

PUBERTY **AND A** **MOTOR-OIL** **COVERED** **KITTEN**



RICHARD CARLSON

Puberty and a Motor-Oil Covered Kitten

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About the story: Twelve-year-old, soon-to-be-seventh-grader, Ryan, finds the neighbor's kitten covered in motor oil. How does he help the kitten? A fictitious story taking place in the southwestern desert of Tucson, Arizona, USA in the summer of 1983.

About the author: Richard Carlson is an author of children's and coming-of-age books. He is a highly sensitive person, or HSP. You can learn more about him at

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“I’ve got twelve pubic hairs down here,” I proudly announced to Mom, pointing to my pubic region after donning my speedo in my room. “I just noticed them right now when I changed into my swimsuit.”

“Oh. That’s great, Ryan,” she said, as we stood in the hallway. “You’re a young man now!”

It was summer, 1983, in Tucson, Arizona, USA. I was twelve years old. I lived in the suburbs in a nice neighborhood. I was an only child; Mom and Dad had adopted me as a

baby. My biological parents were mere teenagers, not too much older than me when they had me.

I hurried out the back slider to swim in our pool, which was above ground. My body felt cool in the pool water, especially since it was a hot day in the desert.

Tossing my brand-new foam football up into the air and catching it again and again, I thought ahead to my friend Matty coming over later today.

As I tossed the ball into the air again, I accidentally sent it over the backyard fence, near Dad's classic 1959 Cadillac hearse that he planned to restore someday. It was covered with a thick and heavy olive drab tarp.

"Darn it," I mumbled under my breath as I climbed out of the pool and headed to the side of our house to get my football. I walked carefully on the gravel driveway in my bare feet.

The ball had landed right in front of the hearse; as I approached it, I

heard a kitten meowing underneath the car.

I kneeled and saw the neighbor's kitten right under the engine with a streak of motor oil on her head and back, probably from the engine oil pan.

“Here, kitty, kitty,” I sang, hoping she'd come out.

Bajor was her name, and she was a longhair cat, part Siamese and part Balinese.

She walked out, and I carefully picked her up. The oil coated her long fur.

Still carefully walking on the gravel driveway in bare feet, I hurried to show Mom whom I had found.

I opened the kitchen door and saw Mom washing some dishes.

“Look, Mom. It’s Bajor. She got motor oil on her from rubbing against Dad’s hearse’s engine.”

Bajor just sat there as I carefully held her against my bare chest. And then, Bajor suddenly trilled.

“Don’t let her lick the oil, okay?” Mom said. “The neighbors aren’t going to be home until later tonight. We will have to clean the oil off before the cat licks it and gets very sick.”

Mom grabbed the dishwashing soap bottle and led the way to the bathroom tub.

“You’re a young man now. Maybe you should clean the oil off her,” Mom announced, making me feel excited

and proud to finally be a man. She was treating me like I was a grown-up.

“How do you know this soap is safe for Bajor?” I asked Mom, curious.

“A coworker of your father’s had to clean motor oil off their dog, and they asked a vet what soap to use,” she explained.

Mom handed me several small rags to scrub Bajor with. Happy to be helping an innocent kitten, I turned the tub water on lukewarm first and tested the water before putting Bajor under it.

“Scrub her back with plenty of soap and a rag. Make certain you don’t get soap in Bajor’s eyes or mouth,” she directed, giving me confidence in myself by treating me like an adult.

I carefully and gently scrubbed Bajor’s back and head again and again with soap, water, and rags until she was all clean. I was so happy to have been responsible and not gotten soap in her eyes, nose, ears, or mouth.

“Rinse her body several times to make certain there is no more soap,” Mom instructed, and I did.

She handed me a towel when I was done. I gently and carefully dried Bajor.

“Now she’s clean,” I proudly declared, holding her against my bare chest. Bajor trilled and trilled.

“Let’s put her in the doggie kennel that we have in the shed,” Mom suggested. “That should keep her from going back under the hearse until the neighbors get home tonight.”

She held Bajor while I went outside to get the crate out of the shed.

Once I carried it back inside, we dusted it off and placed a towel inside, along with a bowl of water for Bajor.

“We’ll bring her next door when the neighbors get home,” Mom said.

Bajor slept as I swam in the pool. Then, Matty finally came over. I told him what had happened with Bajor, and he was relieved that the cat didn’t lick the oil on her fur and get sick.

I showed Bajor to Matty.

“She’s so sweet,” he said. He picked her up and carefully cuddled her in his arms. She trilled and trilled and trilled.

We swam for a while and tossed my football across the pool to each other.

“I’ve got twelve pubic hairs,” I told Matty.

“I’ve got a bush of pubic hair. Don’t worry; you will grow a bush like me, hopefully really soon,” Matty said.

I was happy to have him as a friend.

“Can I see your pubic hair?” I asked, hoping for at least a peek.

“Sure,” he replied, and we got out of the pool.

Standing where Mom wouldn’t see us on the concrete walkway near the toolshed, he pulled his speedo down to his knees.

“Cool. You’ve got a big bush for sure,” I said.

He smiled and giggled. His penis was erect.

“Let me see yours,” he said.

I pulled my speedo down to my knees, as I got an erection, too.

“See? I’ve got twelve.” I pointed to them on each side of my penis.

“Cool,” Matty said. We pulled our speedos back up and jumped back into the pool.

Not too long after that day, I grew a full bush of pubic hair, just like

Matty. Now, we were alike. I enjoyed being a young man.

Mom treated me a little different since that day, giving me more responsibilities like a grown-up might have. I was allowed to be at home in the evening when my parents were out, and I didn't have to have a babysitter. I also was given chores, and it was my responsibility to wash my own clothes and bed sheets.

I loved being practically a teenager. Over the summer, dad and I

had fun restoring his hearse. It turned out great.

The neighbors thanked me and decided to start keeping Bajor inside. She was now an indoor cat, safe from motor oil and coyotes.