

## The Feline High-Rise Syndrome.



From, not being cuddly to being able to always land on their feet, there were many such myths that Blanca debunked for me. Blanca the green eyed, Black cat possessed supernatural powers such as making anyone fall in with her unconditionally and to reciprocate that with her cat-ly affection.

Only after losing her forever did I realise how common is this phenomenon of 'Feline High Rise Syndrome' - when a cat suffers injuries due to having fallen into a void from a height. It doesn't happen because they jump, but rather because they slip or something makes them lose their footing (a gust of wind, something that frightens them, a lapse in their concentration...). Many Cat parents are grappling, with their cats falling from a height and sustaining severe injuries. Falls can result in shattered jaws, punctured lungs, broken limbs and even death. It's a growing problem in fast urbanising regions as more people live in high rise flats and apartments.

It is true that cats have an instinctive ability to always fall on their four paws, as they can reflexively twist their body and right itself using their acute sense of balance and flexibility. This is known as the cat's "righting reflex". Therefore, the pet parents often assume that their cat can take care of themselves. The cats can surely cling to the bark of tall trees with their claws, but the window ledges, concrete or brick surfaces are difficult to clasp on resulting in the fatal falls from the high rise buildings.

Cats have excellent survival instincts, and they don't deliberately "jump" from high places that would be dangerous. However, no cat is completely safe from falling from a height thus it is only wise to be precautionary, as prevention is the only solution!

From my grieving experience, I highly recommend all the pet parents to take the following precautions:

- To fully protect your pets, install snug and sturdy screens in all your windows. If you have adjustable screens, ensure that they are tightly wedged into window frames.
- Note that cats can slip through childproof window guards-they don't provide adequate protection!
- Train your pets: to respond to your calls; to attend their nature's call at home if you live in a high rise building.
- Most important: constantly keep a check on the whereabouts of your pet (esp. the cats!)

### **If only, cats really had nine lives!**

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