

The Cat that Walked by Himself

by Rudyard Kipling

Once there was a time when all creatures were wild. Cows, horses, sheep and dogs were wild. They walked through the Wild Wood as wild as could be. Of all the wild creatures, the wildest of these was the Cat, for he liked to walk alone through the Wild Wood.

Man was also wild at this time, as wild as the animals. Then he met the Woman, and she told him she didn't like his wild ways. She found a nice, dry cave and made it comfortable with a warm fire and a clean floor. Man and Woman settled into their new home.

On their first night in their new home, Man slept and Woman sat by the fire. She placed a roast bone in the fire and made her first magic.

In the Wild Wood, the animals saw the strange light and wondered what it meant. The Dog smelled the wonderful roast bone. He decided he would find out what was happening. He asked the Cat to come with him. The Cat refused, because the Cat always walked alone. After the Dog left, the Cat followed him, because the Cat also wanted to know what was happening.

When the Dog reached the cave, he asked the Woman what smelled so wonderful. She tossed him the bone and he gnawed and gnawed. It was the best thing he ever eaten. "Give me another!" he begged.

The Woman promised she would feed the Dog a bone every night if he would help the Man hunt and guard the cave. The Dog agreed, and he settled into the cave.

And so it went, night after night. The Woman made magic to draw the Wild Ones to the cave. She made dried grass for the Horse and the Cow. The Horse promised to help the Man hunt. The Cow promised to give fresh milk every day. Each time, the Cat followed them to the cave alone and heard what happened.

One night the Cat saw the light in the cave and smelled the wonderful aroma of warm milk. He walked to the cave by himself, as was his nature. When he arrived, he asked the Woman what was happening.

The Woman told the Cat to go back to the Wild Wood. "You are the Cat who likes to walk alone," said the Woman. "Go back to the Wood and walk by yourself."

The Cat wanted to taste the warm milk, so he pretended to be sorry. "Oh, wise and beautiful Woman," he pleaded. "Does this mean I can never come into the cave, lay by the warm fire and drink the warm milk?"

"For that compliment," replied the Woman, "I will make a bargain with you. If I ever say a kind word to you, you may come into the cave. If I say kind words twice, you may lay by the fire. If I say kind words three times, I will give you warm milk three times a day forever and ever."

With that the Cat returned to the Wild Wood by himself, waving his wild tail as he went.

After a time, a Baby arrived in the cave. The Cat went to the cave one morning while the Man was hunting and the Woman was cooking. The Baby began to cry and the Woman placed the Baby outside the cave to play. She gave him some pebbles to play with and returned to the cave. Still the Baby cried.

The Cat sat next to the Baby and stroked his cheek with his paw. The Baby laughed at the tickle of the soft fur.

Inside, Woman heard the Baby laugh, she smiled. "The one who has made the Baby laugh has done me a service and I thank him kindly."

With that, the Cat walked into the cave. When the Woman gasped, the Cat said "I made the Baby laugh. You gave me your kind thanks, and by our agreement, I may sit inside the cave."



The Baby was sad that the Cat had left him and began to cry again. "I will sing the Baby to sleep," said the Cat. He lay next to the Baby and purred, long and low, until the Baby was fast asleep.

The Woman smiled at the two little creatures. "You did that well, clever Cat."

Suddenly the Cat was sitting by the warm fire. "That's the second kind thing you have said to me. Now I may sit by the fire forever and ever."

The whole cave became quiet, so quiet that a little Mouse ran silently across the floor.

"Eeee!" cried the Woman, for she was afraid of the Mouse. The Cat pounced on the Mouse and ate it up.

"You are clever, Wild One," said the Woman. "None of the others are fast enough to catch the Mouse."

"That's the third time you have said kind words to me," the Cat said. "You will give me warm milk three times a day. But I am still the Cat that walks by himself!"

With that, the Woman smiled and gave the Cat warm milk forever and ever.



Sequence of Events

Put the events in order by placing a 1 in the blank before the first thing that happened, a 2 after the second and so on.

_____ The Woman made a bargain with the Cat.

_____ The Dog gnawed the bone.

_____ The Woman found a cave.

_____ The Cat ate the Mouse.

_____ The Woman gave the Cat warm milk.

_____ The Cat tickled the Baby.

Vocabulary

Circle the answer that means the same as the word.

gnawed

- A. licked
- B. laughed
- C. chewed
- D. barked

aroma

- A. taste
- B. sight
- C. smell
- D. feel

compliment

- A. rude words
- B. words of praise
- C. idea
- D. excuse

bargain

- A. agreement
- B. dinner
- C. argument
- D. fire

pounced

- A. danced
- B. saw
- C. jumped quickly
- D. screamed loudly

WORD SEARCH

Circle each word from the list in the puzzle. Words can go up, down, backwards, and diagonally.

W C A K I E D N S C E N G F D
 R A O R S K I E O P A K N S E
 Y V L R O A R M W T S N A S S
 E E O K G M P G U O N W W A I
 F H G R E L A R L Q L Q E R M
 Z L A W I D E M V K T L D G O
 H B I M P O U N C E D S O S R
 H S E E A P C I G A M L A F P
 E N L U F R E D N O W W I O S
 T M O U S E L Z S K X W O C R

AROMA
 BARGAIN
 CAVE
 COMPLIMENT
 COW
 FOLLOWED
 GNAWED
 GRASS
 HORSE

MAGIC
 MOUSE
 NATURE
 POUNCED
 PROMISED
 ROAST
 WALKED
 WISE
 WONDERFUL