

Turning another 'Paige' in the barn

Last spring, I wrote about Paige the barn cat, and how she 'came back.'

You see, she originally arrived in the dead of winter, and was quite comfortable in the barn, sharing space with some beef cows and steers.

But come the early spring, she disappeared. I figured she was gone forever, probably becoming a snack for a bunch of coyotes.

The Sidekick argued otherwise—and naturally, much to her delight (with an ample number of "I told you so's" thrown in for good measure) Paige did return a couple weeks later.

The summer has been fairly uneventful for Paige, and her only trauma during that time was a two or three week adjustment period, becoming accustomed to the arrival of the sheep.

(Originally, she ran like the wind the moment the sheep opened their mouths to bleat—which is pretty much every time I open the barn door.)

Now, after fully accepting the Brown woolies running around their pen, she's quite relaxed, waiting patiently to be fed whenever I go to the barn to feed the sheep.

But about a month ago, Paige suddenly became very 'rotund', in fact, one could say she was getting fat. She's always had a terrific appetite, but this was becoming ridiculous.

Then, almost overnight, she became thin again.

Hmm, we became suspicious as to what Paige had been up to during those 'hot summer nights.'

The Sidekick, doing the 'girlie thing', tried to coax the details out of her, but she wasn't sharing—she was one cool cat. We kept an eye on her.

Her tummy was missing fur and she was always hungry—prime clues that Paige had become a mommy and was feeding some kittens.

This past weekend, The Sidekick's persistence paid off. She discovered the location of the kittens.

We noticed the cat always came running from the same location every time we entered the barn, so it was pretty clear that she had 'em hidden in that general area.

After finding the kittens, there was one hitch. We know where they are, but can't see them.

Ted Brown



They were hidden under a big old piece of unused feeding equipment, out of sight to anyone bigger than a cat. We can hear them quietly mewling whenever Paige goes in to feed them, but we can't see them. We don't even know how many she has hidden away.

I had to laugh—in spite of the fact The Sidekick did 'find' the kittens, Paige still has the upper hand, or paw, if ya know what I mean. In other words, the kittens are still inaccessible.

This cat's cool about it. She now comes bounding out and doesn't even try to hide where she's coming from. She knows we know where they are, but she's enjoying that 'in control' cat smugness thing all felines possess.

On the other hand, like a brand-new grandmother, The Sidekick's almost itching to see those kittens, to hold them and play with them.

Over the years, she's had lots of kittens born when she had her own place, and enjoyed seeing them grow. But she was dealing with house cats.

Paige is a barn cat, a different creature and much more protective of her babies.

The Sidekick ain't pleased with this waiting game, but has little choice in the matter—Paige is in control, end of discussion.

I've told her Paige will eventually bring them out, to show off her new babies to the rest of the barn residents, and proudly accept any compliments that we shower on her.

But one thing's certain about this 'reveal'.

She's a barn cat—it'll happen when she's ready, and not a minute sooner.

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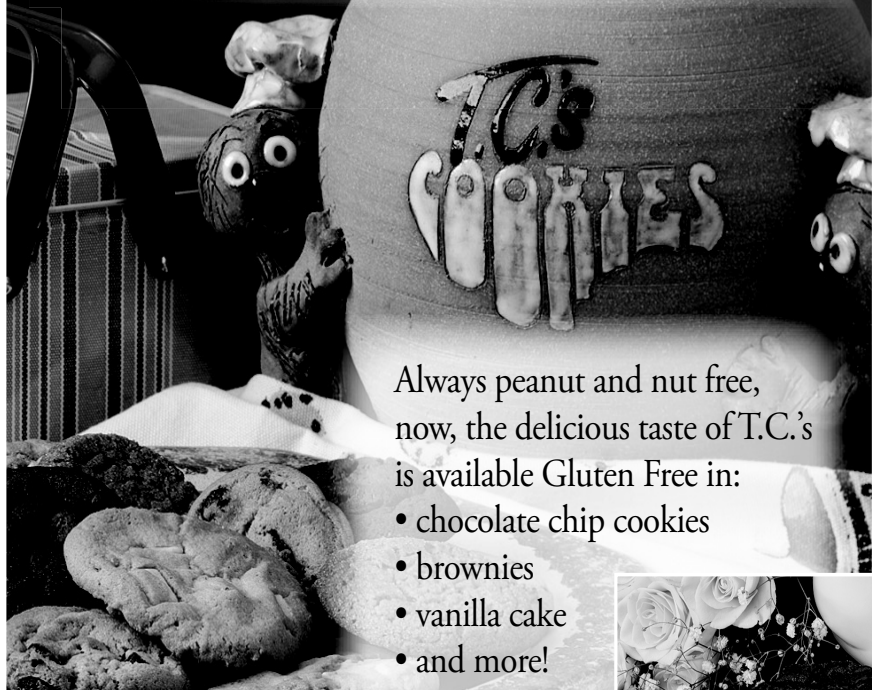
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