middle of the night, but I just went back to sleep ...

Dave: It must have been that grey cat - the big one with the long tail; I saw him hanging around yesterday, and I guess he thought he could find something to eat. That's the problem with having a cat flap; it can be used by other animals too! Why didn't you come out and chase him away?

Boots: Well, I don't think that 'Guard Cat' is part of my job description! And besides, some of those neighbourhood tomcats are pretty big - there is nothing I can do ...

Dave: Yes, I guess so. Perhaps it's better if you do keep quiet; the last thing I want at three o'clock in the morning are cat fights in the kitchen! I think I might look into getting an electronic cat door.

Boots: What's that?

Dave: It seems they are very common these days in some other countries. The pet wears a very small tag on its collar, and the door mechanism has a lock. This is released automatically whenever it senses that the key tag is nearby, and the flap is then free to open. When some other animal approaches, of course the door remains closed.

Boots: That sounds like a good idea. Why don't you get one?

Dave: Well, they are kind of expensive. And if the batteries in the door section run down, then the key doesn't work, and the pet is trapped outside, or perhaps inside. But I really don't see any other solution to our problem. I don't want to switch to a system where I have to come and open the door for you all the time!

Boots: No, I much prefer our present arrangement, where I can come and go as I please. I really feel so much at home here!

Dave: That's nice to hear!

(Boots jumps up onto the bookcase, heading to her usual napping place at the back of the closet.)

Dave: Heading off for your first nap of the day?

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Boots: What do you mean 'first'? It's already seven o'clock in the morning. You really don't know much of what goes on around here at night, do you?

Dave: It seems not!

Boots: You know, when I was younger, I had methods of keeping those tomcats occupied and away from your kitchen ...

Dave: Aah! So that's why this kind of thing is only happening recently. I guess you must have plenty of stories ... but of course, a lady never tells, does she?

Boots: Never!

(She disappears into the closet ...)

Dave: Sweet dreams!

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