

The true story of how, with Divine guidance, Cora, a needy, deaf, recently orphaned rescue cat and Barbara, a lonely, recently widowed 90- year- old woman join forces to lift one another from loss and despair to companionship, purpose and love.

Cora the Cat: On Loan from God

By Barbara Morris

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Cora the Cat

On Loan from God

Barbara Morris

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Cora the cat

Adapting warily

To what life offers.

Barbara Morris

Introduction



My cat, Cora, was the best cat in the world. You may debate me on that, but after you hear her story, you will see why. She was not only the sweetest, cutest, most loveable, and well behaved (when it suited her) cat, but she was also the most intelligent cat you've ever met. At the same time, she had—let's just say—her limitations . . . You see, Cora was deaf. She was a thirteen-year-old rescue cat who had a God-given purpose in life. This purpose was to comfort me after my husband suddenly died. Let me tell you: Cora worked hard to fulfill this assignment. Like all cats, she worked hard to be sweet, adorable, and comforting. This meant she purred when petted, got underfoot at dinnertime, she head-butted for attention, slept a lot, sprawled in the sun with a smile on her face, curled on my lap *when she felt like it*, and tucked her head into the crook of my elbow *when she felt like it*. And when she did feel like it, the comfort she gave was heaven for both of us.

I wasn't the only one who needed comfort. It turns out Cora also needed attention. Her beloved owner, Marjorie, had just died. Cora desperately needed a "forever home" and loving care, which I had in abundance. So, with God's wisdom, Cora and I became helpmates for a year-and-a-half.

Cora and I spent a beautiful eighteen months together during which Cora, sadly, developed severe dementia and had to be euthanized. However, even in that confused state, she truly was God's life-reviving gift to me, which I knew from the moment she came into my life. I felt so strongly about it that I wanted to shout it to the world. This book is my shout.

Once I decided to write this book, I realized that I needed help—lots of it. My professional writing, for the most part, was humor or travel related. What I needed now was advice about how to tell the story of my relationship with Cora—something very dear to my heart. So, I joined Cora in a sunny corner where she was drowsing.

"Any ideas of what to write about us?" I asked Cora.

The sideways look she tossed me said it all: "Easy. You love me. I love you. But right now, I'm tired. Go

write your book and let me sleep,” she yawned. She was no help at all, but her yawn was contagious. I slumped down in the sunny corner next to her and napped.

About an hour later, I awakened with a start when, clearly, in my brain, I heard the first sentence of the book. I sprang up. My ninety-year-old “springing” took a minute or two while I massaged my achy knees and grasped the arm of my chair in a death grip. This was not the time to fall and break a hip. I had a book to write.

That afternoon as I slept the first sentence of this book that came to me is on the next page...

Chapter 1



On September 21, 2021, God gave me a special gift: Cora, the cat. I understood this gift right away. My husband had suddenly died, and the way I see it, God put Cora in my life to comfort me. You might think when God gives you something really special, it would be beautifully wrapped with a big heavenly bow, but this was not the case with Cora. God must have run out of wrapping paper because Cora came unwrapped and was in disarray. In fact, when I received her, she was the messiest ball of unkempt, dull, matted fur. She was such a frightened and huddled cat! Some gift, right?

Despite her appearance, God in His wisdom had sent another gift along with Cora—the gift of love. He sent it in big, billowing heaps so that the moment Cora was in my home, I loved her with the kind of love that hits you so hard, you think you’ve been pounded by a tsunami.

When I first tried to pet Cora, she (of course) hissed, spit, stiffened her spine, and bit me. She then

took refuge under the table. Obviously, it didn't feel like the storybook beginning of a loving relationship. However, I empathized with her. I cooed to Cora that I knew she felt threatened, scared, and alone. I had to get down on my ninety-year-old hands and knees and crawl under the end table to tell her. I did what it took because Cora, slit-eyed, wary, and pathetic, was, like me, about 95% deaf.

What do you suppose God was thinking when He decided that Cora and I would make a team? Did He look at us, slump-shouldered, bleary-eyed and both of us having recently lost our best friends? Cora's devoted owner, Marjorie, had just passed away; Ward, my dear husband of fifty-six years had passed away too. Did God look with sympathy at me when I howl-sobbed into Ward's pillow? Did He want to pick up and cuddle Cora when she scrunched herself into a shabby ball in a dark back closet? Did He cradle His chin in his hands, nod sagely and, in heavenly tones, murmur, "The perfect pair! Boy, do they need one another!"

God knew what he was doing, of course. You see, Cora and I had so much in common. For one, in human years both of us are in our nineties. And then there's our deafness. I incline my head and say "Huh?" a lot; Cora

just cocks her head and looks puzzled. God was also aware, naturally, that both of us are on meds for high blood pressure and lurking kidney problems; our arthritic bodies ache, and it takes both of us forever to ease our groaning joints into a comfortable position. So, yes: we are two peas in a pod.

It is so uncanny. As I write this, I'm seeing almost for the first time what bad shape both Cora and I were in. Isn't it amazing that in the vast expanse of the universe, God took the time to consider the deep, personal needs of two of his children? You see, I believe that Cora, too, is a child of God. The fact that God reached out to each of us, one-on-one, is beyond incredible. Beyond human words. Even I, a professional writer, can't describe this. When I try to imagine God turning his eye on me, instinctively I lower my head, my breath stops and, incredibly, I feel . . . I feel shy. But perhaps little Cora, dozing in the sun now with one paw curled over her eye, has the right response: she simply accepts that God has taken her in hand—that she's loved; that she's comfy with a full tummy—and that's that.

This is the story of how we two, both God's creatures, have been given the challenge of caring for

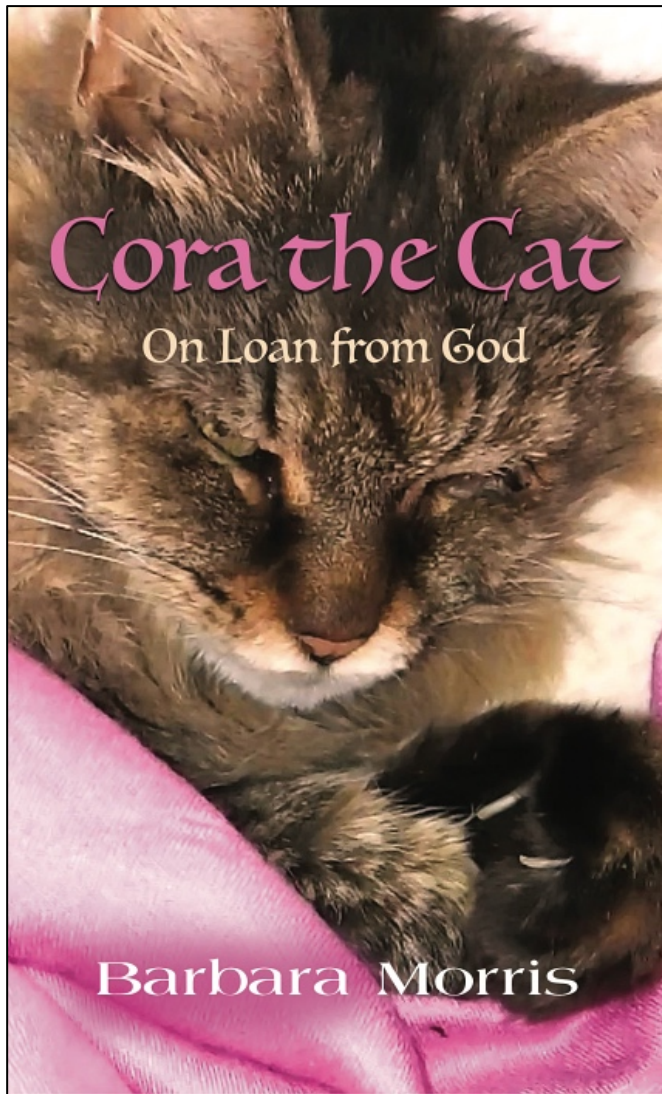
and loving one another. Cora and I loving each other was our mutual purpose—our communal prayer to God. I have tried to explain all this to Cora, but she was singularly uninterested. She was waiting impatiently for din-din. (Okay, I admit it. Like millions of cat owners, I baby-talk to Cora at times, and din-din is one of the silliest words.) As you read our story, however, I think you'll see why Cora and I needed one another, why our companionship is “the best of prayers to God,” and why Cora and I go together as naturally as gin and tonic or peanut butter and jelly.

God, in His wisdom, didn't just plopp a cat on a complete cat-novice. Before I was married, I was a novice about both cats and dogs. In fact, I was a novice about any pet. It's not that I didn't try, however. At age ten I spent my allowance on a sweet little goldfish named Oscar, but in a rush of love, I over-fed him. I learned the sad lesson that sometimes you can have too much of a good thing. In His loving concern for Cora, God gave her to someone who eventually became a devoted cat person. That person is me! I and my late husband—a true cat lover—devoted ourselves to seven cats over thirty-five years. Thus, I'd like to tell you a little about these delightful pets who preceded Cora and

who prepared her path to me. The next chapters will be devoted to that.

Before I tell you about the wonderful cats that came before Cora, I must mention again that sadly almost two years after God introduced Cora and me, He lovingly called Cora back to Him. She had been on loan. Her work, to reawaken my dispirited soul and to bring purpose to my life, was done. Only part of my assignment was complete: to restore Cora's unkempt little body, and, more importantly, to fill her life with trust, security, and love. The rest of my assignment was to use my God-given talent to write about the remarkable heavenly relationship between Cora and me. Moreover, our story is a tribute to God's special gift to me.

And now, to all the precious cats who paved Cora's way to my heart and home . . .



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