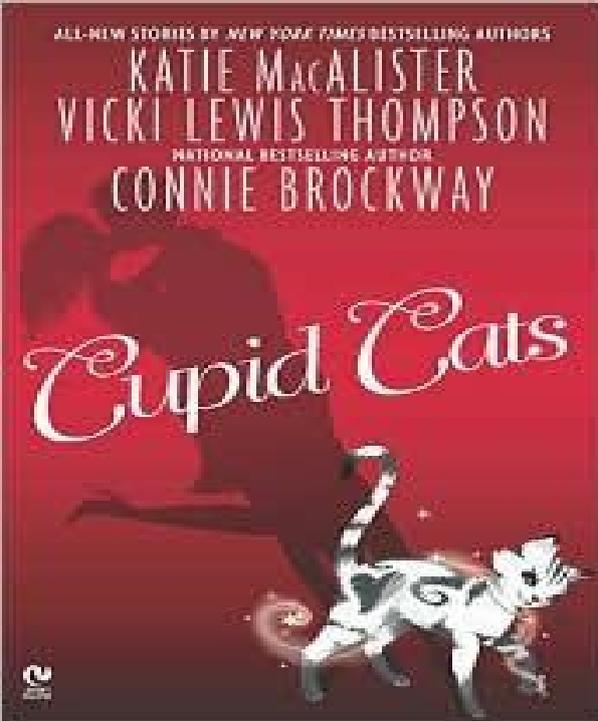


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# Cupid Cats



# *CupidCats*

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VICKI LEWIS THOMPSON



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CUPID CATS

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SHELTER:

Bring a little magic and  
love into your life  
Adopt a Cat



by Katie MacAlister

## *Chapter 1*

---

*“They ran right over me, and my head came off. I kid you not, Jas; my head came right off! There I was, lying in the mud without a head, and a herd of oxen stomping all over me. It was surreal! No, more than surreal. Well, it was a past-life regression, so I expect a certain amount of surreal is bound to be there, but still, my head! In the mud! And cows all over me! Well!*

You're not going to believe what happened next!"

---

"That's hardly surprising, given that I don't believe what you're telling me now," I murmured, squinting at the computer screen.

"Then the woman who ran me over with her ox cart got down and tried to put my head back on, just like in a cartoon or something, but of course that didn't work."

"Of course." I frowned as I scanned the latest memo to come from my supervisor. "Greg can't

possibly be serious. The entire department will use his guts for garters if he thinks cutting the release-to-wild program will ease budget concerns.”

---

“So then this guy comes along, and he sees the crazy ox woman with my head and, after all sorts of misadventures, he bites her!” my sister continued, obviously too caught up in the bizarre dream she was telling me about to pay attention to anything else. She picked up a pen and spun it around

her fingers.

---

Shaking my head at my e-mail inbox and sighing, I took my favorite pen from Corazon and went back to deciphering the latest governmental mandate regarding the proposed hatchery and fishery reform policy, listening with half my attention as she yammered on.

“He was kind of cute, although all that blood . . . urgh. I tell you, Jas, it was freaky, downright freaky.”

“Dreams often are,” I said

absently, giving up on the policy. Although it was a bit out of my bailiwick, concerned as I was with the enforcement of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife laws, and not policy, it behooved me as an officer of that department to stay current on anything that might affect my job.

“It wasn’t a dream!” She whacked me on the arm. “Aren’t you listening? It was a past-life regression! It was all real! Well, it was real in the past, but I was

reliving it. Anyway, I came a bit unglued at the vampire, so I made Barbara, the hypnotherapist, bring me out of it. And then Patsy told us about her gorgeous neighbor who swims naked, and we went over, only she had to wee, and *he* was the vampire.”

That last word caught my attention. I turned to look in astonishment at her. Although she was eighteen months younger than I, we looked enough alike to frequently be confused as twins.

Her hair was the exact same shade of amber as mine, although her eyes were a darker brown, mine waffling toward hazel. “You were a vampire in your past life? Do Mom and Dad know?”

---

“Will you listen to me?” Cora’s expression was rife with annoyance. “I wasn’t the vampire; he was—Patsy’s neighbor.”

“Patsy, your friend? She has a neighbor who is a vampire?”

“Yes! At least, she didn’t seem to think he was one, but because I had

to fly up here first thing this morning, I haven't had a chance to talk to her since she and Terri brought me home last night. But, Jas—vampires! They exist!”

---

“Nonsense,” I scoffed. “You were probably just lit up and imagined all of it.”

“Oh, we were drunk all right,” she admitted, opening the top drawer of my desk and absently poking through it. “But there’s nothing like a vampire to sober you up right away. I didn’t imagine

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