

Please Meet Tom (formerly Taco) and Priscilla



The story of Tom and Priscilla is a modern-day version of “Beauty and the Beast,” complete with a happily-ever-after ending. Tom was a feral, brown tiger cat who showed up in Priscilla’s neighborhood. Priscilla was the Westbrook resident who could not help but be charmed by the stray, hungry cat she saw wandering in her yard. He was curious but kept his distance. Priscilla slowly gained the trust of the un-neutered feral she and her husband dubbed “Tom.”

Priscilla worried about the frigid nights and days this 5-year-old male had spent outdoors. Slowly but surely, she coaxed Tom into her home with the promise of treats, warmth and companionship. Everything seemed to be going well until Tom bit Priscilla, as she reached down to pat him on the head and he startled. Tom ran outside. Priscilla called Animal Control, which caught Tom and brought him into the ARL. He was quarantined because of concerns about rabies. Tom was sequestered in a cage, where he was observed. It turned out that Tom did not have rabies, but became sick with a respiratory infection and bad cough.

Yet Tom was too wild to allow technicians to come near and medicate him. Finally, they were able to dose Tom with liquid antibiotics as he opened his mouth to hiss. A routine was established and Tom began to get well. Slowly but surely, he began to trust. Tom allowed himself to be wrapped in a towel and taken into a steam room so he could breathe easier and clear the mucous from his lungs. His defenses dropped and he looked forward to the attention and love of his human caretakers.

What about Priscilla? She never forgot Tom and called the ARL regularly to check on his condition. The day finally came when Tom was well enough to be placed up for adoption. Priscilla wanted him back. She had wanted Tom to trust her. Now she was willing to put her trust in this feral feline. She believed he could find peace in her home and learn to love his human companions. Today Tom is not the same frightened, untrusting feral. He has his own bed in Priscilla’s home and a few cat nip toys. He likes to sleep on his back on her carpet, his paws straight up in the air, completely defenseless -- and trusting. Tom still goes outside and patrols the neighborhood. But he always comes back. ***He comes back home.***

