

The Cat who lived a million lives

A Story by Yōko Sano

100万回生きたねこ

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There is a cat who had lived a million lives;

He died a million times; and was re-born a million times.
He had a distinctive coat like a tiger; he was a very impressive
cat.

A million people had loved him as their own cat; and a million
people had cried for him when he died;

But this cat had never shed one drop of tears.



Once, he was King's cat. He didn't like the King.

The King was at war all the time. He put the cat in a splendid cage and he took the cat to the wars. One day, the cat was shot by a straying arrow.

The king held the cat, crying in the field of the battle.
The King had no mood for the war anymore;

He returned to the castle, where he buried the cat in the garden.



Once, the cat was raised by a sailor. He didn't like the sea.

The Sailor had travelled around the world with the cat.

One day the cat fell into the water from the ship. The Cat couldn't swim and he drowned. As the sailors held the cat's wet body in his arms, he cried out aloud.

He buried the Cat in a city park far away from the sea.



Once, the cat was raised by a circus magician. He didn't like circus.

The magician put the cat into a box every day, then cut the box in half. As he took the unharmed cat out of the box, the audience applauded. One day, the magician accidentally cut the cat in half.

As the magician held the two pieces of the cat in both hands, he burst into tears. No one applauded.

The cat was buried in the circus's backyard.



Once, the Cat was raised by a thief. He didn't like the thief.

The thief always took the cat with him. They walked in the streets in the nights. The thief walked quietly, like a cat.

The thief broke into houses with dogs and safe's. While the dog barked at the cat, he took advantage to open the family's safe. One day, the cat was killed by a dog.

The thief holding the diamonds and the dead cat, walking in the dark street, cried.

The cat was buried in the thief's small yard.



Once, the cat was raised by a lonely old woman. He didn't like the old lady.

The old lady, holding the cat on her lap, looked out of a small window, sitting all day.

The cat lay on the old lady's lap all day, sleeping and napping. Finally, the cats got older and older, then he died.

The wrinkled old lady, holding the wrinkled old cat in her arms, cried all day.

The Cat was buried under an old tree in the yard.



Once, the cat was raised by a little girl. He didn't like the little girl.

The little girl always carried the cat on her back, or held the cat too tightly when she slept. When the little girl cried, she cried over the cat's back.

One day, the little girl carried the cat on her back again. A strap wrapped around the cat's neck accidentally and the cat was strangled to death. The little girl, holding the limp cat, cried all day.

Finally, she buried the cat under a tree in the garden.



However, the cat did not mind his own death so much.



One time, the Cat was not raised by anyone.

He was a wild cat.

For the first time, he was his own master.

The Cat liked himself this way the most.

He was already a beautiful tabby cat.

Now of course he became a very strong wild cat.



All the girl cats wanted to marry him.

Some brought him big fishes;
Some brought him the best mice to eat;
Some brought him precious gifts;
And some were licking his hair,

The Cat just said:

”I died a million times. Who can be my match?”

He still liked himself the most.



There was a beautiful white cat. She didn't look at the Cat.

The Cat walked up to the white cat, said: "I died a million times!"

The white cat simply replied: "is it?"

The Cat was a little angry, because he liked himself so much. The next day, and the third day, the Cat walked to the white cat, said: "You haven't even lived one life to the end, right?"

The white cat still simply answered: "oh."



Once, the Cat walked in front of the white cat. He did three somersaults in the air and said: "I used to be a circus cat!"

The white cat still simply responded: "So?"

"I have lived a million" In the middle of the sentence, the Cat changed to ask: "Can I stay by your side?"

The white cat said: "Okay."

Since then, the Cat stayed by the side of the white cat.



Over time the white cat gave birth to many cute kittens.

The Cat no longer said "I have lived a million times..."

He liked the white cat and the kittens the most, more than he liked himself.



Finally, all the kittens had grown up, left them one by one.

”These kittens have become very impressive wild cats!” The Cat said, satisfied.

”Yeah.” The white cat purred softly.

The white cat was more and more like an old lady.

The Cat had become more and more gentle.

He also made a soft purr from his throat. He wanted to stay with the white cat together forever.



One day, the white cat was lying on the side of the Cat, motionless and quiet.

The Cat cried, for the first time of his million lives.

He cried from morning to night, from evening to morning. He cried a million times, days and days passed.

At one noon, The Cat stopped crying. He was lying on the side of the white cat, quiet and motionless.



The Cat never reincarnated again.