

The day I brought Aravis and Skylar through my front door, my life changed forever. My name is Suzi Collins and I live with my mom and three brothers, (two older, one younger) on a small farm in Waco Texas. Obviously, I am writing this because I brought two of Tom's kittens into our home where they speedily made themselves part of our family, and our hearts. From the time I was very young, I had wanted a Siamese. My favorite story what called "The Incredible Journey" and featured three family pets, a Labrador, a Bull Terrier, and a Siamese cat who traveled together across Canada to find their owners. It was a true story and talked about the history of the original Siamese. The cats belonged to the daughters of Pharaoh in Egypt. These were the animals that were so stunningly beautiful and intelligent, that the Egyptian race worshipped them as gods. I learned about the kinked tail and crossed eyes. I begged for a kitten and poured over my book of cat breeds for long periods, intrigued by blue eyes that showed piercingly through the masked face. As I grew into my mid-teen years, my cat books got put away and my interest in the Siamese was replaced with 15-year-old interests. But I didn't lose my love of animals. We had, and still have a small-scale farm where we have a few cows, two of which are mine that I raised as bottle babies when their mothers rejected them. We have a herd of sheep, about 25 chickens, ducks, rabbits, and dogs of all kinds! Most importantly, Sarplaninac Shepherds. A sheepdog we had imported from Europe. They are beautiful dogs, and always have puppies! Growing up on a farm teaches you to value life, in all aspects. It teaches you the fragility of life and that life is worth fighting for. Whether that be a newborn puppy that needs to be fed every four hours of the night, or just growing a garden. I loved animals, especially baby animals, and I would do anything to see a baby animal make it through. Whether watching a peeping chick break through its shell into a new world or staying all night with a laboring sheep. I loved animals, and again, I began to want something of my own to love (besides my beta fish and cows!). Then, while looking for something to listen to while doing chores, I stumbled across my favorite childhood story, "The Incredible Journey". Old dreams began to awaken. I dug out my cat books and also began digging around online. I discovered a new characteristic of the Siamese that most intrigued me, they talk! I watched video after video of Siamese talking to their owners. I began to research Siamese catteries too. I didn't like anything that I saw. All I could find were round-faced cats that resembled Siamese, but not true Siamese. I didn't give up, I kept looking. Finally, while browsing a website to help you locate specific breeding Catteries, I found the Black Thai Cattery and Tom. I was very excited and spent a lot of time looking at pictures and reading his testimonials. Finally, here was what I had been looking for! The traditional Siamese, with stunning blue eyes, dark masked faces, and high plaintive voices. I poured over his website, studying all of his cats until I found the exact cat I had been looking for. It was Emily. I saw a picture of her and fell in love. After seeing Emily, I messaged him right away! Tom got back to me that same day. He gave me so much information, and it didn't take too much thought until I decided to bring a kitten, or two to my home! Tom was fantastic! He answered

all of my questions, and questions I didn't even know I had! He made sure I knew what I was getting into, but these weren't just kittens, they were Siamese kittens and very different!

"Now you know you're signing up for a five-year-old toddler for the next 20 years, right?" Tom reminded me many times. I told Tom how much I loved Emily, and he confided that Emily was in fact his favorite cat, because she exactly reminded him of the cat he had when he was a little boy. Tom put me on his waiting list, and made sure I knew that it was quite a long one... I told him I didn't mind that, as long as I could get a kitten that looked somewhat like Emily. Tom said he couldn't make any promises, but he would try. Then 14 days later, he emailed me and told me that Emily was indeed pregnant and that he had generously put me on the waiting list for her litter! I was so happy that my entire family was happy for me. I promptly made a picture of Emily my screensaver until weeks later, I had a picture of one of her kittens to trade it with! I loved the weekly updates! Every Sunday afternoon, Tom sent an email with pictures and an update on what was new that week. My mom and I both looked forward to it! The time went by all too slowly for me, and I tried to consume what little time I had available with studying Siamese health, lifestyle, and common issues. I spent most of my time imagining them, what they'd feel like, and what their voices would sound like. Tom told me I was impatient, which I am a lot of the time! Tom was so helpful, liberally giving advice and opinions on how I planned to do things and raise my kittens. He helped me with what to research, healthy diet, and life patterns. What I wanted most, was for my kittens to talk. I told Tom that the first time I talked to him. He sounded skeptical, "okay, but I'll just warn you, teaching them to talk won't take much effort; teaching them to be quiet is nearly impossible!" "That's what I want!" I had insisted. Tom told me they wouldn't come trained to talk, but it wouldn't take much, and when they started talking, you are going to wish you hadn't. I shrugged and affirmed that was what I wanted. Now, I don't regret teaching them to talk, but I kind of wish I hadn't encouraged them to talk quite so much!

After over 5 months of pestering Tom, pickup day finally arrived. Did I mention Tom even hand-delivers most of his kittens? For those customers, like me, who can't pick up their kittens from him directly, he gets on a plane and delivers them to you! August 16th found myself waiting (impatiently!) swinging a cat carrier (which I fully intended not to use) searching the baggage claims for Tom. After what seemed an eternity to me, I spotted him. I think I surprised him by bounding up and giving him a hug. After so many phone calls and text messages, I felt as if I'd known him forever. Next Tom took my brother and me to a secluded corner of the airport where I could pick my kittens. He unzipped the cage, and the kittens started crawling all over the place. I immediately tried to see how many kittens I could fit in my lap. They all looked exactly the same, so I decided on the two that seemed most appealing in the weekly updates. The gold-collared kitty was always rolling around on her back, and the gray-collared

kitten looked exactly like Emily to me. Those were the two I chose. Aravis and Skylar. After signing the papers Tom had for me, I tucked my kittens into the pet carrier, said goodbye to Tom, and ran to my car.

I haven't said much about my family's involvement until now, because they were pretty skeptical. My mom was excited about it, but my brothers, were not so much. Tom assured me that the Siamese, and especially the Siamese raised by him, were not like regular cats at all, and that a lot of people call them Cogs (cat-dogs). We were both confident my kittens would win them over very quickly. In the car, I opened the carrier, and Aravis and Skyler immediately began to explore their new surroundings. They found the favorite part of being in the car, my lap. My brother who is driving looked over at them skeptically. He reached over and begin rubbing one of the kittens' ears. He was surprised by the deep purr that rumbled out immediately. Ara and Sky adjusted very quickly to family life, they take naps with my mom when I'm at work, and they follow me around the house talking to me about their day when I get off work. They climb my brother's pant legs. They chew on our fall decorations. They definitely have different personalities. Aravis is so curious and will pounce on anything that moves. Sky is my sweet girl. She likes to cuddle and talk, and sit on my shoulder while I'm reading, or even better, lay on top of my book while I'm reading!

My lap is filled with both kittens as we speak. My oldest brother calls my kittens "murder mittens" (hence the kittens climbing his pant legs) and my other brother, James calls them "fuzzball". James has taken to carrying them around as he does various things like making hot tea in the kitchen, he'll even sit down on the couch and talk to them. My youngest brother spends long periods racing a piece of string up and down the hall with Ara and Sky pouncing after him. I think it's safe to say that I am the kitten's favorite member of the family! I can't do anything without their help! Sky helps take out the laundry by adding a little weight to the load. Aravis helps clean the bathroom by running off with the cleaning rug. They both help with the floor, by rolling around in the trash pile. And I love every minute of it! I want to thank Tom for all the time, care, and effort he poured into these kittens. They have made our home a better place, and have filled holes I didn't know were there. I've only had them for about two months and I can't imagine life without them! I probably was not the easiest or most patient person to work with. And to whoever reads this, Tom's kittens are truly worth the price, the time, and whatever else you may give to get one. I would never have been satisfied with anything else! Also, please excuse my horrible writing, there's a reason I'm not an author!