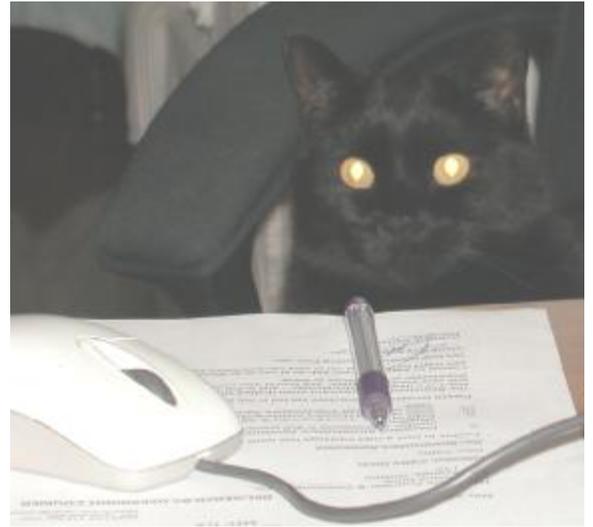


Memoirs of a Sleep Deprivation Expert

Written by Samwise the Cat
(no ghost writer was used)

Peter and Cathy were too tired this year to write a Christmas letter so I told them that I would dash out a few lines to send to our many friends. All of us wish you a Blessed Christmas Season and the happiest and best of New Years!



I was born a poor black kitty cat on a farm in rural Southern Ontario. I had a sister who was all white with one black patch, and a brother who was grey with black stripes. I have a patch of white on my breast so I look like I am wearing a tuxedo.

We lived with my momma and poppa in the hayloft of a big rambling barn. There was a huge door at the end of the loft which was used to put hay into the loft. We often slept there overlooking the farm yard and the fields beyond. My momma had made a bed for us with a soft blanket on a huge pile of hay. It was twice as tall as me! Momma had to lift me up and put me on it. I loved lying there with the sun warming me up.

When the three of us were bigger, we started to explore the barn. It was wonderful. There were two old horses, Bill and Brad. They pulled the hay wagon while we sat on top watching the passing scenery. There was my special friend Gertrude. She was a cow. The farmer would squirt milk at us while he milked her. It was warm and tasty. Gertrude would clean me with her huge tongue.

We used to race around the barn as fast as we could. One day, we sped into a different part of the barn and ran into Fred because we couldn't stop in time. Fred grunted and squealed and chased us away. We asked momma why Fred was so mean to us. She said "Fred is a pig. You frightened him." We kept going back to try to make friends with him, but he always chased us out of his sty.

One day when I was still very young, the farmer brought a nice lady to the barn. We all ran up to her. She picked us up in turn. I liked her and purred as loud as I could to tell her so. She liked me too. She didn't put me down but took me with her. I never had a chance to say goodbye to my momma, my poppa or my brother and sister and tell them how much I loved them.

We drove off in a car. It moved very fast. Faster than Bill and Brad pulling the hay wagon! It was fun. I like going fast. She took me to an aircraft hangar at the Brantford Airport. Her name was Rachel and her husband's was Don. There were also Danielle, Hudson and Nathan. They were mechanics who worked on the DC4 airplane which was parked in the hangar. Don was the pilots and Rachel his navigator.

It was a lot of fun during the day. I would race around the hangar leaping up and over work benches. Hudson called me Banshee. I would try to leap onto whatever Hudson was working on. I loved to see stuff flying all over with Hudson scrambling to stop it. Then Hudson would chase me with his fist in the air. He never caught me. I don't think he ever tried very hard.

Danielle called me Sweetie Pie. Whenever my emotional tank was empty, I would go over to her and she would pick me up and hold me tight. I couldn't help but purr while she held me. She had wonderful fingers. They always seemed to find that spot under my ears and scratch it just right. Mmmmm.

I liked being on my own. I could sleep when I wanted and where I wanted. I could prowl into every nook and cranny all over the hangar. I didn't have to wash. I think that is why Nathan called me Smudge. My face was never clean.

It was scary at night though. Mice would come out and taunt me. I would get so mad that I would chase them, but they always escaped. It was lonely. The wind would howl outside and the rain would sound so loud on the tin roof.

Everyone spent all their time looking after the airplane so I was in and out of it all day long. I liked to sleep in the engine cowling because it was small and I felt safe. Nothing could sneak up on me.

Sometimes Don would stay late. He would sit at a table and play with pen and paper. I liked to catch the pen. When he set the pen down on the paper to get a cup of revolting coffee, I would knock his pen onto the floor. It was fun to watch it fall. Don always picked it up and put it back on the table so I know he liked the game too.

After one sleepless night of chasing mice, I went into the very back of the plane to sleep. There was a pile of parachutes in a corner. I slept there without being disturbed. I dreamt that I was back on the farm being pulled on the wagon. The wagon was bumping along the tracks in the field.

Suddenly there was a huge roar and I woke up terrified. The plane was moving. I was petrified with fear and couldn't move a muscle. I was jolted about by the incredible bumping. The roaring and jostling increased. When the bumping finally stopped, I felt a lurch in the pit of my stomach. I tried to move forward. I could see Rachel and Don in the cockpit. I felt safer. I knew they would protect me. If only they knew that I was there.

I tried to clamber forward but it was too hard. The floor wasn't flat. It was tilted. I couldn't get a footing on the metal floor. I meowed, but no one could hear me over the roar of the plane. Finally, the floor wasn't tilting so much. It was almost flat again. I ran to the front of the cabin and threw myself at Rachel. She was very surprised to see me and held me close until I stopped shivering.

I looked out the window and all I could see were clouds. They look very different in the air than from the ground. It wasn't long before the floor started tilting again but the other direction! I couldn't have left the cockpit if I had wanted to. We landed in a place called Detroit. I was stuck in a box and wasn't allowed out. All because I didn't have something called a Passport. It would have been fun to explore a foreign country.

The landing in Detroit was scary. Don radioed the tower on approach. He kept muttering that the runway wasn't very long. Rachel cautioned him to land at the very beginning of the tarmac because it was so short. We touched down and Don pulled back on the throttle as hard as he could and the plane screeched to a halt. We stopped just before the tarmac ended. Don sighed in relief, "That is the shortest runway I have ever landed on!" Rachel agreed and said, "But look at how wide it is!"



The trip home was better. I sat curled up on Rachel's lap during take-off and landing.

One day, when I was six months old, this guy showed up in a pickup and took away the propellers. He had these huge ropes that I chased around. I followed him everywhere. He seemed very kind. He let me untie his shoe laces. It was very funny when he tripped over them. His name was Peter.

We couldn't fly anymore. I would sneak into the plane at night and pretend to be Don piloting. The mice would come and join me. They liked to pretend that they were skydiving when they jumped out the door.

A few weeks later, this same guy, Peter, came back with the propellers looking all shiny and new. I raced up to him and said "Hello!" He remembered me! Don told Peter that he and Rachel would be moving away and would Peter like to take me home? He said yes and I have lived with Peter and Cathy ever since.



I was still very small when this happened. I met my step-sister Bailey. Bailey taught me the rules. Rule number One, everything in the house belongs to her. Rule number two, if I touch anything, she will beat me up. Corollary: I belong to Bailey and she can do whatever she wants to me whenever she wants.

She didn't like me coming into her house. She ignored me for the first month. Finally after a month of being there, she grabbed me and cleaned me. She told me that if I was going to live in her house, then I had to be clean. I hadn't had such a good cleaning since I was on the farm. I don't like washing so I am glad that Bailey does it for me.

For example, I am not allowed to scratch any furniture because the furniture belongs to her and if anyone was going to scratch the furniture, it would be her. Cathy doesn't let her scratch the furniture. Bailey has two scratching posts. She beats me up if she catches me scratching them, so I scratch a couple of times and then check over my shoulder in case she is coming.

I followed Peter and Cathy everywhere and snuggled with them whenever I could because they are very snuggable. Whenever they looked at me, I started to purr. I also like to garden. So I was named after the hobbit Master Samwise Gamgee.

I looked up what a hobbit was and found out that they like breakfast, second breakfast, elevenses, brunch, lunch, afternoon tea, supper and dinner, bedtime snack and midnight snack. I have tried to put this knowledge into practice and highly recommend it to all.



Though I am a very brave kitty, I am admittedly a little easy to startle. Once Peter was holding me in his arms, snuggling with me, which wasn't so bad until this thing called a "toaster" exploded with an ear-splitting boom!

Without thinking, I jumped, and clawed my way to safety up and over Peter's shoulder. Peter has never held me without wearing a shirt again.

Another time, as I was in my litter box doing my business, Bailey snuck up on me. She startled me so much that I tore out of the box in the middle of everything. Since then, I have been nicknamed "turd tosser" and other such epitaphs.

I enjoy surfing on the internet. I came across an article about the United Nations 'Oil for Food' program. I thought about it and decided that I could use this concept to my benefit. I came up with the 'Snuggles for Kibble Program.' Whenever I give snuggles to Peter and Cathy, they give me a treat just to get rid of me. Bailey lies on the floor and tries to look cute. My way has been much more successful.

Bailey is willing to lower herself and to eat off the floor. This is highly demeaning and I refuse to do so. It took a while, but I was finally able to get Cathy to put my food on top of a small box. No more bending over. She was very slow at grasping this basic idea. Unfortunately, the food was still served in a dark ugly spot.

After many years of requesting an alternate setting, they put a table in front of an upstairs window. Finally I could have my sidewalk café without having to brave the elements. Except they didn't move my food upstairs! This was hard to bear.

I sat down to sleep about a solution to this dilemma. It irked me that Cathy put her computer on the desk and would cover my eating area with lots and lots of papers. It bothered me so much that I arose from my soft nook and went over and complained. She held me and petted me but I was determined not to go away until she moved the papers. Finally she gave me a treat off to the side.

Presto! This was where my UN plan worked admirably. I had my plan of attack. Every time that she sat down at my table then I would purr and snuggle until she fed me. It took a lot of persistence and patience on my part, but I now have my bowl of water and my bowl of food on the table.

I have a nice garden behind the house. It turns into a jungle during the summer. I like to pretend that I am the King of the Jungle and prowl. I like to sing this song while on my adventures:

Goin' on a lion hunt.
Goin to catch a big one.
I'm not afraid.
Look, what's up ahead?
Tree!
Can't go through it.
Can't go under it.
Can't go around it.
Gotta go up it.



Bailey taught me how to catch mice and birds. I brought one home to Cathy once and she took it away and buried it. I was most upset that she wasted exceptionally good meat so I don't let them see my prizes anymore. I am a good Christian lion and always give thanks before eating.



I have begun research into the area of the effect of sleep deprivation on humans. I will be publishing my findings soon in a peer-reviewed journal. Currently, my research entails staying awake all night in order to prevent Cathy from sleeping. (Peter throws pillows at me so he isn't such a good test subject.)

It is very exhausting work!

I use several methods: the first is to sit on her pillow and knead her hair; the second is to sit beside her and to meow as loud as possible directly into her ear. It is amazing how fast she sits up straight on that one. I don't want to reveal all my secrets at this time. That and I was told that I couldn't go over six pages.

Blessings, peace and joy to you and yours!

Peter, Cathy, Bailey & Samwise

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