

I was talking with someone who had done animal rescue and had at one point had two baby opossums in her home. I have handled little opossums at Palo Alto Wildlife Rescue. They are small, not very active, rather feisty -- they hiss and are likely to bite if they feel threatened -- and they have tenacious grips, because of their habit of clinging closely to mother's fur as she forages up tree and down bank. But all in all they are nice little creatures, unprepossessing and not likely to cause trouble in a human household. Or so my friend thought.

Then they hijacked the cat.

The cat could have eaten them, except they she was already well fed, or maybe the babies were feisty enough that she thought Tender Vittles was better prey. Anyhow, she treated them benignly enough, and they apparantly missed mom, or so it seemed, cause when kitty got close enough, they climbed aboard, latched on to the fur of her back with that tenacious grip, and wouldn't let go.

The cat's response was to act as if invaded by aliens -- not far from the truth. She wriggled, hissed, and spat, trying every means possible to rid herself of these inferior life forms. The opossums just held on all the tighter. The cat decided that if she couldn't shake them off perhaps she could outrun them, so off she went, yowling, tearing about the house, with the opossums hunkered down behind the windshield, peering through tiny goggles as the wind whipped their little riding leathers, or something like that. (Why am I thinking of a scene from a Steven Speilberg movie?)

The very upset cat was finally chased to earth in the basement, rescued and relieved of her passengers. Now she hates opossums. Hates, do you hear me, *HATES*!!

-- Jay Freeman