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# Write your own Historical Fiction 2024

## Layla's Escape

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As she woke up, Layla immediately noticed the strange movement that the floor was making. She tried to stand, but the floor rocked harder, and she fell onto her side. It wasn't just her that fell down, though. What also fell was a large wooden crate, which Layla was in. It was the top one of a tower of nine other cats in crates. She then felt herself falling, all the way down to the floor. She felt her body crash to the ground, and watched as tiny pieces of wood smashed around her. She closed her eyes.

When Layla woke up, she was desperate to find out where she was. She ran as fast as she could across the wooden floor and found that there was an edge. She looked over it. What she saw horrified her. Layla's big, pointy ears drew back in fear as disgusting, cold water sprayed in her face. Her back arched, and her tail grew massive and fluffy. She took a step back. She could hear people talking around her and could sense that something dangerous was going to happen. Layla could tell she wasn't supposed to be out of her box, so she tried to hide from the people on the boat, who wanted to put her in another one.

Suddenly, two great big hands closed around her, and someone picked her up. Furiously, she bit them, and the person let go, shocked. Before anyone had time to catch her, Layla had leapt off the side of the boat, and into the water of the river Nile.

Cats can see eight times better than humans in the dark, but as she sunk lower and lower into the depths of the water, even Layla couldn't see a thing. She started to lose her breath, so she swam back to the surface, and swam back down again. She didn't know she could do that! Layla was starting to enjoy swimming, and completely forgot about the people on the boat . . .

Back at the boat, Akhethetep, a priest, was very angry. His cat, which had been bred and raised to be sacrificed and mummified for the cat god Bastet, had just escaped from him, on the very day that she was going to be killed. Akhethetep was furious, and he would not attend the event which was happening that day without her. Every year, between April and May, the Egyptians went to one of Bastet's many temples, to have their cats sacrificed. They also had a party and a feast. Akhethetep did want to go, but as he was such an important person, and Bastet and the gods were so important to him, he decided that he would not let Layla get away. He was going to find her. Even if that meant he had to swim through the Nile, or run across the desert. He decided that he was going to get his cat back.

Meanwhile, Layla had swam all the way back to land, from the middle of the 1.7-mile-wide river. She was now happily lying on the sand by the water. Layla knew nothing about her being bred to be sacrificed, she didn't know why, every year, that she saw cats being taken across the river, and she had not, until now, ever thought about anything like that happening to her. She lay down and watched the fish swim past her in the river. She wasn't scared of the boats or the people. She just watched them come past her.

About an hour later, a large boat with stacked up crates and a lot of angry people on it, was coming straight in Layla's direction. She didn't move a muscle. She wasn't scared at all. She just expected it to sail by and just leave her alone. But it didn't. She started to hear voices on the boat, shouting. "It's HER!" someone shouted. "LAYLA!!!" Angry faces stared at her, all around the boat, and at the front, was the angriest of all. Her owner, Akhethetep.

Akhethetep stepped off the boat, with three other people. Layla was outnumbered. Four humans against one cat! How would she make it away this time? She looked all around her. There were pyramids, houses, statues; there were loads of places to hide. Right in front of her, was a pyramid. The people were right behind her. She ran straight in, without thinking . . .

Layla got in by squeezing her body into a small gap between two stones. Luckily, this gap was very close to the door, so there was a tunnel inside. The humans would never fit in that gap! Layla felt safe in there, knowing that they would not be able to catch her. She lay down for a while, and when she got up, she decided to explore this mysterious place. She went down the corridor, then she went left, then right. She went in so many different directions that she started to forget where she was going. This place felt like a maze. Some walls had pictures and hieroglyphics on them, and some corridors were just pitch black with darkness. She went to sleep in one of the tunnels.

When she woke up, Layla walked through a very long corridor. She could see a room at the end of it and she was very curious to find out what was in this room, but after she saw what it was inside, she instantly regretted looking in there. The ceiling was high, and there were hieroglyphs carved into the walls. And right in the middle of the room, was something gold and shiny, that looked like a person lying on the floor. It was a sarcophagus. Layla didn't know this, though, and she thought that it was a real person. It scared her a lot and she ran straight through the chamber, and out the other side of the room. Outside the room, there was a narrow, diagonal tunnel facing up. It was an air shaft. Layla looked through the tunnel, but it was so long that she couldn't see the end. She hoped it would lead to an exit. It took Layla about an hour to reach the end, but when she did, she couldn't believe what she saw! It was LIGHT! She had reached an exit! It felt so good to be back outside, there was fresh air, and she could see the water. She couldn't wait to swim again. She was very high up though. And there were humans at the bottom.

After jumping down every single human-sized brick, Layla was finally at the bottom of the pyramid. It took her all night. She had to get somewhere far away, without the humans noticing her. She expected Akhethetep and the others to still be following her, but luckily it had been three days since the ceremony when she went inside the pyramid. They didn't follow her in. They believed that "Death will slay with its wings whoever disturbs the peace of the pharaoh", so they just expected her to die in there. They were all back at their houses, and had completely forgotten about Layla.

She didn't want to live with people anymore. She was traumatised and never wanted to see one again, so she ran away. She ran away from the pyramid, and she swam all the way across the Nile, but wherever she went, there were people all around her. She ran past them. She walked through villages, and swam through more ponds and lakes, until eventually, she found an abandoned village. There were no people here, there were mostly just cats, and other animals for the cats to catch. And when she got in, the cats didn't fight her, or hiss at her, but they welcomed her, and let her live there. And that village was the place that Layla lived for the rest of her life.

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