

I have many positive role models in my life, but among the best is someone who has been by my side since I was just a baby. Her name: Peachess. In her sixteen years of experience, she has gone through more than anyone I know. Over that time she has lost her siblings, many close friends, and all but one of her children.

In September, 1999 on a small farm on the edge of Hortonville a late batch of kittens was born. My parents, Dean and Angela, went there to pick out one of them. They went home with all eight of the kittens. Four of them were adopted by other people. One of them, Oreo, was lost, never to be found, Daisy was poisoned by a neighbor, Toby was run over by a truck, and then all that was left was Peachess. That August, Peaches had a litter of six kittens. All of them found loving homes. One of them, Oliver, went to my Aunt and is living happily in Madison today.

Peachess lived as an outdoor cat her whole life, side by side with our other cat, Freddy, until the winter of 2011 when Freddy passed away quietly, leaving Peachess alone. BUT IS SHE REALLY ALONE? We have frequently seen at least four different fluffy cats around our house. Their names are Si-Ball, Whitestorm, Checkers, and Buttercup. Apart from a few skirmishes, they have remained on friendly terms with Peaches.

And where is Peachess now? She has survived through so much, from the heartbreak of losing those close to her to being outside through the harsh Wisconsin winters, and has come out on top of it. Other than being partially deaf, Peachess is still in tip-top shape, and I have a feeling she will survive for years to come. She may end up outliving us all.

Peachess has been a true inspiration to me. She has shown me how to stay tough, even when nothing goes my way and she's shown me how to be kind and caring. She has always been there for me. She is truly my hero.