

2016 MCC Creative Writing Contest

Fiction Category

Second Place: "Max" by Jessica Tribbett

The creature shoves its cold, damp nose into my side. I let out a low hiss as it clumsily falls onto me. I'm not sure what this thing is, but I don't like it. A few moments ago I was perched up on the window sill basking in the glory of the sun and now this thing is running circles around me. I usually look forward to Emily arriving home, especially since that means meal time, but today she brought home this fluffy mess. "Yip! Yip!" it yelped in my ear. I lower my body to the ground and glare at it. Such noise is not welcomed.

"Kitty, be nice to Max," Emily shouted from across the room. She was pulling things out of a bag, some of which I was able to identify as treats. Was she really going to feed this Max thing? I paced around the outside edge of the room, swishing my tail as I walked, and keeping one eye on him as I did so. He scampered back and forth across the floor. I watched as he lost his grip and slid into the cupboard. What is with this thing? I dart my ears back as its claws click loudly against the floor. I don't understand why he doesn't draw them in. Max comes up to me and very forwardly starts licking my face. I back away in protest and look up expectantly at Emily. She glances down at me and then quickly races across the room to the food dish. She's lucky I'm here to keep her on track.

I watch as the food falls from the scoop into my dish and I purr. Emily dashes off into the other room and I can hear her scrambling about. I have only finished my first bit when a muzzle shoves itself into my bowl. I hiss in protest but Max continues to scarf down my food. Emily walks into the room just as he finishes the last scraps. She walks past me unaware of what evils this monster is up to. I meow at her feet trying to get her attention, but she passes by me. Swooping up the creature she heads outside. I follow out the cat door. She lets Max down and he runs around excitedly. I shake my head in annoyance as he runs head first into the fence. Emily just laughs and goes back inside. I started to walk back inside also, but Max runs over and pushes me out of the way. I grumpily stand up and shake myself off.

Walking into the house I see Emily eagerly petting Max. I rub up against her leg, but she is solely focused on him. Why does she care about this pest? I stomp off in protest and return to my spot in the window sill. I watch the excited ball of energy bounce around for the rest of the night. Emily finally ties him next to a blanket and disappears into her room. His excessive whining sends me to the other end of the house where my eyes slowly grow heavier.

“Bang!” I jump up and dart under the couch for protection. I look out the window to see flashes of light streaking through the night. Another rumble sounds and I rush towards Emily’s room. I paw at the door to find it shut tight. Unsure of what to do I turn around to see Max sleeping peacefully on his blanket. I inch closer to the snoozing beast. I slowly lay down next to him. I feel his soft warmth surround me as he snuggles closer. Even as the thunder booms above us he sleeps on. He rests his head on me and I can feel his heartbeat. I slowly begin to drift off to sleep, as I listen to his breaths, and think that maybe this creature isn’t so bad after all.

JUDGE’S COMMENTS:

The writer proficiently and pleasantly crafts a scene from the unique perspective of a house cat. The use of descriptive detail is vivid and the piece has an overall humorous tone, and the thought the writer has put into the piece makes it feel believable and authentic.

Kyleigh Ritter is a 2009 graduate of Michigan State University, where she earned a Bachelor’s degree in creative writing and was the recipient of the Jim Cash Creative Writing Award. She currently works as a professional writing consultant in the MCC Writing Center.