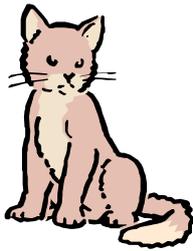


True Animal Stories

The Ginger Kitten

It was a stormy day in the middle of winter on an island in Scotland. One of the children heard mewing coming from under the garden shed and found a tiny kitten huddled underneath. The children had noticed a stray mother cat running across the garden but she was half-wild and nobody could get near her. And nobody guessed she had hidden her baby kitten under the shed because it never made any sound. One day, the mother cat disappeared. The day afterwards, six-year-old Mark heard the weak cries of the kitten, and that was the first they knew about it. It was five weeks old and hungry.



Mark mother brought the kitten indoors and gave it a saucer of milk. It lapped it up as fast as it could. Mark found a cardboard box and put a soft bit of blanket in it to keep the kitten warm.

The kitten blinked its big yellow eyes at Mark and began to purr. It had the loudest purr he had ever heard and its little body vibrated with the noise. It sounded like an engine and made Mark laugh.

“I am going to call him Rumble,” said Mark.

Rumble was very affectionate. Whenever he saw anyone, he would begin his loud purring and rub himself against their legs, wanting to be picked up.

But there was a problem. Every day, Mark's mother looked



after a baby girl whose mother was out working. The baby had just learnt to crawl. She got into everything. Once it was the coal bucket! Another time it was in a basket of clean washing, which she threw all over the floor! She loved Rumble and would crawl after him and try to stroke him.

But Rumble was ill. Because he had been outside sleeping on the damp earth under the shed, he had a very bad cold. His lovely yellow eyes were running and, being a cat, he did not know how to blow his nose. Mum was worried that the baby would also become ill if she played with the kitten, or even if she crawled over the floor where he had been. Mum did not know what to do. It was too cold to keep Rumble outside, even inside the shed. He was too ill and too little. But the house was not very big and there was no place to keep him until he became well. She tried to find someone else to look after him, but nobody wanted him.

Feeling very sad, she decided she would have to take him to the vet to be put to sleep.

The day she came to this difficult decision she went to the vet's and gave Rumble to him. Tears were streaming down her face and she could not stop crying. She had come to love Rumble and he was so friendly and sweet-natured she knew she would miss him. The vet gently took Rumble from her and she sadly went home. On the way she said a prayer over and over again for the little kitten.

That afternoon, Mum was busy in the kitchen when she heard a knock on the door. When she opened it she was surprised to see the vet. He told her what had happened after she had left Rumble with him.



A man had come into the surgery and noticed Rumble sitting looking very sad in a cardboard box. Rumble was sneezing, his eyes were watering and his fur was standing up in spikes all over him. He was not a pretty sight! But the man kept looking at him.

“Does that kitten belong to anyone?” he asked the vet at last.

“No,” said the vet. “He’s ill and he doesn’t



really have an owner. Someone has been looking after him, but she can’t do it anymore.

“May I have him?” asked the man. “I live on my own and get very lonely.”

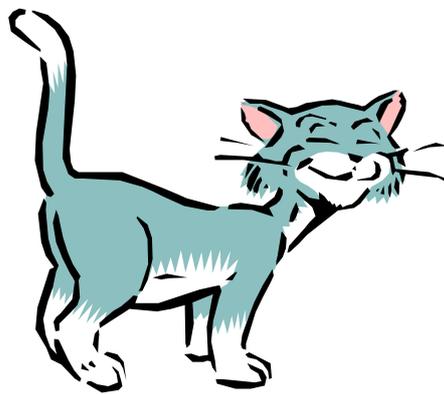
“Of course!” said the vet, sounding surprised. He hesitated and then added, “But there are lots of other kittens needing homes. Kittens much prettier than this one, and not ill!”

The man tickled Rumble behind his ears. Rumble looked at the man and purred. The sound was so loud for such a skinny little kitten that it made the man laugh, just as it had made Mark laugh when he first heard it.

“This is the kitten I want!” he said firmly.

When the vet told Mum, she could not believe it at first. It seemed like a miracle.

“I think Bahá’u’lláh heard my prayer and sent that man to the vet!” she said, smiling at Mark.



Do you have a story to share about your pet?
Maybe something funny or clever it does? Or just
Interesting? If so, write and let me know so
we can put it in *Dayspring*.