

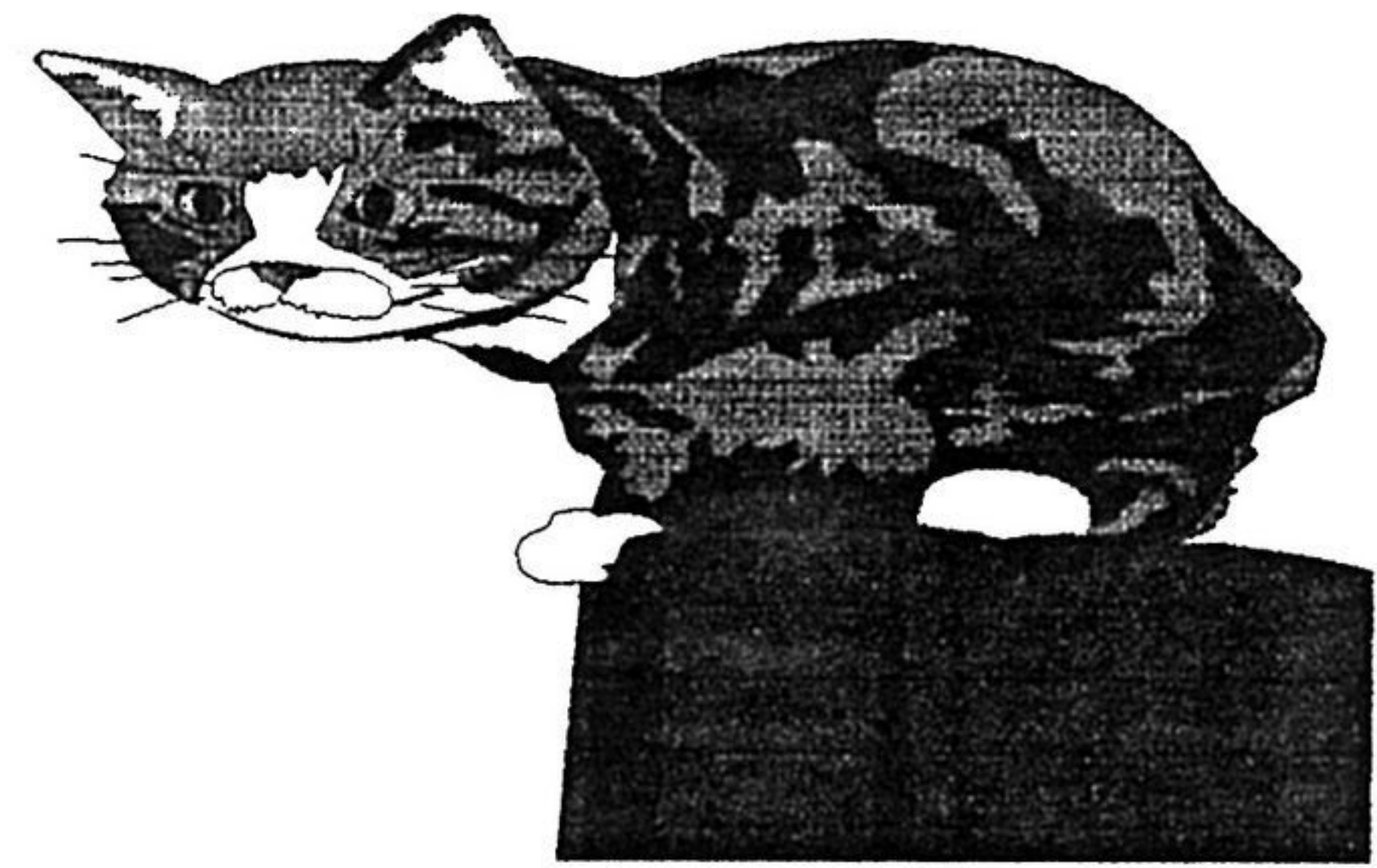
Cat-Astrophe

When I was a little girl, my mother always said, "Barbara, do not feed stray cats!"

In most ways I was a very obedient child, but when my mother wasn't looking, I snuck food out for the poor, starving felines.

Now, many years later, I am supposed to be a sensible adult who never feeds stray cats-but sorry to say, it is an obsession I can't control.

Short after mother passed away, a cat whom I called 'Tiger' came to my door. Of course you can't guess what I did. Eventually, another cat whom I called 'Smoke' appeared on the scene. As 'luck' would have it, Tiger was a male and Smoke was awell, you can imagine. Shortly afterwards, a visitor came running up to me and said there were several kittens following Smoke, the --yes-- female. It was true, little Smoke was a mother.



One day I looked out on the deck door wondering what to expect. There I saw a big, ugly, grey male cat-whom someone must have dropped off at "The Cat Lady's" house. I called the cat 'Big Daddy' as from then on all the kittens were grey and not the prettiest. (But not big-yet!).

Big Daddy must have thought he had died and gone to heaven, for there was a harem of female cats all ready to go into heat.

Tigger and Smoke soon disappeared. I think they were fed up with all the kittens around, but, hey, they started it!

Then one summer years later, many cats disappeared. Some strayed elsewhere, a couple may have died, but I found homes for the kittens, and took a few to the Humane Society-which was very hard to do, but good in the long run.

A neighbour who shall remain nameless, though a great person, told me that he had a live trap to catch raccoons. When I was over there one day he showed me a list of animals he had caught. Besides raccoons, he had caught squirrels, chipmunks, and CATS! The mystery was solved. Even though I felt a little sad, it had released me from my dilemma. When they got in the cage (poor devils) he then took them away to bother some other mindless individual who would feed them. Now when he catches one he appears at my door and asks "Is this one of yours?".

Well, I think every story should have a happy ending, and this one does-almost.

Now I have only three perfect felines-female and FIXED.

However, there is this one beautiful black stray cat (male) who has just recently found the home of "The Cat Lady" and isn't exactly willing to leave.

I leave you with a special note: DON'T FEED STRAY CATS!

B.J.M.