

The Animal Holiday Party

To: Lena
From: Ben (and the animals)
2008

When Kahlua and Stella found out that they would be left home for the holidays, they were not amused.

“I won’t get enough to eat!” Stella cried. “But at least we won’t have to deal with all of those dogs and cats.”

“And I won’t get car sick again,” Kahlua said. “But it will be boring here without anything going on.”

“Maybe we should have our own party?” Stella said.

“What a great idea! Let’s have a party!” Kahlua said.





So Kahlua and Stella tried to think who they could invite to their party.

First, they noticed Sarina and Pearl, the cats right next door, outside in the backyard.

“Would you like to come to our holiday party?” Kahlua said.

“Sure!” Sarina said. “What should we bring?”

“Just bring yourself and a party hat!” Stella said.

Stella walked up and down the road in front of their house and found a few more cats to invite.

Kahula walked left and right on the road behind their house and found even more cats to invite.

“Should we add more cats to the party?” Stella said.

“Of course!” Kahula said.

So Stella called Bryn, who lives downtown.

“What should I bring to the party?” Bryn said.

“Bring yourself and a party hat!” Stella said.

Now they had a growing list.



Meanwhile, Daisy, the dog who lived with Kahlua and Stella, was suspicious.



“What are you girls doing?” Daisy asked.

“Oh nothing,” Kahlua said. “We are meeting other cats. Mind your own business!”

Every day, they found more cats from the neighborhood and from the city to come to the party. But who else?

Stella found the phone book and called other cats in the state and the region.

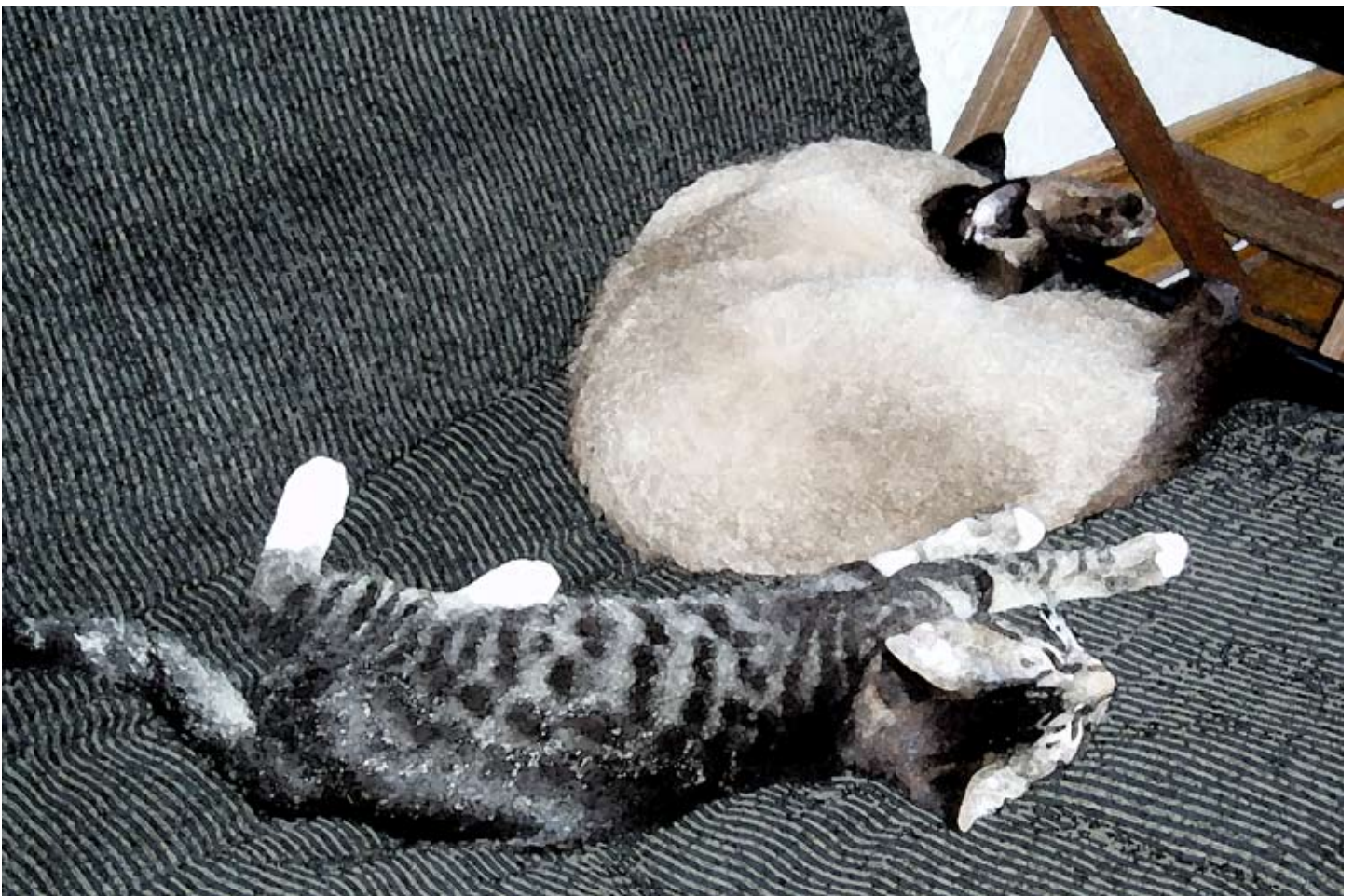
Kahlua emailed her friends - Pepper, Zelda and Mia - in Philadelphia.

Stella pulled out addresses of her pen pals - Bootsie, Ally and Soxy in Louisville, Kentucky, and Cocoa and Casey in Los Angeles, California.



They both made sure to tell their friends to bring party hats.

Every cat invited was planning to come. Even Mia, who was taking care of a beach house in Delaware, would make it to Baltimore for the fun.



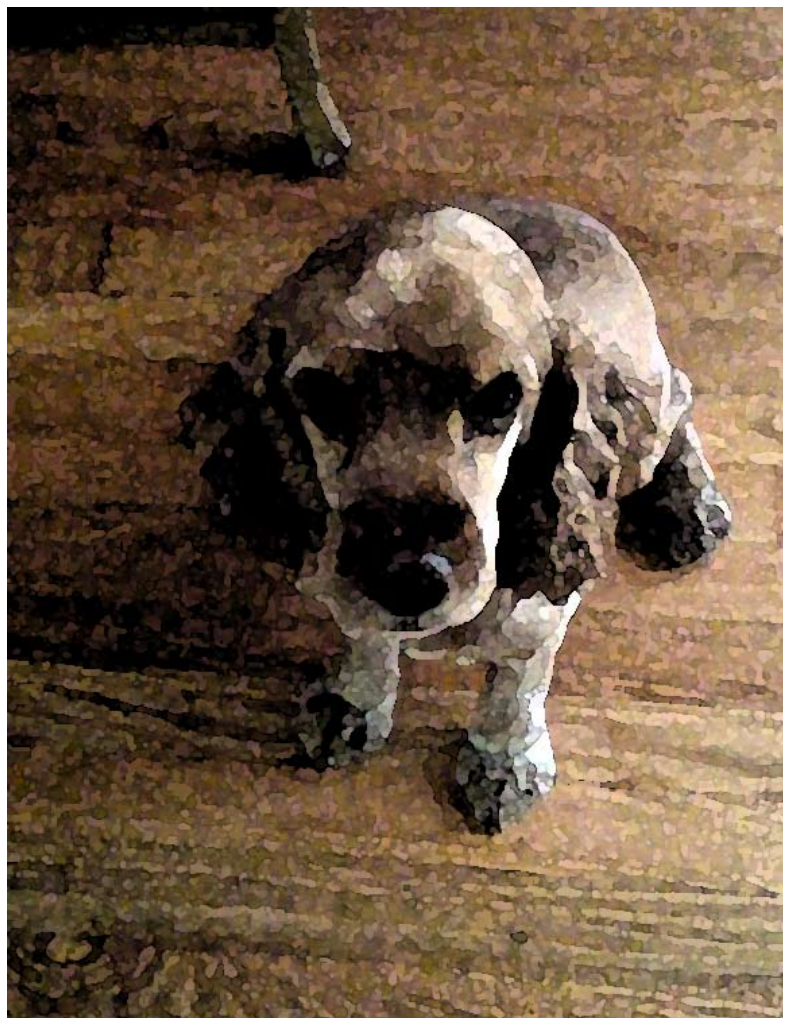
There was one slight problem, though. Cocoa and Casey could not find a flight on December 25, so they asked if they could arrive early.

“Sure!” Stella said in her letter back to her friends. “You can come anytime!”

They were scheduled to arrive in Baltimore on December 23, two days before the actual party.

“We will just start the party early!” said Kahlua, already making a list of things they needed to get for the party.

While Kahlua and Stella’s owners did not know about the big cat party, Daisy did. She discussed it on long walks with her boyfriend, Luke.



“The cats are going to have a party during the holidays while we’re out of town!” Daisy said.

“Did they invite you?” Luke said.

“Of course not,” Daisy said. “I’m not going to be here.”



“Still, that is rude for them to have a party without you,” Luke said.

“I think it’s a cats-only party,” Daisy said.

“That’s really rude!” Luke said. “Maybe we should have a dogs-only party, to show them what an animal party is really like!”

So Daisy and Luke planned their own party, inviting dogs from all over the city, state and country. Daisy made sure to invite Sophie and Callie, who lived with Kahlua and Stella's cat friends from Philadelphia. They set the date for December 23, just two days before the planned cat party.

There was only one problem. Kahlua and Stella had decided to move their party to December 23 as well!



Like the California cats, other cats were so excited about the party that they wanted to show up early.

Neither the cats nor the dogs had any idea what was in store for them on the day of their respective parties.



To be secretive, the cats arrived through the garage, in the back of the house. Sarina and Pearl were the first to arrive. Like many cats in the area, they just walked over, although one cat came by scooter and another by skateboard.

Bryn took the bus from downtown, while Mia took a boat to the Inner Harbor and walked from there.

The California cats, Casey and Cocoa, arrived by plane, as did Bootsie, Ally and Soxy from Kentucky. They shared a taxi to the party. Ally pretended to be a gift for the hosts.



The first sign of the dogs and cats noticing each other occurred on the train, where Pepper and Zelda noticed Callie and Sophie in a separate car.



“Why are you on this train?” Pepper asked the dogs.

“We are going to Daisy and Luke’s party,” Callie said.

“Why are you here?”

“We are going to Kahlua and Stella’s party,” Zelda said.

“So it’s one big party?” Sophie said.

“I don’t think so,” Pepper said. “Only cats are allowed at their party.”

“Very interesting,” Callie said.

While the cats tried to be secretive by entering the home through the garage, the dogs did not hide and entered through the front door. Both the dogs and the cats told their friends to arrive at the house before 5 p.m., so that their owners would still be at work.



After all of the invited dogs arrived, Luke went into the dining room to refill the appetizer dishes with kibble and rawhides. He noticed that the door to the kitchen was closed, so he opened it.

There were at least 20 cats in the kitchen! They had opened the refrigerator, pulled out the milk and poured it into at least 10 separate bowls! They had also opened a number of cheese packages and were feasting on them as well.

Luke freaked out, closed the door and found Daisy in the living room, amongst the other dog party-goers.

“You’re not going to believe this,” Luke said. “All of the cats are here, right now!”

“Their party isn’t supposed to start for two days!” Daisy said.



Daisy stormed into the dining room and opened the door to the kitchen.

“Cats!” Daisy said. “What are you doing here?”

“We are partying like it’s 1999,” said Stella, falling face-first into her milk.

“Our friends wanted to come early,” Kahlua said.

“But you are ruining our party!” Luke said.

“What party?” Stella said.



Behind the door, about 20 dogs attempted to enter the kitchen.

“We are having our party today!” Daisy said.

Kahlua jumped on the counter and opened a cabinet door, revealing a calendar.

“I don’t see anything scheduled for today,” Kahlua said.

“We’re having our party, and that’s that.”

“No, you can have your party later,” Luke said. “It’s dog party time!”

“Nope, sorry, it’s cat party time!” Stella said.

The dogs started yelling, “DOGS, DOGS, DOGS!”

The cats begin yelling back, “CATS, CATS, CATS!”



Tempers continued to flare, until Daisy, while trying to walk back into the dining room, accidentally stepped on Pepper's tail. She was not amused, and neither were the rest of the cats.



“This means war!”
Zelda shouted.

At that, each cat near a bowl of milk flipped the bowl toward the nearest dog. The cats closest to cheese started flinging it toward the dogs.

Stunned, the dogs retreated into the dining room and closed the kitchen door.

“If they want war,” Callie said. “They’ll get war!”

The dogs armed themselves with dog biscuits and rawhides. They reopened the door and flung everything they could at the cats.

Unfortunately, they were not ready for the cats' secret weapon.

“Cats!” Kahlua shouted like a field sergeant.

“Quickly! Plan Doggie Dismantle is in full effect!”

“Roger that!” Bootsie said.



At once, every cat ran back into the garage and shut the door behind them. Puzzled, the dogs sat in the kitchen.

“I think we won!” Luke said.

“This seems fishy, even for cats,” Daisy said.

Then, the garage door reopened, and the dogs found themselves faced with the most frightening thing ever assembled: a phalanx of cats wearing party hats.

Although there were more dogs in the room, and they were bigger and stronger than the cats, they were no match for the marching party hat wearers. The cats even carried extra party hats to fire pellets of food. Of course, the dogs ate some of the pellets, but most hit off the sides of their heads as they fell.



After just 15 minutes, the only dogs left standing were Daisy, Luke, Callie and Sophie. It appeared as if the cats were victorious. Then they heard a car out front.



“They’re here!” Stella said. “Look at this place!”
The kitchen was covered in milk, cheese, dog biscuits and lying dogs.

“What do we do?” Luke said.

“It’s obvious: the cats will be in trouble,” Daisy said.

“The cats aren’t allowed to have parties. We’re free!”

“Not so fast,” Kahlua said. “You didn’t ask to have a party, either. You are just as responsible.”

The dogs took exception to this line of reasoning.



“But you hurt our friends!” Luke said.

“I think they’re all asleep,” Stella said.

“Regardless, we need to do something,”

Kahlua said. “Our owners will be at the door any minute, and they don’t like messes in the house!”



“Why should we help you?” Daisy said. “Luke and I can go hide in the basement. If they ask us, we’ll just say you invited the dogs in as a trap to cause this mess.”

“Would you really do that?” Stella said.

“Well, it would have been nice to be invited to your party,” Luke said.

“You would want to party with cats?” Kahlua said.

“Sure, why not? Daisy said. “We are different animals, but a party is a party.”



“Besides, Sophie can speak cat,” Luke said. “Meow?” said Sophie. “Yeah, I should have warn you about that,” Mia said.

“We had no idea,” Kahlua said. “I guess maybe we should have had one big party.”

“We can talk about this later,” Stella said. “We’d better do something now or there won’t be any more parties!”

Stella was right. They had to devise a plan. Kahlua removed her party hat and sighed, but that gave Daisy an idea. Before she said anything, Kahlua glanced at the hat and realized what was going through Daisy’s mind.



One by one, the cats removed their hats and held them by their paws. Slowly, they spaced themselves out so they covered their entire kitchen. They placed their hats on the ground and scooped up whatever mess was near them. They then passed the upside-down hat to the next cat, who kept passing it until it ended up being dumped into the garbage cans. The dogs walked around and picked up stray items and full party hats, to dump into the garbage cans.

“What about the rest of the dogs?” Luke said.

“Shouldn’t they help?”

“For now, let’s let the sleeping dogs lie,” Daisy said.

In mere minutes, with the help of teamwork between cats and dogs (not to mention an entire roll of paper towels), the place was spotless. By this time, the dogs started waking up, and Daisy and Luke motioned them to join the remaining cats in the garage.





“We did it!” Kahlua said. “They’ll never know about the party!”

The animals heard the keys and the front door open.

“It’s too bad you are going to miss the real party, two days from now,” Stella said.

“Maybe we should stay in town!” Daisy said.

Luke nodded while trying to remove the party hat a cat had mysteriously placed on his head.