

The Great Escape

CatChannel humorist Peter Gerstenzang blogs about how his cat and dog pulled off an amazing breakout.

By Peter Gerstenzang

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I knew it was a mistake to watch "The Great Escape" with Gracie last Saturday. The very next day, looking like Steve McQueen, my cat made a break for it. Suddenly, I was faced with a pressing question: How did Gracie get her hair to look like McQueen's? As she slipped out the door, Gracie had a question of her own. She looked at me like: Why do you have to act like the strict commandant of a P.O.W. camp? Amazingly, this was the second time I'd been asked this in the same week!

Of course, she didn't get out by herself. Gracie has trouble figuring out which end of the bowl to eat from. But, just as they had teams in "The Great Escape," Gracie had Happy. I've since spent hours trying to decide if Hap is more the James Garner or the Charles Bronson type. Needless to say, I displayed just this kind of sharpness of mind when the cat escaped. First, Happy moved to the screen door. Gracie walked over to him. Hap pushed the door open with his behind. My housecat was gone.

Still hyped on the Homeland Security Code, I yelled, "Condition Red!" Happy went into his normal defense posture, meaning he ran upstairs and cowered under the bed. I ran outside. No Gracie! I went into my normal attack posture. I hyperventilated. The cat had never been out of the house before. Maybe she had been treed up an elm by a couple of squirrels! Then again, maybe she split to join a commune.

What to do?

I ran out back and found a couple of squirrels creepy enough to be members of the Manson family.

"What did you do with my cat?" I yelled, throwing an apple at them.

The squirrels devoured the apple, then eyed me as if I'd make a nice palate cleanser. I moved on.

I ran from house-to-house. No Gracie. I stopped at the Johnsons. Not because of any signs of the cat. It was to borrow a paper bag, so I could regulate my breathing. Meanwhile, I checked lawns, and rang doorbells, stopping only to slap myself in the forehead in frustration. After a crazed half-hour, I headed home, fearing the worst; ready to put Gracie's face on a milk carton.

As I neared my house, I saw something amazing. The screen door was slightly open and I saw a cat's tail, which promptly disappeared. I ran over and went in. Gracie was home. Happy, who had helped her out, had just helped her in.

I suppose I should have screamed at my two naughty P.O.W.s. But I was too relieved. I did give Happy a dirty look, which caused him to run off and hide under the bed, again. I fed Gracie. I said a prayer. Everyone was safe. However, considering the stunt my pets pulled and where they learned it, I did announce one new rule. It was? No more movies until further notice!