

CRITTERS IN PARADISE

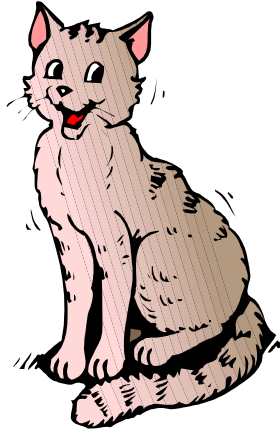
By Ron Berry

Critters in Paradise

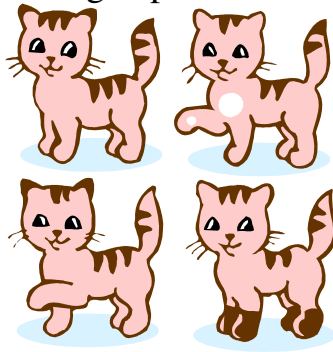
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Dedication page

This story is dedicated to all the fur/feather critters that have nice warm homes and to their fellow brethren that do not.



Mama Kitty (she had a name, but had been mama for so long, she forgot it), didn't want to get up. It didn't take much to see that it had snowed really hard during the night. But, the steady meowing of her kittens told her it was time to scrounge up some food for them.



"I'm coming kids."

As she woke up, her senses detected an odd aroma.

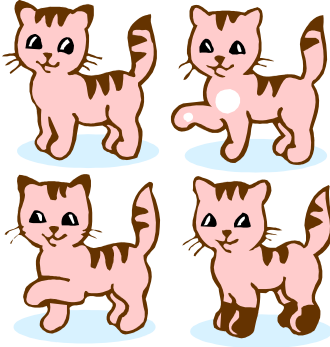
Catnip? Where did that come from?



Getting up, she looked around and almost collapsed! There were several dishes of food and half a dozen catnip filled toys. As she looked closer, she discovered more packets of food with a little card attached.

SEASONS GREETINGS
FROM
SANTA KIYY

“Kids, come here, hurry!”



They may have been kittens but it sounded like an army on the march! Food had been scarce lately so the little ones were hungry. But when they saw the bonanza, they stopped cold.

“Mamma, Where did you get all this?”

“I didn’t.”

Just then little sister winks found the catnip mice. But before they could start to play...



“Kids, get over here and eat. This isn’t a normal day so enjoy what bounty we have.”

Christmas does indeed come but once a year, but this year, even the animals were able to celebrate. On the back of the card, Santa Kitty wrote:

**THIS IS MY FIRST VISIT
I WILL RETURN EVERY
CHRISTMAS**

“This will be an annual event. Santa Claus has told me that no one can be left out.”

Mamma kitty wasn't the only animal to discover that Santa Claus and his animal brethren were real. It was turning into a real white winter and the forest animals were having a hard time foraging for dinner.



“Momma, you stored a lot of nuts before winter, why not just go get some of them?”

“I would, but all this white stuff makes it very hard to see where I put them.”



It was a cold winter also. Even if she could have found her storage areas, it would have been difficult to recover. But then Mrs. Squirrel smelled something. She stepped into the other part of their home and was totally amazed. There were piles and piles of nuts and berries. As she started digging through the pile she knocked over something hard.

What's this?

Scurrying around she found the card.



SEASONS GREETINGS
FROM
SANTA KITTY

“Santa kitty”

She turned the card over.



THIS IS MY FIRST VISIT
I WILL RETURN EVERY
CHRISTMAS

“This is the first of many Christmas visits. I even left a small tool you can use to dig up your storage supply.”

Wow! A Santa just for us non-humans!!!

She rushed back to her sleepy kids to tell them of the surprise but she tripped over something. It was toys specially designed for baby squirrels.



This scene was repeated over and over with every animal in the world. All the furkids would usually get something from their human counterpart, but Santa always left a little something for them. This year and from now on, even the animals that lived outside had their own special Santa's.