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Journal entry from The Sonoran Desert of Arizona.

The Desert Awakens

I generally get a lot of visitors in the summer that squeeze in under our doors. Entering that way means they are pretty small. Often they are insects, mostly unwanted varieties such as Cone Nosed Kissing Bugs and Scorpions though I rarely get the latter. Mostly spiders come calling. Occasionally a snake is small enough to get in.

Pinkie The Cat is ever alert and always lets me know. Sometimes geckos come in. They are everywhere in the house, and I don't like for Pinkie to bother them, because they eat all manner of insect.

This evening, Pinkie had a throw rug all bunched up and was attacking it. Yikes! I turned on the light and there was a snake. It hardly qualifies as a snake, it is probably the tiniest one in the world. They are more like emaciated earthworms. There are a few of them that are different species, so I am not sure what this one is called. There are Thread Snakes which is an apt name for what Pinkie was tormenting.

As soon as I turned on the light, Pinkie snatched the snake up in her mouth and trotted away. She knows I will rob her of her prey. I trotted after her, noting that the poor snake dangled from her jaws. I was hoping she hadn't pierced it with her remarkably sharp teeth. She started for the bedroom and I yelled "NO" in a booming voice that shook the house. She obediently turned at the last minute and headed for the porch where she dropped the snake on the floor.

I raced in and grabbed Pinkie. She is a very small but very muscular and strong cat and DID NOT want me to take her toy.

I was momentarily in a quandary as to how to deal with keeping her away from the snake and getting the snake back outside. I had Pinkie flattened with my left hand and a flashlight in the right illuminating the poor tiny serpent (I hadn't had time to turn on a light). I always hesitate to catch any snake. Then I thought "what is it going to do, BITE YOU????". It probably didn't even have a mouth that I could see without a magnifying lens!

The tiny snake writhed around while I attempted to get hold of it. I stretched the limit of my abilities by holding Pinkie (who was also writhing around) down with my left hand while attempting to grasp the snake with my right hand. I finally got a grip on it in the near darkness and was able to

release Pinkie. The little snake was very lively and apparently unharmed, so I got the door open and hauled it outside and turned it loose.

I have had to catch those little guys before, and that is when I learned that snakes can jump. Years ago, I pursued one to move it to a safe place. Each time I got close enough to touch it, it quite literally jumped off of the ground. I find jumping snakes to be incredibly hard to catch! Luckily the little snake this evening was disinclined to leap about!