

Observation Essay Example Text

Ring-tail Tooter

"Ring-tail tooter." That's what my grandfather calls people who like to fight. And that's how Tooter, my eight-month-old cat, got his name. Tooter lives at my house along with ten other cats. I named him when he was a kitten, because he pounced on any sleeping cat he came across. Even if the cat was larger, he nipped its ear and tried to start a wrestling match. Lately, I've been very busy, and haven't spent much time with Tooter. I began to wonder how he amused himself without human companionship. One Saturday morning, I left my chores and spent the time observing Tooter. I stayed across the room so I wouldn't disturb him.

I first observed Tooter himself. He's a small cat, only twenty-six inches long and ten inches high. When he turns on his back in the sunshine and stretches out his paws, though, he seems longer. Tooter has shiny, black fur, silky soft, a large patch of white on his face, and three smaller patches on his paws, but none on his body. His sharply pointed ears are constantly erect, as though he's listening for some secret sound.

Tooter eats dry cat food from a dish he shares with the other cats. As he eats, he puts both his front paws into his dish. Perhaps he's guarding his food from the other cats. He does this even when other cats aren't around, however, so it may be that Tooter just has unusual table manners. His sharp teeth crunch into the food at a steady rate. Eating only about five minutes at a time, Tooter doesn't consume much food, perhaps only one-fourth cup.

After dining, Tooter usually gives himself a bath. Grooming is a time-consuming process for him. With his rough tongue, he wets one paw and wipes his face with it. Then, he wets his other paw and wipes his face again. He also uses his paws to clean the outside of his ears. Next, he grooms his chest and stomach, licking and pulling at his fur. Then, he turns to work on his back, followed by the base of his tail. The whole process usually takes five to ten minutes.

Grooming makes Tooter sleepy. He stands up, yawns, stretches, and curls up in a ball. Ten minutes later, he's up, headed for his litter box. Soon, he wanders down the hall, pausing to bat at a piece of waste paper someone has dropped. Almost immediately, he knocks the paper underneath the crack between the door and the floor. For a few seconds, he searches for the paper with his paw, but soon loses interest.

Tooter's favorite cat companion is Baby Jane, the little gray cat I got about the same time as Tooter. Tooter seems to enjoy grooming Baby Jane, who usually purrs contentedly until Tooter becomes too rough for her liking. Then, she hisses and jumps off the couch. >On this particular morning, Tooter jumps up on the windowsill behind the couch and stares out the window. Soon, he makes a strange clicking noise in his throat, the kind cats make when they spot likely prey. Sure enough, just outside the window, on the branch of a cedar tree, a blue jay perches, chattering away.

Tooter watches the bird for several minutes, but it eventually flies away. Bored, Tooter settles down on the windowsill and begins to purr. Soon, he's fast asleep. At this point, I'm no longer a mere observer. I scoop Tooter up and let him sleep on my lap as I watch Saturday morning TV. He purrs happily, but thirty minutes later wanders back to his food dish.

Tooter's life isn't very exciting by human standards, but I realize he's perfectly content with it. He doesn't seem to need me as much as I need him.