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Cats and Dogs Come From Different Worlds

By Kevin Duggan

Humans and animals have lived together for thousands of years yet the relationship between them remains uneasy.

There are a lot of issues, including that whole predator/ prey, place-on-the-food-chain thing and dominance, as in who's really in charge.

It's kind of like the relationship between men and women but without the added tension that comes with children.

Here's further proof that dogs are from Venus and cats are from Mars.

According to an Associated Press story, a Greenville, Maine, man was saved from injury or worse when his dog, a black Labrador retriever named Thumper, awoke him as fire swept through his home.

Thumper roused Roland Cote by pulling on his arm, leaving him just enough time to call 911 and get out of the house ahead of the flames.

Good boy, Thumper!

Here's the kicker: Fire investigators believe the blaze was started by the family cat - Princess - when she knocked over a kerosene lantern.

Princess suffered a singed tail, but otherwise all residents of the household were safe. What's not clear is

whether the fire was an accident or a case of kitty arson.

Bad, Princess, bad!

As the owner/companion/attendant of a dog and two cats, I was not surprised by this story. Cats and dogs have different approaches to people that foster different results.

Our dog, B.J., thinks the world of me and my family even though we don't take him on enough walks or give him enough treats and we're forever telling him to do this and don't do that.

He's alarmed by unfamiliar things and is quick to alert us to security breaches, such as squirrels lurking in the backyard.

I once watched him stand down a plastic bag that blew into the yard with much bristling, growling and sniffing. In the end the bag won the war of nerves, but B.J.'s intentions were noble.

If, God forbid, we had a fire, B.J. would certainly react and give us time to react.

The cats, on the other hand, I'm not so sure about. They're the kind of housemates who would be 'busy' taking a bath or something during an emergency.



Oreo and Lucy tolerate us because we do put out food for them and provide warm places to sleep. They get impatient when we're slow to open doors for them.

When happy, they purr and rub themselves against our legs and look adorable. When feeling vindictive, they pee on the carpet. Who can rely on such a creature?

Don't get me wrong. I like cats and appreciate their independence. I'm just not sure that appreciation goes both ways. The dog, on the other hand, appreciates me even with my many failings.

It all makes for a sometimes tense domestic atmosphere. The lesson is clear.

Even if a dog has your back, don't turn your back on a cat.

Kevin Duggan is a senior reporter for the Fort Collins Coloradoan. This article originally appeared in the Fort Collins Coloradoan and is re-printed by kind permission of the author.

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