

# Working Cat

## Rinchin

Yesterday we had a big argument. Just when i had sat down to work , she had come and mewed with great anger. Her food was cold.

"Why did I never learn to not put it out to her straight from the fridge?"

"What an ungrateful cat you are" I said. "So what if the food is cold? Always complaining. Eating sleeping and complaining. Why dont you make yourself useful?"

"You are not useful either". She spat back "If I drink eat and sleep you do the same".

"Who do you think gets the money for the milk?" i said.

"I would've got my own food, I would catch mice. But there aren't enough mice in the house".

"That's my fault too, isn't it? i said sarcastically. "Lazy cat. Go away."

She did . She was gone a long time. It was evening when she came back.

"I have something to tell you" she said, sitting down on my table.....I leaned back on my chair, "what?"

"There is a big office beyond the lake, I have been employed by them.They have asked

me to catch mice."

Thats nice, i said half beliving what she said.

"I have to go and fix things up tomorrow. The details of my work and pay"

"Ok" I said. My cat is good at making up stories.

Next evening after another conversation with a rather smug cat, I was a little more beliving. This is what I got to know.

She had landed a job with some office. Like she said, she had finalised the deatils of her work and pay. But it wasnt all smooth sailing for her. Half way through her discussion she had had an argument with the people in the office. Since she would catch mice and that would also be her food she would technically be eating office property. They wanted to deduct that has lunch money from her pay.

"Thats not fair" she had said . "The mice are of no use to you. My job is to rid the place of mice, what I do with the mice is my buisness." " I will do my work you give me what youve promised. Thats the deal."

The cat made these negotiations and came back.

When she finished narrating her day, my previous disbelief was fading, but was being repalced by new doubts. " will you be able to manage? " . I asked. "They will make you work. They will make you work for every paisa they pay if not more. Employers are smart that way"

"Well i know that, but I made sure that they will now pay me the whole amount, no deduction for the mice i eat. Nor is there any definite number of mice that i have to kill per day. Just keep going there till they have no mice. And the way i see it, they will always have mice. Bad drainage and lots of paper"

Finally I had to concede "You made a good deal cat. Better then i could have"

"Oh you get too emotional and concentious. I was practical. Not like you...I just want my money." then showing her practical self she said "Ok, enough of this chit chat, I have work to do, I have to attend to my personal hygine and sleep. With that, she licked herself for a while then curled up and fell asleep right in the middle of my bed.

Next morning I got up to find the cat on my chest . "Give me my milk and set me off. I have to start early".

I did as she asked. And off she went.

On the way, people started at her. But my cat she did not care. The first cat that we knew to go to work.

Suddenly a car screeched from behind, Hey! you almost climbed on me? The cat hissed "So look where you're going." Suddenly cars started to honk at her from all sides.

Angry faces, glaring at her but the cat just swished her tail to all the rush hour irritation and ambled off again. She saw the lake on the way. The lake that was the jewel of their town, placid today shining a lazy blue. And now she would pass it every day on her way to office. "May be ill swim in it on the way back or sit and gaze at it, waiting for a fish who wanted to die to jump into my mouth" she said to her self.

When she reached the big office. The man at the door asked her to sign a register. "You are late." Everyone comes at 9:00."

"Oh! but its only a minute past" ,

"That doesnt matter. Three such days and we will cut a days payement at the end of the month."

"but for just a minute?" she asked, she was used to arguing, my cat.

"Well, you've already spent more than one minute arguing with me needlesly. And if

you dont watch it, you might break another rule- to not talk to anyone for more than 3 minutes if its not concerning work."

The cat squashed under the weight of these rules quietly entered the office. Once inside she was taken to a big room, filled with chairs and tables. It was here that she had to work. The cat started, at first she could see nothing...then suddenly she heard a squeak....and the fun began. She chased the mouse all over office... many things came in her way, table legs, chairs, peoples legs, bags, drums, out from here, inside there. In ,out, behind , in front. All afternoon she worked. Finally one down. She took the mouse to a corner and began to eat it.

"Oh god look , this dirty cat is eating something shoo!" said a squeky high pitched voice.

"Offf would she get no peace?" Thought the cat as moved to continue her gnawing a little further down the room.

Then suddenly someone said, "here is the cat sitting and eating and there is a mouse running over our bags practising for the mice olympics". "Is that what the boss is paying her for?"

So the cat left the dead mouse and ran after the live one.

Suddenly here was a loud commotion. The big boss was angry, "look what the cat has done, she has left a dirty dead mouse under my chair". He asked someone to come

clean it. The person who had to clean it said "I think you should increase my money. I am not supposed to do this."

"Cut it from the cat's salary " someone said.

The cat hissed " I would've eaten the mouse had you given me the time, its also a part of my work- waste diposal !, isnt it ?".

"Look how she hisses, first a sloppy worker and and so much aggression."

The cat ran all day. Coming under peoples feet. She was thinking its easy to be a pet, people make you do what they want in return they expect just a little cuddling . But its difficut to be a working cat. As soon as they think they have to pay you they start to think of all sorts of things.

The office was just not made for her, all ye furniture made her work so much more difficult and on top of that constantly moving and talking people". Everthing was there to suit them and even then they complained when she came under their feet.

"Do you know they even understand the nature of my work...they cannot apply the same rules for me, can they?" She thought out loud. But no one was listening.

For now she would just have to measure up to their standards.

In the evening on her way back....she saw the lake but didnt notice it . It was a serious blue now slowly starting to reflect the lights of the offices and cars. She couldnt wait to

get home, it was getting dark and she was tired. This time the screeching and honking frightened her into walking on the edge of the road. Her defiance and fight was on a low just now.

So how was your day? I asked her smiling at her as she passed by my desk.

She hissed at me. Just give me my food, don't want any smart talk from you."

"Why? didn't you get back mice?."

"No, they said it was office property."

"Then why didn't you eat them there? "

"I get only a fifteen minutes lunch break. How many mice do you think I can eat.? plus I can't leave the dead mice lying around in office till the my lunch break, and I can eat them only during that break. So we had to throw them." the injustice of it all released in one breath and then she fell silent. Started to attend to her tail.

"Do you think you'll go back tomorrow." I asked gently, for once I was feeling gentle towards her.

"I'll think about that tomorrow " she said. "For now I think I have had enough of humans as co-workers." with that she climbed on my lap and curled up to sleep.

I couldn't resist one try to get my own back, "so now you know it's not so easy being a human at work....?"

"It's not easy ...but I think I can manage...on the other hand you... "she said looking straight into my face...will you be able to do my work...catch mice and eat them?"

"May be I can learn, but why would i ,when i have a cat to do that for me? "

"...my point exactly, So why should i catch mice when you can feed me?."

"I could shoo you out",

"then i'll steal your food, or kill pegions. You wont like it nor will your neighbours"

"I didnt exactly invite you here did I ? into my house?" I shot back at her, angry that she blame her misdemenour on me

"Well , you made a house, so I became a house cat.. You have to deal with what you make."

I held that thought as i stroked her to sleep. Just her purring and my thoughts.

Next day she she was back on my chest,

"get up i have to leave."

"Youre going again?"

"Yes!"

"But i thought you hated it"

"ill mangage"

"you're adapting to our ways?"

"What choice do i have?" she shot back "with an ungrateful mistress like you, ill always have to keep a contigency, wo'nt I?"

"They are all like me out there you know" i mumbled

"Much worse," she said, "but that doesnt make you better"



"Maybe ill get better" I siad trying to sit up straight.

"Soon when i change, you will have no choice, you will have to get better" She said and walked towards her milk bowl, waiting for me to play my role, as she was playing hers."