

# Kitty Cat Scam

Ana Maria Mendoza

## BEFORE YOU READ:

1. Read the title. What do you think a “kitty cat scam” might be?
2. *Red flag* is figurative language. It means a warning.

## We Wanted a Cat

I thought that being a victim of a scam was difficult. But really it is very easy! You have to be careful, even when you are doing something simple, like adopting a kitten.

A few weeks ago, we decided to adopt a kitten. We wanted to give a home to a small pet. But we have a problem. My daughter is allergic to cats. So, we needed to find a special cat. Siamese cats are better for people with allergies. I used Facebook to search for a shelter that had a Siamese cat available for adoption. And I found one! A woman in Pecos, Texas, had an animal shelter, and she had a beautiful Siamese cat.

## Three Red Flags

I sent her a message and she showed me photos of the cat. She said she was coming to El Paso in two days, and she could bring me the cat. She said I should give her \$50 to help pay for the gas.

I thought this was reasonable, so I prepared to transfer the money. A small *red flag* made me pause. The transfer went to a bank in Mexico. It was weird. If she lives in Texas, why is her bank in Mexico? I asked her for an account within the United States, and she gave me another account. So I transferred the money.

The next day, she told me that she could not transport the cat because she did not have the proper cage. She asked for \$40 to buy the cage. This was a second *red flag*. Something was not right. Someone from an animal shelter should have the cage she needs to transport a cat.



The author's daughter with a kitten.

I decided to check the photos she sent me. I searched for them on Google, and, surprise! The photos were taken from Pinterest, and they were uploaded two years ago! That was my third and last *red flag*. I was a victim of an internet scam.

## Learning to Stop and Pay Attention

Unfortunately, I could not get my money back. Now I know not to trust purchases that ask for money up front. I know that if I see a *fed flag*, I should stop and pay attention.

One thing I *could* do was report her on Facebook. Now her “pets for adoption” page has been shut down. I hope I have helped others avoid being scammed. But she probably just opened a new page with a different name!

**AFTER YOU READ:** What *red flags* does Ana Maria notice? Tell a story of when you noticed a *red flag*. What did you do?

Ana Maria Mendoza is an ESL student at Ysleta Community Learning Center in El Paso, Texas. She is married and has two children. She has been living in the United States for two years.

