

In March 2020 when the UK went into national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Morris the cat was settling himself into a normal spring. He was dreaming of spending hours outside sunbathing in the summer, but whilst waiting for the warmer weather to arrive he was enjoying spending time in the house of his local human friends, getting lots of cuddles and curling up to go to sleep on their armchair.

Suddenly, one day he wasn't allowed into his friends' house anymore. He couldn't work out what was wrong with them. They kept gibbering some words to him, but he couldn't understand as humans haven't yet learned to speak 'cat'. He was quite worried about them so he spent several days keeping them under intense surveillance, sitting at their windowsill peering in at them and meowing. If they opened their door he was there, ready to try and gain entry. Likewise if they came home from a walk, he was ready and positioned by their door. However, for some reason unknown to Morris, they would not let him in. He would then try his usually successful, 'I'm the cutest cat in the world' routine (rolling over on his back and looking up with wide eyes), but still nothing and so as a last resort he would start to cry. The only response he got was for them to come outside and stroke his head wearing gloves, not the result he desired.



The other thing that Morris had noticed was a change in his owners' habits. There was a lot of hand washing (His fur wasn't dirty was it?). They no longer went out so often and they didn't seem to be leaving him on his own whilst they disappeared for several days (on holiday, whilst the neighbour fed him). Neither did they send him to the dreaded 'luxury hotel' (the cattery). He was enjoying all the extra attention he was getting from his owners, it was wonderful having his humans at home and under his watchful eye!

The only problem was that as time went by Morris was convinced they would suddenly go away and abandon him. So, he kept a very close eye on them and listened out for them leaving the house. As soon as he heard them leave he hot footed it through the cat flap and followed after them. Sometimes they tricked him and slipped out whilst he was preoccupied, which he found very irritating. On the occasions he managed to follow them he always found that they were just going for a walk around the village, but he thought he should follow just in case. He really enjoyed these walks and the neighbours all commented to his owners, as they passed by, that it was nice to see them taking Morris for his daily walk.

One thing Morris kept hearing was that humans were talking about loneliness. Now, Morris doesn't believe in loneliness. He thinks that his humans should be concentrating on him, giving him cuddles and playing with his toys with him. He thinks that if humans are feeling lonely then they clearly aren't giving him enough attention!

Although Morris enjoyed the extra attention he was getting from his owners, he preferred his life in 'normal' times as he was missing his other human friends and really looked forward to a time when he could once again call in every day to see them and get lots more cuddles and play time.

Questions:

1. What plans had Morris got in store for 2020?

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2. What did Morris do in response to his concern about his friends?

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3. Describe the changes that Morris noticed in his owners' behaviour.

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4. How did Morris check his owners were not going to abandon him?

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5. Do you think that the views Morris had on loneliness are reasonable?

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6. Why was Morris looking forward to normal life resuming?

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7. Write an account of your experience during lockdown.

8. Draw a picture of Morris going for a walk with his owners.

Answers:

1. Morris's plans for 2020 included spending time in his friends' house getting lots of cuddles, sleeping on their armchair and then spending hours outside sunbathing in the summer.
2. In response to his concern about his friends, Morris put them under intense surveillance for several days, sat at their windowsill peering in at them and meowing, waiting by their door trying to get in, tried his 'I'm the cutest cat in the world' routine and then resorted to crying.
3. The changes that Morris noticed in his owners' behaviour was lots of hand washing, staying at home and that he was not sent to the cattery.
4. Morris checked that his owners were not going to abandon him by trying to follow them every time they left the house.
5. Any sensible answer.
6. Morris was looking forward to normal life resuming because he was missing his other human friends and looked forward to a time when he could once again call in every day to see them and get lots more cuddles and play time.