



Kitty Cornered: How Frannie and Five Other Incorrigible Cats Seized Control of Our House and Made It Their Home

Bob Tarte

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Bob Tarte had his first encounter with a cat when he was two and a half years old. He should have learned his lesson then, from Fluffy. But as he says, “I listened to my heart instead, and that always leads to trouble.” In this tell-all of how the Tarte household grew from one recalcitrant cat to six—including a hard-to-manage stray named Frannie—Tarte confesses to allowing these interlopers to shape his and his wife’s life, from their dining habits to their sleeping arrangements to the placement and furriness of their furniture. But more than that, Bob begins seeing Frannie and the other cats as unlikely instructors in the art of achieving contentment, even in the face of illness and injury. Bewitched by the unknowable nature of domesticated cats, he realizes that sometimes wildness and mystery are exactly what he needs.

With the winning humor and uncanny ability to capture the soul of the animal world that made *Enslaved by Ducks* a success, Tarte shows us that life with animals gives us a way out of our narrow human perspective to glimpse something larger, more enduring, and more grounded in the simplicities of love—and catnip.

Kitty Cornered: How Frannie and Five Other Incurable Cats Seized Control of Our House and Made It Their Home Details

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Tessa Dick says

While pawing out treats to my furry friends, I quote the oft-repeated line in Kitty Cornered (after telling a cat no to the demand for treats), "while wiping the cat treat dust off my hands".

It's always difficult, and often impawssible to refuse a cat anything. They're purrsistent.

Cats rule my life, but at least I can point to Bob Tarte as a total cat slave, while I still manage to resist some of the more unreasonable demands from my furry task-masters.

This book is hilarious most of the time, sad at times and a great read.

It's easy to read, so I could have plowed through it in one evening, but I want to savor every delicious word.

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### **Jessica says**

I adored this book, especially since I have cats myself. I even found myself laughing out loud many times, which is very unusual for me. Bob Tarte is a fantastic writer and I feel like the animals are leaping off the pages as he tells the story. Can't wait to see where his next one takes us.

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### **Deborah D. says**

I stopped reading around page 125 or so, after struggling with myself for the last 40+ pages.

The stories of the cats and their behaviors were, for me, overwhelmed by the miasma of the authors repetitive refrain of the human's physical and emotional issues.

I found myself grumbling at the writer, despite the fact that I have experienced the depressive side as well. I have yet to have laughed out loud and decided I was going to call it 'good enough' and move on to the next book.

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## **Bark says**

Look at that cover and those crazy, crazy eyes and tell me you could've resisted!

This is a cute audiobook about a man who insists he didn't start out as a cat lover. Yeah, yeah I've heard *that* story before! He never really had anything against them but his parents preferred dogs. He was also scratched pretty badly as a kid but never held it against the entire species. His take 'em or leave 'em feelings towards them changes when he marries an animal lover named Linda and suddenly their house is filled with birds, other assorted animals and lots of cats. Six of them by the very end and he clearly loves them all.

He recalls how all of these cats came into his life and the stories are sweet, funny and, whew, sorrynotsorry for the spoiler alert, none of them die! I have to tell you, I was extremely worried about that but he ends the book before that ever happens. If you're an animal death wimp like me you can feel safe reading this one.

I think any cat lover will enjoy this audio but you really do have to be a fan of the feline because it's most definitely a cat person book. The writer is a neurotic man who only wishes "to stay in a good mood for longer than hour". If you can relate, you will enjoy him and his many idiosyncrasies. He reminded me a bit of Eeyore and that is okay. I enjoy reading about other people's problems and their naughty pets. It makes me feel better about my crazy bunch who have shaved years off of my life with their cord chewing, string eating, demonic ways. So, while there is nothing earth shattering here and it didn't make me laugh out loud (but nothing does, really because I'm a crab), it's an amusing and pleasant, stress-free way to spend a few hours.

The audiobook I listened to was narrated by Tom Perkins and he is a pleasure to listen to for hours on end. You know I'd tell you if he wasn't!

\*I received this audio from Tantor Media a shamefully long time ago. Thanks, Tantor!

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## **Cayr says**

Bob Tarte is back to regale readers with more hilarious pet stories in his third and funniest book so far, *Kitty Cornered*. Tarte's previous two books highlighted his hijinks with his unruly flock of hook bills, ducks, chickens, geese and a cast of oddball characters; none, perhaps, as odd as Tarte himself.

Tarte's feathered friends take a back seat in *Kitty Cornered*, which is centered around the cats of the Tarte household. As the story unfolds, three cats share the author's home, Moobie, Agnes and Lucy, who have worked out an almost tolerable arrangement. When a stray cat starts hanging around the yard, Tarte is immediately beset by worries that it will stay; but one day a chance flicker of eye contact passes between them, mutating his concern into worrying the stray won't stay. Before the book concludes, the cat population in Tarte's home has doubled.

Tarte is a self-proclaimed sad sack, alternately paralyzed by anxiety, depression and exhaustion. His self-deprecating humor reaches new heights in *Kitty Cornered*, as he (read the rest of the review here

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## **Christine says**

If you are a cat lover, then you will enjoy *Kitty Cornered*. As someone who is owned by a cat, I could see bits of myself in some of the stories. The Tarte household is much more than just cats, they also ducks, chickens and other assorted animals but the main story was about how they acquired their cats or as many people say, how the cats acquired their humans. The stories were funny and poignant. I could actually place myself in his shoes in some of the story. The author is a work in progress himself, as much as the cats. However, as a cat person, you know that they are not pets, they are members of your extended family and the stories are written so you understand that deep love they have for their cats and their other animals. Highly recommend.

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## **Joanne says**

This book starts with a ground-floor plan of Bob and Linda Tarte's home. There are indications of where things occur in this home, all related to the pets that this couple cohabitate with.

Bob and Linda are very into animals, with cats, birds, rabbits in the house and ducks and chickens in the barn.

Bob Tarte litters this book with the personalities of all the animals that encompass his life. There are cats already in the home, but more are acquired during the reading, including the one stray that Bob seems to be the most taken with, Frannie.

The book is enjoyable on learning about the machinations and ups and downs of owning so many different pets. Bob is great at making you understand, as much as he or we can, the different emotions, phobias and quirks of each cat.

This is a good book and there are some very funny instances of man versus animal, with no real battles, but a sense of understanding on both sides.

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## **Jennifer says**

I was really torn on how to rate this book - if the rating system allowed, I think a 2.5 would be most appropriate. As a feline enthusiast and owner of 2 crazy but lovable cats myself, I had hoped to get more enjoyment out of this story. I did find some of the stories relatable and humorous. Others were just plain boring. The author's quirky, sarcastic sense of humor sometimes made me chuckle, and other times made me roll my eyes. What I found most grating though was his constant references to his anxiety and mental issues. I don't feel this was relevant to the stories he was telling, and since it was mentioned in nearly every chapter, it felt like I was being beat over the head with it. I think if those pieces were removed entirely, this actually would be a pretty cute and fun read.

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## **Jen A. says**

Cute. Read this one as an advance copy, so there were some errors (one "far" was typed in as "fat"), and the editors will probably clean it up a bit more.

Tarte's observations toggled back and forth between witty, interesting and amusing to overly self-sabotaging. In a "comedy in contemporary culture" class that I took for my master's program, we examined the differences between comedians who either a) shoot other people down or b) shoot themselves down. Tarte is one of the latter, and sometimes he gets it right and sometimes he gets too heavy and you want to send him some Prozac.

His opinions about his cats (and other critters) make for a fun, quick read. (Just check your copy editor's red pen in the nightstand drawer first.)

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### **Sonia Reppe says**

I am intrigued by cat behavior. I really liked the humor and the personal connection. This book wasn't just anecdotes, it was about Bob's life as a cat owner. He and his wife also have a lot of birds, and he wrote about that (*Enslaved by Ducks*). I haven't read it, and I probably won't, because I'm not that interested in birds, but if it falls into my hands I may read it because I liked Tarte's writing. Someday I will get more cats...

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### **Xanthi says**

I listened to this on audiobook. The narration was spot on for conveying the humour in this book, which there is a lot of. In fact, even though I'm a cat fan, it was the humour more than anything else, that made me love this book. Also, the obvious fact that not only is the author owned by his various cats, but that he revels in it, is what really appealed to me about this book. His affection for them is obvious and a delight to read about.

Oh, and although cats are the focus of this book, there are several other animals that make appearances throughout this book: various birds, mice, wild life, rabbits etc.

The book has some drama, a lot of laughs and a whole lot of heart.

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### **Elaine Campbell says**

Bob Tarte is the only writer I know of who is both a humorist and a narrator of animal stories – true ones that he and his wife, Linda, have lived out firsthand under severe Michigan weather conditions and while having their own crosses to bear: Linda with a serious back problem and Bob who suffers emotionally at times. Yet they rise over and above difficult circumstances in this charming third newly-released book that followers of the Tarte's animal adventures will welcome with open arms.

This is the third book by Bob Tarte about his family's care of and love for natural life. Each book has its own nature and character. They are not copycat, albeit somewhat altered, editions of their predecessors. My favorite (even one of my very favorite books of all times) remains the premier one: *Enslaved by Ducks*, a true tour de force if there ever was one. The second book, *Fowl Weather*, depicts a more serious side of the Tarte family life (this definition of family includes all family pets) and is written with exemplary skill (and, of course, ever present humor).

Now comes along a different sort of book once again. For one thing, the Tartes are older; Bob seems to be off antidepressants, but is still emotionally shaky (those of us that suffer psychically can well understand

this) and Linda's back condition, if it has not worsened, certainly hasn't gotten any better (one wonders why surgery is not on the agenda). And we get to meet the most darling rascalions—an impossible and endearing set of cats—I can think of in literature, each with his or her own very distinct character, temperament and likes and dislikes. (To see their handsome photos, see [BobTarte.com](http://BobTarte.com), click on the book's cover, and then again on the Photos Link.)

Kitty Cornered explains in graphic detail the saying of Mark Twain: "Cats were invented by God to let people know they are not in control." The rip-roaring events related in Kitty Cornered more than bear this out. (As an aside, the chapter about the animal psychic-author, Kathleen Schurman [Locket's Meadow: The Long Road Home], was quite interesting and made me, a former doubter, an instant believer!)

If you love animals (especially cats), this book is a "Don't Miss"; if you love humor, this book is a "Don't Miss"; if you don't love either, then better skip it! Non-fiction noir (with no pets in sight) may be an alternative.

As the owner of four cats, five dogs, one canary and one Senegal parrot, Kitty Cornered was a real treat for me and I look forward to Book Four, understanding that these stories have got to be lived before they can be written about, so I may be waiting for some time.

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### **Jim Corbiere says**

Finished reading "Kitty Cornered" by Bob Tarte. This is one way I can tell how behind I am on my reading. I purchased this book the day it came out...in 2012. I did enjoy this book a lot and, like any book revolving around animals, I had a hard time putting it down. I think any animal lover especially cat lovers, will really enjoy this book.

It isn't necessary to read the previous two books (Enslaved By Ducks and Fowl Weather) but it really does help to show how many animals the Tarte's really do have. Kitty Cornered focuses on the feline members of the Tarte family. Explaining how each came to them and how they scratched, clawed, purred, and meowed their way into their hearts. Any cat lover knows how cats can be. They each have their own personalities and sometimes they mix well and sometimes there is an all out war! Agnes, Mooby, Frannie, Lucy, Tina, and Maynard are the main characters and you will grow to love them. There are other members of the family mentioned but it really helps to read the other books to know who they are. Of course, Bob's self-deprecating humor always makes for a good laugh.

The author will tell you flat out that he is a bird lover over all but he has room in his heart for all animals. Growing up he really seemed to see animals as non entities. Then he married Linda. It all started with one bunny and then the animals took over their lives. You can tell how much they care about their furred and feathered family by reading the books. Well worth it.

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### **Deb (Readerbuzz) Nance says**

I finished reading this book yesterday and the first thing I thought of was, If you have cats, you will love this book. If you have animals in your home, you will love this book. If you need a good laugh, you will love this book.

I could not stop laughing as I read this story. Bob Tarte writes with sly humor about the trials of living with animals along with the impossibility of living without them. As I read along, I thought of a hundred people that I need to tell about this book. People who have cats. People who love animal pets. People who would never have cats. And people who don't like animal pets.

That about covers the entire human race, I suppose. Everybody would like this book. Well, maybe all except the Very, Very Serious. And, perhaps, those who have complete indifference to animal pets. (Are there people like that?)

So, just about everybody.

And if you are still not sure, here are a few quotes to test yourself with:

"...my thinking began to change after I married animal lover Linda...For our first Christmas, she surprised me (to put it mildly) with a gray kitten that we named Penny. Before we knew it, stray cat Agnes needed a home. Moobie came next, and her arrival sent me to the store up the street for another litter box. When I complained about my fate to the cashier, she said, 'Three of them. You must be a cat person.'

'Not me!' I told her, as if she had accused me of running a meth lab."

"The day that I decided to adopt Lucy is seared into my brain like my first morning at kindergarten, the disastrous junior high date with Monica Plumb, and the Tom DeLay episodes of Dancing with the Stars."

"I'm going to take the collar off and she can lick all she wants. She can't hurt anything.'

Once again I proved to be as accurate as a placemat horoscope."

"Frannie (the cat) could be quirky, twitchy, fearful, proud, manipulative---no, wait a minutes, that was me. There was a deep and possibly pathological bond between us, making me feel like she was the kind of cat that came along just once in a lifetime."

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## **McGuffy Morris says**

Bob Tarte has a very inviting, open manner of writing. His sense of humour and honesty are key elements as he writes about animals, his life with them, and himself. He has been a favourite author of mine since I read his first book, "Enslaved by Ducks", followed by "Fowl Weather".

In "Kitty Cornered", Bob takes us back to his Michigan home to tell us about life with his cats. Bob sees within each cat a life worth saving and a story worth telling. With his humorous but keen insight, we learn how each cat comes to Bob & his wife, Linda's home. As they learn to fit into the household, Bob finds that he also has lessons to learn. He also sees reflections of himself. He shares not only the cat's story, but also what he learned about and from the cat.



Bob confesses that he was not originally a “cat person”, but further admits to having been won over by their honesty, and similar ways of viewing their environment, life, each other, and themselves.

“Kitty Cornered” is a wonderful, warm and fuzzy book. It is a definite must-read for cat lovers. Bob Tarte is funny, wise, and very human. His books have heart and soul. I highly encourage you to read “Kitty Cornered”, and all of Bob Tarte’s books.

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