

**THE STORY OF MYRTLE
MAE
AND BLACKIE**



Myrtle Mae and Blackie, a mom and her son, have lived with me for several years since they were helped by the Pacific Animal Foundation in 2007. Myrtle Mae, a feral cat, had 4 kittens under my front steps. PAF adopted out 3 of the kittens and I adopted the 4th kitten (Blackie) along with his mom. Myrtle and Blackie were both spayed and neutered by PAF and they now live on my covered sundeck. They have all the amenities and luxuries of life – a big plastic 2-level condo, cat towers, beds, scratching posts and other cat goodies. There's a Plexiglas gate that I slide across the top of the back steps and I leave an opening big enough for just them. It helps to keep out any large intruders that might get in the yard – mainly dogs and coyotes. My yard is gated and completely fenced so it's pretty hard for them to get into the yard.

I can pick up Blackie and he loves to be petted. He's the happiest guy I've ever met. He's always purring and he's very affectionate. Myrtle Mae, who rarely purrs, still won't let me touch her. I can place the food dish in front of her and give her treats by hand. If I attempt to pet her, she moves away. If I insist, she runs away. I know she loves me because when I leave my shoes on the sundeck, she lays on top of them and rubs them with her head. She will come up to the window and rub her head on my face with the glass in between. If I open the window, she runs away. If the cats are nowhere to be found, all I have to do is whistle a few times, and they both arrive either together or seconds apart. If you see one, you know the other is not far behind. They are always kissing and rubbing up against each other. I often hear them calling each other. They cuddle up together at bedtime. They're the best of friends.

I've been renovating my house for about a year. The cats disappear when the workers arrive and they reappear almost immediately after they leave. Neighbours on either side of me are cat friendly and have large yards with lots of hiding places. They stay in one of those yards while the work is being done. On the days when there are no workers at my home, they spend much of the day on the sundeck sleeping. They will come inside the house at night when the weather is inclement. Blackie runs inside, but his Mom needs a little coaxing. It usually takes about 10 minutes for her to make up her mind to come in. I close off half of the house and leave the basement door open. Fluff, my domestic cat (also a rescue cat but not feral) lives inside only and the three of them just don't get along so I have to keep them separated at night. Blackie and his mom have half of the house and the entire basement to roam around once I've gone to bed. I leave all of the blinds up so they can look out. I have a litter box in the basement. They are little angels and always use the box. They don't scratch my furniture. They're wonderful little guests, especially since the mom is feral. I leave some dry food out for them and plenty of water. I don't hear a peep from them all night. When I get up in the morning they're both bright-eyed and bushy-tailed and ready to go outside for the day. My life is so enriched by the presence of these lovely little creatures. I hope they live long, happy and healthy lives.