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## Ch. 2 ALOOF, MY ASS

Tue, 2006-03-21 02:00 — Robin Olson

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury; I'm here today to convince you that cats are NOT, I said, NOT aloof. Where cats ever got that bad rap is beyond my comprehension. Let me present you with the following evidence from my journal. I believe that what transpired during the course of just one day will be more than enough to prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that cats are not aloof! My Journal: Monday, March 20, 6:30AM Alarm goes off. My boyfriend hits the "Snooze" button. I try to roll over, but I can't because I don't want to squash two of my cats; Spencer and Gracie. Monday, March 20, 6:35 AM Boo-Boo jumps on the bed next to Spencer and Gracie. I pet him. He is nervous, but he stays in place as I rub his rump. I close my eyes and pet him in my sleep. Monday, March 20, 6:37 AM Petunia, who's been sleeping on a bench next to the bed, jumps on the bed, hisses at Boo-Boo, they fight briefly. Petunia remains on the bed while Boo-Boo, dejected, runs down the hallway, yowling. I am desperately trying to not be awake, but I'm losing the battle. Monday, March 20, 6:39 AM I sit up without flattening any cats. Nicky is still passed out on my boyfriend's feet and his sister, Nora is sitting up on another bench by the bed, peering over her brother, looking to me to see if I'm showing any sign of getting up (and getting her some FOOD). Sophie casually walks into the bedroom to see if I'm ready to brush her (she is such a Brush-Whore). Monday, March 20, 6:45 AM I manage to get up. I'm not getting anyone any food! My back and neck hurt. My left arm is numb. I limp over to the bathroom and shut the door so my boyfriend doesn't accidentally get up and discover the sight of me peeing while limply sit on the toilet. Before I can do my "business," I hear frantic clawing at the door. I say the first swear word of the day, get up and open the door. Gracie is startled by the door opening and runs off. Petunia dashes into the bathroom and promptly jumps onto the counter, next to the sink. She wants me to turn on the faucet so she can get a drink of water. Monday 6:45:37 AM I leave the door open a tiny bit. I hope I can do what I need to do fast so my boyfriend won't see me. I know if I shut the door, it'll only act like a baiting device which, in turn, will lure more cats to claw it down. I turn on the faucet for Petunia, who doesn't like the flow of the water so she won't drink. Instead she stares at me as though I should know better. I fiddle with the flow until she reaches down to lap at the stream. I sit down thinking that the coast is clear. Gracie BLASTS into the bathroom, forcing the door wide open, races over to my feet and rolls over on her back. I'm supposed to rub her belly NOW?! I reach down to pet her and try not to pee onto the toilet seat as I'm doing so. Gracie, startled AGAIN, runs off. I loose my balance and fall off the toilet. Fortunately I do not pee on the floor or down my own leg. Monday 6:46 AM My boyfriend hears all the commotion, gets up and runs into the bathroom to find me on the floor, with my pajama bottoms around my ankles. I say the second through the eighth swear words of the day. He asks if I'm ok. I reply, the ninth through twelfth swear words of the day. He shrugs and stomps off, back to bed. Monday 7:14 AM I have showered and dressed. I am going to have a fresh start, again. I am calm. Spencer keeps me company by standing or sitting in places where I want to stand. I almost trip over him four times. I do not kick him out of the way. I want to very badly, but I do not drop kick him into the family room. Gracie, Petunia, Boo-Boo, Nicky and Nora are on the bed staring at me. I nod. They all jump down onto the floor while I urge them along with; "let's go!" There's a sudden stampede of fur, down the stairs, each cat making certain they don't miss an opportunity to try to trip me as I descend along with them. I live another day. I reach the bottom stair. I make my way to the pantry where the FOOD is kept locked up. Monday 7:16AM Each cat takes his/her position by their assigned bowl. I place a dollop of very expensive canned cat food into each bowl, then spend the next 10-15 mins herding each cat back and forth, away from "the wrong" bowl and back to their designated bowl. Even if the food is exactly the same in each bowl, they have to make sure one cat didn't get the tuna while the others suffered with chicken. Suddenly there's a moment of peace. All I can hear is the wet, tacky sound of the cats licking up their breakfast. --- Now I know that some of you might be thinking that my cats are only hungry and that's why they follow me around. It's a fair, but foolish assumption. My 8th grade chemistry teacher said that; "To assume is to make an "ass" out of "u" and "me." Do not assume you are correct until you read onward. Monday, March 20, 7:41AM Time for me to make myself an egg sandwich. I love my breakfast egg sandwich. I don't care if eggs are good or bad for me. I like them. I'm going to eat them. I keep it interesting by changing out what gets mixed in with the eggs. Today I added fresh spinach and goat cheese and yesterday was parmesan and dehydrated onion. I wouldn't be surprised if lined up, all the eggs I have eaten would reach the moon and back. I bet I could build something cool out of all the plaque building up in my arteries. While I attempt to move back and forth between the refrigerator, stove and counter, Spencer makes sure he continues to try to trip me. Nicky, Nora, Gracie and Petunia sit on the window sills, by the kitchen table, looking out at the birds, who are enjoying their morning's fill of black oil sunflower seed and thistle. Boo-Boo and Sophie came over to rub up against my leg, thinking that maybe they could push me over, instead of trip me. Do they know they're the beneficiaries of my Will? I have a bad feeling that they do. They better remember that I have hands and they can't open the pantry with out at least ONE working hand. Two paws won't cut it. I "accidentally" kick Spencer. I appologize to him and go back to cooking. Monday, March 20, 7:50 AM I sit down at the kitchen table with a glass of orange juice and the glorious egg sandwich. I can see delicious waves of steam rise from my breakfast and glimmer in the morning sun. Nicky does not hesitate to ignore this magical moment by jumping down onto the table to get a better look (so he can get petted). To add further mirth to the moment, he shakes his head to better be able to disperse (shed) a liberal amount of cat hair into my juice. I manage to move (shove) him off the table. He sits across from me, looking mournful, while I try to pick the offending fuzz out of my beverage. Spencer jumps up on the cushion next to me, purring. With perfect comedic timing, he rubs his head into my arm as I lift the OJ to my lips. I spill my juice down my shirt. Nice. I say the thirteenth and fourteenth swear words of the day and make a run for the paper towel roll which is hanging from underneath the cupboard on the far side of the kitchen. Monday, March 20, 7:53AM Cleaned up, I go back to the table to FINALLY eat my egg sandwich. Petunia is licking an edge of the egg that's sticking out beyond the rye bread toast. I do not kill her, but I do let

her know very clearly I am not pleased. I say the fifteenth through the sixteenth swear words of the day, cut the offending piece of egg from the sandwich and sit down to eat whatever is left. It's cold. My once glimmering meal is now miserably moist and gummy. Fine. I'll just eat it and get on to doing some work. At least the cats are reduced to sitting on the windowsill, far enough away that they can't shed on me or do me any further harm. I actually believe they're trying to lure me into a false sense of security. Foolishly, I "assume" I can eat in silence. Monday, March 20, 8:02 AM Petunia and Boo-Boo have a fight under the kitchen table. Startled, from the loud cries, I bite my lip, instead of the sandwich. Before I can unleash the seventeenth swear word of the day, I feel a claw swipe across my black stretchy pants covered shin. Not only do I have a small hole in my "garment," I have a delicate red swash across my alabaster (almost blue) skin. Sure. I was just in the way. My shin saved one of the cats from getting clocked in the head. I'm a good cat-mommy. [Insert eighteenth swear word here] Monday, March 20, 8:38 AM I finish applying betadine to my shin. My black stretchy pants will live through another day so I leave them on. Of course there were one or two cats keeping me company as I applied the antiseptic to my leg. I ignored them as much as I could and was sorely tempted to just go ahead and stomp on any of them that tried to thread themselves between my legs as I walked back down stairs to my office. I kept reminding myself that I love them. They love me. They aren't doing anything to hurt me. They are CATS. They are not my vindictive ex-husband's "new" (old) wife. They are just doing their cat thing. They are aloof and independent. They don't need me, they choose to be with me. Monday, March 20, 9:00 AM I made it to my office, unscathed. It only took walking down two flights of stairs and turning left, but I don't want to take anything for granted or ASSUME I am going to make it in one piece. Spencer is wheezing quietly on one of the two cat beds under my desk. Petunia is relaxing in adjoining bed. It's very quiet in the house. Gee, this is very nice. I can even pet the cats with my stocking feet while I sit at my desk. They seem to like it. I think I'll run catch up on my e-mails, before I get to work. Monday, March 20, 9:21 AM I'm trying to write a witty reply to an e-mail from my secret pen pal in Switzerland, when Boo-Boo decides he wants to check up on me. He rubs up against my leg. I reach down and pet him. He knows he can't knock me off my feet or out of my chair (this time) so he backs off and runs out of the room. Monday, March 20, 9:22 AM I'm trying to figure out what some of the slang means in my secret pen pal's email (nutty Brit that he is) when Boo-Boo decides he wants to be petted again. So I pet him. I decide I will ignore the part of the email I don't understand and just write about what I saw on TV last night and how that my pen pal should watch this show once it gets around to airing in his country. Boo-Boo wants to be petted again so he keeps rubbing up against my leg. Every time he does it, I lose my concentration (what little I have). I'm not going to yell at him. He was a feral cat two years ago and I want him to have confidence in humans so he'll be more adoptable when the day comes that I find someone to (GET HIM OUT OF HERE) adopt him. Monday, March 20, 9:23 AM Boo-Boo wants to be petted again, but he was too close to Petunia this time and she decided she'd had enough. She and Boo-Boo are mortal enemies, so once again, they break out into fight. I am able to move my leg out of the way, but in throwing myself backward, my office chair rolls over the tip of Nora's tail. At some point, she had snuck onto the cat bed to the right of my chair and I didn't see her there. She screeched and tried to run for it, but I had her pinned. I got up quickly and ended up knocking a PILE (PILE!) of loose papers, notes and business cards onto the floor. My lamp tips over and hits the wall. The light bulb explodes. I rush after Nora to check on her tail. Monday, March 20, 9:28 AM I finally get hold of Nora. She's in the basement, hiding behind the icky staircase. She is upset, but her tail doesn't feel broken. It was so close to the tip, I think it just scared her more than anything else. At least it got her to do some exercise. At 22+ pounds, she needs all the running around she can get. Monday, March 20, 10:02 AM Bathroom break time. This time, since my boyfriend is safely at work, I leave the door open. This way no cats will claw at it while I'm in there and I don't have to worry about anyone seeing me astride the bowl. Cricket, who has been otherwise on his own, being aloof, comes to say; "Hi!" while I'm...ah..."reading." "Oh, that's a nice boy, Cricket." I pet Cricket, while I try to read a book about cat behavior problems. Petunia rockets into the bathroom and jumps directly onto the counter, near the sink. Yes, she wants to drink out of the faucet again so I turn on the water and she looks at it and looks at me. The flow isn't "right" so I turn it off and shoo (yell) her off. If she can't just drink the friggen' water as it comes out of the tap, whatever the flow, then tough shit. I mean, nineteenth swear word. Spencer's lonely. He doesn't know why I left him to sleep, alone in my office. So he struts into the bathroom purring loudly. Cricket, fearful, makes a run for it. Spencer looks up at me, then opens his mouth to meow, but no sound comes out. I don't know if I have caused him respiratory distress or if he is trying to tell me to turn on the bathroom fan. I ignore his rude commentary and go back to "reading." Monday, March 20, 10:17 AM I really need to get to work on designing layouts for a banner ad for a product I think is stupid. The cats are circling me. They are bored. Maybe I should play with them for a few minutes? Monday, March 20, 10:47 AM Awww...they <sup>u</sup>'re so cute! I should take some photos of them! Monday, March 20, 11:38 AM Okay. Now I really need to get to work, but there are a few photos I just shot that might be really GREAT! I'll just pop into my office, launch Photoshop and have a look. Spencer, Petunia, Nicky and Boo-Boo follow me. They take their assigned seats and begin to frantically groom themselves before they nap. Monday, March 20, 1:45 PM The cats are all napping. A few of them are by my feet, a few are sitting on the window sill, enjoying the afternoon sun. I reviewed most of the photos, retouched some of them and uploaded them to my photo-sharing web site so my cat-photographing friends can see what a great photographer I am! I'm hungry! Monday, March 20, 1:47 PM I make the mistake of getting out of my chair. This alerts ALL the cats that there is a feeding opportunity at hand. They race into their positions, by their food bowls and wait. Spencer, once again, "air meows" at me. I roll my eyes. I can't even have MY lunch first. They have to be fed NOW or I face having to dodge cats who will continue to try to trip me—who will stop at NOTHING to get me to feed them. If I feed them, however, I am teaching them that they can annoy me and I will do their bidding. I have to remember, I AM THE BOSS. I am making MYSELF some lunch, THEN I will feed the cats. Monday, March 20, 1:48 PM OK. So the cats are fed! I'm weak. What can I say? Monday, March 20, 1:49 PM Yummy! Tuna sandwich day! I love tuna fish. The really good stuff..fancy albacore (dolphin safe). Of course, to enjoy tuna I have to be VERY careful during the preparation of my lunch. One false move will send shock waves throughout the cat population and I will have 8 psychotic cats crying (or "air-crying", in Spencer's case) at me. I go to the cupboard and quietly remove a can of tuna. The cats are busy eating. Maybe they won't notice. I quietly lift the can opener from the utensil drawer. Nonchalantly, I walk into the bathroom that's across from the kitchen. I turn on the light and close the door. I turn on the vent (fart) fan. It makes LOTS of noise. The cats won't hear the can open, so they won't realize I'm going to eat TUNA. Monday, March 20, 1:50 PM I clamp the can opener onto the rim of the tuna can. Pressing down firmly, I hear the can hiss as the vapor seal is released. I don't want to be paranoid, but I think heard something outside the bathroom door. I turn the handle on the can opener slowly. I get hit with the strong odor of tuna. Mmm..it smells good. My mouth waters. I get the lid off the can. Maybe if I drain it into the bathroom sink they won't notice? There's not enough tuna water for all of the cats so it's better if I... Monday, March 20, 1:50:58 PM ...oh shit. I hear furious scratching at the bathroom door!!!! The jig is UP! ...continued...

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