TERRIBLE NIGHT

KAMIE CAT'S

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Sheila Hamanaka
To my ever-cool dad Conrad Hamanaka, my forever friend Kalluk (aka "Mr. K"), Sachiko’s grandfather DoDo, and Ava’s beloved Kamie. You all joined the ancestors much too soon.
One night

Kamie Cat noticed something unusual.

There was no screen in the kitchen window.

A sliver of a moon, no wider than a cat's whisker,

barely lit the alley behind the house she shared with old Mr. Wong.
Music and the delicious smell of fried fish floated in on the night air.

Someone was having a party!

Kamie had never been to a party, and fish was her favorite food.

Quicker than a wink, Kamie Cat went out through the open window.
It was a **big mistake**.

From the other end of the alley, Kamie saw a big, black shape charging toward her.

A dog!

He, or she, was barking like crazy.
Kamie ran.

She ran through one backyard, and then another.

She ran up a tree, but unfortunately it was a small tree.

The dog jumped up and knocked her to the ground.

Kamie Cat landed on her feet and ran... right into the street!
Something even bigger
and faster than the dog
was headed right toward her!

It had two big eyes, each one brighter than the full moon!
Kamie ran and climbed over fences, garbage cans, and gazebos.

Fortunately, the dog and the thing with big yellow eyes were gone.

Unfortunately, Kamie was lost. And lonely.

How she missed her best friend, Mr. Wong!
In Kamie’s neighborhood all the little houses looked the same. Was this her house? Kamie peeked inside. Yum!

A woman was serving her cat fresh food and water in clean bowls.
“MEOW!” Kamie yowled. “I’m hungry, too!”

The woman looked up. But instead of inviting Kamie to dinner, she yelled, “SHOO! GO AWAY!”
Inside, a little boy was brushing a cat with a soft brush.

On the next block she peeked into another window.

Kamie sighed. Mr. Wong brushed her every day!

Kamie almost meowed but she remembered how the lady had yelled at her.

She kept going.
At the next house
Kamie watched a man
clean a cat box.

Mr. Wong cleaned
Kamie's litter box every day.

He filled it with fresh litter.

"There you are, Princess,"
the man said to
his cat friend.

"I know cats are
clean and like a nice,
clean litter box."

Mr. Wong cleaned
Kamie's litter box every day.

He loved Kamie,
and Kamie loved him.
At the next house
Kamie saw two cats
curling up in a nice,
round cat bed.

Mr. Wong had made Kamie
a bed from an old basket.
How she missed her
soft, warm bed!
Sadly, Kamie moved on to the next house.
Inside, a cat was scratching the arm of a sofa.

A man who was sitting across the room began to yell. Then he threw a slipper at the cat!

Kamie frowned.

But it wasn’t their house.

Mr. Wong always made sure that Kamie had a scratching post. He knew that cats need to scratch.
And he never, ever yelled at Kamie.

He never hit Kamie, either, or threw anything at her, even if she made a mistake.

Mr. Wong was kind.

Kamie ran away from the house.
Kamie hid under some bushes. She began to cry.

“Here, Kitty!” someone said in a soft voice.

A young woman bent over and picked Kamie up.

“I think you are lost!” she said.
In the morning, the woman took Kamie to an animal shelter.
“No tag?” he said to Kamie.

“No tag?”

“Hello, Kamie,” the veterinarian at the shelter said.

“We’re a bit crowded, but come on in,”

“How are we supposed to know where you live?”

“I think she’s old,”

“How are we supposed to know where you live?”

“I think she’s old,”

“Yes,” said the veterinarian.
"And most people want to adopt cute little kittens," he added.

"Hmmm... she looks kind of scruffy, wouldn't you say?"
“No! I would say she looks beautiful!”

a voice called out.

“And old is good. An old friend is the best friend of all!”

It was Mr. Wong!
He had come to the shelter to look for her!

Kamie meowed for joy.
"I'm sorry," said Mr. Wong.

"I'm sorry I forgot to put the screen in the window!"

"I'm sorry I didn't give you a collar with a tag on it so people would know where you live.

I'm sorry I didn't give you a collar with a tag on it so people would know where you live.

It will never happen again."
That night
Kamie and Mr. Wong
sat in the kitchen
after a fine dinner of fried fish.
The moon was no wider than two cat whiskers and the alley behind the little house was quiet and dark.
And the only thing that went out the window was the sound of Mr. Wong's guitar and Kamie Cat's purr as she hummed along.
The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) was founded in 1951 and is dedicated to alleviating suffering inflicted on animals by humans. AWI helps a wide range of animals in need, including those used in experimental laboratories, confined to factory farms, caught in steel traps in the woods, and threatened with extinction across the globe—from the smallest mice to the great whales of the sea. We believe that each person can make a difference for the animals by stepping up to help those who are suffering or are in need of a little assistance. Please consider becoming a member of AWI and helping us make the world a better place for all living creatures. For more information, including educational materials for children, visit AWI at: www.awionline.org.

About the Author–Illustrator

1. Sheila Hamanaka is an award-winning children's book author-illustrator whose work focuses on multiculturalism and peace.

2. Her books include the popular *All the Colors of the Earth; The Journey: Japanese Americans, Racism, and Renewal; Grandparents Song;* and *Bebop-A-Do-Walk.*


4. She is currently working on a novel for middle grade readers. She lives in New York City.
Oh no!
Someone forgets to put the screen back and Kamie jumps out the window.

During her misadventure, Kamie gets a glimpse of how other cats live, and comes to appreciate life with kind Mr. Wong. In this colorful story, kids learn the basic dos and don'ts of caring for our feline friends.

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