



WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

Never Say Never

Have you ever said “never again” about something?

After our 17-year-old dachshund passed away in 2018, I told my husband never again would I let another fur baby steal my heart. My heart was broken, and I could not bear the thought of loving and losing again.

We both stand by our desire to not have another animal share our home. At least that is our current wish, as we have traveling hopes and remodeling and moving goals. We have explained to our family and ourselves it is about freedom. We have help with caring for our cows when we are away, but indoor pets are another story, and we worry that we just do not want to take on more at this time.

What I have learned in so many other areas of my life is that when I proclaim never again about anything, the universe somehow finds a way to make me eat those words with some exception to my rule.

My latest never again story began a few months ago, and although I have no idea what the rest of the story will look like, I thought I would share the current chapter.

We have a huge and very old fruitless mulberry tree, whose trunk is hollowed out. Our barn cat often has her kittens in the trunk of this old tree that stands in the safety of our fenced-in backyard. She and her babies reside in it until she is ready to move them to the barn.

For some strange never-happened-before reason she deserted one of her kittens in our backyard tree. Naturally, we started feeding it and providing water. As the weeks passed, we decided it needed better shelter from weather than the tree trunk provided, so we bought a waterproof insulated house and built platforms for her food and water bowls.

Apparently, I neglected to provide more rules to the universe with my proclamation to never again allow an animal to steal my heart. I never imagined I could someday have a tree cat adopt me.

When I say tree cat, I do in fact mean tree



A photo of Annette's white feline, Snowbaby. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

cat. This little feral beauty lets me rub her, and she purrs with glee when I get near. However, she does not want her feet off her tree. Indeed, I am quite sure she has never left her tree and allowed her feet to touch the ground. She vanishes into the hollow of the trunk at the sight of anyone but me.

For months I was not quite sure if my little tree cat was a boy or a girl. That determination was recently learned. I have a female tree cat that has been named Snowbaby, whose striking blue eyes mesmerize me into spending as much time as I can by her tree. I keep a ladder by her tree to climb up so I can get as close as she will

allow. She loves for me to be up on her level. She immediately gets into her house and starts rolling on her back for me to rub her tummy.

In the 42 plus years of having barn cats come and go, we have never had a white feline. It seems this is a never-before fact the universe also thought was time to rectify.

Here is my word to the wise, my friends. Simply put, it is very possible there is no such thing as never again, especially when it comes to love. Love has a way of capturing our hearts in the most unexpected ways and often at the most unanticipated times. Snowbaby now has mine. 