

This time of year, I like to hunker down with a nice cozy blanket in my lap with a book in hand or a movie on the TV and my cat right beside me. Correction: make that *cats*. Two days into the new year, we welcomed a new addition to our house: a six month old kitten named Bagel. For the past seven years we have been a one cat household, and for the past seven years our resident kitty has ruled the roost. Whether it's aggressive cuddles, treats, new toys, or a sample of the goods whenever I make a tuna fish sandwich, she usually gets what she wants. Yes, she is spoiled. As I write this column, she is watching the snow on her brand new cat tree she got for Christmas. She usually gets what she wants, but she absolutely did not want a new kitten invading her space.

For the past seven years we've been happy as a one cat family. However, a few weeks before the new year I was invited by my coworker, Jennifer Meyers, to visit a rescue with her. She was on the market and we definitely were not. That day I met four super cute cats and suddenly I felt something I hadn't felt in almost a decade -- the desire to take one of them home. As Jennifer fell in love with one orange cat now named Ted (or Bruce, if you talk to her husband), I decided to go home to talk to my wife about the possibility of adopting a cat for Boondi. At first she was hesitant, because of two things. First, Boondi is the best cat in the world. Second, we weren't sure how Boondi would react to a new addition and this uncertainty was scary. I convinced Brenna to visit a couple of shelters anyway, with the easy caveat that if it didn't feel right, we would walk away. But then we met a little tuxedo kitten who convinced us by hopping right into our laps and proceeding to give us both kisses (she knew what she was doing!). We looked at each other and said, "Welp, there she is. Let's take her home immediately." That was a month ago. Now she's here, and Boondi is mostly okay with it. I think Bagel has a little too much energy and Boondi doesn't know what to do when she gets too close. It's like she's channeling her inner Roger Murtaugh ("I'm getting too old for this..." - well, you know the rest!). However, just like Murtaugh and Martin Riggs, they'll be best friends before we know it.

Bagel and Boondi have inspired me to highlight a few books located at the Kirkland Town Library that feature our flexible feline friends. The first one up is *On Cats: An Anthology* (2021). It features a collection of essays, poems, letters, and short stories written by literature's greatest writers from Hemingway to Atwood and inventor Nicola Tesla to poet John Keats. The anthology is a celebration of cats and the curious ways that make them so special.

Our second highlight is *A Cat's Tale: A Journey through Feline History* (2020). This is a history of cats and their relationships to humans, as told by Baba, the Cat, and translated by Dr. Paul Koudounaris. Baba showcases thorough research about her ancestors beginning in the prehistoric era and following the trajectory through how their relationship with humans began. Not convinced to read it yet? You will be after I tell you that it features portraits of Baba in costumes that reflect the era she's describing!

I can't write a column about cat literature without mentioning Rita Mae Brown's Mrs. Murphy series. Mrs. Murphy, a cat, and her best friend Tucker, a corgi, along with their human friend, Mary Minor "Harry" Harristeen, investigate murders in this beloved mystery series. With 32 books about the crime solving trio, you'll have plenty of stories and adventures to join.

Please swing by the Kirkland Town Library to check out our expansive collection of books about cats and to see photos of Bagel and Boondi! Special thanks to Clinton Pet Vet Rescue for helping us bring our new kitten home.