

## *A Cat's Eye View on Kitten Crushes*

**I** hear voices behind the door. New customers! Another chance? As they cluster at the cages, I'm cool as a cucumber, curbing my craving for companionship and affection. I start my slow swim through a sea of legs, but they aren't here to cavort with me. They crouch and crane to check out each kitten in the crew.

The kittens camping it up with clownish contortions are the eye candy that compels people to come here. It's an epic cliché. Right on cue, children squeal and parents coo, captivated by the current crop of cuddly kittens in kennel captivity. They're convinced the kittens are the cream of the crop, but I think that's a canard. Yes, the cheeky cherubs corner the market on cute — while I'm cursed to be their collateral damage. I can't catch a break at this carnival of kitten canoodling. Would it kill 'em to consider me? They have no clue of the catch-22 created by the annual influx of the little critters. It's a calamity for cats like me with a capital C.

Call me cantankerous, but I just can't compete. It's a crime to be the seriously senior amid a cache of cacophonous kittens, captive by circumstances beyond my control. I'm calm and quiet. My character is charming, yet my characteristics cannot be changed. I'm a card-carrying cat to whom no one will commit. My chances are crippled by comical kitty capers. I'm cast aside consistently for being

***too big,  
too furry,  
too old ...***

a cut-rate cat with a capital C.

The perennial catalyst is a cloudburst of kittens when spring showers the world with newborns

— under porches, in sheds, buried in bushes, stuck in sewer drains, dumped on farms and collecting in restaurant garbage-can colonies. They are corralled by an army of the emotionally-mixed, dispatched to trap, contain, manage, handle and eliminate the “problem”. It's a seasonal catastrophe that culminates in a campaign of cooperative chaos. From the frantic calls to police, firemen and animal control, to the clamor by those with compassionate conviction comes a cornucopia of kittens that swell the already swollen, rescues to a critical mass confronted with more to care for and keep. No matter how many kittens luck out, the luck runs out for the rest. However high the count, it can't crack a fraction of a percentage point in the 50 million stray cats struggling, scrounging and scrapping for simple survival across the U.S. where last year's orphans become this year's breeders. And the cycle continues.



A contingent of care-givers breeze in and out of what I have come to claim as my castle. My rock star qualities have catapulted me to celebrity status earning me free reign. Though I'm no spring chicken (I'd eat a spring chicken!) I've got it covered. I strut through the cubby holes between cages and litter boxes, climbing chairs to canvas my court as their quixotic king. The kittens are confined while I recline wherever I choose. In some seasons I'll notice a carbon copy of me as a kid, but I'm no kid anymore. Just a common cat with a capital C.

My congenial constitution is challenged daily by the "kits" who are let out to frolic and get their kicks when their kooky antics are too close for comfort. Carefully keeping my claws in check I remind myself that most don't stay very long. They are capriciously carted off and carried away by kitten cravers of every kind. I've outlasted them all. It clearly is cause for concern.

This collection of captured, recycled cuties are cradled, kissed and coddled in their new, cozy, carpeted cribs at a cosmic cost to cats like me. A cruel conundrum of crazy circumstance. Nobody sees that in a few months they'll be each full-scale cats with a capital C — like me.

And probably next year, I'll still be here among a clowder of cats that didn't make the cut in another karmic contest with kittens. I'll continue to listen for voices behind the door. New customers could be another chance for this champion cat with a capital C.

Submitted by Angel Ridge Animal Rescue  
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