

## ESSAY

### 10-11 "Softy's Gift" by Kathryn Hall

Her name was Softy. White with black and gray spots, she was a long-haired cat with very soft fur. That's where the idea to name her Softy came from. Her feet looked like she had socks on, so her nickname was Softy Socks. Sometimes she held her mouth in such a way that she looked like a mouse. She was the sweetest cat and didn't meow that much. When we were blue, she always cheered us up by rubbing against our legs. She was an outdoor cat. My mom called her our watch cat. She like to look at the cars go by and was always there when we left and when we came back. She never went far from the house and was always around. When my dad was home, she would paw at the window to get his attention.

One day a frightening experience happened. I opened the front door and saw Softy lying there, breathing heavily. We weren't sure what was wrong with her, but at first concluded it wasn't too serious. She then stood up, and we saw she had a limp and two big gashes on each side of her body. We were astonished!

The first thought that came to our minds was that a dog had attacked her, however, there were no teeth marks. Because we weren't sure what had happened to her, we took her to a vet. The vet x-rayed her and reported her injuries were caused by a gunshot wound. The vet also told us she had a broken leg. We couldn't believe somebody had shot her because I thought no one would shoot a cat! The vet wanted to put her to sleep, but we wouldn't let her. We decided that with a lot of prayers and a comfortable place to stay she just might get better.

At first the situation didn't look good. She wasn't eating and just didn't have any energy. Finally, she started eating and walking. Of course, she still had a limp, but it was a very slight one. There was hope! She started getting better on her own and seemed fine.

At the time she was shot we thought she was pregnant and that the shot had killed all of the kittens. However, about two months later, she had two kittens: one was born dead and the other alive. I named him Cuddles because he loved to cuddle in blankets. He was white with gray spots and very noisy. Softy couldn't last through two major incidents though. We buried Softy in her favorite place in the woods surrounded by trees. Five days later the kitten died, too. Although he had a great will to live, he was just too small and wasn't strong enough. We buried the kitten right beside his mother and hope that they will both have a happy life in heaven.

Miracles do happen even if they are not what you expect them to be. Even though we had Cuddles, Softy's gift to us, for only a few days, it was better than not having him at all. The kitten helped us remember how special Softy was and brought back many precious memories we had of her.