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The Grand Escape

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Chapter 1
How it all Began

Marco and Polo were cats. They lived in the house with the Neal family.
The cats were able to talk to each other. Marco was even able to read!
One day, Marco read about a ranch. He and Polo decided that someday they would escape from the Neal's house and run away to the ranch.
Chapter 2

Polo's Story

Polo loved to play. He played with sheets, boxes, ping pong balls, and straws. He still even chased his tail.
Polo also liked to eat rubber bands and other stringy things. One Christmas, he ate so much ribbon and tinsel, he became very sick. He even had to have an operation.
The Neal's did not want Polo to get sick again, so they put away all of the things that he might try to eat. Polo became bored and decided to run away with Marco.
They ran out of the door and hid under a bush.
Chapter 3
Hiding Out

Water from a sprinkler splashed the bush and the cats.
The cats ran behind the shed.
It was getting dark. Mr. Neal looked for the cats with a flashlight.
Mrs. Neal cried when they could not find the cats.
When the Neal's went to bed, Marco and Polo ran out of the yard through a hole in the fence. They headed west to find a ranch.
Marco and Polo found many things to explore. They saw trash cans, weeds, rocks, and boxes. They smelled odors they had never smelled before.
Polo saw a mouse and caught it under his paw.
Neither he nor Marco wanted to eat it, so Polo let it go.
Soon, they came to the back of a restaurant called Big Burger. They saw many cats eating trash.
A fish was on the ground near the trash.
When Marco reached for the fish, a big yellow cat named T.J. swiped him in the nose and told him he could not have it. The cats began to fight.
A cook came out of the resteraunt and squirted the cats with a hose. The cats ran away. Marco and Polo hid in the Alley.
A white, brown, and yellow calico cat joined Marco and Polo in the alley. Her name was Carlotta. When the other cats had finished eating, Marco, Polo, and Carlotta went back to the garbage cans and ate from what was left.
When they were finished, Carlotta showed Marco and Polo around the neighborhood. Carlotta and Polo jumped onto a high fence. Marco tried to jump onto the fence, but landed face first, into the side of the fence!
Marco tried to jump onto the fence again. This time he was able to do it! All three cats sat on top of the fence and licked their fur to wash up from dinner.
Afterwards, the cats continued on their walk.

Carlotta showed Marco and Polo where Bertram the Bad, the biggest, meanest dog on the street, lived.

She told them that they should NEVER go to his house! They walked until they got back to the Big Burger. Carlotta went home to sleep.
Marco and Polo tried to sleep on the warm hood of a car. A mean man yelled at them and scared them with a newspaper. They ran back & to the alley and stayed awake all night.
It began to rain in the morning. Carlotta offered to check Marco and Polo into the "club". They followed Carlotta into an old garage. Inside, they met some of the cats from the alley. Even TJ, Texas Jake, was there. Carlotta made the cats share the club with Marco and Polo.
The club cats told Marco and Polo that they could not really belong to the club until they solved 3 mysteries. The other cats talked about the mysteries they had solved. Boots solved the mystery of rain. Umbrellas mean rain.

Elvis solved the mystery of hair. Showers wash hair off. Texas Jake solved the mystery of masters. Clocks are masters of people. The club cats would choose mysteries for Marco and Polo to solve.
In the meantime, they all went out to lunch together at Big Burger. While they ate, the club cats talked about all the things they did not like about living with people. People eat whenever they want to. Cats eat when people feed them. People talk whenever they want to. People tell cats to be quiet. People go to the doctors when they want to. People trick cats into going to the vet.
After they finished eating, the cats went back to the club for a nap. They did not wake up until dinnertime. They went back to Big Burger for dinner. On their way, they saw a "lost cat"
Marco and Polo were glad that Mr. and Mrs. Neals were worried about them. After all, The Neals had left them many times and they had worried that the Neals might never come home.
Chapter 8
The First Great Mystery

The cats ate spaghetti and meatballs behind Big Burger.
Afterward, Elvis sang for the cats & customers.
Later on, Texas told Marco and Polo what their first great mystery would be. Marco and Polo needed to find out what was in Bertram the Bad's dog house & bring it to the club.
Polo climbed into Bertram's back yard. He would distract Bertram so that Marco could get inside the dog house.
The only thing Marco could find in the dog house was a dirty old sock tied in a knot.
Texas Jake announced the next mystery that Marco and Polo would have to solve. "When it rains, what happens to the water that goes into the street drains?"
Chapter 10
The Second Great Mystery

Marco and Polo jumped into the drainage hole and saw that water was running like a stream down the middle of a tunnel.
Marco and Polo walked in the tunnel for a long time. Suddenly, they were attacked by river rats.
Then, before they knew what was happening, a rush of water swept Marco and Polo out the end of the tunnel.
Chapter 11
On The River

Marco and Polo climbed onto a log.
Then they climbed onto a rock.
A fisherman helped Marco and Polo get off the rock.
Marco and Polo walked a long way through the woods.
They ate beetles.
They found a highway and followed it back to the club.
Chapter 12
If Cats Were in Charge

Marco told Texas Jake that he and Polo found out that rain water goes into the river.
Carlotta said that all the cats should go to Big Burger to celebrate Marco and Polo's return.
Marco and Polo talked about the man who helped save them. Some two-leggeds were good.
If cats were in charge and people were pets, the cats would still change some things. Elvis said, "There would be no umbrella's opened in the house." That scares cats.
Boots whined, "There would be no whistling tea kettles." That hurts cat ears.
Carlotta said, "I would not let them smoke. Smoking stinks!"
Texas Jake said, "There would be no vacuums. People tease cats with vacuums."
Marco and Polo said, "We would not let people put us in cars. Cars are scarey."
Texas Jake then told the cats what the third great mystery was. Marco and Polo would have to find out where people go in their cars.
That night, Polo was so nervous that he ate string, fringe from a lamp shade, and ribbon from an old hat. He threw up.
The next morning, when Mr. Murphy began to get into his car, Marco and Polo snuck in behind him.
While Mr. Murphy was driving, he sang. It was a cowboy song. Marco thought Mr. Murphy might be a cowboy.
When the car stopped, Marco, Polo, and Mr. Murphy got out. Marco and Polo saw huge mound of red brown dirt everywhere. Marco and Polo thought they were at a ranch.
Mr. Murphy talked to a group of men wearing yellow hats. Marco knew that cowboys wore hats.
Mr. Murphy climbed on top of a huge orange creature. It roared! It turned its head! It ate dirt! Marco thought this creature was a horse.
There was nothing for Marco and Polo to eat, so they went to sleep. When they woke up, they were in the horses mouth! It dropped them onto a pile of dirt!
Marco and Polo hid under Mr. Murphy's car until he came back at the end of the day. They snuck in and rode home with Mr. Murphy.
When Marco and Polo got back, they told the other cats all about the ranch that people go to when they drive their cars.
Suddenly, Bertram the Bad ran into the club & and attacked Texas Jake. Marco threw Bertram's sock to distract him. Bertram let go of Texas & Jake and ran out of the club and toward the sock.
Texas was badly hurt. The cats took him home so that his owners could take him to the vet.
Then, the cats went to Big Burger. Big burger had a new garbage can. It was a big, locked dumpster that the cats could not get into.
The cats all decided to go back to their own homes and families. They wanted to be able to have food to eat and they wanted to be safe.
Mr. and Mrs. Neals were surprised to see Marco and Polo. Because they did not think Marco and Polo were ever coming home, they brought two new kittens home. They introduced Marco and Polo to Jumper and Spinner.
The Neals gave Marco and Polo a bath and fed them.
Jumper and Spinner would not let Marco or Polo get into their bed, drink their water, or play with their toys.
Marco and Polo used the story of their escape to trick Jumper and Spinner into Sharing. First, Polo said his throat was too dry to talk. Spinner let him drink the water.
Next, Marco said he was too tired to talk.

Jumper and Spinner let him and Polo sleep in their bed.
Jumper and Spinner sat, crouched by the picture window, plotting a grand escape of their own.