

Shirley's Christmas Turkey

A Christmas story

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Winter brought snow, ice skating, and decorated trees to the village. A holiday market was going on in the nearby towns. Shirley went to the butcher shop on the square to select her Christmas turkey. Tomorrow, she would host her Christmas party.



Since Frederick had died years ago and Leonard had moved to the capitol to work as a lawyer, Shirley lived alone. Well, not quite alone, Leonard brought a little kitten home to his mother last Christmas. Shirley loved the little tiger cat, that she named Tiny. Her annual party was a highlight for Shirley, she invited Leonard, of course, plus the widow Emma Gowan, Mr. and Mrs. Schmidt, her neighbors from downstairs, and Father Mel, the Catholic priest from Cashton.

“Tiny, now we have everything we need for our Christmas dinner”, Shirley told the cat, as she came in the door from her shopping trip. Tiny was Shirley’s constant companion, sitting with her while she crocheted in the evening and sitting under her feet at the table for breakfast while Shirley lingered over coffee. And though the little cat did not really understand what Shirley talked about, she seemed to respond well to her owner’s voice. Shirley loved having Tiny to talk to in the house.

The next morning, as Shirley continued with her dinner preparations, she realized she needed butter for her gravy. She carried Tiny out of the kitchen, closed the turkey and the fixings, closed the door, and the shutters between the kitchen and dining room counters and left the apartment to get the butter. At the market, she got the butter, some chocolate for her guests, and a small treat for Tiny.

Up the steps she went, and after unlocking the door she stepped into the apartment. At the corner leading to the dining room, an uneasy feeling came over her. The shutters stood open, and looking down at the carpet, she spotted scraps of turkey scattered across it.



“Tiny!” she called out, setting her package down on the dining room table, and walking through the doorway into the kitchen. There on the floor was the turkey, pulled out of the pan, and with obvious chunks torn out of the raw carcass. Fuming at the cat, Shirley picked up the turkey, put it in the sink, washed it off and put it back in the roasting pan. She turned on the oven and while waiting for it to heat up, picked up the pieces off the floor, cleaned up the counter, put her butter and chocolate away, laid the treat aside and went to find Tiny.

As she suspected, Tiny was hiding behind Shirley's table in the living room. "You are a bad cat", she told her, "But we are not going to tell anyone about this, so shhh".

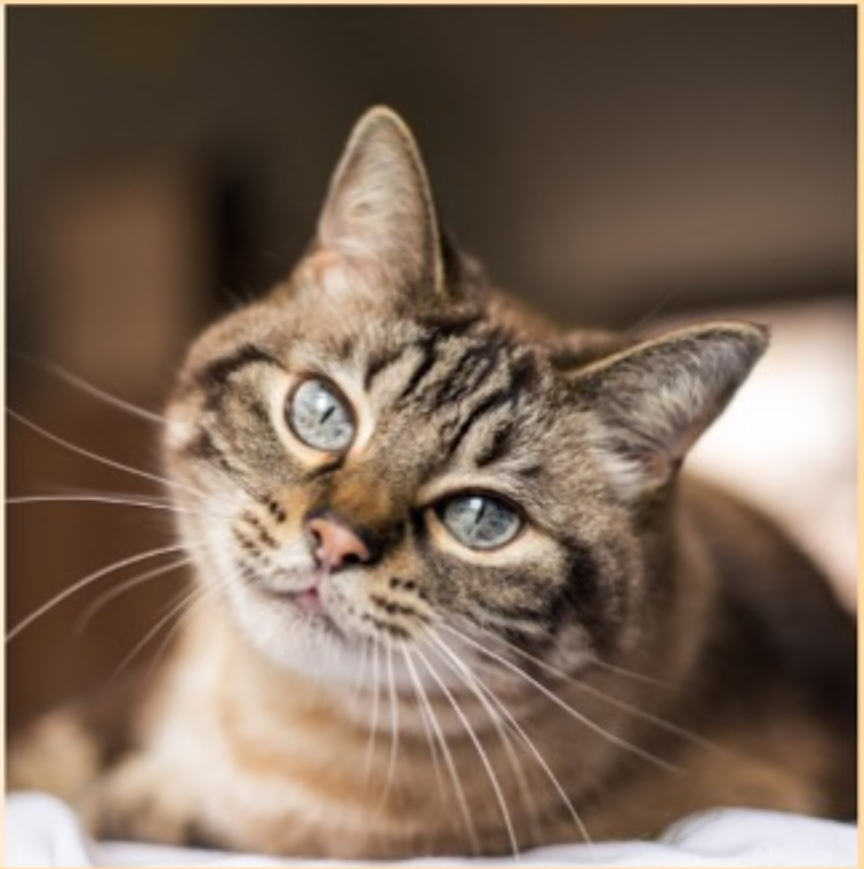
Hours later, the food was ready, the guests were at the table. Shirley did an admirable job of cleaning up Tiny's mess, and getting all the food cooked and out on time for her guests.

“I tried something new this year and carved the turkey ahead of time. I thought it would be easier for you all. Enjoy.” Father Mel blessed the meal and when they all said “Amen”, there was Tiny, sitting on the floor at Shirley’s feet.

Mr. Schmidt took his first bite of turkey and declared, “Delicious!”.

Emma Gowan, who was sitting next to Shirley, looked down and saw Tiny. “What a polite cat”, she said, “sitting there so pretty”.

“Oh yes”, said Shirley, “she is such a good cat”.





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