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## Grimalkin

by Candida Lloyd

Rebellion meant a look in the eyes, an inflection of the voice. At most, an occasional whisper. There was only one member of the household who noticed these things. A twitch of a pointed ear, or a flick of my tabby tail would alert my beloved, blond-haired girl to my displeasure and she would swiftly offer sounds of comfort and a gentle kiss to my crown.

*She* was polite enough to let me sniff her fingers before she indulged in caressing my furry coat, and for this, she was rewarded the privilege of being allowed to fondle my soft white bib – forbidden territory for the others. Should *they* dare attempt this, a quick nip to the hand was a warning not to be so presumptuous. If these people noticed me at all, it was as an inconvenience – rudely shunting me from the sofa when I'd been kind enough to warm it for them.

Sometimes I would need to nudge them around the ankles to remind them it was feeding time - but this was usually met with shouting and a delicate paw being squashed under a shoe on the kitchen floor. But I had no choice – it was that or starvation. Of course, the fools never kept track of my meals and I could have eaten more than the allotted two, but the unappetising dry, brown lumps on offer were not an enticement. Occasionally, and much to my delight, the blonde-haired girl would offer up a delectable salty crisp or a piece of chicken and I would exude appreciation in the form of vigorous purring.

Once, to prove my unerring devotion, I caught a field mouse and placed it on her bedroom floor among discarded socks, used cotton wool balls, a hairbrush and other miscellany.

It was a few days before it was identified, and shrieks of displeasure ensued followed by one of the others scrubbing the carpet with a foul-smelling chemical erasing any scent of my prize. Only my beloved understood that the tiny rodent was a gift of love, and a demonstration of my feline credentials to impress her. She and I lay curled up on her bed and she thanked me in a human purr as I licked her salty skin with my sandpaper tongue. Bliss.