

## THE CHOSEN ONE

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Have you ever known someone who was happy all of the time? Not just happy but bowling over with joy, almost to the point of nausea?

I knew such a person, her name was Miss Nola.

Miss Nola woke up with a smile on her face and never knew a day of misery. She was the type of force that when upset, atmospheric changes occurred because it was so rare for her to have a bad day. Both her happiness and her smile were contagious, but some people felt irritated by her joy.

How could anyone be irritated by someone who makes you feel welcome and makes you feel like your best? What can I say? I guess some people just enjoy misery.

I got to know her when she was assigned to my classroom as a teacher's aide. She was one hundred years old—if a day. I found out she never married and she had many careers around the world. She never spoke of family, so I secretly wondered what kept her grounded and so full of life.

She invited me to tea. I wasn't sure why I accepted, but I guess I was intrigued.

*Could her home hold the secret to her endless joy*

*and happiness?*

What I found surprised even me, which is not easy to do.

I stepped through her gate onto a winding colorful mosaic walkway that looked like shards of china and glass from broken stemware and dishes that served in her home over the century because, like I said, she was a hundred—if a day.

The garden was spectacular! Perfectly manicured with tulips of red, blue, and yellow, and roses in every color imaginable. Even the grass looked special with red and pink ground covers around the edges. The smell of honeysuckle wafted through the air with a hint of mint you could smell from the herb garden. In the background, there was a symphony of wind chimes, chiming unique songs.

Inside, the home was equally as beautiful. Colorful souvenirs that she picked up during her travels accented earth-toned walls. Big cushy furniture beckoned you to sit for a while to take in the house and relax. The smell of freshly baked cookies blended harmoniously with scents from the garden.

As I looked at the pictures of her family, I found something very peculiar—a cat. A cat in itself is not peculiar, but what was, was the cat in the photos, who through the generations looked like the same cat. And I would have sworn dollars to donuts

that the paintings of the ladies with THE cat were painted BEFORE photography was invented in the early 1800s. This cat was very striking with unusual patterns of swirls, stripes, and circles.

*What were the chances they could find such a cat in each generation?*

Our conversation was easy and familiar—like we had known each other for a lifetime. She told me about the generations of family on the walls and their lives and accomplishments. She told me stories of the Salem Witch Trials and how being a single woman made you a target for speculation and suspicion. I told her about my five daughters and what it was like raising them during such a crazy time. As she recounted her early life, she gave a hint of her age, but I could not count that high, so I thought she was pulling my leg.

I heard scratching on the door and then, in walked THAT cat!!! The cat from the photo! When she saw me gasp and go ashen and faint, she quickly said, “Let me explain.”

We sat and drank pot after pot of delicious mint tea as she told me the story of Bastet, the Egyptian cat Goddess. She told me that Bastet was born about ten thousand years ago and how he has been passed down by extraordinary women throughout the years.

The *chosen one* is the perfect woman, who is

loving and kind and has in her a great capacity for selfless love. After all, the great woman who cares for Bastet carries an even greater weight—for the fate of all women depends on the well-being of this amazing cat. She is a goddess tied to every living woman on Earth. She used to walk as we do. Later, her form changed to that of a cat—revered in ancient Egypt. If she dies, so does humanity. She brings joy and long life to those who love her, and when your time on Earth is coming to an end, you must find a suitable home for her care.

“That’s why I invited you to my home,” she admitted.

She said the more she spoke to me the more she felt I was the perfect woman. She loved that I had five daughters, but ultimately it was Bastet who chose.

Miss Nola spent half of her life looking for the perfect woman. Me and my girls welcomed Miss Nola into our family and we spent countless hours sharing our lives over endless pots of tea. She was a very warm and amazing woman who taught love and compassion.

Today, my girls and I live in her home with Bastet. That was two hundred and fifty years ago.