A Touch of Pink Saves the Day

I like to think back to the day Mr. Pine moved into me. He had quite a few packages for a single person. Mr. Pine is nice. He filled me with easels and paints. Canvasses and paint brushes, too. I remember as I watched him work on his paintings for the first time. I can remember meeting Missy, his white cat, for the first time, too. I have quite a few marks to remember Mr. Pine by. Things like paint on the walls and the ceiling, and cool dents in my floor from when his easel fell over.

Well, the problem is that Mr. Pine rents me, and even though his paintings are very good in my opinion, nobody seems to want to buy them. This way, he can’t pay my rent. He might have to quit being an artist, and maybe even have to move out of me. Missy and I are trying to think of some ways we can help Mr. Pine. At night, when Mr. Pine is asleep, we quietly talk the problem over. Tonight, Missy has a good idea!

“What if we somehow convince people to buy Mr. Pine’s paintings?” she suggests.

“Yes, but how?” I ask.

Missy hops up onto the bookshelf and sighs, “I don’t know.”

“Have you forgotten,” I say, “that I am a house, and that you are a cat?”

“We could just talk to the buyers,” suggests Missy.

“What?! They might think I’m haunted then! Or that they are losing their minds. And then they wouldn’t want to buy any paintings,” I point out.

Missy looks at the clock hanging over the mantle. “You’re right,” she agrees sadly. “Mr. Pine is going to be awake soon,” she adds, “and I need to get some sleep.” Then she curls up and falls asleep without another word, as cats do.
As a house I do not sleep, I look around and think at night. Some people are coming to look at Mr. Pine’s paintings in a week. Missy and I have to think of something by then, so that Mr. Pine can at least get some money. I wish I could think of something, I really do. I listen to my creaking boards and then I look over at Missy purring as she naps.

Soon Mr. Pine wakes up. He sighs and falls into his favorite armchair. Missy tenderly seats herself on his lap as I watch sadly. I can’t bear the thought of Mr. Pine moving out of me. But after all, I am just a house, and there’s nothing I can really do.

Just then Mr. Pine gets out of his armchair and walks over to the window. Struggling and grunting, he tries to open it, but it won’t budge. “Oh,” I think to myself, “that one tends to stick.” So I quickly shift my wall and Mr. Pine easily opens my window. Just then, I realize that I can help Mr. Pine, even if I am just a house. Maybe there really is a possibility for me!

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“See you later, Missy!” says Mr. Pine lovingly as he closes the front door behind him.

“Take good care of the house for me while I’m at the movies!”

Once Mr. Pine has left, Missy immediately jumps up onto the mantle, stretches out and says, “Good! Now we have some time to think our problem over.”

“Exactly,” I agree. Missy and I chat for a while about Mr. Pine’s problem. Then Missy looks over at one of Mr. Pine’s paintings on the wall. “That painting might look better if it had a brighter sky and there wasn’t a thunderstorm rising over the pasture. That might make it look more cheerful.”

I think for a minute about that. Missy is right! I look at Missy’s big fuzzy tail swishing back and forth. Then I look over at the painting. Then across the room to the high cupboard where Mr. Pine keeps his paints. And then I get an idea! “Missy!” I say, “I have a great plan for
how we can help Mr. Pine. But it will have to wait until he’s asleep.” I tell Missy my plan and she agrees that it will definitely work.

Soon Mr. Pine arrives home from the movie theater. Missy tries her best to act as casual as she can, but she is a little extra bouncy. Mr. Pine notices. “Missy, what’s gotten into you? Did you miss me while I was at the movies? Come over here and I’ll give you a cuddle,” he exclaims. Missy jumps onto his lap and purrs as he pets her, waiting impatiently until we can do our plan.

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Once everything is quiet and Mr. Pine is fast asleep, Missy and I put our plan into action. First, I open my window next to the cupboard and let the chilly wind blow its doors open. This way Missy can hop into the cupboard and knock the paints down. I turn on a light as Missy slices down the middle of the tube with one claw, and then presses down hard with her paw so that blue paint oozes out onto a paint palette. “It’s working!” whispers Missy, trying not to wake up Mr. Pine. I close my window as Missy dips her tail into the blue paint and brushes it right onto the dark sky in one of Mr. Pine’s paintings. Missy works all through the night on quite a few paintings, with me turning on the faucet for her when she needs to wash her tail before using a different color. I direct her, telling her which paintings to work on, and which colors to add where. Missy lightens and darkens the skies, changes the shapes of trees, and the colors of sunsets. After Missy is done, I have to admit the paintings do look a little more cheery and pleasing.

In the early morning, when the sun first comes up, Missy pushes the paintings one by one over to one of my big sunny windows. I open the curtains and let sunlight stream down onto
them. After a while, Missy gently touches each painting to make sure it is dry. Then she pushes them back to where they were the day before. This way Mr. Pine won’t notice a thing.

Soon Mr. Pine comes down the stairs. “I don’t remember leaving that curtain open,” he says out loud.

“Oh!” I think to myself, but luckily Mr. Pine doesn’t suspect anything.

Just then, he looks over at his paintings. “I don’t remember putting more pink in that sunset!” he exclaims. “But my, I like it a lot better than I remember it from last night. And look at the shape of that pine tree! It looks quite pleasant.” Missy purrs happily and rubs Mr. Pine on the leg, looking quite proud of herself for touching up the paintings so nicely.

Just then someone knocks at the door. “Who could that be?” says Mr. Pine to himself as he turns to open it. “Why hello, Mrs. Lilac,” he says, “what a nice surprise.”

“Hello,” says Mrs. Lilac, I came over to give you some of my banana muffins. “I can’t eat them all by myself.”

“Why thank you,” says Mr. Pine, taking a sniff. “They smell delicious.”

Before she leaves, Mrs. Lilac glances over at Mr. Pine’s paintings. She looks at one of the sun setting over a beautiful sea. “My, I love the pink in that painting!” she remarks. Missy beams.

“Why thank you,” says Mr. Pine again. “You know that painting is actually for sale!”

Mrs. Lilac looks thoughtful. “Well, I just might like to buy it,” she says, and I can hardly believe it …
In the next days, Mr. Pine takes some inspiration from Missy and me and begins to touch up some of his other paintings. I am so happy about the way things are turning out that I creak with delight. By the next week, Mr. Pine’s paintings look splendid, and he even sells a few more.

It looks like Mr. Pine will be able to pay his rent after all. And that Missy, Mr. Pine and I will be together for quite a long time.