AU. Nekotalia. Arthur is an author who is quite pleased with his life, thank you very much but, one stormy afternoon leads to him adopting a companion or two.

AN- So this is really late. This little oneshot (little, hah!) is for my 110th reviewer on ff.net Heroic Panda on Follow Me Down which was like a year ago. Due to writer's block, ongoing health issues, real life being busy, rewriting Street Savvy and my computer crashing twice and losing all of my outlines, notes and everything else, I nearly forgot I promised this!

As I read a bunch of cat stories (Hetalia and otherwise) if this seems similar to any other stories on ff-net or aon-com it is because some elements got stuck in my brain and got written in and is not intentional.

I apologize once more for the lateness - here we go, fluffy Nekotalia, hope you enjoy :D

I don't own Hetalia

Arthur stared out into the rain, sighing.

It was coming down in torrents now, making it difficult to see his lilies at the edge of his garden, never mind the road.

He had had such high hopes for the day and now, well, he still had things he needed to do but was
no longer looking forward to them.

At least he no longer needed to water his garden.

Unable to put off his outside errands off another day, he reluctantly donned his bright yellow rain jacket and grabbed an umbrella along with some cloth bags and stepped out into the deluge. He slowly made his way down to town and by the time he was at the grocery store fifteen minutes late he was soaked.

The small store was practically empty considering it was four in the afternoon on a Saturday but it was only him, the check-out clerk and an older lady in the place. Well, considering this was only a small hamlet and it was pouring out he supposed he shouldn't be surprised. Besides, it was nice to be able to get what he needed without much fuss.

About twenty minutes later he'd gotten what he needed for the next few days and packed it all up in his cloth bags and backpack, wrapping more sensitive items and each bag in extra plastic bags to hopefully keep all the wet out. Shouldering everything, he turned and pushed the door open with his back and stepped back into the storm. The trip back was slower going as the wind was against him and it was largely uphill but he was halfway home when he heard shouts.

The desire to be dry warred with his curiosity for a moment before he decided to go briefly investigate. Turning the corner, he saw two young kids holding down a small squirming ball of fur and trying to tie a bell to its long tail.

"Alright you two, scat!" He shouted waving one of his arms at them. "Leave the poor thing be and go home! If you go now I won't tell your mums how you were tormenting an animal."

He couldn't really tell who they were with their bright jackets but they didn't know that and they knew how word travels quick in a small town and so they took off as Arthur walked closer to where the small kitten was now staring at him with piercing green eyes.

Not entirely sure what else to do (why wasn't it just running away? To its home?) he stared back. Perhaps not the brightest of ideas, cats tend to not take any prisoners with staring contests and soon his eyes were watering and he had to blink. In that time the cat had closed the distance and was now sitting at his feet, staring up at him before letting out an imperious meow.

"Shoo." He muttered, nudging it with his foot, "go home."

The kitten instead climbed onto his other foot and meeped at him again.

Arthur groaned, this is what he got for doing a good deed? He then sighed, he needed to be home soon or else bags or no bags, his food would be inedible due to being soaked.

Slowly lifting his foot, he was relieved when the cat scrambled off allowing him to turn around and resume his walk home. However, the tiny little thing then began to follow him so with a resigned sigh, he transferred all his bags to one hand and scooped the wee thing up and put him on his shoulder between his rain-jacket hood and head.

Once he was back inside, he quickly shucked his wet coat and shoes and after putting his groceries down in the kitchen (and the must be-refrigerated and frozen things away), he went to grab a towel for himself and the kitten. Putting it down on his coffee table, he vigorously towelled it dry while ignoring the complaining mrrts, yrrrows and meeps that resulted.

He left it nestled in the towel as he quickly went to go change clothing and hang his wet clothes in the shower before going back to his sitting room. Upon entering, he saw that kitty had managed to
burrow out of his towel cocoon and was now sitting proudly upon it before it *meeped* victoriously at him when it saw him.

Rather demanding for such a small thing.

"Yes yes, you defeated the towel. Well done you." He said absently as he sat on the armchair.
"Now what to do with you O conquering hero."

It was a rather skinny short-haired cat with a round head and large eyes, its pale brown coat was disrupted by barred stripes; from the little Arthur knew about cats, the cat wasn't just a tabby but was at least partly purebred. Which likely meant that he had an owner.

With a sigh, he took the plunge and slowly reached out (after all just because he hadn't been mauled the first time was no guarantee) and as if the kitten knew what he was about to do responded, claws outstretched to swat him. Luckily though he was able to quickly dodged and tuck his hands around its paws so it could no longer move them and scooped him up as the kitten yowled unhappily and thrashed, flailing its tail.

"Sorry about this." He said before picking him up and manhandling him a bit as he checked for broken bones, an ear tattoo and then lifted his tail...Yep. Male. He then set him in his lap and gave him a pat or two to apologize for the indignity. "Well, you don't have a collar or a tattoo but you seem familiar enough with people so I don't think you're a stray..."

Leaning over to grab his notebook from the side table, he did a quick Google search for missing cat notices in his area and then looked through the local papers site to see if anyone had put a lost cat ad in the personal section though nothing turned up. He then looked up the local vet number and called them to see if anyone had reported a lost cat to them and when they also responded negatively, he made an appointment to get the little fellow to get checked out (after all, who knew how long he'd been out in the woods and elsewhere?) the next day. Then he sunk into the chair's soft cushions with a sigh as he put his phone and notebook back on the table.

To his surprise, the tiny kitten (apparently forgiving him for the earlier insult) reared up on his back legs to grab his hand as he drew it away and pulled it down so he could lick and nuzzle his fingers, letting out a rumbling purr.

"I suppose you can stay the night." Arthur quietly said, secretly delighted, and as the little ball of fluff curled up in his lap, he decided that the remaining groceries could wait to be put away.

After all, Oz warmed his lap quite nicely.

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Oz ended up sticking around as no one came forward to claim him despite Arthur's efforts to return him to his rightful owners (there was one at one point definitely as no kitten would be litter box trained otherwise) Not that Arthur minded the company... though the rambunctious fellow was always getting underfoot.

The day after Arthur had found Oz, the vet had pronounced him a healthy ten week old Australian Mist and gave Arthur a pamphlet on basic care. When Arthur had protested that he wasn't going to *keep* the cat, Doc Karpuski just rolled his eyes and announced that he had clearly been adopted by Oz and then slyly commented that he didn't seem to mind considering he had already *named* him.

And he was right, when no one called his number on the posters or ad he'd put in the paper, Oz was here to stay.
He had grown used to having the little fluffball around and would even admit that he was fond of him. His family (consisting of his sister and two brothers) were all far enough away that casual visits were not possible and while he had a number of friends in town, his small house did get lonely sometimes. With Oz around, he was never alone: he was always napping on the one armchair's cushion or climbing up on his bookshelves or exploring every nook and cranny of Arthur's house or having to be rescued from ridiculously inaccessible spot that Arthur could spend hours attempting to figure out just how he'd gotten there. Oz also was making quick work of his pest problem, causing Arthur to frequently start his day by finding a mouse, groundhog, small bird or even the occasional snake left as an offering by the back door.

Arthur would not have claimed to be a pet person but he was a quick convert after the first time that Oz had jumped on his bed just after he'd turned out the lights and draped himself over his legs before beginning to purr.

With his luck though, Arthur should've known it was just the beginning.

It had been about six months since Arthur had found Oz and it was raining again as spring came howling in.

The cat was now bigger and had claimed the left armrest of his chair as his own, perching there every night at just the right angle for petting as Arthur sipped his tea and read his book. Every now and again Oz would decide that he wasn't getting enough attention and paw at the top of his book until he could peer over it (either that or he wanted to see what Arthur was reading) and wouldn't go away until he got ear scritches.

But tonight was different, Arthur had settled in his chair but Oz was nowhere to be seen. Deciding that he would eventually turn up, Arthur began to read but after one chapter, gave it up as a bad job and went to go look for the furball.

He looked in all his favourite places: the attic, the window in the front foyer above the door, the space between the cupboards and the ceiling in the kitchen, under the bed, in the narrow space between the mattress and the bed frames support struts, behind the TV and on the top shelf of the bookshelf. When he wasn't there, Arthur began a more thorough search but a half hour later he had to admit defeat.

Oz was nowhere to be found inside.

He looked outside at the pouring rain. That meant that the furball had somehow managed to get outside (Arthur suspected the top floor bathroom window) and was likely soaking wet waiting for Arthur to open the door or to come get him with his umbrella.

Spoiled thing. Arthur thought with fond resignation as went to go first grab a few towels and place them on the counter before he put on his wellies and coat and pulled an umbrella from the stand. Then he stepped outside and began calling for the little bugger. Deciding that he wouldn't really search for him unless he vanished for a day or two (as Oz was a cat and most times would come back if and when he chose and not a moment sooner for all that Arthur worried), Arthur just gradually went around the front and looked in all of Oz's typical bolt holes before heading to the backyard gate to look in his garden. Passing under the aged willow, he looked around the flowering bleeding hearts, parsley, sage, tulips and thyme before going over to where the ivy crept along the fence and wall and his Narcissus 'Jetfire', Roma and Purple Sensation flourished but the brown cat wasn't there either. He was about to wander farther to the back of the property when he called again and this time he heard the most plaintive 'mew' and found Oz crouching under the alpine wood ferns looking miserable.
"Well c'mon now you silly thing." Arthur chided, relieved, before leaning over with his umbrella. "Let's get you inside." He then crouched down and balanced the umbrella between his ear, chin and shoulder and reached out with both hands for the Mist. However, Oz crouched down, low on his belly and backed up a little, much to Arthur's surprise before turning tail and ducking back into the mess of ferns.

Was he injured? Oz was normally fairly cuddly (though only for minutes at a time) so for him to avoid contact was abnormal and a bit concerning (and maybe a bit hurtful if Arthur was honest with himself) but the cat didn't leave Arthur wondering long as he returned a second later with a tiny kitten held by the scruff of his neck and looking quite proud of himself.

"Oh you didn't." Arthur groaned. "You dratted thing!" However after a minute's staring contest, he gave in and picked both of them up and made his way back to the house muttering. "How did you even...are you even old enough? Nevermind that, you don't even have any bollocks?!! It better be the only one you won in the divorce because I do not need any more cats!"

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After getting them inside, Arthur quickly began to towel them off; Oz submitted with grumbling resignation (along with the quick tick check) but didn't take off as he usually would after. Instead he waited patiently for Arthur to do the same to the kitten and coiled between his legs as he walked over to the sitting room.

Like he had with Oz, he settled into the armchair and did a quick check for injuries, gender or an id tattoo but only discovered the little kitten was male and had kinda stumpy legs. Putting him down on his lap, he watched amused as Oz jumped up onto his customary arm rest and leaned over to touch noses and then began to clean the top of the kitten's head. When the little fellow squirmed and whined, Oz stepped down onto his lap and used his paw to hold him in place before resuming washing. It was rather cute.

Turning on the data plan on his phone (his laptop being upstairs at the moment), Arthur did a quick search to determine what kind of cat he had on his hands so at least he would know what to feed him if nothing else. After a few minutes, he was relatively certain that he was a two-and-a-half to three week old Munchkin kitten with orange and white fur of medium length that curled ever so slightly and was just about as cute as the breed sounded.

He then gave a quick call to Dr. Karpuski to see if anyone had report a cat of that description to have gone missing (but considering how young the fellow was, it was unlikely) and make an appointment to get a check up for the afternoon. Watching Oz fuss over the small ball of fluff, Arthur decided that Gimli could stay; it would do Oz could do to have a friend/playmate and he appeared to already be quite attached.

Picking up his book, he opened it back to where he'd left off before his brief sojourn into the rain and settled in to read.

In the following weeks, Arthur became quite fond of Gimli, taking breaks from his work to watch Oz dote on the kitten who seemed to have imprinted on him like a baby duckling. They went everywhere together, Oz often having to carry the Munchkin when some places proved beyond his ability to reach. He also kept Oz from bugging him when he was bored, instead he would go find Gimli and they would go hunting or exploring or something. On the downside though, Arthur found he had to rearrange his cupboards in order to move the food to a higher shelf as Gimli proved to be a clever thief (in hindsight, perhaps Bilbo would've been a better name). When they began going through food faster despite Arthur regulating it, he ended up setting up one of those kid-cams in the kitchen in order to catch the kitten working the cupboard open and letting him and Oz in.
Clever little thing.

It was also to where Gimli would disappear to when Oz bugged him too much, causing the Mist to sit outside whatever cupboard he'd absconded to and meow pitifully until Gimli came out again.

Arthur was a hard worker, make no mistake but as an author, sometimes inspiration just wouldn't come. That was usually his cue to go do some gardening or go bug Oz and Gimli or go to the local library and get some more books and look for ideas that way. But this close to the deadline he really, really couldn't.

So instead he settled into his study, a usually cozy room with an oak desk, two desk chairs, a side table and large bookshelves lining the walls but it now felt incredibly stifling. He glared at his screen, willing the words to come while ignoring the coffee cups that seemed to multiply every time he looked over, stack of notes, veritable heap of rejected rough drafts, mound of bills and letters from his editors piled up on every available surface. He had removed any and all potential distractions, all unread books were downstairs, the app StayFocused was blocking any fun procrastinating websites, the kitchen window was propped open so Oz and Gimli could get out (and Oz carrying Gimli could get back in) and he had turned off his cell and disconnected his landline. Still, his fingers itched to open FreeCell or to get up and stretch and to just go get a snack or take just a five minute break. Just five minutes but no, he had already gone that route and he knew that three hours would pass before he got back to work if he gave in.

This wasn't working dammit, he thought as he ran a tense hand over his forehead then through his hair as he let out a heavy sigh. He needed a break and was getting increasingly foul tempered. It was the biggest obstacle he ran into with every novel; he had all the big events planned, the beginning and the end but getting between them could be nightmare-ish.

Well, as his femme fatale was in a traditional "tight spot", he could always resort to a cliché but he hated doing that. But all the ideas he was coming up with resulted in screwing up later parts he'd already written so what to do?

He stared more at his screen, the solution was there! It was right there at the tip of his tongue, what if he? And then she? That could work!

Pleased, he began to type and within an hour the troublesome section was done and sent off to his editor for critique. Leaning back in his chair, he starts when he sees that there is a cat sitting in his lap.

This isn't entirely unusual, Gimli having snuck up on him a few times when he was absorbed in what he was doing (not Oz though, Oz is much too excitable for a cat to be stealthy) but never before had either managed to plonk themselves down in his lap without him noticing. Especially as when the either cat did that it was so they could demand ear scritches. So he was already surprised by this.

But what had him staring in stupefaction was that the cat in his lap was not either of his cats and proceeds to have a very silent mental breakdown fuelled by lack of sleep and too much coffee. In the mean time the medium-sized cat had jumped up on his desk and was now nuzzling its wedge shaped head against his head interspaced with gentle licks. When Arthur failed to respond, the cat, acting as a model gentleman, began to investigate the mess that was his desk. It walked along the length of it, tail swishing as he sniffed and examined everything but didn't touch or knock anything over. After exploring everything to its satisfaction, plonked its butt down in front of the computer monitor, cocked its head and quietly meowed.
Arthur groaned and let his head flop back into the chair. "Oz let you in, didn't he?"

Seeing that Arthur was out of his stupor, the cat gently hopped down from the desk onto his lap and then stretched up on his back legs to balance with his front on his shoulders to nudge up against Arthur's face purring happily.

"I suppose you can stay for supper." Arthur murmured, running a gentle hand down its back before picking it up as he stood up to go downstairs. The cat was deceptively heavy for its rather lean build and, on closer inspection, likely malnourishment. As he turned, he spotted Oz staring at him smugly from the door, "Have you decided I'm so bad looking after myself that you need to bring in backup? Because if so, stop."

Oz's new friend was an already neutered two year old platinum mink Tonkinese male with gently rounded, slightly wedge-shaped head, almond-shaped eyes, slim legs and tail and oval paws. He also was never going back to his former home if Arthur had anything to say about it upon discovering the cigarette burns, broken bone in his back hind leg and knife thin scars peppering his skin.

So after another visit to Dr. Karpuski (along with a multitude of shots and one cast), Ghost became another permanent resident of the Kirkland household. Oz and Gimli took to him well enough, seeming to understand that they were getting tuna once a day due to Ghost being malnourished and a bit frail and needing to be fed up. Over the weeks they also came to respect the cat's more introverted nature and kept the more rough housing shenanigans away from him as Ghost was bigger then the pair of them and the one time they hadn't, Ghost had ended the fight with prejudice. All in all, he was a very friendly cat despite any abuse suffered and adored cuddles if you sat still long enough for him to settle in your lap. One thing that Arthur did not like so much (though it had earned him his name) was the Tonkinese's ability to move very quietly and often scare the crap out of him.

It was the introduction of Fish into his life that caused Arthur to resign himself to becoming the crazy cat man who lived up the street (though at least he's in good company).

His kinda-friend Francis had managed to find a job in the city but unfortunately was unable to find an apartment that allowed pets. In desperation, he gave Arthur a call, not wanting his beloved cat to end up in the pound and possibly put down. He had repeatedly promised that as soon as he could he would take her back but his job started in two days and he needed to move and get ready and it was his dream job so Arthur please?

And Arthur had given in like the damn softie he was.

So now he had four cats living in his house and all of them were quirky idiots (though he loved them for it). Oz climbed, Gimli stole, Ghost vanished and Fish, well, Fish was a special cat that lived up to her name.

She was a gorgeous five year old chocolate Abyssinian, medium sized and slender with a long tapered tail, wedge-shaped head, large pointed ears and striking green eyes. Oz and Gimli were fairly indifferent to her being there when she proved to be uninterested in joining their exploring shenanigans but she and Ghost got along swimmingly and could frequently be found sharing a sun beam. All in all, she was a fairly nice cat but after the first incident, Arthur was convinced that her and Ghost's friendship was based on sharing secrets about how to scare him out of his skin.

Really, he should've known by now that any cat that 'adopted' him (as Dr. Karpuski would say) would be at least a little bit odd. In fact, after the first occurrence, he had rung Francis (never mind
that it was 11:30 at night) to yell at him for not bothering to warn him to which the insufferable idiot had laughed and replied "how exactly do you think she got her name?"

It happened like this: shortly after receiving Fish, Arthur had had a long but successful day and had gone for an evening jog before going to have a long hot shower to relax his sore muscles. His first mistake was that he did not close the bathroom door all the way, the second was not paying attention. He had been rinsing the shampoo out of his hair when something brushed up against his leg and walked over his foot.

Arthur jumped, his eyes snapping open as he yelped and then slipped in the tub and just narrowly caught himself on the small ledge while knocking both the shampoo, conditioner and soap over. Furiously blinking as soap got in his eyes, he looked down to see Fish sitting there, crouching to sniff at the bottles, tail swishing playfully. He groaned, already resigned to his new cat's whims and picked the fallen things up before he resumed his shower. All the while Fish happily batted at the falling water and rolled into the mess of bubbles at his feet.

He briefly wonders when he'd become so fond of cats, he might even care more for his cats than most of humanity. Why else did he indulge them as they drove him crazy? It might be for the snuggles, it might be for the company, it might be because they're oddly easy to talk to, could be because cat's don't judge about his life and romantic inclinations; they care only for their next meal, head rubs and sunbeams...

God damn it, he really is turning into a crazy cat person.

His luck did not much improve, or at least not where his growing cat clowder was concerned.

A few months later, as he was on his way home from the library and the grocery store, he heard tires squeal and then soon after, the car came tearing past him causing him to jump out of the way. That wasn't too abnormal, plenty of idiots passing through liked to speed and would take the curves too fast; however the pained hissing he heard as he got closer caused him to stop.

The cat was full-grown, golden brown with a chestnut tabby mackerel stripes, oddly tipped ears and had green almond shaped eyes and would have been a beautiful cat. Except what really got Arthur's attention was how its pupils were fully dilated, the whites could be seen around its eyes, how it was crouched as far as it could, tail tucked in, ears flattened against its skull and the continuous purring (whenever it wasn't hissing at Arthur). He would've written it off as an aggressive feral cat except it was clearly in pain (the continuous purring was a big clue, when Oz broke a rib climbing he had been the same) as he looked to the side he could see a trail of blood following it along.

The poor thing had likely been hit by that speeding asshole.

A pitiful hiss caused him to focus back on the poor cat and Arthur ruefully refocused his murderous thoughts to the task at hand. First he called Dr. Karpuski who promised he'd get his receptionist/nurse Gupta to drive over before he began thinking of what he could do to help the miserable thing.

It was a good thing he had bought new gloves at the store (long rubber ones for when he cleaned with chemicals/the bathroom) he thought as he fished them out of his backpack along with a can of tuna. Looking up the road, he decided he was safe enough for the moment and moved a bit closer before taking the can of tuna and sliding it over to the cat. After a few suspicious sniffs, the cat began to lick at it and allowed Arthur to come closer (though it still kept one eye on him). Having earned at least the cat's cooperation, Arthur took off his jumper (shivering as the cool autumn air
hit his skin) and put it nearby and began to coax the cat onto it. Then gently (so gently) he began tugging the jumper and cat both over to the side so that they were no longer in the middle of the road.

Shortly after Gupta arrived and together they sedated the cat and carefully carried him to the car and drove to the clinic.

Huìxīng was apparently already a patient of Dr. Karpuski and belonged to the elderly Han Wang who had passed the week before; since his death, no one had seen hide or hair of the Dragon Li cat. His only grandson was still in town, trying to put his affairs in order but after Arthur went to the address provided, a mourning Yao Wang told him he could not take the cat as both he and his wife were severely allergic. Though he did offer money for the vet bills and offered his help to try to find a new home for his grandfather's beloved cat.

However, when it turned out that Huìxīng would lose his back leg, Antonio (who ran the local animal shelter) bluntly told Arthur that he was unlikely to be adopted due to his injury and age and that he would likely have to put him down. Arthur had looked into the miserable eyes of the Dragon Li and had instead brought him home.

Huìxīng was about seven years old and was still quite playful, joining Oz and Gimli as they played outdoors though he did tend to knock things over when he jumped up onto furniture and ran around. Arthur just lightly scolded him though would smile slightly as he tidied up the mess, glad that the cat wasn't allowing a loss of limb to slow him down any and began putting breakables in more secure places.

It was his turn to host Christmas this year and had ultimately had to buy a kiddy fence and use it to block off the living room as Oz and Huìxīng kept knocking ornaments down (and one memorable time, the tree) and trying to eat the candy canes hanging off the tree, Gimli kept dozing in the stocking over the fireplace, Ghost kept kneading the wrapped gifts until the paper was shredded and then slept on them and Fish kept knocking the wax holly and poinsettias down.

Essentially his cats were menaces and so were banned to the attic (it was a liveable, ventilated space) as he cleaned the rest of the house.

He had just finished putting away the supplies and was about to put the turkey in the oven (it wouldn't end up dry and tasteless this time, he'd followed Francis's recipe to a T) when the doorbell rang, so wiping his hands on a dish cloth he went to answer.

At the door was his sister Kathleen and her husband Pat and oldest brother Aneiren and he quickly let them in and took their coats. That done, he got them settled in the living room (earning curious looks about the gate but no one commented yet) before he went to go finish up in the kitchen.

Opening a bottle of ice wine, he offered three flutes to his guests before settling back to nurse his own as they began to exchange news. Scott had broken up with his girlfriend after he came back from his tour in Afghanistan as it just wasn't working between them anymore (though both Kat and 'Ren thought there might be something developing between him and his squad-mate) and was running late as he was going to pick up their gift, Aneiren was seeing a girl and he was feeling pretty confident that he would soon be introducing her to the rest of the family and, when Kathleen politely refused the wine, he found out she was two months expecting to his delight. For all that he thought that marriage and dating was a bit overrated, he was overjoyed to hear that his family was getting along alright.

In return he offers news of their hometown. Antonio and Lovino had gotten married, the
Beilschmidt brothers were expanding and going to be opening another inn in the next town over, Bel was going to be moving to London where she'd gotten a job at an advertising firm, Vash and Lili's home renovation business was really starting to pick up (he'd had them do the bathroom in May), Necolai and Elizabeta's annual prank war had been put under truce after Elizabeta's trick had accidentally misfired and caused paint to explode everywhere in the hardware store and an annoyed Sadiq had taken them to task for it...

Soon enough, all the crackers and cheese along with the wine was gone and Arthur was getting up to fetch more. Concluding that the floors and everywhere else was also dry, he went upstairs and let his cats out of the attic. However, most of them were timid around new people and hearing cheerful voices from the first floor caused them to hesitate. Shrugging, he made his way back downstairs jsut as the doorbell rang again.

He heard Aneiren, Kat and Pat come up behind him as he went to answer and felt the universe laugh at him when he opened the door to see Scott holding what appeared to be a year old cat that had a white belly and varying shades of grey elsewhere in addition to brown tabby markings. It had a broad wedge shaped head with a red bow stuck to the top, blue-green eyes and a thick, plush fur coat.

"Merry Christmas Art." Scott said cheerfully. "I hope you like cats cause Teddy here's about the friendliest Ragamuffin you'll ever meet."

Aneiren piped up, "Y'see we thought you might be a bit lonely with this one and a half storey all to your lonesome so we thought you might like some furry company."

"That's sweet." Arthur replied as he plucked the bow off the purring cat before he started to laugh, he just couldn't help it. "He'll fit right in.

His siblings all looked confused for a moment before Oz jumped down from the window above the door and mewed at Arthur as it was time for his damn mob of a clowder to be fed.

Closing the door behind Scott, he took Teddy from his surprised brother and put him on the ground before taking his coat and putting it with the others. He then padded over to the kitchen and began to fill the cats bowls with food and just like that, all five of his cats appeared.

His siblings watched amused from the door as Arthur went to go find a sixth bowl for his newest addition. "So Arty," Kat said teasingly, "dating wasn't working out so you went straight into adopting?"

Arthur chuckled as he watched Teddy approach each of his cats and exchange nose bumps and nuzzles before answering "Nah, they all adopted me. I only had Oz at Christmas last year and was still thinking that his old owner might come get him so didn't mention him. Gimli turned up in April, Ghost in May, Fish was Francis's and I took her in in July, Huixing needed a home this past October and, yeah. I wasn't intending to adopt a pet, they just kinda fell into my life and never left."

He crouched to put the bowl down as was nearly bowled over as Teddy butted his head up against his shin and then leaned his head under the hand Arthur had thrown out to catch himself with, shamelessly demanding pets.

Leaving them to their food, Arthur grabs another bottle of wine and takes the tray of spanakopita (from the Tina's bakery) out of the oven after quickly checking on the turkey and adding a bit more water to it and they settle back into his sitting room. They chat again but when Arthur begins to hear growling from the kitchen, he goes to investigate.
Oz is staring Teddy down while Teddy is low on his belly, ears back and looking woebegone at the other, it's almost comical considering Teddy was much bigger than Oz but Arthur wasn't amused as he did not want a fight to break out. However, before he could intervene, Teddy just shuffles closer and closer until he can just lean his weight on Oz and, as Arthur watches, the Mist goes down as the Ragamuffin then lay on top of him and began to nuzzle and clean every exposed part of fur not presently squished under his bulk being forcibly cuddled. Oz makes whining, complaining noises for a few minutes though it eventually turns into a resigned purr.

Arthur then casts an eye over the food dishes and grins; obnoxiously affectionate and apparently a vacuum when it came to move. Yep, he'd fit right in.

His book was finally done, the final draft polished and shined and sent off to his editor for the last time. Slugging back the dregs of his coffee, he stood and stumbled out of the room and turned the corner and slunk into his bedroom. He quickly peeled off his clothes and tugged on his pyjamas before flopping down face first into the mattress.

It didn't surprise him that not even a minute later, he felt a paw begin to tap at the back of his head. "Fuck off Teddy." He groaned, "despite what you think, my head is not and never will be a pillow."

However, he had learned after the first time this had happened and rolled over and glared him down, the Ragamuffin still looking temped to flop down and sleep on his face. However, Arthur out-stared him so he curled up instead right beside his left ear and began to purr. Soon after he felt the bed jolt as Fish came up to join, the Abyssinian wasn't typically a snuggly cat but she enjoyed sleeping on Arthur's foot. Oz hopped up shortly after carrying Gimli and deposited the small cat on his chest before kneading the blankets by Arthur's hip and settling. Huixing sneezing alerted Arthur to the cat dozing on the window sill and when he turned his head again, he nearly shouted when he discovered that Ghost was now curled up by his right ear.

They drove him nuts, they really did. Knowing that Ghost would claim any available box as his napping space, that Teddy enjoyed waking Arthur up for food by jumping on his chest repeatedly or by smothering him, that Fish would scare off birds by bathing in the bird bath, that Huixing would nip at his ankles at odd times to get attention, that Gimli would get stuck and yowl loudly until being rescued. And Oz, Oz was almost a walking disaster, sticking his nose into everything due to his curiosity.

But they were weirdly protective of him and in times like this, when he was beyond exhausted and having them all draped around him in some sort of odd cat embrace/show of affection and being lulled off to sleep by purrs.

This was nice.

When writing this, I wasn't trying to make Arthur ForeverAlone! as when I was mapping the story out, I felt as I got farther into this that I was making Arthur asexual or at least grey/demi sexual. I'm kinda hoping this comes across in the story as I'm not asexual and have never written someone like that before and there wasn't really a point when I felt I could outright state it into the narrative as the only real dialogue is with his siblings who are all aware and accepting of this. Anyway, this is partly why he isn't bothered by the amount of cats in his life as the cats give companionship, understanding, cuddles and love – like not as a replacement for human contact or void filling but they offer that with no strings if that
makes sense...

In case there was any uncertainty. Breed largely chosen by what breeds are native/began in
their country (or one that was at least close to their country) and also by appearance (don't
look much like Nekotalia cats I know), all the canon characters that were colonies of the
British were included :)

Australian Mist – Australia – named "Oz" was picked as is short for Australia which is part of the
breed name.

Munchkin – New Zealand – named "Gimli" was picked due to short legs of breed making think of
dwarves, also LOTR movies were filmed in NZ so seemed appropriate

Tonkinese – Canada – named "Ghost" was picked as cat breed colour blends into the background
well and one of Canada's main traits in the manga is how he is quiet/invisible

Abyssinian – Seychelles – named "Fish" was picked as Seychelles is usually drawn with one and
the cat-her likes water/going in the shower

Dragon Li – Hong Kong – named "Huixīng/Comet" as likes to run around/hyper and as reminded
me of flower on Hong Kong's flag

Ragamuffin – America – named "Teddy" after Teddy Bear due to breed's fluffiness and cat-him's
cuddly nature and also partly after the President Roosevelt

Australian Mist - http://www.rumptumtugger.co.uk/uploads/1/7/1/2/17125458/1341699.jpg?377
Munchkin - http://www2.kittensforadoption.us/img/kitten-pictures/kittens-for-adoption-P100946.jpg
Dragon Li - http://media-cache-ec0.pinimg.com/736x/26/92/7f/26927f0b22791431689bf9851705bc77.jpg
Ragamuffin - http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-s2Ae5XGcn8A/TY5uvceocXI/AAAAAAAAGv4/6B6ASMhDHao/s1600/Ragamuffin11.jpg

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