The rivalry between feline and canine foes has been legendary for centuries. Dogs chasing cats has been depicted in various ways and many a cartoon and story has been based around the contention between the two household pets.

Dogs chase cats because they are natural predators. That is, before their domestication took place about ten thousand years ago, canines were acting upon survival instincts to chase and catch smaller creatures to eat. The survival instincts are also known as the “prey drive.” While training can modify the prey drive, movement, rather than the object triggers the natural instinct that makes dogs chase cats.

The book Life In The Cat’s Lane is a witty and unique look at this age-old battle in the form of a diarized account by a pet cat known only as A. S. Cat. Charting the highs and lows of a cat’s life that gets rudely interrupted by the arrival of a dog, this funny and heartwarming book shows that loyalty and love can develop between even the most staunchest of enemies!

The owner behind this cat is Diana Comber and she decided to write a zany book about her “enraged” moggy and a “squirrelous” puppy as a fundraising project, brought about by her own father’s battle with dementia.

“My father was once a dedicated cardiovascular surgeon,” she states. “Watching his brain being destroyed by vascular dementia showed me how devastating such diseases are for sufferers and carers alike. These illnesses are distinctly unglamorous and terrifying to many but even small money-raising ventures like mine can make a difference.”

After spending five years helping her mother to care for her father, Diana became deeply affected by what the family had gone through. So much so she decided to redirect over 25 years of business and marketing experience into writing, publishing and promoting a book to support Europe’s leading dementia research centre located at The National Hospital for Neurology & Neurosurgery in London.

Diana closed down her marketing communications consulting business for nearly two years, lived off savings and borrowed money so she could finish what she saw as the first of a series called Pets Diaries. The idea was – and still is – to help fund initiatives to fight brain-related diseases whilst supporting other relevant charities wherever possible.

Despite the many warnings from others not to give up her day job, Diana did it anyway. “For 18 months I tried writing it whilst working but couldn’t find enough time to make real headway. So, when my biggest contract ended, I decided to wind down the whole business temporarily – and ‘just do it!’” By mid 2007, after almost two years of full-time effort, she had completed the manuscript. Thus was born the purported diary of one A.S. Cat who, besotted by a dog. And when Diana couldn’t find a publisher, she again did it anyway via her communications consultancy business, Mspec.co.uk. This show of sheer determination and purpose paid off and the hugely entertaining Life in the Cat’s Lane was printed and distributed to an eagerly awaiting audience!
Life in the Cat’s Lane is what the tongue-in-cheek author labels “autobiofiction,” a work based on her own real-life experience of “mismanaging the sharp end of dual-pet ownership.”

For by her frank admission, she made a cardinal error as a pet owner – daring to introduce a rather too curious pup into a 17-year-old cat’s household “without permission.” This error leads to many mishaps, tears and tantrums, which were all documented by the author!

“Year 1 was hell,” she recalls of 2003 when her real cat Sooty was so put out by the appearance of real Chow Tamba that puss “snubbed his owner royally” for the next six months. “Left my bed the day the dog arrived,” Diana quips.

“My home office became a War Zone with their ongoing scuffles, chases, spitting and claw swiping. They drove me nuts. The dog thought the cat was her exclusive play toy while puss considered Chow the dog from hell.

“After a few weeks, though, I began to see the funny side and started taking notes – thinking I might turn all the mayhem into a book to raise more money for The National Hospital.”

So those notes eventually turned into a wry diary narrated by A.S. Cat (A Superior Cat) and the proceeds would go to various charities, with The National Hospital being the primary beneficiary.

The National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery is a leading centre for the diagnosis, treatment and care of patients with a wide range of neurological conditions such as epilepsy, multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer’s. Together with the Institute of Neurology, NHNN is a worldwide leader in the research and treatment of brain and spinal cancer, dementia, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease and stroke and head injuries while providing a major international centre for training.

With lovable characters and an all-too-true storyline, Life in the Cat’s Lane is a hugely enjoyable read and is an ideal gift for any cat (or dog!) lover!

PetFocus has three of these great books to give away and “Mega grr-ow!! When I consider what She paid for Dog, and all the carry bags of Its stuff, Her response was - no, IS - scandalous. What She really means is: I’m not forking out all that dosh for an aged moggy. Serves her right to be oppressed by a high maintenance dog and uninsured “rescue cat” in his dotage.”

“Indeed, it strikes me that with proper training, a Chow could be a most loyal and fear-some ally to A.S. Cat.”

Competitions

all you have to do is answer the following question correctly:
What is the name of Diana’s cat?
A) Sooty
B) Sweep
C) Tigger

Please send your answer, name and address to: Competitions, PetFocus Magazine, Vision Team Publishing, Elmbridge Business Park, Elmswell, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP30 9HR or email comps@visionline.co.uk by 16th March. Good Luck!

Reader Offer

PetFocus is pleased to announce that we’ve arranged for copies of Life in the Cat’s Lane, specially signed by the author, with free bookmarks to be made available to ALL PetFocus readers for only £5.00 each (covers p&p from anywhere in the UK) instead of the regular price of £7.99. Just contact the publisher and quote PetFocus via: mail@mspec.co.uk, 07850 195356 or post to A.S. Cat, Mspec.co.uk, PO. Box 936, Camberley, GU15 9EQ

For more information, visit: www.pet-lit.com. All proceeds will go to charity.