

## THE FIRST TIME I MET SIMONE

This is about the very first time I met Simone. It happened soon after we moved into our house. The house has a large back yard, and I was out there, looking at it, thinking about what I could do to make it look nicer. I had noticed there were some cats in the neighbourhood, but hadn't thought much about it. But then I met a special cat. This tells you about that meeting.

The words that Simone said **look like this.**

The words that I said **look like this.**

If you're reading this out loud, maybe you can make different sounding voices for Simone and me. If you're reading it to yourself, you can hear the different voices in your head.

So, as I told you, I was looking around the back yard when I heard, not with my ears, but in my head, a voice that said

**Hello. Who are you?**

I was pretty sure what it was, because I have the strange ability to talk to some cats and dogs, mind to mind, if you know what I mean. So I looked around, and there was a cat behind me, sitting and looking at me, not very far away. I knew I would be able to sort of think back my thoughts, so I said to the cat by thinking,

**Hello. Who are you?**

**I'm Simone.**

**Nice name. But I can't tell by your name if you're a girl or a boy. Are you male or female?**

When I asked that question, Simone's tail sort of went stiff, like Simone didn't like the question, and, sure enough, Simone said

**Don't be impolite by asking personal questions. What's your name?**

**My name is Ted.**

**And what's the name of the female human you live with?**

**Her name is Selma.**

That's a nice name. It's sort of smooth. Where are your children? I haven't seen them yet.

**They don't live here in Victoria. They live in other places, quite far away.**

You humans do that, don't you? Spread all over the place I mean. Most of you humans don't have their family living near them. Do you get lonely, with your children not here with you?

**Well, yes and no. It's nice to be with your children, but it's nice too when they're grown up and doing things for themselves. Besides, Selma and I have other people we feel close to, just like feeling close to your family. It's sort of like having a family when you feel close to some other people.**

I have friends like that, mostly cats. They're sort of my family, I guess. How big is your family you feel close to?

**Well, that's a hard question to answer. It depends who I count. I have a family of friends I talk to a lot, but I also have family I've never even met.**

I don't understand that. What do you mean?

**Ever heard of Jesus?**

I've heard that name, quite a lot. Humans usually say that name quite loudly.

**Well, yes, I'll have to tell you more about Jesus some time. He was a wonderful human person. Anyway, Jesus said that whoever loves God and wants to do what is right is part of God's family. I love God and want to do what is right, so all those other people who feel the same way would be my family too. So, if I look at it that way, I have a very big family.**

Even though you don't know each other.

**Well, yes., but in a funny way we do know each other, even if we've never met.**

I think I know what you mean, though it's a bit hard to understand. Can you tell me again, please?

**It's like this. I do sort of know other people who love God and want to do what's right, because I have the same feeling. So if I know their feeling, I know them quite**

**a bit, even if I've never met them.**

I think I understand that. I think I have some of that feeling too. Sometimes at night I just sit on a fence and look at the moon and the stars, and feel very warm and peaceful inside. And I think about being nice, and keeping my claws to myself, and helping some little kitten. That's part of the feeling you're talking about, isn't it?

**Yes, that's sort of the feeling, I guess.**

So if I have that feeling too, that makes you and me related, right? I'm part of the family that you're part of, so we're relatives. Right?

**I guess you could say that.**

I just did. So you're my brother, or my cousin, or some other of my relatives, right?

What Simone had figured out and said was pretty clever. I even thought Simone might have been kidding me when Simone said we were related, I now knew that this was one smart cat, and that we might have some interesting conversations. And then Simone said,

I guess your family you've never even met is even bigger than you thought, isn't it? You probably didn't know that some of us cats belong to that family, did you?

**Maybe some dogs too.**

Simone pretended, I think, not to hear that, and started to walk away. I hoped Simone wasn't annoyed at me for saying what I did about dogs, but I don't think so. As Simone left, I said,

**Bye, Simone. I hope I'll talk to you again.**

Simone sent me back a thought that said:

Oh, you'll see me again some time. I live around here, and now that I know we're related I'll come back and we'll talk some more. Bye.

And that was the end of the first conversation I ever had with Simone.

What do you think about the idea that we're sort of part of the family with everyone

else who loves God and wants to do the right thing? I think it's a nice idea.

There's a song we often sing in our church about being part of that family. You may know it. Here are the words of the chorus.

*Come in, come in and sit down,  
you are a part of the family.  
We are lost and we are found,  
and we are a part of the family*

It's nice to be in church and feel that way, isn't it? Even when you've never talked to some of the people who are there, to know that they feel the same as you do about loving God and wanting to help people.

*Want to hear more **Simone** stories? come to Esquimalt United Church for our Sunday Service starting at 10:45 a.m.  
500 Admirals Road, Victoria, BC*

***P.S. It is not every Sunday that Ted Bristow has the children time, so if you are in luck you might hear a Simone story the Sunday you come. Otherwise you have to come back the following Sunday and see if Ted is there.***

*Free to use in Family, Church or Childrens gatherings, Copyright 2003 Ted Bristow*