

Tales of a Cat Abroad

My cat stared suspiciously at the big orange crate in the corner of the living room.

I'd tried everything I could think of. I strategically positioned her favorite toy mouse on top of it. I laid out an assortment of delicious fishy snacks around it. Heck, I'd even stuck my head inside the thing to show by example that the big, orange oblong was completely fun and wouldn't bite.

It was all pointless. My cat KNEW something was up and she was NOT happy.

She was right to be suspicious. Weeks earlier I'd made a big decision.

I was moving from Australia to the US permanently—and my flatulent bengal would be coming with me. In just a few days, one way or another, she'd be put in that crate, chauffeured to the airport and together we'd start a completely new life across the sea.

All through those final days of packing, she'd sit on a stack of boxes and stare at me with big, dark, accusing eyes. Her expression said it all.

"I don't know what you're doing but whatever it is, stop it."

A few days later it was those final few, frantic minutes before the removalists arrived. My stomach churning, I coaxed my cat inside the crate and locked the door.

I expected growls of protest, maybe even an angry nip to the back of my hand, but she meekly did as she was told. Somehow that made it even worse.

I told her everything would be alright even though I didn't quite feel it myself, and we were on our way.

An agonizing flight later and we touched down in the US. As I walked into the terminal, my palms were sweating. Surrounded by newness, a wave of homesickness crashed in. I hoped I'd made the right decision for us both.

I filled out the papers and the customs officials handed a big orange crate across to me, complete with glowering cat.

As a friend drove me to my new home, I sat in the back seat beside the orange crate and I cracked open the door.

Looking out at the world whiz by, I felt swallowed up with uncertainty. I had so much to learn about my new home.

I suddenly realized exactly how my cat had felt—how unsettling it must have been to be faced with that unknown orange crate, not knowing what it all meant, not knowing what would happen next.

Then I glanced across at the crate.

There was my bengal buddy, perched on top of the crate, licking her paw and looking out the car window without a care in the world.

She was completely fine. Happy even, as she watched a new world fly past. She chirped at me conversationally.

I figured maybe it'd be alright after all.

