

Advice, by Minx

July fifteenth! I'm twenty-three!
Sing 'Happy Birthday', cats, to me!
I am the longest-living queen
Of Birmans that have ever been.
I guess you'll want to learn the key
To such extreme longevity.
Well, first you need to get your mum
Completely underneath your thumb,
That when, at oh-two hours and twenty,
You point out that your bowls are empty,
She will not scream abuse and shout,
But swift and eagerly leap out
Of bed and rush to get more food
And specials to uplift your mood.
And next you need a doting dad,
Who'll rise and shine and not get mad
When, in the early dawn of day,
You mention that your litter tray
Is not as fresh as you could wish;
And - since he's up - a spot more fish
Would bridge the gap till breakfast's tuna
(Unless he'd like to bring that sooner).
Beside these two, another yet:
You need a sympathetic vet.
When I'm assailed by ailment's strokes,
I send for Griffiths and for Stoakes;
Or, if some joint a trifle stiff is,
Call Derek Stoakes and Richard Griffiths.
Their cageside manner and their skill
Revive a cat who's feeling ill;
Their kind attention always cheers.
They've kept me now these twenty years.
There's Phillipa and Helen too,
Who greet me with a pleasant coo.
They know my tippie; Peridale
And Lactulose, with Adam's Ale.
These medicines cost a fair few shekels.
I also have, from Melva Eccles,
Homeopathic drops and grains
Promoting health throughout my veins;
Baryta Carb., Nux. Vom., Pop. Sol.
And Berberis keeps kidneys whole.

Now, having organized your staff,
You might think to sit back and laugh
As they indulge your every whim.
Not so; maintaining them in trim,
Ensuring servitude non-stop,
Requires you keep them on the hop.
So to the best of your ability
Deploy the arts of your senility:
The poorly hip; the plaintive mew;
The liquid, trustful eyes of blue;
And, what makes them throw in the towel,
An eldritch, bosom-rending yowl,
Which, with a limp-extended paw,
Will make them think you at death's door.
Remember, too, your every motion
Is studied with intense devotion;
So, if you wish to gain attention,
Just try a little poo-retention;
And, when you judge the moment right is,
Contract a dose of mild cystitis.
This makes your mummy feel a meanie,
And buys your vet a Lamborghini.
And if they mention holidays,
Assume a stern, accusing gaze,
That charges with assault and battery
Them that would leave you in a cattery.
Then wistfully glance round the room,
As if to say, "Farewell, my home!
How could my loved ones be so heartless?"
(With practice, it will look quite artless.)
This should induce a guilty trip,
Or you have let your standards slip.
Next, make your eyeballs turn quite purple;
A hacking cough will bring a furball.
"Tis stress!" they cry, "We cannot leave
Our lonely cat to pine and grieve!
Who cares if we lose our deposit?
Our cat's the one we ought to cosset!"
Then, with the status quo restored,
Permit yourself to be adored.
The secret, cats, of living long
Is, *Keep your staff where they belong.*