



Rascal

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Rascal is a graphic novel about a destructive but endearing cat. Realistic illustrations of feline antics reveal the pros and cons of pet ownership, including unforeseen life changes.

A young woman returns from a trip to discover that her mother has left her their neighbor's kitten. Irrked by the intrusive present, though relieved that the creature survived a week in a cardboard box, she adjusts to daily life with the mischievous pet whom she names Rascal: there's fur everywhere, biting, scratching, a battle of wills over food, and smelly excretions.

This story about Rascal and his unnamed owner is told in four panels per page, with a blue, black, and white color scheme. The two are almost the only characters pictured, and the action rarely goes beyond their apartment. A lot of information is conveyed by Rascal's eyes, which can seem inscrutable but are, in fact, full of expression. Interactions are narrated by the human thinking aloud, with Rascal contributing the occasional hiss, purr, or cry. Some wordless pages rely on physical comedy: Rascal learns how to open doors, falls into a trashcan, and envisions himself as a mighty predator.

Dry humor pervades the book; as Rascal tears around the room, his sarcastic owner wonders, "Who should I call? A vet or an exorcist?" A few details are anachronistic, as with the woman corresponding with her mother through letters and taking Polaroid photographs, but they also emphasizes the timelessness of the human-animal relationships. Rascal's story rings true, including his owner's feeling of being watched and the irony of Rascal sleeping anywhere but his designated bed.

Rascal is a charming graphic novel about the surprises of pet ownership.

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