

The
Last
little
Cat



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BELIEVE IT! It would seem that the last little cat was born in the last place a cat should be born—even a last little cat. The little black kitten was born in a kennel! And it was the last kitten of a whole litter of kittens—six kittens had been born, after that the last little cat was born. Born in a nest—mind you—in a chicken nest in a barn that was now a dog kennel.

The barn had once been a chicken barn, but now it was full of dogs and dog cages, and dog noises and dog din. Up from the floor of the barn rose the cages—rows and rows of cages, cages

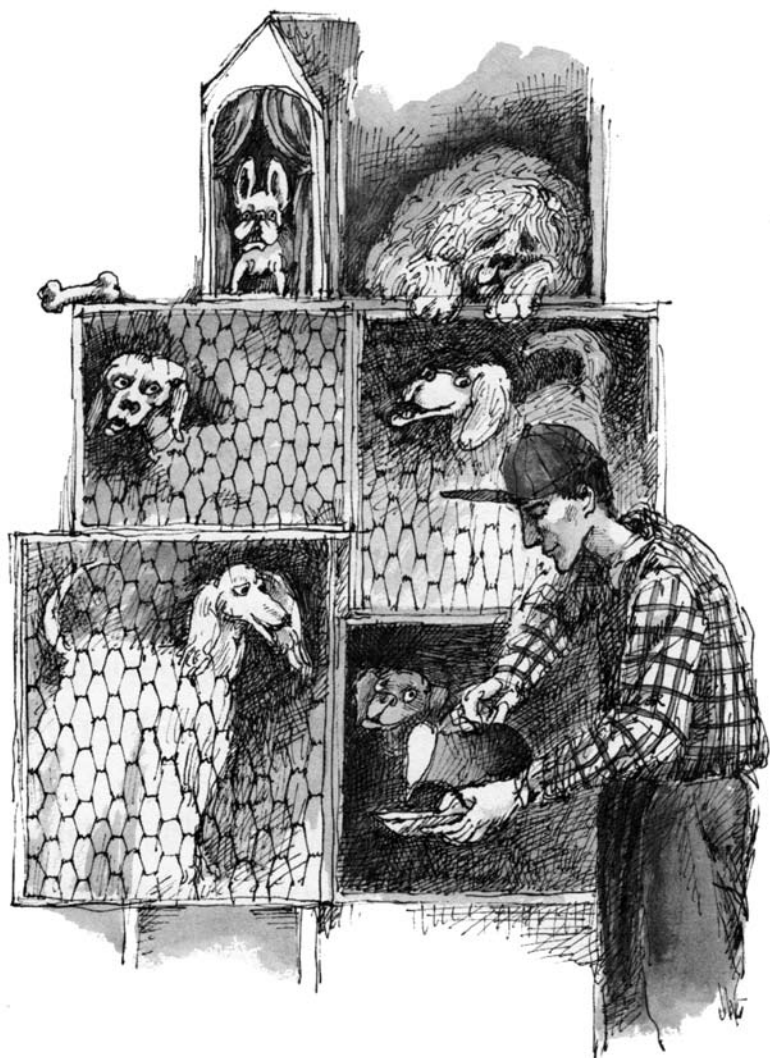
above cages—floor-low and man-high. And in each and every cage—floor-low, man-high—was a barking dog.

There were dogs in all the cages—all kinds of dogs. But all of them were barking dogs. There were no quiet dogs. Not in any of the cages—floor-low, man-high—were any quiet dogs.

Except one!

This one quiet dog was in a cage set on top of the row of cages against the end wall of the barn. Set on top of the other cages this way, this dog's cage was higher than man-high, and almost higher than a man could reach. The dog was there in a cage set by itself because he belonged to the man who owned the kennel-barn. The dog was blind!

He was the kennel-man's own dog. He was so old that he was blind and stiff. He was so old that he was almost



deaf, and he could smell but little. But he could feel! He could feel hunger and thirst, and warmth and cold, and love and kindness, and loneliness and longing. He could still feel all that! And he was quiet. He was so old that he was blind and quiet.

It could be seen that the barn that was now full of dogs and dog noises and din had once been a chicken barn. Against the end wall of the barn there still were chicken nests, row upon row of cubbyhole chicken nests, one above the other. But now they weren't chicken nests with straw in them, and eggs in them, and chickens laying eggs in them — now they were just empty cubbyholes to put things in for the dogs.

But the highest row of cubbyhole nests was higher than man-high, and higher than a man could reach. It was

even higher than the high cage of the old blind dog. This top row of chicken nests had not been cleaned of straw and filled with things for dogs. And in the straw of one of those nests—where chickens once had laid their eggs—the mother cat had put her young. Her whole litter of six kittens! And then still the last little black kitten!

It was a strange place for a mother cat to have her kittens—in a chicken nest in a kennel full of dogs! But there was no other secret, hidden, unseen place for this mother cat to have her young. She belonged in the kennel-barn. She lived there! She was kept there to keep down the rats and the mice that stole the food for the dogs—so it was there that she had to have her kittens. And no other place!

The high cubbyhole chicken nest was far too small for a litter of six kittens, and



then still the last little black kitten. Oh, for the first nine days, when the kittens still were blind and small, there was room in the nest for them all with the mother. But there was no place for the last little cat for milk from the mother. The six kittens took all the places for milk. There was no place until the other six kittens were done with drinking milk. Then there was a place, but then there was no milk.