



Rosie's Story

The True Story of a Cat and Her Unlikely Best Friend



BY BONNIE BADER

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CHAPTER 1

RESCUED

ON AN APRIL EVENING IN 2015, THI Bui (say: *Tee Boo-ee*) received an urgent call from a friend. A tiny kitten had been found alone on a dark street in San Jose, California. Twenty-two-year-old Thi had been rescuing kittens for a long time, so she sprang into action.

Within minutes, Thi arrived at the scene, where she discovered the kitten curled up on

the street outside her friend's house. The kitten had mostly black-and-brown fur, but her paws, legs, and chest were white. She was very tiny indeed.

Thi tucked her strands of long black hair behind her ears and bent down to get a closer look. "She looks sick," she said. "Poor thing."

She looked around for the kitten's mother, but there wasn't another cat in sight. Thi's friend said she hadn't seen another cat for at least a day. Thi knew that without a mother to take care of her, the orphaned kitten would need help to survive.

Thi gently picked up the trembling kitten. "I have to get you home, little one."

"As soon as I saw her, I knew you'd be able to help her," Thi's friend said gratefully.

"Thanks for calling," Thi replied, cradling the long-haired tabby kitten in her arms.

Carefully, Thi laid the kitten on the front seat of her car. She covered her with a blanket to keep her nice and snug. Then Thi began her drive home.

As she pulled up to a stop sign, she glanced at the kitten and smiled.

The kitten yawned, curling her tiny pink tongue.

Although Thi had rescued a lot of kittens in her life, there was something very special about this one. She could just feel it.



The little kitten slowly opened her green eyes. She didn't know where she was. She was shivering, but she was starting to feel warmer now that she was nestled in a cozy blanket. Her stomach grumbled, but there was no mom to feed her.

What's happening? she thought.

The kitten tilted her head and saw someone seated beside her, her hands on a steering wheel. They were inside a car . . . *But where are we headed?* she wondered.

Bump!

The kitten's body jerked, and the person's hand shot out to keep her from flying forward. The kitten sniffed. The hand smelled sweet and comforting. Maybe this human had food for her. Her stomach gurgled again. She opened her mouth, mewling, but no food appeared.

She was starting to feel hungrier and weaker by the second . . .



Thi rushed the kitten inside her single-story house, which was where she and her two sisters,

Thoa (say: *Twa*) and Tram, took care of abandoned animals. The Bui sisters had tons of experience with newborn kittens, so Thi knew just what to do. She started by placing the tiny kitten on a heated blanket.

From the looks of her, the kitten was about two-and-a-half to three weeks old. A kitten that age needed their mother's milk. But since there was no mother cat around, Thi needed to prepare a bottle of kitten formula, which was as close as she was going to get to real cat milk.

“Don't worry,” Thi assured the kitten. “I've got something yummy for you.”

Thi took the formula out from the closet. Feeding a kitten cow's milk or soy milk can be very dangerous. Luckily, kitten formula has just the right kind of vitamins and minerals that newborn kittens need to help them grow.

And this little one needed the kitten formula right away!

Quickly, Thi fit a special bottle with a rubber tip. These rubber tips make a kitten think they are drinking milk from their mother. If the kitten's mouth is very tiny, a dropper can be used to deliver the milk instead. Whatever the method, Thi knew it was important to make sure the formula drips out one drop at a time. After all, this was a teeny-tiny kitten with a teeny-tiny mouth and a teeny-tiny tummy!

Once the powdered formula and warm water were added to the bottle, Thi shook it to make sure there were no lumps. Clumps of powder can block the hole and keep the kitten from getting the milk. Thi tested the formula on the inside of her wrist to make sure it wasn't too hot, picked the kitten up, and placed her

belly down on her lap. This is the safest position to bottle-feed a kitten. This is also the position a kitten would most likely take milk from their mother.

Thi guided the kitten toward the bottle. Slowly, the formula dripped into her hungry mouth.

“There you go. Easy now,” Thi said.

Just then, Lilo, one of Thi’s huskies, padded into the living room to see what was going on. Lilo had just been spayed and was wearing a cone so that she couldn’t bite or lick the itchy stitches.

“Hi, Lilo,” Thi said. “Came to see what all the excitement is about, huh?”

Lilo kissed Thi, then glanced at the kitten and trotted back to her bed.

Tram, the youngest Bui sister, passed Lilo in the doorway as she stepped into the living room.