

My mother always says we were meant to be together, right from the first day we met. She came to visit me at my foster mom's house, with my other rescue brothers and sisters, and I admit I didn't want to meet anyone that day. I didn't know her voice then, when she and my foster mom scoured the house looking for me and calling out the name I had been given back then. I was a bit annoyed when they pulled my hiding spot couch out and found me, and I didn't know it then, but my mother says she knew by my crabby face that I was the cat for her.

I used to think I might not ever be adopted. My brothers and sisters were much more welcoming than I was, more outgoing and playful and popular. My foster mom was surprised when my mother insisted that she wanted to adopt me, as my brothers and sisters tried to play with her, rubbing up against her and meowing hello. But I wasn't in the mood to play, or be cuddled. Even then, she understood me. I didn't know it then, but a week later when she came to take me to my forever home, I knew.

Soon I had a whole house to myself, to explore and investigate. I had my very own food bowl that I didn't have to share with anyone else. I had my own perch by a big sunny window, I had new toys and new smells to sniff out, and most of all, I had a home all of my own. My mother was patient with me, even when I was feeling shy and overwhelmed with everything new. I had a new name that I didn't know then, but I know now.

My mother is the best kitty mother I could ever want, maybe even in the whole world. She loves me for me, she's patient with me and understands me when others didn't. She always makes sure to leave my spot on the end of the big bed in her room open for me. (She calls it "her room," but really, we both know it's mine.) She doesn't mind when I try to wake her up when it's time for breakfast, or stand on top of her before she gets out of bed in the morning. Instead, she rubs my favorite spot behind my ears and talks to me, and lets me talk to her for as long as I want. She doesn't care that I'm loud and chatty, even when she isn't. She always lets me sit on her lap and investigate whatever book she's reading, and I always let her share the couch when we watch the stories on the television. I always look forward to her coming home when she leaves, when she gives me food or lets me check on her food, especially when she brings back my favorite food of all - chicken! Whenever she comes home I have so much to talk about, and my mother always listens to anything I have to say. She always brings me new toys, even if she knows I'd rather play with socks I pull from the laundry, and always has time to play with me. She says I'm the sweetest and most handsome cat in the whole world, and always tells me how much she loves me and how much she missed me while she was gone. When she blinks slowly at me and I blink back at her, I know she loves me with all her heart.

My mother says I was named after a prince who lived a long, long time ago, who was loved by a very powerful queen - a prince who had buildings and statues and monuments

built for him, because she loved him so very much. When I think of my life before I met my mother - from being rescued from behind a Waffle House, to living with lots of other cats, wondering if I'd ever be adopted or have a place to call my own - I know I'm just as important as any prince to my mother. We may not have a castle or a palace, but I do have a home all to myself, and the best, kindest, most understanding mother in the whole world to share it with. My mother does so much for me that I could never repay, but I know all I have to do is blink slowly at her and she knows how much I love her.

- Albert