

Cultural Heritage with Cats and Dogs

**Myths, Legends, Fairy Tales, Proverbs,
Superstitions collected**

by

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Confidence

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An info-learning resource for volunteers, teachers, activists, public servants in the field of strays management to be used for raising awareness of the group you target - children, youth, vets, persons with special needs. You can use it to prompt group participation, stir imagination for group inputs, ice-break a learning session. Use these info as a resource for info-learning sessions particularly but not necessarily with kids.

In 2014 Initiativa Cetatenilor Seniori from Romania used it for 3 info sessions with teachers, children and seniors to promote participation in a civic drawing competition 'Stories by Grannies about Cats and Dogs' part of the campaign ["Less Dogs on the Streets/Adopt a dog"](#). It was also used in a series of 3 info-sessions to prompt public speaking and the interest of 20 teenagers for the issue of risks and benefits of pets and strays alongside with the Study on the legal and institutional framework worldwide, in Europe and the project countries



Senior Citizens Empowerment
for Active Aging



Lifelong
Learning
Programme

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History, Myths and Legends about Cats

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HISTORY, MYTHS AND LEGENDS ABOUT CATS

The Origins of Cats-

The origins of our canine companions are often debated among academics and dog lovers alike. But although there is still much to know about how the first dogs came to be, the introduction of cats into the human world seems better established. Cats became part of our lives 7,000 to 8,000 years ago, after people had already begun to live in permanent communities. Apparently attracted to rodents who came to feed on stored grain, the ancestor of today's cat, the African wildcat, became a frequent and welcome visitor. The cat, as we know her, played an important part in Egyptian culture and lore. It was also at this time that felines and humans began a curious relationship that has proven to be both good and bad for the cat.

The Cultured Cat

The Egyptians thought so highly of cats that the goddess Bastet was depicted as one. Strict limits were placed on taking cats outside of Egypt, and families actively mourned the deaths of beloved household felines. At the same time, however, thousands of cats were bred and raised for sacrifice. Their mummies have been found in huge numbers. Egypt was at the crossroads of great trading enterprises, and cats soon found their way both east and west. Short-haired cats arrived in Italy 2,100 years ago and moved across Europe quickly, finally reaching England some 1,900 years ago. Almost everywhere they went, cats were welcomed for their ability to control rodent populations. In many places, they were also appreciated for their companionship. Their darkest hour probably came during the Middle Ages in Europe. Christian religious leaders linked cats with the practice of witchcraft, and sanctioned their wholesale slaughter. This is a particular irony, as cats likely played an important role in helping to protect Europe from even greater devastation during the Black Plague, by killing the rats

that carried infected fleas from home to home. The Renaissance, which brought new light to many areas of human endeavor, benefited cats, too. They began to appear in paintings and literature as objects of affection. Later, settlement of the New World brought cats across the Atlantic, and they followed the colonists as they spread across the continent.

The Cat as a Companion

It was the development of the middle class that profoundly changed the role of felines in our society and homes. Cats were no longer relegated to the role of rodent wrangler, and came more and more to fill that of companion. Their appeal is such that over the past ten years, they have supplanted dogs as the most common companion animal in the United States. Yet as a continued reflection of our mixed appreciation of cats, research shows that we are less likely to take cats to the veterinarian, provide proper identification or keep them indoors where they will be safe. A variety of sources suggest that there may be as many cats living homeless, as strays and ferals, as there are in homes.

Unlike our friend the dog, the cat's evolution took place largely without the assistance or presence of a human partner. They did not undergo the long-term genetic selection that produced specialized canine breeds for hunting, herding or guarding. As a result, domestic cats have retained many aspects of their original feline behaviors. This may further the mistaken impression that cats can do fine on their own and require limited attention from human caretakers.

Cats have avoided many of the problems that dogs have faced due to selection for exaggerated physical characteristics. There have been just a handful of unusual physical traits fixed as breed characteristics. The shortened muzzle of the Persian family, the ears of the Scottish Fold, and the tailless Manx are among the few examples. It may be important to stay vigilant in this area, however, since the ever-growing popularity of cats may stimulate an expanded desire for "new and different" breeds and varieties, such as the Munchkins and Twisty Cats of recent years.

Much like dogs, cats have adapted to our lives independent of a need we may have for

them to work for us. Instead of mice, they now capture our imagination and affection. And while the world may forever remain divided into dedicated dog people and cat lovers, many of us revel in the fun and complexity of having both dogs and cats in our homes. If nothing else, we may want to heed the old Irish proverb that warns, "Beware of people who dislike cats."

The Cat and Islam

The domestic cat is a revered animal in Islam. Admired for its cleanliness as well as for being loved by Prophet Muhammad, the cat is considered "the quintessential pet" by Muslims.

Origins of reverence

Cats have been venerated in the Near East since antiquity, a tradition adopted by Islam, albeit in a much modified form. Muhammad is reported to have said that "a love of cats is an aspect of faith"; according to other hadiths, he prohibited the persecution and killing of cats. The prophet purportedly allowed a cat to give birth on his cloak, and cut off the sleeve of his prayer robe rather than wake his favorite cat, a female named Muezza, who was sleeping on it.

Cat resting on a pillow next to an imam in Cairo, by John Frederick Lewis

One of Muhammad's companions was known as Abu Hurairah (literally: "Father of the Kitten") for his attachment to cats. Abu Hurairah claimed that he had heard the Prophet declare that a woman went to Hell for starving a female kitten and not providing her with any water, but this was disputed by the Prophet's widow Aisha.[According to legend, Abu Hurairah's cat saved Muhammad from a snake.[The grateful prophet stroked the cat's back and forehead, thus blessing all cats with the righting reflex. The stripes some cats have on their foreheads are believed to mark the touch of Muhammad's fingers.

The Cat of Celtic Lore

The cat's life was not highly valued, but the animal itself was treated with a great deal of caution. It was said that a witch's cat was "endowed with reason." These felines were

also said to be vengeful, so great care was taken so as not to offend them. A cat could also be a spirit, an evil fairy, a shape shifting witch, a demon, or the devil himself in disguise. For these reasons the cat was often believed to be a spy for evil beings that lurked outside the home. There was also a fairy cat that was known as the King of the Cats. Truthfully, he was much less a king than a vengeful protector spirit of the feline population in general. There's also an abundance of lore, which speaks of talking cats. These are often Aesop-like tales or stories of shape shifting witches. These cats are usually given human characteristics to the extreme. They are bards, warriors, and even sentries. One common Celtic story, for example, is of a Cat who allowed some travelers to feast upon his table. When one of the men tried to take advantage of the hospitality by stealing a necklace, however, the cat became a flaming arrow and incinerated the would-be thief.

In myth, the Cat of Celtic lore is a much more ambiguous entity. The Tuatha De Danaan god Nuada had one of his eyes replaced with one of his pet cat's eyes. Cuchulain and his companions fought three cats in one tale, and in another the Fianna would fight against Cat-headed and dog-headed warriors who were part of an invading land force. Across the water, one of Arthur's men named Gogyfwlch was said to have had cat eyes. Arthur himself later battled a cat that almost killed him. Elsewhere, there's the story of an enchanted princess who spent one year as a Cat, one year as a swan, and one year as an otter. This shape shifting theme, as we have seen before, was quite common in the Celtic world.

As an ancient symbolic Celtic animal, the cat represents the guardian of the Otherworld (or Underworld, depending which texts you read from various regions). Stoic, silent and mysterious, cats fit the bill of Otherworld guardians quite well. They keep the secrets of the Otherworld eternally to themselves, as they gaze with guile upon a world that does not see or understand the depth of their knowledge. However, black cats in Celtic lore were considered evil, and were sacrifice.

The Roman cat

Cat Folklore: Cats Ruled Ancient Rome

According to cat folklore, in ancient Rome, cats were considered special creatures. In fact, some Romans considered cats household gods, representing the warmth and security of the house.

Here are some other ways Romans showed their feline friends respect:

Cats were the only animals allowed in Roman temples. At Roman weddings, sacrifices were made to the cat in order to bless the couple with a prosperous future. Cats were also given sacrifices at Roman funerals to ensure protection for the deceased in the afterlife. One myth about the goddess Diana tells the story of her being transformed into a cat to escape a monster. Romans loved cats, but not as much as the Egyptians loved cats. The death of a cat led to tensions between the two countries. In 47 B.C., a Roman was stoned by the people of Alexandria after killing a cat. From that point forward, cats were no longer allowed in Roman-occupied Egypt. Because of its free spirit, the cat is often associated with Libertas, the goddess of liberty and freedom. Statues of Libertas often show her with a cat at her feet. A Roman author, Pliny the Elder wrote the Romans appreciated cats because of their independent nature.

The Role of the Cat in Ancient Egypt

In Ancient Egypt cats were known as Mau. About 4000 to 5000 years ago cats were domesticated and accepted members of the households of Egypt. Many of the breeds we now know have evolved from these ancient cats. The Egyptians were the first to keep and use cats to hunt fish and birds as well as to destroy the rodents that infested the grain stocks along the Nile. Cats were considered so valuable that the Ancient Egyptians protected it by law (which they imposed the death penalty for killing cats - deliberately or not), they were revered as hunters and worshiped as gods.

The first feline Egyptian goddess might be Mafdet, depicted in the Pyramid texts as killing a snake with her claws. Mafdet might be translated as "runner" in Egyptian. While there are many other cat goddesses, Bast is the only one represented as a domestic cat (Welcome, 1997). Cats were regarded as manifestations of the goddess Bast. This

Egyptian goddess had many roles, including the goddess of fertility, the moon, and also as the protector of all cats. She was referred to as Bastet when in full cat form, as opposed to the representation of Bast as a beautiful girl with the body of a human and the head of a cat. In Egyptian mythology, she had many conflicting relationships with fellow gods and goddesses. She was said to be the daughter of Mwt and Amun, the daughter of Ra, sister of Djehuti, Seshat, Het Heret, Ma'at, and twin sister of Sekhmet. She was also the sexual partner of all gods and goddesses, and the wife of Ra (Milo, 1997). Most feline gods and goddesses, however, were big cats, mainly lions and lionesses.

The Sphinx for example is a representation of a lion, and is one of the earliest works of Egyptian art. The sphinx has the head of the pharaoh, and the body of a lion, showing the pharaoh's power and importance. According to Allbritton, Sekhmet, the lion-headed goddess of fate, controls the Tablets of Destiny; therefore, the fate of humanity lies in her hands, or rather her paws. Her statue is covered in gold, and includes an elaborate headdress and a golden throne. Sekhmet symbolizes the burning sun in Egyptian religion. She is the goddess of fertility, protector of the young and weak, and the deity of war and destruction. Legend has it that one day she was seized with a desire to slaughter all humanity; so killed and drank the blood of many. The god of the sun, Ra, finally put an end to the massacre by mixing beer and pomegranate juice, to appear as blood. Sekhmet then drank herself into oblivion (Allbritton, 1998). Cats were treated extremely well during the time of the pharaohs.

Cats were treated as gods, and were protected by law, as well. The punishment for harming or killing a cat was harsh (Wolf, 1997). Diodorus Siculus said:

Whoever kills a cat in Egypt is condemned to death, whether he committed this crime deliberately or not. The people gather and kill him. An unfortunate Roman, who accidentally killed a cat, could not be saved, either by King Ptolemy of Egypt or by the fear which Rome inspired. (Qtd. in Preserved for Posterity, 1997)

There were also laws forbidding the exportation of cats. However, Phoenician traders often smuggled them out and sold them to the Mediterranean countries (Coll, 1997).

Armies were even sent out to recapture cats from foreign lands. The Egyptians were so

devoted to their cats that they even surrendered to the Persians, due to their beloved cats. When the Egyptians were at war with the Persians and the Egyptians were wearing down the Persian army, a Persian general came up with a plan. Because he knew of the great love and reverence with which the Egyptians treated their cats, he ordered his soldiers to capture as many cats as possible from the city. When they had enough, they returned to the city of Pelusium and lined up for battle. When the dust cleared, the Egyptians were horrified at the number of their terrified cats that were running over the battlefield. Rather than harm the cats, they surrendered the city to the Persians without a fight. It was a devastating loss for the Egyptians (Coll, 1997).

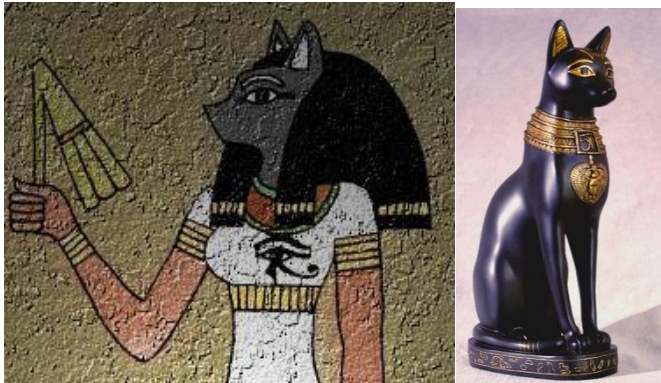
In another example of the Egyptian's devotion to their cats, Herodotus relates that when a fire broke out in Egypt, the men would stand in a line to prevent harm to the cats, thinking more of that than extinguishing the fire. Even so, Herodotus noted, "the cats slip through or leap over the men and leap into the fire." (Chapter 66, 3) It can be assumed that this is hyperbole, and that most cats would not rush towards a blazing fire. This statement, however, made hundreds of years later in Greece, does show the understanding of the importance of cats to Egyptians.

The importance of cats is epitomized in the abundance of decorated statuettes found in the excavated tombs. Statuettes were seen as religious symbols with great history and importance by the Egyptians. These statues were often adorned with golden jewelry and ear rings (Sandmeier, 1997). They are shown standing with their tails wrapped around their bodies to the right (Adored and Adorned, 1997). Cats were mummified after death, and mice, rats, and saucers of milk were placed in their tombs. However, X-rays of 55 mummified cats showed that several had broken necks, implying that the Temple priests may have killed kittens to keep down their population, and used them as offerings to Bast (Bisno, 1997). Cat cemeteries line the Nile River and cat mummies can be found in the tombs of Egyptians (Coll, 1997). The city of Bubastis, or Tell Basta contains around 300,000 cat mummies. The most important cat tomb cities besides Bubastis were Giza, Abydos, and Denderah.

When a cat died, the occupants of the house where the cat died from natural causes would go into a deep mourning and shave their eyebrows (Herodotus). Brier (1994) also

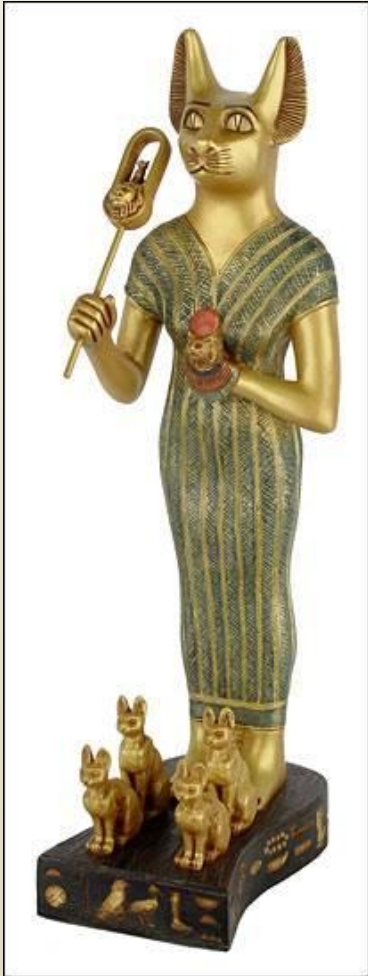
states that although cats were treated well, many Egyptologists have come to believe that domestic cats were not, in fact, considered sacred (p.215).

This sacred animal was so important to the Egyptian society and religion, that after the cat's death, its body was mummified and buried in a special cemetery. Also, the Egyptians had strict laws prohibiting the export of cats. However, because cats were valued in other parts of the world for their rat-catching prowess, Phoenician traders often smuggled them out and sold them to the Mediterranean countries. Domestic cats were also found in India, China, and Japan where they were prized as pets as well as rodent catchers. Other cultures had different views of cats. Some embraced them, others detested them. Over the subsequent centuries, the domesticated cat proliferated throughout Europe, the Middle East, and China. Though no longer worshiped as deities, cats were still honored and appreciated for their mousing abilities no matter where they turned up.



The Egyptian cat-headed goddess - Bastet

The Egyptian cat-headed goddess, Bastet was strictly a solar deity until the arrival of Greek influence on Egyptian society, when she became a lunar goddess due to the Greeks associating her with their Artemis. Dating from the 2nd Dynasty (roughly 2890-2686 BCE), Bastet was originally portrayed as either a wild desert cat or as a lioness, and only became associated with the domesticated feline around 1000 BCE. She was commonly paired with Sakhmet, the lion-headed goddess of Memphis, Wadjet, and Hathor. Bastet was the "Daughter of Ra", a designation that placed her in the same ranks as such goddesses as Maat and Tefnut. Additionally, Bastet was one of the "Eyes



of Ra", the title of an "avenger" god who is sent out specifically to lay waste to the enemies of Egypt and her gods.

The cult of Bastet was centered in Bubastis (located in the delta region, near modern- day Zagazig) from at least the 4th Dynasty. In the Late Period Bubastis was the capital of Egypt for a dynasty, and a few kings took her name into their royal titles. Bubastis was made famous by the traveler Herodotus in the 4th century BCE, when he described in his annals one of the festivals that takes place in honor of Bastet. Excavations in the ruins of Tell-Basta (the former Bubastis) have yielded many discoveries, including a graveyard with mummified holy cats.

Because the Greeks equated Bastet with Diana and Artemis and Horus with Apollo, Bastet became adopted into the Osiris-Isis myth as their daughter (this association, however, was never made previous to the arrival of Hellenistic influence on Egypt). She is stated to be the mother of the lion-headed god Mihos (who was also worshipped in Bubastis, along with Thoth). She is depicted most commonly as a woman with the head of a domesticated or wild cat or lion, or as a cat itself.

Cats in Viking Mythology

The Vikings kept cats for their valuable skills as mousers as well as keeping cats for pets. Kittens were sometimes given to new brides as an essential part of setting up a new household. It is especially appropriate that brides should receive cats, since cats were associated with Freyja, the goddess of love. The Vikings

*believed that Freyja rode a cart drawn by a team of cats. It might seem absurd to imagine a cart drawn by cats, until one realizes that Viking cats were not your standard *Felis domesticus* -- they were the *Skogkatt*(Norwegian, meaning literally "Forest Cat"), a wild breed native to the North. In Denmark, these cats are called *Huldrekat* (huldre are female forest spirits, literally, "the hidden folk"). The *Skogkatt* is a large breed, known for their strong bones and muscular forms.*

*[Freyja is the most famous of the goddesses. She has in heaven a dwelling which is called *Fólkvangr*, and when she rides to the battle, one half of the slain belong to her, and the other half to *Óðinn*. As is here said:*

*Fólkvangr it is called,
And there rules Freyja.
For the seats in the hall
Half of the slain
She chooses each day;
The other half is Óðinn's.*





Her hall is Sessrúmnir, and it is large and beautiful. When she goes abroad, she drives in a wagon drawn by two cats. She lends a favorable ear to men who call upon her, and it is from her name that the title has come that noble women are called freyjur ("lady"). Love-poetry she likes well, and it is good to call on her in love affairs.]

*Interestingly, though Freyja's cats certainly catch the popular imagination, Old Norse literature never recorded the names of the goddess's cats. One author, Diana Paxson in her novel *Brisingamen* assigned the poetic names *Tregul* ("tree-gold", or amber) and *Bygul* ("bee-gold", or honey) to Freyja's cats where they appeared in her story. There is no evidence at all in Norse literature for these names, of course, but they certainly have the flavor of Old Norse literature to them!*

The ancestors of the Skogkatt probably were Southern European shorthaired cats which came to Norway from other parts of Europe in prehistoric times. Due to the natural selection imposed by the strange and hostile climatic conditions, only individuals with a particularly thick coat and other adaptations to a cold climate survived.

The earliest literary descriptions suspected to be the Norwegian Forest Cat come from the Norse myths, describing the large, strong cats that drew Freyja's chariot or the cat so heavy that not even Thorr, God of Thunder, could lift it from the floor: Owners of Forest Cats will readily recognize their large-boned, powerful cats in these tales. The first literary description that unmistakably describes the Forest Cat is from the Danish clergyman, Peter Clausson Friis, who lived the greater part of his life in Norway. In 1559

Friis described three types of "lynx": the wolf lynx, the fox lynx, and the cat lynx. It is believed that the animal which Peter Claussøn Friis called the "cat lynx" was in fact the Norwegian Forest Cat, a theory made more likely by the many similarities in general appearance between the Forest Cat and the Norwegian lynx. The most apparent of these is that they are both big, long-legged cats with large ruffs, and tufts at the tips of their ears. Moreover they both like water, and the stories of swimming Forest Cats who catch their own fish in lakes and rivers are innumerable. The Forest Cat evidently utilizes the same methods as the Norwegian lynx when it goes fishing

Cats in the Middle Ages

*Full disclosure: it does appear that **there was a market at certain points for cat skins**. Bartholomew de Glanville mentioned this in a thirteenth-century history, and Langland's *Piers Ploughman* mentions a pedlar of such, who 'would kill if he could for the sake of their skins'.*

People were also quite horrible to cats during things like witch hunts (when, to be fair, they were also quite horrible to each other) and the Black Plague, and during strange awful things like the Kattenstoet in Ypres. While not treasured the way, say, horses were, I'm not sure they suffered more than people at the time; concern about the sanctity of life in general was not really at its highest around the thirteenth century. In the accounts and lawbooks Good old Hywel Dda (or rather, Iorwerth ap Owain Gwynedd) listed the sarhaed of a cat:

***The value of a kitten** from the night it is born until it opens its eyes, a penny, and from then until it kills mice, two pence, and after it kills mice, four pence.*

Eleanor de Montfort (Countess of Leicester, not her daughter who married Llewelyn the Last) bought a cat in 1265; it doesn't specify whether she wanted it for snuggling or because her fortress had a mouse problem. She did have a reputation, however, for liking animals in general.

Exeter Cathedral, meanwhile, had a cat on the payroll. Fifteenth-century accounts list its salary as a penny per week, so it wasn't working purely on commission and eating only the mice it got rid of. There is still a small cat door to the cathedral's south tower.

Cats in Books

***Bestiaries** are the first place to look for any sort of animal, of course, though they're not the only place we find cats. Isidore of Seville suggests that the Latin word 'cattus' may come from 'to catch', as in what they do with mice, or else because their eyes capture the light.*

*(An archaic and lesser-known Latin word for cat is *aelura*—yes, the Twitter handle adopted by yours truly—David Mankin's edition of Cicero is dedicated to 'the memory of Marmalade, *aelura mirabilis*,' which I think is delightful.)*

But cats are also found in manuscript illuminations, like the one above. They are often chasing mice, though not always—the British Library has a list of some of the more humorous ones, including a cat defending a castle from the mice who have it under siege!

*Cats are also mentioned in courtesy manuals such as *The Boke of Nurture*, which asks the host to dryve out dogge and catte, or els geve them a clout, which rather suggests that both sort of pet were frolicking about the tables waiting for people to drop food, or else just helping themselves to it.*

Cats and the Church

The most compelling evidence, though, that cats were actually considered pets and not just employees of the house comes from men and women of the Church, who surely wouldn't have kept them on hand if they actually thought they were servants of the Devil. Here, for instance, is an illustration of a nun with her spinning, and her cat 'helping' in that way that cats love to do with soft crafts:



The Ancrene Wisse is explicit that while hermits could own three acres and a cow, there was only one companion suitable for an anchoress; it reads 'shall not possess any beast, my dear sisters, except only a cat.' Again, if they were that evil, they would hardly have been fit companions for women who had given up all earthly society in favour of contemplation and prayer.

And then, of course, if you are the sort of person who follows both medieval things and cats, you will have seen this fellow floating around the internet. He left his mark quite literally on a fifteenth century manuscript, and it's not hard to envision the poor monk sitting there copying away, trying in vain to keep his feline companion from messing up his work.



Cats in Finland

In Finland it was believed that cats led the souls of the dead on the dangerous journey through the underworld to heaven (or hell).

"The Kalevala" is an epic Finnish poem arranged by Finn Elias Lonnrot and compiled from Finnish and Karelian folklore. In one story, a witch decided to one day invite herself into a house that happened to be filled with people. Upon entering this house the witch began to dance around while muttering bizarre incantations, much to the chagrin of all who were present. All at once, the people found themselves transported onto a sleigh drawn by a giant magical cat. This mysterious cat pulled the sleigh at fantastic speeds until it finally came to "Pohjola", a place where evil resides in everlasting night, located deep within the hinterlands of Finland.

The Kalevala also recounts the origins of the cat

I know of the cats origin - the incubation of Greybeard

The cat was gotten on a stove as a girls nose,

a hares head, a tail of "Hiisis Plait of Hair,"

claws of a viper, a tail of snakes venom

Feet of cloudberry, the rest of its body is of the wolfs race.

Old Japanese stories - the real Maneki Neko

At the beginning of the Edo period, on the place where today is located the Gotokuji Temple, it was a small temple where a very poor monk lived, accompanied only by his cat, named Tama.



One day, a noble man, according to some writings li Naotaka from Hikone, was returning from hunting and, caught in the rain near the temple, took refuge under a nearby tree.

After a while, he observed a cat sitting in front of the temple's entrance, beckoning him to enter. Surprised, the noble moved towards the cat and immediately the tree was struck by lightning.

As a gratitude for having its life saved, the noble became the temple's patron, and the temple soon became prosperous.

After the cat died, it was buried in the Temple's cemetery and the Maneki Nekosculptures were made to honor the magical cat.

Maneki Neko are charms for good luck and prosperity, as Tama brought to the small temple. According to some sources, since then, Maneki Neko has been considered an incarnation of the Goddess of Mercy, the deity who watches over and protects people. The temple was renamed Gotokuji Temple in 1697 and today there are hundreds of ManekiNeko, of various sizes, brought by people praying for business success, but also for their lost or sick cats.

Myths and Legends about Dogs

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Greek mythology

Argos

This is another tale of a wonderfully faithful dog. Argos was the first to recognize Odysseus (aside from those that Odysseus had already revealed himself to) after he returned from the Trojan War, despite the fact that Odysseus had disguised himself as a beggar. Once he was happy that he had seen his master again, Argos died. "As they were talking, a dog that had been lying asleep raised his head and pricked up his ears. This was Argos, whom Odysseus had bred before setting out for Troy, but he had never had any enjoyment from him. In the old days he used to be taken out by the young men when they went hunting wild goats, or deer, or hares, but now that his master was gone he was lying neglected on the heaps of mule and cow dung that lay in front of the stable doors till the men should come and draw it away to manure the great close; and he was full of fleas. As soon as he saw Odysseus standing there, he dropped his ears and wagged his tail, but he could not get close up to his master. When Odysseus saw the dog on the other side of the yard, dashed a tear from his eyes without Eumaeus seeing it, and said: 'Eumaeus, what a noble hound that is over yonder on the manure heap: his build is splendid; is he as fine a fellow as he looks, or is he only one of those dogs that come begging about a table, and are kept merely for show?' 'This hound,' answered Eumaeus, 'belonged to him who has died in a far country. If he were what he was when Odysseus left for Troy, he would soon show you what he could do. There was not a wild beast in the forest that could get away from him when he was once on its tracks. But now he has fallen on evil times, for his master is dead and gone, and the women take no care of him. Servants never do their work when their master's hand is no longer over them, for Zeus takes half the goodness out of a man when he makes a slave of him.' So saying he entered the well-built mansion, and made straight for the riotous pretenders in the hall. But Argos passed into the darkness of death, now that he had seen his master once more after twenty years."

Cerberus

We would most commonly find Cerberus (or Kerberos, meaning "demon of the pit") in Greek mythology, with a small mention in Roman mythology. Cerberus, in Greek mythology, was believed to be the offspring of Echidna and Typhon, and had Chimera as his sister, and the Hydra as his brother (all of these creatures also being monsters.) Cerberus is the monstrous three headed dog who guards the gates to the Underworld. He stood on the bank of the river Styx, and would wag his tail at all dead souls that were trying to enter, but would snarl and bark viciously at all those who tried to leave. It was also his job to eat any living person who tried to enter into the Underworld. There are several different ideas of how Cerberus was meant to actually look. The most commonly accepted idea is that of three heads. However, there are some who claim that Cerberus had 50, and sometimes even 100 heads! Another description of Cerberus says that he had the head of a lion, wolf, and a dog, with the tail of a dragon, and a mane of writhing snakes. The idea of the three heads possibly originates from the cycles of life; past, present, and future. Dear old Cerberus crops up in quite a few Greek stories. For instance,

Hercules' twelfth labor was to capture Cerberus, and when he carried him up to the earth and a little of Cerberus's drool fell onto the earth, the first poisonous plants were born, such as aconite. Orpheus used his musical talent to lull Cerberus to sleep. Another story regarding Cerberus was when Psyche, the love interest of Eros, lulled Cerberus to sleep by giving him drugged honey cakes. Running parallel to this in Roman mythology, the Sybil of Cumae lulled Cerberus to sleep in a similar manner in order to permit Aeneas entry into the Underworld. Cerberus has also managed to weasel his way into popular culture. There is a German rock group named "Cerberus," and the name also makes plenty of appearances in Anime and Video games. A "version" of Cerberus appears in Harry Potter, but this time, his name is Fluffy, and he is Hagrid's ferocious, but beloved three-headed dog.

The story of Cerberus

Pride of place among the monsters born of Echidna has to go to Cerberus, the great three headed dog that guards the underworld. As a dutiful pet to Hades, ruler of the dead, Cerberus works hard to keep living beings out of the underworld and prevent deceased souls from returning to the world of life. Getting past Cerberus on the way into and out of the underworld was therefore a chief problem for the heroes who visited the land of the dead. Orpheus charmed his way past the dog with music. Aeneas pragmatically fed the creature drugged honey cakes. Psyche used sweet words and dog biscuits.



Hercules of course used brute strength. In fact the demigod was in the underworld specifically to borrow Cerberus as a twelfth and final bravura labor. Capturing the hellbeast of course required bravery and raw force, but Hercules had become rather savvy by the time of his last labor, and he did some other things right. Before going to the underworld he mastered the Eleusinian Mysteries so that, in case he never returned from the realm of the dead, he could at least enjoy a pleasant afterlife (the cult's principal benefit). Once he had entered the underworld through the winding subterranean cave Taenarum in Laconia, Hercules sought out Hades and asked permission to borrow his dog. Hades granted it provided Hercules subdue the beast without using any weapons. When Hercules wrestled Cerberus to submission, he took the creature back to Eurystheus who was so frightened he hid in a jar (which is how he is always portrayed) and freed Hercules from any further obligations. Cleansed of his past sins, Hercules was free to pursue his own life.



Herakles, Cerberus and Eurystheus (from a black-figured Caeretan hydria vessel of Etruscan make, ca 525 BC)

Dante also described Cerberus. The Italian poet's version of the monster seems to be having doggy fun. Virgil and Dante witness him tearing apart spirits and they feed him some dirt to play with in the following passage from [Inferno](#):

In the third circle am I of the rain
 Eternal, maledict, and cold, and heavy;
 Its law and quality are never new.
 Huge hail, and water sombre-hued, and snow,
 Athwart the tenebrous air pour down amain;
 Noisome the earth is, that receiveth this.
 Cerberus, monster cruel and uncouth,
 With his three gullets like a dog is barking
 Over the people that are there submerged.
 Red eyes he has, and unctuous beard and black,
 And belly large, and armed with claws his hands;
 He rends the spirits, flays, and quarters them.
 Howl the rain maketh them like unto dogs;

One side they make a shelter for the other;
Oft turn themselves the wretched reprobates.
When Cerberus perceived us, the great worm!
His mouths he opened, and displayed his tusks;
Not a limb had he that was motionless.
And my Conductor, with his spans extended,
Took of the earth, and with his fists well filled,
He threw it into those rapacious gullets.
Such as that dog is, who by barking craves,
And quiet grows soon as his food he gnaws,
For to devour it he but thinks and struggles,
The like became those muzzles filth-begrimed
Of Cerberus the demon, who so thunders
Over the souls that they would fain be deaf.

It is good that there is a family member of Echidna that did not suffer extinction at the hands of some hero. It is pleasant to imagine the three-headed dog enjoying a vigorous and rousing eternity with his master in the halls of hell.

Here is gallery of some images both ancient and modern, high art and low art, of the great monster. Also I would like to give a hearty thanks to all of the creative people whose work is available on the internet. You all are truly the best.

Orthros The Two Headed Dog

He was a two headed monster dog with a tail like that of a serpent. He was begotten by Typhon a fierce giant and Echidna who is half serpent and half human and is the brother of Cerberus who is the guardian of the underworld as well as being the brother to the Nemean Lion and the very well known Sphinx and last but not least the Chimera. Orthros in Greek stands for "morning twilight". Orthros was not known as well as the other Greek Monsters for he lived a short life due to Hercules. Both of these dogs were guards of some thing one of cattle and the other of the underworld. One was more fierce then the other which was Cerberus.



How Orthros was killed by Hercules

Orthros was the protector of Geryon's (whom was a three bodied giant) crimson cattle as King Eurytion of the sun set isle of Ertheia he was a giant as well as the herder of these animals. The tenth labor of Hercules is what brought an end to the two head dog and the king of sun set of isle of Ertheia as well as Geryon. Hercules was to bring the cattle of Geryons to Eurystheus but in order to this he had to kill both monster dog and giant(s).

Hercules made camp above the mountain of the herd and made mind to get the cattle the next day but this did not go as planed because the Orthros smelt Hercules and made an attack on him only to be clubbed to death by Hercules then to fight Echidna when he came to help Orthros not knowing it was to late to save him lost his life as well to the hands of Hercules. Upon hearing what had happen Greyons came to take back what was his and fought with Hercules but even with his massive strength and three bodies he was still no match for him and lost his life as well. So within that day two massive giants and a giant of a dog lost their lives.

Orthros was not mentioned any where else in the Greek Myths; this was his only part through it all. It is said that he was feared but he kept to himself and never harmed unless he or his cattle or owner was threatened other than that he was just a normal but very large dog with a mutation.

Dogs in Viking Mythology

There were several types of dogs used in the Viking Age. The great popularity of dogs as pets, working animals, and as companions is shown by the frequency with which they are found in graves, buried alongside their masters. Frigga, wife of Óðinn and goddess of marriage and fidelity, was believed to travel in a chariot drawn by a pack of dogs, perfect symbols of fidelity and faithfulness.

The basic Norse dog is a spitz-type animal, produced by interbreeding of the native Arctic wolf with southern domestic dogs as early as the Neolithic, based on skeletal remains as much as 5,000 years old. There are many modern breeds of dogs which have without doubt derived from Viking Age spitz-type dogs. Although these breeds may well date to the Viking Age or before, a great many were not recognized as formal "breeds" until the 1800's or afterwards.

Viking Age art depicts many dogs, especially in runestone scenes depicting the arrival of the slain warrior into Valhöll: The warrior is greeted by a Valkyrie, bearing a horn of mead, and behind her waits the warrior's faithful hound. Like many dog-owners, the Vikings apparently could not conceive of an afterlife in which their canine best friends were not present. This probably explains, in part, why many warriors' graves contain the bones of one or more dogs, sent to the afterlife to accompany their master.

In Scandinavian belief, the dog is the guardian of the underworld, and it is speculated that one reason for including dogs in Viking Age burials was to provide a guide for the deceased to lead them to the underworld. Prior to the Viking Age, dogs both large and small were found in great numbers in the Vendel graves in Sweden. By the Viking Age, fewer dogs are found in each grave. The Oseberg ship burial contained the remains of four dogs to accompany the women buried there. The Gokstad ship burial contained six dogs buried with their elderly master. Other Viking Age graves in Denmark, Brittany, the Isle of Man and elsewhere containing the remains of dogs show that the custom of sending a person's dogs with them to the afterlife was widespread throughout the Viking World.

St. Roch — A special saint for dogs and dog lovers

So often when Catholics (and plenty of non-Catholics!) think of animals, they think of St. Francis — a saint who indeed has a variety of stories indicating a unique connection with animals. There is another saint in heaven, however, who is a special patron of dogs in particular — a French saint from the 13th/14th centuries named Roch (French pronunciation: roak; English pronunciation: rock).

Abandoning a life of wealth

This medieval saint was born in France near 1295 ... purportedly with a red birthmark in the shape of a cross on his chest. Written accounts of St. Roch assert that he was strongly drawn to the Lord, even as a child. His parents were blessed with wealth, but sadly died when Roch was a young man. Intriguingly, the fortune they left behind had no appeal to Roch; so he rid himself of his inherited riches, put on simple clothing and acted upon an inspiration to make a pilgrimage to Rome.



A devastating plague

As he trekked toward Rome, Roch happened upon a few towns stricken with the plague. His sense of goodness prompted him to stop and minister to those afflicted. Many reports insist that miraculous cures were brought about through his prayers.



Alas, after having spent so much time tending to others with the plague, Roch contracted the dreaded disease himself. Infected wound on his leg resulting from the plague. He decided to retreat to a makeshift shelter in a forest, and prepared to endure what he thought would be his final days. By this time Roch was in Italy and was consequently often referred to as Rocco (ROE-koe), the Italian form of his name.

The kindness of a dog

While enduring the effects of the agonizing plague alone in the forest, a dog images of St. Roch show a gaping

Inexplicably appeared at Roch's/Rocco's shelter, presenting a loaf of bread from its mouth to the holy man. This mysteriously-appearing dog began to bring great comfort and bread each day to Rocco. It is claimed that the nurturing of this dog saved the life of Rocco, allowing him to continue his life of

goodness a while longer.

Proclaimed a saint after his death, near 1327, St. Roch/Rocco has a special veneration in Italy, most likely due to the generosity he showed there during the plague. Many also recall his beautiful dog story ... how the dog's companionship, compassion and sharing of bread enabled this gentle saint to recover and continue his life of piety. St. Roch/Rocco is entombed in the church of St. Rocco in Venice, and his memorial is celebrated on Aug. 16.

Zodiacal Dog in Chinese mythology

For thousands of years, a twelve-year cycle named after various real or mythological animals has been used in Southeast Asia. This twelve-year cycle which may be referred to as the "Chinese zodiac" associates each year in turn with a certain creature, in a fixed order of twelve animals, after which it returns to the first in the order, the Rat. The eleventh in the cycle is the Dog. One account is that the order of the beings-of-the-year is due to their order in a racing contest involving swimming across a river, in the so-called Great Race. The reason for the dog finishing the race second from last despite generally being a talented swimmer is explained as being due to its playful nature: the dog played and frolicked along the way, thus delaying completing the course and reaching the finishing line. As of 2012, the next Year of the Dog in the traditional Chinese sexagenary calendar is February 19, 2018 to February 4, 2019 (Year of the Yang Earth Dog). The personalities of people born in dog years are popularly supposed to share certain attributes associated with dogs, such as loyalty or exuberance;

however, this would be modified according to other considerations of Chinese astrology, such as the influences of the month, day and hour of birth, according to the traditional system of Earthly Branches, in which the zodiacal animals are also associated with the months and times of the day (and night), in twelve two-hour increments. The Hour of the Dog is 7 to 9 p.m., and the dog is associated with the ninth lunar month.

Panhu – in Chinese Mythology

Panhu is an important figure in Chinese mythology. "Chinese mythology" refers to those myths found in the historical geographic area of China, the geographic area of "China" being a concept which has evolved historically. The Panhu mythological complex includes myths in Chinese and also other languages. This myth has a long history of being transmitted by Han Chinese and several of the other ethnic groups of the fifty-six officially recognized by the current administration of China, both orally and in literature. (Yang 2005:4) The Panhu myth is an important origin myth for various ethnic groups.

The basic Panhu myth is about a dog who married a princess. The emperor of China in the course of losing a war which he was waging with a neighbor to the west, offered to marry his daughter to anybody that would present him with the head of his enemy. This was accomplished by a large dog. This presented a dilemma to the emperor, who couldn't stand to see his daughter married to a dog. Accounts vary, but eventually the dog and princess procreated copiously.

Dog and Islam

The majority of both Sunni and Shi'a Muslim jurists consider dogs to be ritually unclean. It is uncommon for practicing Muslims to have dogs as pets.

There are a number of traditions concerning Muhammad's attitude towards dogs. He said that the company of dogs, except as helpers in hunting, herding, and home protection, voided a portion of a Muslim's good deeds. On the other hand, he advocated kindness to dogs and other animals.

"While a man was walking he felt thirsty and went down a well, and drank water from it. On coming out of it, he saw a dog panting and eating mud because of excessive thirst. The man said, 'This (dog) is suffering from the same problem as that of mine.' So, he (went down the well), filled his shoe with water, caught hold of it with his teeth and climbed up and watered the dog. Allah thanked him for his (good) deed and forgave him. The people asked ``O Allah's Apostle! Is there a reward for us in serving (the) animals? He replied: ``Yes, there is a reward for serving any animate (living being).

Additionally many Muslim theologians have argued [citation needed] that the dog is not an unclean animal based on the inclusion of a dog among the Seven Sleepers as recorded in the

18th verse of the 18th chapter of the Qur'an, which reads:

“Thou wouldst have deemed them awake, whilst they were asleep, and We turned them on their right and on their left sides: their dog stretching forth his two fore-legs on the threshold: if thou hadst come up on to them, thou wouldst have certainly turned back from them in flight, and wouldst certainly have been filled with terror of them. (Surah Al Kahf, Qur'an: 18)

Guide dogs are assistance dogs trained to lead blind and visually impaired people around obstacles. Although the dogs can be trained to navigate various obstacles, they are partially (red-green) color blind and are not capable of interpreting street signs. The human half of the guide dog team does the directing, based upon skills acquired through previous mobility training. The handler might be likened to an aircraft's navigator, who must know how to get from one place to another, and the dog is the pilot, who gets them there safely. In several countries, guide dogs, along with most service and hearing dogs, are exempt from regulations against the presence of animals in places such as restaurants and public transportation.

Fairytales from Around the World

About Cats

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THE MASTER CAT OR "PUSS IN BOOTS"

There once was a miller whose only wealth was his mill, his ass, and his cat. To his eldest son he left the mill; to the second son he bequeathed the ass and the youngest son inherited nothing but the cat.

The youngest son lamented "My brothers can make a living by joining their stocks together, but once I have eaten the cat and made gloves of his fur I will have nothing at all."

The cat pretended he hadn't overheard these words and he said to the youngest son "Give me a bag and get a pair of boots made for me so I can scamper through the and brambles; you will that you have inherited more than you imagine!"

The cat's new master gave the cat boots and a bag, but didn't build his hopes too high. He had watched the cat play cunning tricks to catch rats and mice. The cat put on his boots and held the strings of his bag in his forepaws and went down into a rabbit warren. He put dandelion leaves in the bag and he stretched out as though dead. Presently, a young and foolish rabbit jumped into the bag to eat the dandelion leaves. Puss sprang up and killed the rabbit at once then took his prize to the palace where his manners and garb gained him admittance to the king's apartment.

"Sire," said the cat, "I have brought you a rabbit from the warren, which my noble lord the Marquis of Carabas" (that being the title Puss invented for the miller's youngest son) "has commanded me to present to you as a gift."

"Please thank your master," said the king, "and tell him his gift pleases me."

Using the same tricks with his baited bag, puss hid among the standing corn where he caught a brace of partridges. Again, he presented these to the king as a gift from his master, the Marquis of Carabas. The king gave puss some money for drink to quench his thirst from such work. This continued for three months.

One day in particular, when the cat knew that the king and his beautiful daughter would be riding along the riverside for fresh air, puss said to his master: "If you follow my advice your fortune is made. Go and wash yourself in the river, at a place I will show you, but leave the rest to me. You are now a Marquis of Carabas, not a simple miller's son and you muse splash and make a commotion as you bathe."

The Marquis of Carabas did what the cat instructed and went to bathe in the river with much noise and splashing. While he was washing, the cat hid the Marquis's ragged clothes in a rabbit hole and began to cry out: "Help! help! My Lord Marquis of Carabas is drowning in the river."

At this noise, the King put his head out of the coach-window. Seeing it was the Cat who had so often brought him such good game, he commanded his guards to assist the Marquis of Carabas. While they were rescuing the poor Marquis from drowning, the cat told the King that some rogues had stolen the Marquis's rich clothes from the riverbank, though the cat had cried out "Thieves! thieves!" as loud as he could.

The King commanded the officers of his wardrobe to fetch one of his best suits for the Lord Marquis of Carabas. In this new clothing, the miller's son now looked very fine and handsome and he and the princess took a great liking to each other. The king invited the Marquis to join him on the ride in the coach and the cat, overjoyed at seeing the plan go so well, marched on ahead of them.

Presently, the cat met some country men who were mowing a meadow for hay. Puss said to them "Good men, the king is coming this way in his coach and is sure to ask what you are about. If you do not tell him that the meadow you mow belongs to my Lord Marquis of Carabas, you shall be chopped as small as herbs for the pot."

This they did, being fearful of the cat's threat and the Marquis said to the king "This meadow yields a plentiful harvest every year without fail."

The Master Cat, still marching ahead of the coach, met some reapers, and said to them: "Good people, the king is coming this way in his coach and is sure to ask what you are about. If you do not tell him that all this corn belongs to the Marquis of Carabas, you shall be chopped as small as herbs for the pot."

This they did, being fearful of the cat's threat and the Marquis said to the king "This land yields a plentiful harvest every year without fail."

The king was very well pleased and congratulated the Marquis on his lands and on the respectful people who worked the land. The Master Cat continued to march ahead of the coach and said the same thing to everyone he met. The king was astonished at the vast estates of the Lord Marquis of Carabas.

Puss came at last to a stately castle owned by a rich ogre, the real master of all the fields and land thereabouts. The cat, who had taken care to inform himself who this ogre was and what he could do, asked to speak with him, saying he could not pass so near his castle without paying his respects to its master. The ogre received him as civilly as an ogre could do and bade the cat sit down.

"I am told," said the Cat, "that you have the power to transform yourself into any creature you wish: a fierce and noble lion; a strong and stately elephant, and all manner of bests."

"That is true," answered the ogre very briskly, "I shall demonstrate by transforming myself into a lion."

Puss was so terrified at the sight of the lion that he leapt into the roof gutter in spite of his encumbering walking boots. When the ogre resumed his natural form, the cat came down and congratulated him on becoming such a fierce and frightening lion.

"I am told," said the Cat, "though I find it hard to believe, that you can even transform yourself into the smallest creature - a rat, for example, or a field mouse. Please excuse me, but I find it impossible to believe anyone so nobly built as yourself could shrink themselves to the size of a mouse."

"Impossible?" exclaimed the ogre, "let me show you!"

And the ogre transformed himself into a mouse which scurried about the floor. As soon as Puss saw this, he leapt on the mouse and ate it up.

Meanwhile the king, had reached the ogre's fine castle and decided to visit it. Puss heard the noise of his Majesty's coach running over the draw-bridge and ran out to greet the king: "Your Majesty, welcome to the castle of my Lord Marquis of Carabas."

"What! my Lord Marquis," exclaimed the King, "this noble castle belongs to you? There can be nothing finer than this court and all the stately buildings which surround it. Let us go in, if you please."

The Marquis gave his hand to the Princess, and they followed the king into a spacious hall, where they found a magnificent meal that the ogre had earlier prepared for some friends (who now dared not enter because the king was there). By now, his Majesty was utterly charmed with

the Marquis of Carabas and his estates, as was the princess who had fallen hopelessly in love. After a meal and several glasses of fine wine, the king said, "My Lord Marquis, I am much impressed. Let me offer you the hand of my daughter in marriage."

The Marquis accepted with a low bow and later that day he and the princess were married and installed in the castle which had once belonged to the ogre. The Master Cat, or Puss in Boots, became a great lord, and never again ran after mice except for his own sport.

THE WHITE CAT

There once was a ageing king who had three brave and clever sons. The king did not wish to give up his throne just yet, and was afraid that his sons would want to reign over the kingdom before he was dead. He decided to divert the minds of his sons by promises which he could always get out of when the time came for keeping them. So he sent for them all, and, after speaking to them kindly, he added: "I'm sure you'll agree that my great age makes it impossible for me to look after my affairs of state as carefully as I once did. Hence I wish that one of you should succeed me, but in return you should do something for me. I'm thinking of retiring into the country and it seems that a faithful little dog would be good company for me. Whichever of you brings me the prettiest little dog shall succeed me at once."

The three princes were surprised by their father's sudden fancy for a little dog, but as the challenge gave the two younger princes an unexpected chance of being king, and as the eldest was too polite to object, they eagerly accepted the challenge. They bade farewell to the king, who gave them presents of silver and gems, and he arranged to meet them in one year's time, at the same time and place, to see the little dogs they had brought for him.

The princes and their retainers went together to a castle one league from the city, where they enjoyed a grand banquet. The three brothers promised to remain firm friends, to share whatever good fortune befell them, and not to be parted by envy or jealousy. Each one took a different road, and though the two eldest met with many adventures, this tale concerns the adventures of the youngest prince.

The young prince was handsome and merry, brave and versed in everything a prince should know. He wandered from place to place and hardly a day passed without his buying several dogs of all sizes and breeds. Each time he bought a pretty one he would spy one prettier still and then have to sell all the others for it was quite impossible for him to take a thousand dogs with him on his travels!

One nightfall, he reached a great, gloomy forest. He was quickly lost and, to make matters worse, a storm began. He took the first path he saw and, after walking for a long time, he saw a faint red light and hoped to find some woodcutter's cottage where he could shelter for the night. At length, guided by the light, he reached the golden door of the most splendid castle imaginable. Its walls were fine porcelain in most delicate colours, and the Prince saw that all the stories he had ever read were pictured upon them. He was too wet and miserable to spend long looking about and he went to the great golden door.

There he saw a deer's foot hanging by a diamond chain and he wondered who could live in this magnificent castle and not worry about diamond chain being stolen. He pulled the deer's foot, and immediately a silver bell sounded and the door flew open. The Prince could see nothing but

numbers of soft, pretty hands in the air, each holding a flaming torch. He was so surprised that he stood quite still until the hands pushed him into a hall paved with lapis-lazuli, while two lovely voices sang: ""The hands you see floating above will swiftly your bidding obey; If your heart dreads not conquering Love, in this place you may fearlessly stay."

No longer afraid, the prince allowed the hands to guide him towards a door of coral, which opened of its own accord, and he found himself in a vast hall of mother-of-pearl, out of which opened a many other brightly lit and fabulously equipped rooms. After passing through some sixty rooms, he reached a comfortable-looking armchair drawn up close to a hearth which sprang alight as he approached. The hands, which often appeared quite suddenly and unexpectedly, took off his wet, muddy clothes and dressed him in rich clothes embroidered with gold and emeralds.

The hands then led him to a splendid room, decorated with tapestries and paintings of Puss in Boots and other famous cats. The table was laid for supper with two golden plates, and golden spoons and forks, and the sideboard was covered with bejewelled dishes and glasses of crystal. The Prince wondered who the second place could be for. Suddenly in came about a dozen cats carrying guitars and music; they took their places at one end of the room, and under the direction of a cat who beat time with a roll of paper, the cat musicians began to mew in every imaginable key and to draw their claws across the strings of the guitars, making the strangest kind of music the prince had ever heard. At first he put his fingers in his ears, but soon he was overcome with laughter at the comical sight and he wondered what funny sight he would see next.

Instantly the door opened, and in came a tiny figure covered by a long black veil. It was conducted by two cats wearing black mantles and carrying swords, and a large party of cats followed, who brought in cages full of rats and mice. At first, the astonished prince thought he was dreaming, but the little figure came up to him and threw back its veil to reveal the loveliest little white cat imaginable. She looked very young and very sad, and in a sweet little voice that went straight to his heart she spoke to him.

"King's son," said the sad white cat, "You are welcome. The Queen of the Cats is glad to see you."

"Lady Cat," replied the prince, "I thank you for receiving me so kindly, but surely you are no ordinary cat? The way you speak and the magnificence of your castle prove it plainly."

"King's son," said the white cat, "I am not used to such compliments. Let supper be served and let my musicians be silent, as the Prince does not understand what they are saying."

The mysterious hands brought in the supper. First they put on the table two dishes, one containing stewed pigeons and the other a fricassee of fat mice. The sight of mice made the Prince feel uneasy, but the white cat assured him that his own dishes had been prepared in a separate kitchen and he could be certain they contained no rats or mice. Sure she would not deceive him, the prince began to eat.

Presently he noticed that the white cat wore on her little paw a bracelet containing a portrait. He begged to be allowed to look at it. To his great surprise he found the portrait depicted a handsome young man who bore an uncanny resemblance to himself. The white cat sighed and seemed sadder than ever, so the prince dared not ask about the portrait. Instead, he talked of other things and found that she was interested in the same subjects that interested him.

After supper they went into another room, which was equipped as a theatre, and the cats acted

and danced for their amusement. At length, the white cat bade him good-night and the hands conducted him into a room hung with tapestry worked with butterflies' wings of every colour and with mirrors from floor to ceiling and a little white bed with curtains of gauze tied up with ribbons.

In the morning he was awakened by a noise and confusion outside of his window, and the mysterious hands quickly dressed him in hunting costume. When he looked out, all the cats were assembled in the courtyard, some leading greyhounds, some blowing horns, for the white cat was going out hunting. The hands led a wooden horse up to the prince, and mounted him on it despite his protests. It at once pranced gaily off with him.

The white cat rode a monkey, which climbed even up to the eagles' nests when she desired young eaglets. Never was there a pleasanter hunting party, and when they returned to the castle the prince and the white cat dined together as before. This time, after the meal was done, she offered him a crystal goblet, which must have contained a magic draught, for, as soon as he had swallowed its contents, he forgot everything, even the little dog that he was seeking for the king. His only thought was how happy he was to be with the white cat.

The days passed in every kind of amusement, until the year was nearly gone. The prince had forgotten about the meeting with his brothers and had even forgotten what country he belonged to. The white cat knew when he ought to go back, and one day she said to him: "Do you know that you have only three days left to look for the little dog for your father, and your brothers have found lovely ones?"

The prince's memory returned at once and he cried, "What can have made me forget such an important thing? My whole fortune depends upon it! There is no time to find a dog pretty enough to gain me a kingdom and I am far more than three days away from my home!"

The prince was distraught, but the white cat said to him: "King's son, do not fret. I am your friend and will make everything easy for you. Stay another day as the wooden horse can take you to your father in twelve hours."

"Thank you, beautiful Cat," replied the prince, "but there is little point as I have no dog to take to my father"

"See here," answered the white cat, holding up an acorn, "This acorn holds a prettier one than in the Dogstar!"

The prince chastised the white cat for teasing him, but she held the acorn to his ear and he heard a tiny "woof woof" from inside it. The prince was delighted, for it must surely be the smallest dog ever. He wanted to take it out to see it, but the white cat told him to wait until he was before the king, and in any case the tiny dog might become cold on the journey. So he stayed with her another day and thanked her a thousand times.

At last, time came for him to return home and he sadly said goodbye and said to the white cat "The days here have passed so quickly! I wish I could take you with me." But the white cat just sighed sadly and shook her head.

He was the first of the three princes to arrive at the castle. His brothers looked questioningly at the prancing wooden horse, but he kept quiet about his own adventures while listening to their stories. When they asked what dog he'd brought, he showed them a misshapen turnspit dog. The two elder princes smiled secretly, knowing their dogs to be far prettier than the ugly turnspit dog.

The brothers set out together in a coach. The elder brothers carried dogs so tiny and fragile they

hardly dared touch them. The turnspit dog ran behind the coach and was filthy with mud by the time they arrived at the palace. The king could not decide which of the two tiny dogs was the prettier and while the elder brothers were arranging how to divide the kingdom up between them, their youngest brother stepped forward and opened the acorn. Inside, on a white cushion, was a dog so small that it could easily have jumped through a finger ring. The king complained that he could not decide which dog was prettiest and would therefore have to set another task in order to reach a decision.

He asked them to find him a piece of muslin so fine that it could be drawn through the eye of a needle. The brothers consented, though less willingly than before, and set out. The youngest mounted on his wooden horse and rode at full speed back to his beloved white cat. Back at the fabulous castle staffed by the mysterious hands, he found her asleep in a little basket on a white satin cushion. She was overjoyed at seeing him once more.

"How could I hope that you would come back to me King's son?" she said.

As he stroked and petted her, he told her that the king could not reach a decision and had set a new task. The white cat looked serious and said she must think what was to be done, though luckily she knew cats in the castle who could spin very well. Then they danced and dined together, and watched magnificent fireworks from a gallery overlooking the river.

The days passed quickly as before and it was impossible to be bored as the white cat had a talent for inventing new amusements. When the Prince asked her how it was that she was so wise, she only said, "King's son, do not ask me, but guess what you please. I may not tell you anything."

The Prince was so happy that he lost track of time until the white cat told him that the year was gone and it was time for him to return to his own palace. Her spinning cats had made the piece of muslin very well.

"This time," she said, "I can give you a suitable escort," and in the courtyard the prince found a golden chariot enamelled with red and drawn by twelve snow-white horses, harnessed four abreast. A hundred chariots followed, each drawn by eight horses, and filled with officers in splendid uniforms, while a thousand guards surrounded the procession.

"Go!" said the White Cat, "and when you appear before the King in such state he surely will not refuse you the crown which you deserve. Take this walnut, but do not open it until you are before him, then you will find in it the piece of stuff you asked me for."

"Lovely Blanchette," said the Prince, for that was what he had named the white cat, "however can I thank you for your kindness? Just say the words and I will give up all thought of kingship and stay here with you forever."

"King's son," she replied, "you are kind to care so much for a little white mouse-catcher, but you must not stay."

The Prince kissed her little white paw and set out. The enchanted chariots reached the king's palace in just six hours. This time his brothers had arrived first and had impressed the king with their pieces of muslin which they felt sure would pass through the eye of a needle. However, the wily king sent for a particular needle with such a tiny eye that everyone could see the muslin would never pass through it.

The two princes were angry and began to complain that it was an unfair trick. Just then, the youngest prince came in and his father and brothers were quite astonished at his magnificence. He took out the walnut and opened it, expecting to find a piece of muslin. Inside the walnut he

found a hazelnut and inside that was a cherry stone and inside that was a grain of wheat. The prince thought the white cat had played a joke, but he quite distinctly felt a cat's claw scratch his hand so he opened the grain of wheat and found a millet seed. Inside the millet seed he drew out a piece of muslin four hundred ells long, woven with gorgeous colours and patterns. This muslin went through the needle's eye six times with ease. The king turned pale and other princes were silent. No-one could deny that this was the finest piece of muslin that was to be found in the world

Presently the king turned to his sons, and said, with a deep sigh "If you are to rule my kingdom, you need a queen to rule beside you. Go forth once more and whoever at the end of a year can bring back the loveliest princess shall be king and queen."

Though he had clearly won the challenge, the prince went back to his chariot and he and his escort returned to the white cat faster than he had left. This time she was expecting him. The path was strewn with flowers and braziers of scented woods perfumed the air.

"Well, King's son," she said, "here you are again without a crown."

"Madam Blanchette," he sighed, "thanks to your generosity I have earned my crown twice over, but my wily father is so loath to part with it that it would give me no pleasure to have it."

Blanchette replied, "As you must next take back a lovely princess with you I will be on the look-out for one for you. Meanwhile let us enjoy ourselves"

The year slipped away even more pleasantly than the previous ones. Sometimes the prince could not help asking Blanchette how it was she could talk, "Perhaps you are a fairy, or some enchanter changed you into a cat?"

The white cat only gave him answers that told him nothing and while they were together he was so happy he quite lost track of time. One evening, the white cat told him that if he wanted to take a lovely princess home with him the next day he must be prepared to do exactly what she told him. Although he loved no-one, but Blanchette, he knew he could not wed a cat and he agreed.

"Take your sword," she said, "and cut off my head!"

"I cannot!" cried the prince, "How can you even ask such a thing?"

"Please do it," Blanchette begged.

Though he begged her to ask him to set a different task to prove his devotion to her, nothing could change her mind. He took out his sword and with tears running down his cheeks and a trembling hand, he cut off her little white head. Suddenly a lovely princess stood before him. While he was speechless with amazement, the door opened and a goodly company of knights and ladies entered, each carrying a cat's skin. They each kissed the princess's hand and congratulated her on being restored to her own form. After a short while she asked to be alone with the prince.

"You were right in supposing me to be no ordinary cat. My father reigned over six kingdoms. The Queen, my mother, whom he loved dearly, had a passion for travelling and exploring, and when I was only a few weeks old she obtained his permission to visit a certain mountain of which she had heard many marvellous tales. She set out, taking with her a number of her attendants. On the way they passed near an old castle belonging to the fairies. Nobody had ever been into it, but it was reported to be full of the most wonderful things and its garden was reputed to have such fruits as were to be found nowhere else. She wished to try these fruits for herself. Though her servants knocked and rang at the door, no-one answered and they believed

the castle's inhabitants either asleep or dead. By then she was determined to try the fruit so she ordered her servants to put ladders against the wall and climb over. Though the walls did not look very high, however many ladders they tied together, they could not reach the top.

The Queen was sick with disappointment. She ordered her servants to set up camp for the night so they could try something else in the morning. In the middle of the night she was suddenly awakened by a tiny, ugly old woman. The old woman said to my mother 'It is somewhat troublesome of your Majesty to insist upon tasting our fruit. To save further annoyance, my sisters and I will give you as much as you can carry away, on one condition - you shall give us your little daughter to bring up as our own.' Though the queen begged the old fairy to take some other gift in return - kingdoms to rule, or riches, the old fairy insisted that only the baby daughter would do. 'She shall be as happy as the day is long, and we will give her everything that is worth having in fairy-land, but you must not see her again until she is married.' The queen consented, for she thought she would die of despair if she did not taste the fruit and so would lose her baby daughter either way.

The old fairy led her into the beautiful castle and called for the fruit to be brought to her.

Golden baskets of perfect apricots, peaches, nectarines, cherries, plums, pears, melons, grapes, apples, oranges, lemons, gooseberries, strawberries and raspberries appeared at once.

The queen gave up her plan to visit the mountain and returned to her kingdom, but before she had gone very far she regretted her bargain. When the king came out to meet her she looked so sad that he guessed that something had happened, and asked what was the matter. The queen was afraid to tell him, but all at once five ugly dwarfs arrived to collect the baby princess and the queen told him about the fruit. In anger, the king drove the dwarfs away and had locked his queen and the baby princess in a securely guarded tower.

Then the fairies sent a great dragon which killed the king's subjects and devastated the kingdom until the king agreed to hand over his baby daughter to the fairies. The fairies took away the baby daughter - that is myself - and led away the dragon. I grew up in a fine tower surrounded with everything that was beautiful and rare, and learning everything that is ever taught to a princess, but without any companions but a talking parrot and a talking dog. I was visited each day by one of the old fairies and believed myself to be the fairies' own child, knowing nothing of my mother's bargain.

One day, as I sat at my window I saw a handsome young prince who had come hunting in the forest around my tower. He saluted me with great deference and I was delighted to have some one new to talk to. Despite the height of my window, we talked until nightfall. He visited me many times and I consented to marry him, but the question was how was I to escape from my tower. The fairies always supplied me with flax for spinning so I made enough cord for a ladder that reached to the foot of the tower. Just as my prince was helping me descend it, the crossdest and ugliest of the old fairies caught us and the young prince was swallowed up by the fairies' dragon.

The fairies were furious at having their plans thwarted. They had intended me to marry the king of the dwarfs. When I utterly refused, they changed me into a white cat and brought me here. All the lords and ladies of my father's court were here too, some made into cats and the ones of lowest rank made invisible except for their hands. The fairies then told me all my history and warned me that my only chance of regaining my natural form was to win the love of a prince who resembled in every way my unfortunate lover."

"And you have won it, lovely Princess," interrupted the Prince.

"You are indeed wonderfully like him," said Blanchette, "and if you really love me all my troubles will be at an end."

"I love you more than anything and my troubles will also be ended if you will consent to marry me," said the prince, on bended knee.

They mounted into the golden chariot together and the journey was utterly delightful as they were together. At the prince's father's palace, four guards carried the princess in a crystal sedan chair with silk curtains drawn so that no-one could see her. The two older princes had each returned with a lovely princess, but the younger prince smiled and said he had returned with a rarer prize - a white cat. They just laughed at him and asked if he had taken a cat for a wife because he was afraid of mice. Then the princes went to present their brides to their father.

"Are the ladies beautiful?" asked the king anxiously.

The two older princes answered that nobody had ever before seen such lovely princesses, which made the king quite annoyed. However the king could not choose which of their princesses was the most beautiful. Finally he turned to his youngest son.

"Have you come back without a bride?"

"Your Majesty, my father" replied the prince, "in that crystal chair you will find a little white cat, which has such soft paws, and mews so prettily, that I am sure you will be charmed with it."

The king smiled and went to draw back the curtains himself, but at a touch from the Princess the crystal shattered and she stood in all her beauty. Her fair hair floated over her shoulders and was crowned with flowers. Her robe was purest white.

"Sire," said Blanchette, "I will not deprive you of the throne you fill so worthily. I have already six kingdoms. Permit me to bestow one upon you and one upon each of your sons. I ask nothing but your friendship, and your consent to my marriage with your youngest son. We shall still have three kingdoms for ourselves."

The king could not conceal his joy and astonishment and the three princes were married at once to their princesses. After many months of celebration, each king and queen departed to their own kingdom and lived happily ever after, but only one of their castles was ever after full of cats.

KISSA THE CAT

Once upon a time there lived a queen who adored her beautiful smoke-grey, blue-eyed cat. It went everywhere she did and sat proudly by her side when she drove out in her fine glass coach.

"Oh, pussy," said the queen one day, "you are happier than I am! You have a dear kitten just like yourself, and I have nobody to play with but you."

"Don't cry," answered the cat, laying her paw on her mistress's arm. "Crying never does any good. I will see what can be done."

The cat was as good as her word and she trotted off to the forest to consult a fairy who dwelt there, and very soon after the queen had a little girl, who seemed made out of snow and sunbeams. The queen was delighted and soon the baby began to take notice of the kitten as she jumped about the room, and would not go to sleep at all unless the kitten lay curled up beside her.

Two or three months went by, and though the baby was still a baby, the kitten was fast becoming a cat, and one evening when, as usual, the nurse came to look for her, to put her in the baby's cot, she was nowhere to be found. What a hunt there was for that kitten, to be sure! The servants, each anxious to find her, as the queen was certain to reward the lucky man, searched in the most impossible places. Boxes were opened that would hardly have held the kitten's paw; books were taken from bookshelves, lest the kitten should have got behind them, drawers were pulled out, for perhaps the kitten might have got shut in.

But it was all no use. The kitten had plainly run away, and nobody could tell if it would ever choose to come back. Years passed away, and one day, when the princess was playing ball in the garden, she happened to throw her ball farther than usual, and it fell into a clump of rose-bushes. The princess of course ran after it at once, and she was stooping down to feel if it was hidden in the long grass, when she heard a voice calling her: "Aurelie! Aurelie! Have you forgotten me? I am Kissa, your sister!"

"But I never had a sister," answered Aurelie, very much puzzled, for she knew nothing of what had taken place so long ago.

"Don't you remember how I always slept in your cot beside you, and how you cried till I came? But girls have no memories at all! Why, I could find my way straight up to that cot this moment, if I was once inside the palace."

"Why did you go away then?" asked the princess. But before Kissa could answer, Aurelie's attendants arrived breathless on the scene, and were so horrified at the sight of a strange cat, that Kissa plunged into the bushes and went back to the forest.

The princess was very much vexed with her ladies-in-waiting for frightening away her old playfellow, and told the queen who came to her room every evening to bid her good-night.

"Yes, it is quite true what Kissa said," answered the queen, "I should have liked to see her again. Perhaps, some day, she will return, and then you must bring her to me."

Next morning it was very hot, and the princess declared that she must go and play in the forest, where it was always cool, under the big shady trees. As usual, her attendants let her do anything she pleased, and sitting down on a mossy bank where a little stream tinkled by, soon fell sound asleep. The princess saw with delight that they would pay no heed to her, and wandered on and on, expecting every moment to see some fairies dancing round a ring, or some little brown elves peeping at her from behind a tree. But, alas! she met none of these; instead, a horrible giant came out of his cave and ordered her to follow him. The princess felt much afraid, as he was so big and ugly, and began to be sorry that she had not stayed within reach of help; but as there was no use in disobeying the giant, she walked meekly behind. They went a long way, and Aurelie grew very tired, and at length began to cry.

"I don't like girls who make horrid noises," said the giant, turning round, "but if you really want to cry, I will give you something to cry about." Drawing an axe from his belt, he cut off both her feet, which he picked up and put in his pocket.

Then he went away leaving poor Aurelie lying on the grass in terrible pain, and wondering if she should stay there till she died, as no one would know where to look for her. How long it was since she had set out in the morning she could not tell - it seemed years to her, of course; but the sun was still high in the heavens when she heard the sound of wheels, and then, with a great effort, for her throat was parched with fright and pain, she gave a shout.

"I am coming!" was the answer; and in another moment a cart made its way through the trees,

driven by Kissa, who used her tail as a whip to urge the horse to go faster. Directly Kissa saw Aurelie lying there, she jumped quickly down, and lifting the girl carefully in her two front paws, laid her upon some soft hay, and drove back to her own little hut.

In the corner of the room was a pile of cushions, and these Kissa arranged as a bed. Aurelie, who by this time was nearly fainting from all she had gone through, drank greedily some milk, and then sank back on the cushions while Kissa fetched some dried herbs from a cupboard, soaked them in warm water and tied them on the bleeding legs. The pain vanished at once, and Aurelie looked up and smiled at Kissa.

"You will go to sleep now," said the cat, "and you will not mind if I leave you for a little while. I will lock the door, and no one can hurt you." Before she had even finished, the princess was fast asleep. Then Kissa got into the cart, which was standing at the door, and catching up the reins, drove straight to the giant's cave.

Leaving her cart behind some trees, Kissa crept gently up to the open door, and, crouching down, listened to what the giant was telling his wife, who was at supper with him. "The first day that I can spare I shall just go back and kill her," he said, "it would never do for people in the forest to know that a mere girl can defy me!" And he and his wife were so busy calling Aurelie all sorts of names for her bad behaviour, that they never noticed Kissa stealing into a dark corner, and upsetting a whole bag of salt into the great pot before the fire.

"Dear me, how thirsty I am!" cried the giant by-and-by.

"So am I," answered the giant's wife. "I do wish I had not taken that last spoonful of broth; I am sure something was wrong with it."

"If I don't get some water I shall die," went on the giant. And rushing out of the cave, followed by his wife, he ran down the path which led to the river.

Then Kissa entered the hut, and lost no time in searching every hole till she came upon some grass, under which Aurelie's feet were hidden, and putting them in her cart, drove back again to her own hut. Aurelie was thankful to see her, for she had lain, too frightened to sleep, trembling at every noise.

"Oh, is it you?" she cried joyfully, as Kissa turned the key. And the cat came in, holding up the two neat little feet in their silver slippers.

"In two minutes they shall be as tight as they ever were!" said Kissa. And taking some strings of the magic grass which the giant had carelessly heaped on them, she bound the feet on to the legs above.

"Of course you won't be able to walk for some time; you must not expect that," she continued.

"But if you are very good, perhaps, in about a week, I may carry you home again."

And so she did; and when the cat drove the cart up to the palace gate, lashing the horse furiously with her tail, and the king and queen saw their lost daughter sitting beside her, they declared that no reward could be too great for the person who had brought her out of the giant's hands.

"We will talk about that by-and-by," said the cat, as she made her best bow, and turned her horse's head.

The princess was very unhappy when Kissa left her without even bidding her farewell. She would neither eat nor drink, nor take any notice of all the beautiful dresses her parents bought for her.

"She will die, unless we can make her laugh," one whispered to the other. "Is there anything in

the world that we have left untried?"

"Nothing except marriage," answered the king. And he invited all the handsomest young men he could think of to the palace, and bade the princess choose a husband from among them. It took her some time to decide which she admired the most, but at last she fixed upon a young prince, whose eyes were like the pools in the forest, and his hair of bright gold. The king and the queen were greatly pleased, as the young man was the son of a neighboring king, and they gave orders that a splendid feast should be got ready. When the marriage was over, Kissa suddenly stood before them, and Aurelie rushed forward and clasped her in her arms.

"I have come to claim my reward," said the cat. "Let me sleep for this night at the foot of your bed."

"Is that all?" asked Aurelie, much disappointed.

"It is enough," answered the cat. And when the morning dawned, it was no cat that lay upon the bed, but a beautiful princess.

"My mother and I were both enchanted by a spiteful fairy," said she, "we could not free ourselves till we had done some kindly deed that had never been wrought before. My mother died without ever finding a chance of doing anything new, but I took advantage of the evil act of the giant to make you as whole as ever."

Then they were all more delighted than before, and the princess lived in the court until she, too, married, and went away to govern one of her own.

THE LION AND THE CAT

Once upon a time, a lion and his younger brother, the wild cat, shared the same hut. The lion was big and strong and could jump further and run faster than all the other beasts of the forest. If strength and swiftness alone could gain him a dinner he would never go hungry, but when it came to cunning, both the bear and the snake were more cunning than the lion. However, his brother the wild cat was even more cunning than the bear or the snake?

The wild cat had golden ball so beautiful you could not look at it for long. He kept it hidden in his thick furry ruff. A very large old animal, long since dead, had given it to him when he was a baby, and had told him never to part with it, for as long as he kept it no harm could befall him. In general the wild cat rarely used the golden ball, for the strong, swift lion did all the hunting. But now and then his life would have been in danger had it not been for the golden ball. One day the two brothers started to hunt at daybreak. As they trotted along, the lion whispered "There is a bear sitting on that tree. He is waiting for us to pass so he can drop down on my back."

So the wild cat touched the golden ball and said, "Bear, die!" and the bear fell out of the tree, quite dead, but bear is not nice to eat so the lion and the wild cat continued on their way.

A little later they came to a strip of long grass on the edge of the forest. The lion's quick ears detected a faint rustling noise and he stopped short, crying out "That is a snake," for he was much more afraid of snakes than of bears.

So the wildcat touched the golden ball and said "Snake, die!" and the snake died.

The two brothers skinned the snake and made the skin into a small parcel which the cat tucked into his ruff for snake-skins are magical things. Snake, however, is not good to eat so they continued looking. Soon they reached the side of a hill where two fine deer were grazing.

"Kill one of those deer for your own dinner," said the wild cat, "but catch me another alive. I want him."

The lion at once sprang at the deer with a loud roar, but they bounded away and the lion gave chase. Soon they were all lost to sight. The wild cat waited for a long while, but the lion did not return, so he went back to their house, still hungry. It was quite dark when the lion came home, where his brother was sitting curled up in one corner.

"Did you catch the deer for me?" asked the wild cat, springing up.

"Well, no," replied the lion. "We ran half way across the world and left the wind far behind us before I caught them. Think what a trouble it would have been to drag it here! So I ate them both."

Wild cat said nothing, but he was very angry with the lion. He had planned to ride the deer like a horse so he could see all the wonderful places the lion told him about. The more he thought of it, the more he sulked. Next morning, when the lion said it was time to go hunting, the cat told him that he would have to kill any bears or snakes by himself, as the wild cat had a headache and would have to stay at home. The wild cat knew that the lion was too scared not go out alone.

The quarrel went on for days and soon they were not on speaking terms at all. They had not hunted and were both very hungry and even more cross. It occurred to the lion that he could steal the golden ball and kill bears and snakes for himself. The wild cat could sulk as much as he liked, but it wouldn't matter once the lion had the golden ball and could hunt alone. However, the cat kept the ball hung around his neck day and night and was such a light sleeper that it was impossible to take it while he slept. The only thing was to get the cat to lend it of his own accord. After some days the lion (who was not particularly clever) thought of a plan.

"How boring this is!" said the lion one afternoon, when the rain was pouring down in such torrents that he could not even watch the birds and beasts through the doorway, "Couldn't we have a game of catch with your golden ball?"

"I don't want to play catch," answered the cat, who was still cross (for even to this day a cat never forgets an injury done to him).

"Lend me the ball for a little, and I will play by myself," replied the lion, stretching out a paw as he spoke.

"You can't play in the rain, and if you did, you would only lose it in the bushes," said the cat.

"I will play in here," replied the lion "Don't be so mean."

With bad grace the cat untied the string and threw the golden ball into the lion's lap, and composed himself to sleep again. For a long while the lion tossed it up and down gaily, knowing the wild cat was watching the precious golden ball through nearly-closed eyes. Gradually the lion edged closer to the door, and at last gave such a toss that the ball went up high into the air, and he could not see what became of it.

"How stupid of me!" he cried, as the cat sprang up angrily, "let us go at once and search for it. It can't have fallen very far." But though they searched all day and for several days thereafter, they never found it because it never came down.

After the loss of his ball the cat refused to live with the lion any longer, but wandered away to the north, always hoping he might meet with his ball again. Months passed, and years passed, and though he traveled over hundreds of miles, he never saw any traces of it. At length, when he was getting quite old, he came to a strange place where a big river rolled to the foot of some

high mountains. The ground by river was damp and marshy, and as no cat likes wet feet, the wild cat climbed a tree that rose high above the water and thought sadly of his lost ball, which would have helped him out of this horrible place. Suddenly he saw a beautiful ball, very much like his own, dangling from a branch of his tree. He longed to get at it, but didn't know if the branch was strong enough to bear his weight. He saw no point in falling into the river and getting drowned.

So he stretched himself at full length upon the branch, and wriggled his body cautiously along. If the branch felt unsafe he could edge back again. To his delight it seemed thick and stout. He wriggled forward again and by stretching out his paw, he would be able to draw the string towards him. Suddenly the branch gave a loud crack, and the cat made haste to wriggle him back the way he had come.

When cats make up their minds to do anything they generally will do it. So the wild cat looked about to see if there was another way to get at his ball. Above the bough where the ball was hung was another bough much thicker, which he knew could not break with his weight. By holding on tight to this with all four paws, he could just manage to touch the ball with his tail. He would thus be able to whisk the ball to and fro until the string loosened and it fell to the ground. It might take time, but cats are very patient creatures when they want to be. So he hung from the branch above and he worked the string until the ball fell onto the ground. The cat leapt down and tucked his ball away in the snake-skin round his neck. Then he began jumping along the shore of the river, trying to find a boat or a floating log to take him across. There were no boats or floating logs, but on the other side, he saw two girls cooking, and though he shouted to them at the top of his voice, they were too far off to hear him. Even worse, the golden ball fell out of its snake-skin bag right into the river. Normally, when a ball falls into a river it will fall to the bottom and stay there, or else bob about on the top of the water. But this ball, instead of doing either of these things, went straight across to the other side, where one of the girls was dipping her pail to get water.

"What a lovely ball!" she cried and tried to catch it in her pail. The ball always kept bobbing just out of her reach.

"Come and help me!" she called to her sister, and after a long while they had the ball safe inside the pail.

They two girls were delighted with their new toy and took it home with them. That night, they locked it safely in a cupboard in one corner of their room while they slept.

In the morning the first thing they did was to run to the cupboard for their new toy. But when they opened the cupboard door, instead of the ball, there stood a handsome young man.

"Ladies," he said, "how can I thank you for what you have done for me? Long ago, I was enchanted by a wicked fairy who turned me into a golden ball. The spell could only be broken if two maidens took me into their own home. For hundreds of years I lived in the forest among wild beasts. It was only when the lion threw me into the sky that I was able to fall to earth near this river. Where there is a river, sooner or later people will come so I hung myself on a tree and waited. I almost lost heart when my old master, the wild cat, found me. My hopes rose again when he went to the river bank opposite where you were fetching water. But now, ladies, I must leave you. If ever I can do anything to help you, go to the top of that high mountain and knock three times at the iron door at the north side, and I will come to you."

With a low bow, he vanished from before them, leaving the maidens weeping at having lost in

one moment both the ball and the prince. To this day, lions and cats are not friends.

THE COTTAGER AND HIS CAT

Once upon a time there lived an old man and his wife in a dirty, tumble-down cottage, not very far from the splendid palace where the king and queen lived. In spite of the wretched state of the hut, which was not even fit for a pig sty, the old man was very rich, for he was a great miser and would often go without food all day sooner than change one of his beloved gold pieces. The rest he had gained through luck in cheating others.

After a while he found that he had starved himself once too often. He fell ill, and had no strength to get well again. In a few days he died, leaving his wife and one son behind him. The night following his death, the son dreamed that an unknown man appeared to him and said: "Listen to me, your father is dead and your mother will soon die, and all their riches will belong to you. Half of his wealth is ill-gotten, and this you must give back to the poor from whom he squeezed it. The other half you must throw into the sea. Watch, however, as the money sinks into the water, and if anything should swim, catches it and keeps it, even if it is nothing more than a bit of paper."

Then the man vanished, and the youth awoke. His dream troubled him greatly. He did not want to part with the riches that his father had left him, for he had known all his life what it was to be cold and hungry, and now he had hoped for a little comfort and pleasure. Still, he was honest and good-hearted, and if his father had come wrongfully by his wealth he felt he could never enjoy it, and at last he made up his mind to do as he had been told. He went among the poorest people in the village, and spent half of his money in helping them, and the other half he put in his pocket.

The youth flung the rest of the money into the sea and in a moment it was out of sight, and no man could have told the spot where it had sunk, except for a tiny scrap of paper floating on the water. He stretched down carefully and managed to reach it, and on opening it found six shillings wrapped inside. This was now all the money he had in the world.

The young man stood and looked at it thoughtfully. "Well, I can't do much with this," he said to himself, six shillings were better than nothing, so he wrapped them up again and slipped them into his coat.

He worked in his garden for the next few weeks, and he and his mother contrived to live on the fruit and vegetables he got out of it, and then she too died suddenly. The poor fellow felt very sad when he had laid her in her grave, and with a heavy heart he wandered into the forest, not knowing where he was going. By-and-by he began to get hungry, and seeing a small hut in front of him, he knocked at the door and asked if they could give him some milk.

The old woman who opened it begged him to come in, adding kindly, that if he wanted a night's lodging he might have it without its costing him anything.

Two women and three men were at supper when he entered, and silently made room for him to sit down by them. When he had eaten he began to look about him, and was surprised to see an animal sitting by the fire different from anything he had ever noticed before. It was grey in color, and not very big; but its eyes were large and very bright, and it seemed to be singing in an odd way, quite unlike any animal in the forest.

"What is the name of that strange little creature?" he asked.

They answered, "We call it a cat."

"I should like to buy it, if it is not too dear," said the young man, "it would be company for me." And they told him that he might have it for six shillings, if he cared to give so much. The young man took out his precious bit of paper, handed them the six shillings, and the next morning bade them farewell, with the cat lying snugly in his cloak.

For the whole day they wandered through meadows and forests, till in the evening they reached a house. The young fellow knocked at the door and asked the old man who opened it if he could rest there that night, adding that he had no money to pay for it.

"Then I must give it to you," answered the man, and led him into a room where two women and two men were sitting at supper. One of the women was the old man's wife, the other his daughter.

The youth placed the cat on the mantel shelf, and they all crowded round to examine this strange beast, and the cat rubbed itself against them, and held out its paw, and sang to them. The women were delighted, and gave it everything that a cat could eat, and a great deal more besides.

After hearing the youth's story, and how he had nothing in the world left him except his cat, the old man advised him to go to the palace, which was only a few miles distant, and take counsel of the king, who was kind to everyone, and would certainly be his friend. The young man thanked him, and said he would gladly take his advice. Early next morning he set out for the royal palace.

He sent a message to the king to beg for an audience, and received a reply that he was to go into the great hall, where he would find his Majesty. The king was at dinner with his court when the young man entered, and he signed to him to come near. The youth bowed low, and then gazed in surprise at the crowd of little black creatures who were running about the floor, and even on the table itself. Indeed, they were so bold that they snatched pieces of food from the King's own plate, and if he drove them away, tried to bite his hands, so that he could not eat his food, and his courtiers fared no better.

"What sort of animals are these?" asked the youth of one of the ladies sitting near him.

"They are called rats," answered the king, who had overheard the question, "and for years we have tried some way of putting an end to them, but it is impossible. They come into our very beds."

At this moment something was seen flying through the air. The cat was on the table, and with two or three shakes a number of rats were lying dead round him. Then a great scuffling of feet was heard, and in a few minutes the hall was clear. For some minutes the King and his courtiers only looked at each other in astonishment.

"What kind of animal is that which can work magic of this sort?" asked he. And the young man told him that it was called a cat, and that he had bought it for six shillings.

And the King answered: "Because of the luck you have brought me, in freeing my palace from the plague which has tormented me for many years, I will give you the choice of two things. Either you shall be my Prime Minister, or else you shall marry my daughter and reign after me. Say, which shall it be?"

"The princess and the kingdom," said the young man.

THE CLEVER CAT

Once upon a time there lived an old man and his son in a small house on the edge of the plain. The old man had worked very hard, and when at last he was struck down by illness he felt that he should never raise from his bed again.

So, one day, he called his wife and son and said, "My son, I am old and will die soon; I have nothing to leave you but my hawk, my cat and my greyhound. If you make good use of them you will never lack food. Take care of you mother also." The old man died soon after.

After several days of mourning, the son called to his greyhound, his cat and his hawk and left the house saying that he would bring back something for dinner. Presently he noticed some deer and pointed to his greyhound to give chase. The dog soon brought down a fine fat deer which the young man slung over his shoulder. On the way home with their day's catch, they passed a pond and a cloud of birds flew into the air. The young man shook his wrist and the hawk flew after the quarry, bringing back a fine fat fowl which the young man tied to his belt. Near the small house was a small barn in which was kept the produce of the garden, corn and vegetables, and where he could hang and clean the day's catch. As he approached the barn, he saw three rats run out almost under his feet and quick as a flash the cat dispatched each rat in turn.

When the youth left his barn and took the path to the house, he felt a hand on his shoulder and heard a voice. The hand and voice belonged to an ogre who said "Young man, you have been a good son, and you deserve the luck which has befallen you this day. Come with me to the nearby shining lake and do not fear."

The youth followed the ogre to the shore of the lake where the ogre said to him "Walk into the lake and shut your eyes. You will find yourself sinking slowly to the bottom, but be brave and all will go well. Bring up as much silver as you can carry, and we will divide it between us."

The youth stepped bravely into the lake where he slowly sank to the bottom. In front of him lay four heaps of silver and in the midst of them lay a curious white shining stone marked with strange runes. The youth picked up the stone to examine it more closely and as he held it the stone spoke.

"As long as you hold me, all your wishes will come true," it said, "but hides me in your hat and then call to the ogre that you are ready to come up."

In a few minutes the young man stood again, still empty-handed, by the shores of the lake and the ogre asked him where the silver was.

"I was so dazzled by the splendors of everything I saw, that I stood like a statue, unable to move. Then I heard steps approaching and got frightened and called to you," the youth replied.

"You are no better than the rest," grumbled the ogre, and turned away in a rage. When he was out of sight the young man took the stone from his hat and held it, saying "I want the finest horse that can be found, and the most splendid garments."

"Shut your eyes," replied the stone, "When you open them it shall be so."

The youth closed his eyes and when he dared open them he saw a fine horse before him and he was wearing fine robes. Mounting the horse, he called his greyhound, his cat and his hawk and set off homewards. His mother was sitting sewing and when she saw him she curtsied, not recognizing her own son.

"Don't you recognize me, mother?" he asked and on hearing his voice, his mother nearly fell to

the ground in astonishment.

"Where did you get that fine horse and those robes?" she asked, "Surely you have not stooped to murder a rich traveler?"

"They are honestly come by," answered her son, "and I will explain later. First, you must go to the palace and tell the king I wish to marry his daughter."

Though his mother thought he had gone mad, she went to the palace and joined the crowd of other people petitioning for the king's attentions. When all the petitioners had gone, she knelt before the king and told him that her son wished the hand of the princess in marriage.

The king looked at the woman, who was quite obviously not rich, and thought that she was mad. Instead of ordering his guards to turn her out, he answered, "If he wishes to marry my daughter he must first build me a palace of ice, which can be warmed with fires, and wherein the rare and delicate singing birds can live."

The old woman nodded gravely and went away to give her son news of the impossible task. Her son was waiting anxiously outside the palace gates, dressed in his everyday clothes. His mother told him of the impossible task he must complete before he could marry the princess.

"Why I thought it would be something much harder than that," exclaimed the youth, "I will see about it at once."

The youth went into the countryside (where it was a hot summer day) and took the stone from his hat. He asked the stone for an ice palace, warmed with fires and filled with rare singing birds. The stone told him to close his eyes and when the youth opened them, there in front of him was the palace - fit even for a princess. When the king awoke next morning he looked out from his window and, across the plain he saw the ice palace glowing a warm pink from the fires inside.

"He must be a great wizard," the king said to himself, "and would therefore be most useful to me." He summoned the youth's mother and bade her tell her son that he had earned the princess's hand in marriage.

The princess was delighted with her new home and with her husband. They spent many days in the magical ice palace until the young man had grown tired of always staying inside walls. He told his wife that he planned to go hunting and would have to leave her for a few hours. The princess answered as became a good wife that though she would miss him, she would spend the day discussing new clothes and would look forward to his return.

Thus her husband went off to hunt, his hawk on his wrist, and the greyhound and the cat behind him. No sooner had he gone, than the ogre (who had been spying on the palace for many days) knocked at the palace door and asked for an audience with the princess.

"I have just returned from a far country," he said, "and some of the largest and most brilliant gems in the world with me. Perhaps Her Royal Highness might like to buy some?"

The princess was indeed interested in gems. She wanted her new dresses to outshine the dresses of the other ladies at the court balls. The ogre laid rare and beautiful gems and pearls before her. The princess was careful that her expression did not show how much she wanted those precious jewels.

"They are indeed very beautiful, but I fear they are too costly for me," she said with indifference, "and besides, I have plenty of jewels already."

"I don't particularly wish to sell them," replied the ogre, "but my father left me a necklace of shining stones and the largest of its stones, engraved with strange runes, is missing. I had heard

that your husband had come by it. If you can return it to me you can have any of these jewels that you choose. However, I had heard that your husband has no love of ogres so you will have to pretend that you want the stone for yourself."

The princess admitted that her husband did indeed have a stone engraved with runes and that he treasured it dearly and would never sell it to a stranger.

"To-morrow I will return with even finer jewels," said the ogre, "Perhaps they will be more to your liking."

Left alone, the princess wondered whether she could persuade her husband to give her the engraved stone. He had already given her so much that it was a shame to ask for the only object he had kept back and apart from its engravings it was really quite a plain stone. However the thought of the ogre's diamonds, pearls and rubies was too great. Surely, she thought, if he really loves me he will give me everything I desire, even that curious stone. That evening, after supper, the princess invited her husband to tell her all about his hunting trip.

"Aaah," he said, "I was thinking of you all the time. I kept wondering what I could bring back for you. But surely you have everything you could ever desire! What could there be that you do not already possess?"

"It's true I have many beautiful things, but tomorrow is my birthday," said the princess.

"Then what can I give you?" the youth asked, "Is there anything you really for?"

"That curious stone that you keep in your hat," said the princess, "I've never seen anything like it before and I would truly love it as a trinket."

After a long while, the young man made her solemnly swear that if he gave her the stone she must never part with it and always keep it on her person. He did not tell her why and, feeling guilty, the princess agreed and made a great show of being delighted with the gift.

The next morning the young man went hunting again with his hawk, hound and cat and the ogre once again called at the ice palace. True to his word, the ogre had brought even finer gems. Her desire for the gems overcame her guilt at parting with the carved white stone and the princess chose the finest of the gems in exchange for the stone. Soon after the ogre left, the princess noticed a curious thing - the walls of ice were melting around her! The palace grew cold and when the servants stoked the fire the walls melted even faster. The exotic birds, being very delicate, dropped from cold.

When the young man returned, he found only the lower floor left and all the staff huddled together in furs and blankets. He knew his wife must have betrayed his trust and, though she must already be suffering from guilt, he would have to reproach her for it. He turned his horse away and left her in the melting palace saying "You have betrayed me and ruined me so I must seek my fortune alone."

With his greyhound and cat behind him, the young man walked a long way in search of the ogre. He bade his hawk fly as high as it could and to search for the ogre with its sharp eyes. When the hawk finally returned, it told its master the ogre was lying asleep in a splendid seaside palace in a faraway country. The youth rewarded the hawk with a good meal and said "Tomorrow you must fly to the palace and while the ogre is asleep you must find my magical engraved stone and snatch it back. I shall expect you back within three days."

"In that case I must take the cat with me," answered the hawk.

The next morning, before the sun had even risen, the cat leapt onto the hawk's back and clasped her paws around the hawk's neck. The hawk told her to close her eyes so as not to

become giddy with height. All that day and night they flew until they finally reached the ogre's faraway palace.

The cat finally dared open her eyes and when she did, she said "Goodness that looks like a rat city down there by the castle! Let's go down to it - they may be able to help us." For wherever there is a castle, or even a humble home, there are bound to be rats and mice.

They alighted and the cat went to lie outside the rat city's gate. The appearance of the cat caused terrible excitement among the rats. Finally, when the cat made no hostile move, one of the bolder rats put its head out of an upper window of the castle, and said in a trembling voice, "Why have you come? What do you want? If it is anything in our power, tell us, and we will do it."

"I come as a friend and I ask for the aid of four of the strongest and most cunning rats of your city."

Much relieved, the rat asked what task the cat had in mind so he could find the most suitable rats.

"What I have in mind is this," replied the cat, "Tonight they must burrow under the walls of the castle and go up to the room where an ogre lies asleep. Somewhere about him he has hidden my master's stone, which is engraved with strange runes. They must take this from him without waking him and bring the stone to me."

About midnight the cat, who was still sleeping before the gate, was awakened by some water flung at her by the chief rat (who was still too frightened to open the gate). "Here is the stone you wanted," said the rat, "Hold out your paw and I will drop it down to you."

Putting the stone in her mouth, the cat trotted off to where the hawk roosted and though the sun had not yet risen, they set off back to their master. Neither the cat nor the hawk had eaten during their journey and the hawk complained that he was hungry and tired and could go no further carrying such a heavy burden so that night they stopped to rest by a riverbank.

"It's my turn to take care of the stone," said the hawk, "and you can go hunting - for hawks don't hunt at night and you can see better in the darkness."

"Why should I?" said the cat, "I bargained with the rats and got the stone so I must keep hold of it."

The hawk and the cat began to quarrel. In the midst of the quarrel, the cat raised her voice and the stone fell out of her mouth and into the water where it landed in the ear of a large fish.

Both the cat and the hawk dived into the river, but neither could catch the fish and, half-drowned, they returned to shore to dry out. Presently, the cat began to scratch up the sandy riverbank and threw the bits into the water. This caused a great commotion in the river.

"What are you doing that for?" asked a little fish, "You are making the water all muddy!"

"That doesn't matter at all to me," answered the cat. "I am going to fill the river with earth so that the fishes may die."

"That's very unkind," protested the fish, "We've never done you any harm! Why are you so angry with us?"

"One of you has got a stone of mine which dropped into the river. It is smooth and white with strange runes carved on it."

"If we fetch you your stone, will you leave our river alone?" asked the fish.

The cat said that she would.

"Please be patient - it may not be an easy task," said the fish and darted away.

The little fish called his relatives, but none of them had the carved stone. He told them of the terrible danger they would be in if the stone was not returned to the cat. Finally, one of the fish recalled that the large old trout had swum along that part of the river not so long ago so the little fish swam off to find the old trout. He found the trout dozing among some reeds.

"Why, I was swimming along that stretch of river earlier on," agreed the old trout, "and as I was coming back to my reed bed I'm sure something fell into my ear. It is probably still there - I was too tired to bother about it much. Perhaps you'd be so good as to remove it for me?"

The little fish removed the stone from the old trout's ear and joyfully carried it to the place where the cat was waiting. He spat the stone out into the shallow water, since he could not go ashore.

"I am much obliged to you," said the cat, pawing the stone out of the shallow water, so I will leave your river alone."

By this time, the hawk was rested and was eager to get home to his master where there would surely be a meal waiting. The young man was delighted to see his hawk and cat return, and even more delighted that they had brought back his magical carved stone. In an instant he had wished for a palace, but this time instead of ice, it was fine pale marble that would not melt in the heat of summer. He then wished for the princess and her ladies to return, which of course they would have done even without the magical stone whisking them there in the blink of an eye.

The youth and the princess, and the faithful hawk, hound and cat, lived happily for many years and when the old king died, the princess's husband became king.

THE BABY'S BREATH

Long, long ago in parts of Europe, it was believed that fairy folk stole babies from their cribs and left in their place a fairy child. They were called changelings and were unhappy in the human world. A fairy child grew up wild and fey, always looking for a way back into the summerlands; its green or blue eyes were slanted a little and its ears were a little more pointed than normal. And a changeling had a strange way of looking at the world, as though looking through the world to something hidden beyond.

But how? I hear you ask. How could fairies steal away babies?

Long ago, when fairies walked invisible in the world, only cats could see the fey folk. When a cat sat silently watching and there was nothing there to see, it was watching the fairies about their business. And when a cat sat on a mother's lap, the sound of the cat's purring was the sound of it spinning sleep so that the fairies could steal away her child to be their toy.

The purr was like the sound of spinning wheels steadily spinning and that's what it was - as humans slept in an enchanted sleep spun by a purring cat, the fairies stole away the human infant and left one of their own in its place.

It was in the cat's nature to be attracted to a changeling infant and to suck its breath as payment for spinning sleep. So at night, the cat settled down in the changeling's crib and sucked the changeling baby's warm milky breath. Sometimes a greedy cat stole too much of the baby's breath and the parents grieved over the child, not realising that their own baby had been stolen away long time before.

The ancient compact between cats and fairies ended long time ago when the wise cats realised that humans offered a far more comfortable home. Cats still sit and watch fairies about their invisible business, but they no longer spin sleep so that fairies can steal away human children to be their toys. Cats still like the warmth of a baby's crib and are still accused of stealing a baby's breath.

And of course, cats still purr like steady spinning wheels. When a cat is contented it purrs to itself in satisfaction, knowing that it has a far better compact with human folk than with fairy folk. In modern times, a cat only spins sleep if you let it.

THE CAT AND THE MOUSE IN PARTNERSHIP

A cat once became such good friends with a mouse that she invited the mouse to live with her. The mouse agreed to move in and to share with the housekeeping. However they agreed not to leave the house each without the other unless by mutual agreement. "We must provide for the winter or else go hungry," said the Cat, "but it is too dangerous for you to go looking for food in case you run into a mouse-trap."

The cat's advice was followed and they bought a little pot of fat, but they did not know where to put it. After a long discussion, the Cat said, "We can hide it safely in a corner of the church where no-one will disturb it. We won't touch it until we need it."

So they hid the little pot of fat in the church, but it wasn't long before the cat had a great longing to lick some fat. She said to the Mouse, "My cousin has just had a little son, white with brown spots, and she wants me to be the godmother. I will go to the christening while you look after the house - it would be dangerous for you to come with me as the other cats would surely eat you!"

"Certainly," replied the Mouse, "and when you eat anything good, think of me. If possible, I should very much like a drop of the red christening wine."

But the Cat had no cousin, and had not been asked to be godmother. She went straight to the church and licked the top off the little pot of fat. Then went walking and sunning herself on the roofs of the town, licking her lips whenever she thought of the little pot of fat. When evening came, she returned home.

"Did you have an enjoyable day?" the mouse asked her.

"Indeed," said the cat, "It all went very well." And of course, that was the truth.

"What was the child's name?" asked the mouse.

"Top Off," replied the cat drily.

"What a curious name!" exclaimed the mouse, "Is it a traditional name in you family?"

"What's odd about the name?" the cat asked, blinking, "It's no more curious than 'Breadthief' as your godchild is called."

Soon after, the cat had another great longing for some fat and she once more asked the mouse to take care of the house, "I have been asked a second time to be a godmother, and of course I cannot refuse as the child has a white ring around its neck."

The kind mouse agreed and the untruthful cat slunk under the town wall to the church where she ate up half of the pot of fat. "Nothing tastes better than what one eats by oneself," she said, greatly pleased with her day's work. Then she went sunning herself on the town roofs before returning home.

"What was this child named?" asked the mouse.

"Half Gone," answered the cat.

"Halfgone?!" exclaimed the mouse, "What a name! Why I have never heard such a name in my life."

Soon after, the cat once more had a great longing for some fat and she said to the mouse, "All good things come in threes and I have been asked to be godmother to my cousin's third child as well. It is coal black and has snow white paws, but not a single white hair on its body. Such a thing only happens once in two years, so you will let me go out?"

"Topoff! Halfgone!" said the mouse, "Such curious names and they make me very thoughtful."

"Oh, you sit here at home in your dark grey coat and your long tail," said the cat, "and it makes you fanciful. That comes of not going out in the day!"

The mouse cleaned and swept the house while the cat was gone, but the untruthful cat ate up every last bit of the fat and said, "When it is all gone one can be at rest" before returning home sleek and satisfied.

"And what did they name this child?" asked the mouse, "Something as curious as the others?"

"It won't please you any better," the cat told her, "they called him Clean Gone."

"Cleangone!" exclaimed the mouse, "Why don't believe such a name exists! Cleangone indeed! What can it mean?"

The mouse shook her head and curled up to sleep. From that time one, no-one asked the cat to be godmother, but when the winter came and there was no food to be got outside, the mouse remembered their precious pot of fat safely hidden in the church and said, "Come, cat, let's go to our pot of fat - it will taste very good."

"Indeed," answered the Cat, "it will taste as good to you as if you stretched your thin tongue out of the window," meaning that empty air has no taste at all.

When they reached the church, they found the pot in its place, but quite empty and the mouse guessed what had been happening each time the cat had gone to a christening.

"Now I know what has happened, you false friend!" she cried, "First you ate the top off, then half of it gone and then ..."

"be silent!" hissed the cat, "Another word and I will eat you up as well."

But the word "Cleangone" was already on the poor mouse's tongue, and scarcely was it out than the cat pounced on her and swallowed her whole.

"All gone," said the cat to herself. You see that is the way of the world.

THE WITCH'S CAT

Once upon a time there was a peasant whose wife had died and left him with two children; a twin boy and a twin girl. He decided to marry again and over the next few years his new wife had several children of her own, but she neglected and beat the twins and wanted nothing better than to get rid of them. Finally, she had a wicked thought and decided to send them out into the great gloomy wood where a wicked witch lived.

One morning she told the twins, "You have been such good children that I am sending you to visit my granny, who lives in a dear little hut in the wood. You will have to wait upon her and serve her, but she will give you the best of everything in return."

The children left the house together, but the little sister said to her brother, "First we will visit

own dear grandmother and tell her where our step-mother is sending us." Which they did. Their grandmother cried, "I wish I could help you, but I am old and poor. Your step-mother is sending you to the wicked witch of the wood. Listen to me - be civil and kind to everyone, never say a cross word to anyone and never touch a crumb belonging to anyone else. Help may be sent to you after all."

She gave them a bottle of milk, some ham and a loaf of bread and they set out for the wood. There they saw a queer little hut and knocked on the door.

"Who's there?" snarled the witch in an awful voice.

"Good-morning, granny. Our step-mother has sent us to wait upon you, and serve you."

"If I am pleased with you, I'll reward you. If not, I'll cook you in my oven! See that you work hard!" growled the witch.

She set the girl down to spin yarn and she gave the boy a sieve in which to carry water from the well, then she herself went out into the wood. The girl sat weeping at the spinning wheel because she didn't know how to spin. Presently she heard the pattering of hundreds of little feet, and from every hole in the hut mice came squeaking: "Don't cry little girl. We'll help you if you give us some of your bread."

The girl gave them some the bread and the mice began to spin the yarn. The mice told her that the witch's grey cat would tell her how to escape if she gave it some of her ham. She went to find the cat, but instead she found her brother sobbing because the water kept running out of the sieve. Then they heard rustling wings and a flight of wrens alighted and said said, "If you give us some crumbs we'll help you keep that water in the sieve."

So they gave their remaining crumbs of bread to the wrens and the wrens showed the boy how to fill the holes of the sieve with clay to make it water-tight. They carried the water inside the hut without spilling a drop. Inside the hut they found the cat curled up on the floor, so they stroked her and gave her some ham and asked, "Pussy, grey pussy, how are we to get away from the witch?"

The cat thanked them for the ham and gave them a handkerchief and a comb. She told them that when the witch chased them, as she certainly would, they must throw the handkerchief on the ground and run as fast as they could. As soon as the handkerchief touched the ground, a deep broad river would spring up to hinder the witch's progress. If the witch managed to cross the river, they must throw the comb behind them and run for their lives, for where the comb fell a dense forest would start up, which would delay the witch so long that they would be able to get safely away. The cat had scarcely finished speaking when the witch returned.

"You have done your work well enough for today," she grumbled, "but tomorrow you'll have something more difficult to do, and if you fail it will be straight into the oven with you."

The terrified children barely slept a wink on their pile of straw. In the morning the witch gave the girl two pieces of linen to weave before night, and gave the boy a pile of wood to cut into chips. Then she went out into the wood. As soon as she was out of sight, the children took the comb and handkerchief and ran hand-in-hand away from the hut.

First they met the witch's fierce watch-dog, but they threw their remaining bread and ham to him and he let them go past. Then they were hindered by the tangled birch-trees, but little sister tied the twigs together with her ribbons, and they passed safely. At last they reached open fields. Meanwhile, the cat was busy weaving the linen and tangling the threads as it wove. When the witch returned to see how the children were getting on she crept up to the window

and whispered, "Are you weaving, my little dear?"

"Yes, granny, I am weaving," answered the cat.

The angry witch saw that the children had escaped and began beating the cat. "Why did you let the children leave the hut? Why did you not scratch their eyes out?"

The cat hissed, "I have served you all these years and you never even threw me a bone, but the dear children gave me their own piece of ham."

Then the witch was furious with the watch-dog and with the birch-trees for letting the children escape. The dog told her "I have served you all these years and you never gave me so much as a hard crust, but the dear children gave me bread and ham." The birch tree rustled its leaves and said "I have served you longer than I can say with twigs for your broom, and you never tied a bit of twine even round my branches, but the dear children bound them up with bright ribbons."

The witch mounted on her broom and set off after the children, her broom sweeping the ground as it went. The children heard the sound of the broom close behind them and they threw the handkerchief over their shoulder. In an instant, a deep, broad river flowed behind them. It took the witch a long time to find a safe place to cross, but at last she found a place and she chased faster than before. When the children heard the broom behind them, they threw the comb down on the ground. In an instant, as the witch's cat had promised, a dense forest sprung up. It was so thick and tangled that the witch found there was nothing for it but to turn round and go back to her hut.

The twins ran until they reached their own home where they told their father what had happened. In anger, he drove their step-mother out of the house forever and he never again let a stranger into the house.

THE BRONZE RING

Once upon a time there lived a king whose palace was surrounded by a spacious garden. In spite of good soil and many gardeners, the garden never grew trees or plants, fruit or flowers. The king was in despair. One day, a wise old man told the king ""Your gardeners do not understand their business; they don't know how to cultivate gardens because their fathers were carpenters and cobblers. You need a gardener whose father and grandfather was gardeners before him. Then your garden will be full fruit and flowers."

The King sent messengers to every town and village in the land to look for a gardener father and grandfather had been gardeners before him. For forty days they searched until they found such a gardener. The man protested that he was poor and owed money, but the king gave him new clothes and paid his debts and insisted he become the royal gardener. The man had no difficulty in making the royal garden produce fruit and flowers and after a year the king showered gifts on him.

The gardener had a handsome and well-mannered son whose job it was to take the best fruit to the king and the choicest flowers to the king's sixteen year old daughter, the princess. The king considered it time his princess should marry and he had chosen the prime minister's son to be her husband.

"I will never marry the prime minister's son," protested the princess, "I love the gardener's son." The king became very angry and then very sad. He declared that such a husband was not worthy of his daughter, but the Princess was determined to marry the gardener's son. So the

king consulted his ministers.

"This is what you must do," they told him, "To get rid of the gardener you must send both suitors to a very distant country. The one who returns first shall marry your daughter."

The King followed this advice. He gave the minister's son a splendid horse and a purse full of gold. He gave the gardener's son an old lame horse and a purse full of copper coins. Everyone thought the gardener's son would never come back from his journey.

The day before they started the Princess met her lover and said, "Take this purse full of jewels and make the best use you can of them for love of me. Come back quickly and demand my hand."

The two suitors left the town together, but the minister's son went off at a gallop on his good horse was soon far out of sight. After some days he reached a fountain beside which sat a ragged old woman.

"Good morning young traveler," said the old woman, but the minister's son didn't reply. "Pity me, young man," she said, "I am dying of hunger; I've been here three days and no one has given me anything."

"Go away, old witch," replied the minister's son, "I can do nothing for you." With that he went on his way.

Much later that day the gardener's reached the fountain upon his old lame horse.

"Good-day, young traveler," said the beggar-woman, "Have pity on me for I've eaten nothing these past three days."

"Good-day, good woman," replied the gardener's son, "Take my purse and mount behind me, for your legs can't be very strong."

The old woman mounted behind him and in this style they reached the chief city of a powerful kingdom. The minister's son was lodged in a grand inn while the gardener's son and the old woman dismounted at the inn for beggars. The next day the gardener's son heard a great noise in the street, and the King's heralds passed, and crying: "The King is old and infirm. He will give a great reward to whoever will cure him and give him back the strength of his youth."

The old beggar-woman said to the gardener's son, "Go out of the town by the south gate, and there you will find three little dogs of different colors: one white, one black and one red. You must kill them and then burn them separately, and gather up the ashes. Put the ashes of each dog into a bag of its own color, then go before the door of the palace and cry out 'A celebrated physician has come to cure the king and give him back the strength of his youth.' The king's physicians will call you an impostor before you can see the king himself. You must then demand as much wood as three mules can carry, and a great cauldron, and must shut yourself up in a room with the king. When the cauldron boils you must throw him into it and let him cook until his flesh is completely separated from his bones. Then arrange the bones in their proper places and throw the ashes out of the three bags over the bones. The King will come back to life as a young man. For your reward you must demand the bronze ring which has the power to grant you everything you desire."

The gardener's son followed the old woman's directions. First he killed and burnt the three dogs and gathered up their ashes. Then he presented himself to the palace as a physician. When he won admittance to see the king he carried out the old woman's instructions and from the boiled bones the king rose up as a young, vigorous man. The king offered him many treasures, but the gardener's son insisted on the magical bronze ring.

After bidding farewell to the old woman, the gardener's son instructed the bronze ring to prepare a splendid ship of silver and gold in which to continue his journey, a cargo of precious jewels and a crew of fine handsome sailors. In this ship he sailed to a great town and established himself in a fine palace. After a few days he met his rival, the minister's son. The minister's son had run out of money and was reduced to cleaning the streets of manure. He did not recognize the gardener's son and the gardener's son feigned ignorance also.

The gardener's son told him, "You are a stranger, but I will help you. I will give you a ship to carry you home, but you must accept it willingly whatever its condition."

The minister's son agreed and presently they both reached the palace where the palace servants had him strip. The gardener's son ordered the ring to become red hot and he branded his rival's back with it. He then ordered the ring to prepare a ship of black and rotten timbers with ragged sails and an ugly, sickly crew and a cargo of filth. In this dreadful vessel the minister's son arrived home first and, in spite of his condition, the king began to prepare for the wedding. The princess was in despair.

The next daybreak, a wonderful ship of silver and gold sailed into the harbor. The sailors were handsome and the captain appeared to be a prince. The king immediately welcomed the ship's captain to the palace as his guest for however long the man remained in the capital.

"My daughter is about to be married," said the king, "will you give her away?"

"I shall be charmed, sire," replied the young captain, but when he saw the minister's son he exclaimed "how can you marry your daughter to a man such as that?"

"He is my prime minister's son!"

"What does that matter? I cannot give your daughter away. The man she is betrothed to is one of my servants." The king doubted this, but the young captain went on, "I met him in a distant town reduced to sweeping muck from the streets and I engaged him as one of my servants out of charity."

"This is impossible!" cried the king.

"Do you wish me to prove what I say?" asked the young captain, "This young man returned in a vessel which I fitted out for him, a filthy and unseaworthy ship crewed by crippled sailors."

"It is quite true," said the king.

"It is false," cried the minister's son. "I do not know this man!"

"Sire," said the young captain, "You will find my brand on his back."

The minister's son admitted the truth of the matter and went away in disgrace. The young captain revealed himself as the gardener's son and that very day he married the princess.

The young couple were happy and the king was pleased with his new son-in-law, but presently the captain of the golden ship found it necessary to take a long voyage. In the outskirts of the capital there lived an old magician who had studied the dark arts. He knew that the gardener's son had only succeeded because of the genie who obeyed the bronze ring and he wanted the ring for himself.

The magician went down to the sea-shore and caught some pretty little red fishes. Pretending to be a peddler, he knocked on the princess's door and ask if she wished to buy the pretty fish.

"What will you take for your fish?" she asked him.

"A bronze ring," replied the peddler.

The princess didn't know the value of her husband's bronze ring, which he had left safely under his pillow, so she gave it to the peddler in exchange for the fishes. Hardly had the magician

reached home than he commanded the ring to turn the golden ship to black wood and turn the handsome crew to hideous swarthy men and make the precious cargo into black cats. The ring obeyed him instantly and the young captain knew immediately that his ring had been stolen. In this ship he sailed miserably from shore to shore, but wherever he went people laughed at him and his ship. Soon his poverty was so great that he and his crew and the poor black cats had nothing to eat but herbs and roots. After sailing for a long time he reached an island inhabited by mice. The captain landed upon the shore and the hungry black cats set upon the mice at once.

The queen of the mice held a council, "These cats will eat every one of us if the captain of the ship does not shut the ferocious animals up. Let us send a deputation of our bravest mice at arms."

When the mice at arms found the young captain, they said, "Go away quickly from our island or we shall perish, every mouse of us."

"Upon one condition," replied the young captain, "You must first bring me back a bronze ring which some clever magician has stolen from me. If you do not do this I will land all my cats upon your island, and you shall be exterminated."

The mice were dismayed. "What is to be done?" said the Queen. "How can we find this bronze ring?" She held a new council, calling in mice from every quarter of the globe, but nobody knew where the bronze ring was. Suddenly three mice arrived from a very distant country. One was blind, the second lame, and the third had no ears.

"We come from a far distant country," said the newcomers, "An old sorcerer has the bronze ring and keeps it in his pocket by day and in his mouth by night."

"Go and take it from him, and come back as soon as possible," ordered the queen, "Else the cargo of black cats will eat us all."

The three mice set sail for the magician's country. When they reached the capital they ran to the palace, leaving the blind mouse on the shore to take care of the boat. That night they found the wicked old man asleep with the bronze ring into his mouth. The mouse with no ears dipped her tail in a pepper-pot and held it to the sorcerer's nose. The sorcerer sneezed and the ring shot out of his mouth, but he did not wake. The lame mouse snatched up the ring and the three mice set sail back to their own land.

Naturally they began to talk about the bronze ring.

"Which of us deserves the most credit?" they asked each other.

"I do," said the blind mouse, "for without my watchfulness our boat would have drifted away to the open sea."

"I do," cried the mouse with no ears, "did I not cause the ring to jump out of the man's mouth?"

"I do," cried the lame mouse, "for I ran off with the ring."

The three mice began to quarrel and in the argument the bronze ring fell into the sea.

"How are we to face our queen," said the three mice "when we have lost the ring and condemned our people to be utterly exterminated by black cats?"

So they landed on the first island they came to. The lame mouse and the mouse with no ears went to find nuts and roots, leaving their blind sister on the beach and she wandered sadly, eating whatever fish were washed up by the tide. Suddenly she let out a cry as her teeth bit something hard. It was the bronze ring, which had been swallowed by a fish. Joyfully, the three mice set sail for their own island and arrived just in time for the young captain was about to

land his full cargo of hungry black cats to eat all the mice. With his ring returned, he turned his ship back to silver and gold, his crew back to handsome sailors and the hungry black cats became precious jewels once more.

The captain immediately sailed for home and took his revenge on the magician who had tricked the princess into giving over the ring. He seized the magician and tied him to the tail of a wild ass. The ass was set loose outside the city and dragged the magician behind him, breaking him utterly on the hard ground.

THE ENCHANTED WATCH

Once upon a time there lived a rich man who had three sons. When they grew up, he sent the eldest to travel and see the world, and three years passed before his family saw him again. The son returned, magnificently dressed, and his father was so delighted with his behaviour, that he gave a great family feast in his honour.

When the rejoicing had ended, the second son begged to travel and see the world also. The father agreed willingly and sent him on his way with plenty of money, promising a similar party if the son returned as well dressed and with similar good manners. The second son conducted himself well and on his return, the celebrations were even more splendid.

The third and youngest brother was named Johnny, and he was considered foolish and lazy. He spent his days at the stove and dirtied himself with the ashes. Johnny begged to follow in his brothers' footsteps and travel for three years.

"Go if you like, you idiot, but I don't see what good it will do," grumbled his father.

Johnny paid no attention to his father's grumbling and was pleased to get permission to go. His father gave him money and was pleased to get rid of his foolish son.

Johnny had many adventures along the way. On one occasion he chanced to cross a meadow where some shepherds were just about to kill a dog. Johnny begged them to spare its life and let him have the dog, which they did. Johnny went on his way with the dog following after him.

A little further on, Johnny came upon a cat that someone was going to put to death. He implored them to spare it, which they did, and he went on his way with the dog and the cat following him. In another place, he came upon a snake about to be killed and he begged for its life to be spared. Johnny went on his way with the dog, the cat and the snake following him.

One day, the snake told Johnny to follow it. It was autumn, a time when snakes hid themselves in their holes. The snake was going in search of the king of snakes and said, "My king will scold me for being so late when everyone else is housed for the winter. I will explain how you saved my life. The king will ask what reward you would like so be sure you beg for the watch that hangs on the wall. This watch has all sorts of wonderful properties; you only need to rub it to get whatever you like."

All happened as the snake promised and Johnny was given the watch by the king of snakes. Johnny was hungry so he decided to test the watch by asking for a meal of bread and meat and a flask of wine. No sooner had he asked than the meal appeared before him. Johnny continued on his way until evening and, tired and hungry, he touched the watch and asked for a good supper and a comfortable bed. That night he slept very well and in the morning he set off back to his father's house.

When Johnny returned wearing the same old clothes he had set off in, his father flew into a

rage and called him a fool. There was no celebration and Johnny returned to his place by the stove, dirtying himself in the ashes. After three days of sitting by the stove, Johnny was bored and thought it would be nice to see a three-storey house filled with beautiful furniture and with vessels of silver and gold. Johnny rubbed the watch and there it all was.

He went to his father and said "You gave me no welcoming feast, but let me give you a feast. Come and see what is on MY plate."

His father was astonished at the fine house and all the gold and silver and asked where all the wealth had come from. Johnny did not reply, but told his father to invite everyone for a grand banquet. All their friends and relatives were amazed at the fine house full of splendid things and the fine food (which Johnny also wished for from the watch).

After the first course Johnny asked his father to invite the king, queen and their daughter, the princess, to the feast. He rubbed the watch and wished for a fine gold and silver carriage drawn by six horses in jeweled harnesses. His father dared not ride in the carriage, but led it to the palace on foot. The king, queen and princess were surprised and impressed by the richness of the coach and at once agreed to attend Johnny's banquet. Johnny rubbed the watch again and wished that the road to the house should be paved with fine, smooth marble. The king was astonished; he had never traveled over such a gorgeous road.

When Johnny heard the approaching carriage, he rubbed his watch and wished for a still more beautiful house, four storeys high and hung with gold, silver and damask. It was filled with wonderful tables covered with exotic dishes that no king had ever eaten before. The royal family were speechless with surprise. They had never before seen such a splendid palace, nor such a high feast. At dessert the king offered Johnny the hand of the princess in marriage and they were married at once. The king and queen returned to their palace while Johnny and the princess lived in the enchanted house.

Though Johnny was not quite as foolish as his father believed, neither was a clever man. It was not long before his dullness began to bore the princess. The princess asked him how he had acquired such a beautiful palace and it was not long before she tricked the answer out of Johnny and learnt about the enchanted watch. As soon as she learnt of the watch she wanted it for herself. Johnny always slept well - the sleep of an honest man - and it was not hard for the princess to steal his magical watch.

The princess rubbed the watch and wished for a fine carriage drawn by four horses to take her to her father's palace. Once there, she bade her own attendants follow her into the carriage. She then drove straight to the sea-side where she wished that the sea might be crossed by a bridge and that a magnificent palace might arise in the middle of the sea. No sooner had she wished it than it was done. As soon as she had entered the palace, she rubbed the watch and wished for the bridge to be gone. Then she wished for Johnny's fine home to disappear.

Left alone and without his fine home, Johnny felt very miserable. His family and their neighbours and friends all laughed at him. He owned nothing but the cat and dog whose lives he had saved. Unable to bear living with his family, he took the cat and dog with him and travelled far away. By and by, Johnny reached a great desert where he saw some crows flying towards a mountain. One of the crows was a long way behind and when he caught up with the flock they asked why their brother crow was so late.

The late arrival told them that he had seen in the middle of the sea the most wonderful house that ever was built and had stopped to look at it. The fine house stood in the middle of the sea

with no bridge to the land. On hearing this, Johnny realised where his wife was hidden. Johnny went to the shore with his dog and his cat.

When he arrived, he said to the dog and cat, "You are an excellent swimmer, and my friend the cat is very light. Cat, if you will jump on the dog's back he will take you to the palace. Once there, dog, you must hide near the door so that the cat can sneak in and get back my watch. Then we can live comfortably again."

The two animals crossed the sea and the dog hid near the house while the cat sneaked into it. However, the princess recognized the cat and guessed why it had come. She took the watch down to the cellar and locked it in a box. The cat wriggled its way into the cellar and the moment the princess turned her back, the cat scratched and scratched until there was a hole in the box. Taking the enchanted watch in its teeth, the cat waited quietly till the princess returned to admire the watch. The moment the princess opened the cellar door, the cat had dashed outside, carrying the watch in its teeth.

As soon as the cat reached the gates, she said to the dog "We are going to cross back to the shore - be very careful not to speak to me as I must carry the watch in my mouth for safety."

The dog laid this to heart and said nothing, but when they approached the shore he could not help asking, "Have you got the watch?"

The cat did not answer, she was afraid she might drop the watch. As soon as they touched the shore the dog again asked "Have you got the watch?"

This time, believing them to be safely across, the cat said yes and the watch fell into the sea. Try as she might, the watch had fallen too deep for either animal to pull it out. The two animals began to accuse each other and both looked sorrowfully at the place where their treasure had fallen in. Suddenly a fish appeared near the edge of the sea. The cat immediately seized it and thought it would make a fine supper.

"I have nine little children," cried the fish, "Spare the father of a family! Once we lived in the deep sea where there is more to eat, but someone has built a palace there and I am forced to find food closer to land."

"Granted," replied the cat, "but only on condition that you find our watch. Then we will ask our master to do something about the palace."

Grateful to be spared from becoming supper, the fish dived to the bottom and retrieved the watch. The cat and dog returned to their master. Johnny rubbed the watch and wished that the palace, with the unfaithful princess and all her staff, should be swallowed up by the sea, making room for the fishes again. No sooner had he wished it than it was done. Johnny returned to his parents, and he and his watch, his cat and his dog, lived together happily to the end of their days and his parents never again called him a fool.

THE WAR OF THE WOLF AND THE FOX

There was once a man called Simon and his wife, Susan, who had an old cat and an old dog. One day Simon said to his wife "Why should we keep our old cat any longer? She never catches any mice and is so useless that I should drown her."

His wife replied, "Don't do that; I'm sure she could still catch mice."

"Rubbish," replied her husband "The mice could dance on her and she'd never catch one. As

soon as i find her i shall drown her."

Susan was most unhappy about this and so was the old cat, who had been hiding behind the stove and had overheard the conversation,. When Simon went off to work, the poor cat meowed so pitifully, and looked up so pathetically at Susan that the woman opened the door and told the cat to flee for her life before Simon returned home.

The poor old cat ran as quickly as her old legs would carry her into the wood, and when Simon came home for dinner, his wife told him that the cat had gone missing and had probably crawled away to die of old age.

"So much the better," her husband said, "It saves me the bother of drowning her. However, what are we to do with the old dog? He is deaf and nearly blind; he barks when there is no need, and he fails to bark when there is need. The best thing I can do with him is to hang him." Soft-hearted Susan replied, "Please don't. I'm sure he's not as useless as you think."

But her husband just retorted "The yard could be full of thieves and he'd never discover it. As soon as I find him he shall be hanged and we'll be rid of him."

Susan was most unhappy at his words, and so was the dog, who had been hiding under a chair in the corner of the room and who had heard everything. As soon as Simon had gone back to work, the old dog stood up and howled so touchingly that Susan quickly opened the door and told the dog to flee for his life.

The poor old dog fled into the wood with his tail between his legs and when Simon returned, his wife told him that the dog had run off.

"That's lucky for him and lucky for me for it saves me the bother of tying a rope to hang him with," said Simon.

Susan sighed, for she had been very fond of the dog and the cat and there was now no-one at home to keep her company while Simon was at work.

It happened that the cat and dog met each other in the woods and though they had not been the best of friends at home, having kept to their own tasks, they were glad of each other's company. They sat down under a holly tree and told each other the tale of how they had ended up turned out of home.

Presently a fox passed by. Seeing the pair sitting together so sadly, the fox asked what they were grumbling about and why they were so sad.

The cat replied, "I have caught many mice in my day, but now that I am old and tired, my master wants to drown me and be rid of the trouble of feeding me."

The dog said, "Many a night have I watched and guarded my master's house, but now that I am old and deaf, he says i am no more use and he wants to hang me and be done with me."

The fox answered, "That's the way of humankind, ungrateful creatures that they are. I'll help you to get back into your master's favor if you first help me in my own troubles."

The dog and cat promised to do their best, and the fox continued, "The wolf has declared war against me. He is at this moment marching to meet me in company with the bear and the wild boar, and tomorrow there will be a fierce battle between us. I need staunch comrades to stand against the wolf with me."

"All right," said the dog and the cat, "we will stand by you. If we are killed, as we are sure to be, it is at any rate better to die on the field of battle than to perish ignobly at home, drowned like a witch and hanged like a thief."

The fox sent word to the wolf to meet him at a certain place, and the fox, dog and cat set forth

to the appointed place. The wolf, the bear and the wild boar arrived on the spot first. When they had waited some time for the fox, the dog, and the cat, the bear said, "I'll climb up into the oak tree and see if they are coming."

The first two times, the bear saw nothing, but on the third time of looking, the bear said "I see a mighty army in the distance, and one of the warriors has the biggest lance you ever saw!"

This was the cat, who was marching along with her tail erect. So they laughed and jeered and the bear said, "The enemy won't be here at this rate for many hours to come, so I'll just curl myself up in the fork of the tree and have a nap."

See the bear napping, the wolf curled up at the foot of the tree to nap as well. The boar buried himself in loose leaves until only one ear was visible.

By and by, the fox, the cat and the dog arrived. When the cat saw the boar's ear, she pounced upon it, thinking it was a mouse in the leaves. The boar was so pained and startled that he fled squealing in terror. The poor old cat was even more startled and, spitting with terror, she scrambled up into the fork of the tree, and right into the bear's face.

The bear was just as startled as the boar. Growling and swiping with his paws, he lost his balance and fell out of the tree. He landed on the wolf and killed it stone dead. The wolf died with such a yelp that the bear ran off into the woods, certain a whole army of foxes was after him.

The bargain having been kept, the fox told the dog and the cat to take him to the cottage where they had lived with Simon and Susan. On their way there, the fox caught a score of mice. When they reached the cottage he put them all on the stove and said to the cat, "Now go and fetch one mouse after the other and lay them down before your master."

The cat did exactly as the fox told her and when Susan saw this she said to her husband, "Our old cat has returned home and what a lot of mice she has caught!."

"Perhaps she is not so useless after all," said Simon, "I never thought the old cat would ever catch another mouse."

His wife replied "I always said our cat was an excellent creature, but you men always think you know best."

Meanwhile, the fox said to the dog, "Your master has just killed a pig. When it gets a little darker, you must go into the courtyard and bark with all your might."

As soon as it was dusk, the old dog began to bark loudly.

Susan said to her husband, "Our dog must have come back - I hear him barking with all his might. Do go out and see what's the matter - perhaps thieves are stealing our sausages."

But Simon answered, "The old brute is as deaf as a post and is always barking at nothing," and he refused to go and find out what was happening.

The next morning, Susan got up early to go to town, and she thought she would take some sausages to her aunt who lived there. When she went to her larder, she found all the sausages gone and a great hole in the floor. She called out to her husband, "I was right after all. Thieves have been here last night, and they have not left a single sausage. Oh! if you had only got up to see what our old dog was barking at when I asked you to!"

Simon scratched his head and said, "maybe he's not so useless after all. I never believed the old dog was so quick at hearing."

His wife replied, "I always told you our old dog was the best dog in the world, but as usual you thought you knew so much better. You men always think you know best."

So the dog and the cat settled back into their home and every time Simon suggested they were not earning their keep, his wife would stare at him until he admitted that the animals were not so useless after all. And the fox scored a point too, for he had carried away the sausages.

THE COLONY OF CATS

Long ago, in the days when animals spoke, there lived a community of cats in a deserted house not far from a large town. They had everything they needed for their comfort, they were well fed and well lodged, and an unlucky mouse stupidly ventured in their way, they hunted it for sport. The old people of the town spoke of a time long ago when the whole country was so overrun with rats and mice that all the corn had been eaten up. The people were saved from starvation by cats. It might have been gratitude that the descendants of the cats were allowed to live in peace in their house. No one knows where they got the money to pay for everything, nor who paid it, for all this happened so very long ago.

The cats were rich enough to keep a servant to the things the cats could not – the housework and cooking the meat (for they did not condescend to eat it raw). The cats were very difficult to please about the housework and most women quickly tired of living alone with only cats for companions so they never kept a servant long. It became a saying in the town, when anyone found herself reduced to her last penny: "I will go and live with the cats".

Lizina was unhappy at home; her widowed mother preferred Lizina's older sister and often neglected Lizina while spoiling her sister. If Lizina complained, her mother beat her. One day Lizina could stand it no longer and she declared she was going to live with the cats. Her mother was all too pleased to see Lizina go and chased her away with the broom.

Lizina ran all the way to the cats' house. The cats' cook had left them that very morning, with her face all scratched from a quarrel with the head of the cats' house. Lizina was therefore very welcome and she set to work at once to prepare the dinner, worried that she would not be able to satisfy her employers.

She was frequently hindered by a constant succession of cats who appeared one after another in the kitchen to inspect the new servant; one was in front of her feet, another upon a chair, a third sat on the kitchen table and several more prowled about the kitchen. They all purred, pleased with their new maid, but Lizina did not yet understand their language, and often she did not know what they wanted her to do. However, as she was a kind-hearted girl, she set to work to pick up the little kittens which tumbled about on the floor; she patched up quarrels, and nursed on her lap a big old tabby with a lame paw. This made a favorable impression on the cats, and it was even better after a while, when she had had time to grow accustomed to their strange ways. Never had the house been kept so clean, the meats so well served, nor the sick cats so well cared for.

After a while, the house of cats had a visit from an old cat, whom they called Father Gatto. Father Gatto by himself in a hilltop barn and sometimes came down to inspect the little colony. He was much taken with Lizina, and asked the cats "Are you well served by this nice, black-eyed little person?" to which they replied "Yes Father Gatto, we have never had so good a servant!" Each time he visited, Father Gatto asked the same question and, each time, the cats gave the same answer. However, after a time, the observant old cat noticed that the little maid was looking ever sadder.

"What is the matter, my child? Has any one been unkind to you?" he asked one day, when he found Lizina crying in her kitchen.

Lizina sobbed "No Father Gatto! They are all very good to me, but I long for news from mother and my sister at home."

Old Gatto, being a sensible old cat, understood her feelings and said, "You shall go home and you need not come back here unless you please. But first you must be rewarded for all your kind services to my children. Follow me down into the inner cellar, where you have never yet been, for I always keep it locked and carry the key away with me."

Lizina looked round her in astonishment as they went down into the great vaulted cellar underneath the kitchen. Before her stood the big earthenware water jars, one full of oil, the other full of a liquid that shone like gold.

"Which of these jars shall I dip you in?" asked Father Gatto, with a toothy, whiskery grin.

Lizina looked at the two jars and finally replied, "In the oil jar," for she did not think herself worth dipping in gold.

Father Gatto replied, "Oh no, my child, you deserve better than that!" and seizing her in his strong paws he plunged her into the liquid gold.

Lizina came out of the jar shining gold from head to foot, only her pink cheeks and long black hair keeping their natural colour. Father Gatto purred loudly with satisfaction.

"now you may go home to see your mother and sister," said old Gatto, "but take care that if you hear the cock crow you must turn towards it, but if you hear the ass bray, you must look the other way."

The little maid gratefully kissed Gatto's white paw and set off for home. Just as she got near her mother's house the cock crowed, and quickly she turned towards it. Immediately a beautiful golden star appeared on her forehead, crowning her glossy black hair. At the same time the ass began to bray, but Lizina took care not to look into the donkey field where the donkey was grazing. Her mother and sister, who were in front of their house, cried out in astonishment when they saw Lizina. They cried out in even greater admiration when she took her handkerchief from her pocket and drew out also a handful of gold.

For some days the mother and her two daughters lived very happily together, for Lizina had given them everything she had brought away except her golden clothing, for that would not come off, in spite of all the efforts of her jealous sister. The golden star could not be removed from her forehead, but all her gold pieces had ended up with her mother and sister.

"Maybe I will go and see what I can get out of the pussies," said Peppina, Lizina's older sister, taking Lizina's basket and fastening her pockets into her own skirt, "I should like some of the cats' gold for myself," and left the house before the sun rose. The cat colony had not yet taken another servant, knowing they could never get one as good as Lizina, but when they heard that Peppina was her sister, they all ran to meet her.

"She is not at all like Lizina," whispered the kittens among themselves.

"Hush!" the older cats said, "not all servants can be pretty."

But silently they all agreed she was not at all like Lizina. On her very first day she shut the kitchen door in the face of the tom-cats who used to enjoy watching Lizina working. A young and mischievous cat who jumped in by the open kitchen window and onto the table got such a blow with the rolling-pin that he yelled for an hour. Each day, the household became more and more aware of its misfortune. The work was as badly done and the servant was surly and

disagreeable. Heaps of dust collected in the corners of the rooms and cobwebs hung from the ceilings and in front of the window-panes. The beds were hardly ever made and the feather beds, loved by the old and feeble cats, were never shaken or plumped up. At Father Gatto's next visit he found the whole colony in a state of uproar.

"Caesar has one paw so badly swollen that it looks as if it were broken," said one. "Peppina kicked him with her great heavy boots. Hector has an abscess in his back where a wooden chair was flung at him. Agrippina's three little kittens have died of hunger beside their mother, because Peppina forgot them in their basket up in the attic. There is no putting up with the creature - do send her away, Father Gatto! Lizina herself would not be angry with us, she must know very well what her sister is like."

"Come here," said Father Gatto, in his most severe tones to Peppina. He took her down into the cellar and showed her the same two great jars. "In which of these shall I dip you?"

Peppina answered at once, "In the liquid gold," for she was not at all modest and was greedy as well as unkind.

Father Gatto's growled angrily, "You have not deserved it!" and flung her into the jar of oil, where she was nearly suffocated. When she came to the surface screaming and struggling, the vengeful cat seized her again and rolled her in the ash-heap on the floor. When Peppina rose, dirty, blinded and disgusting to behold, he pushed her out of the door, saying, "Begone and when you meet a braying ass be careful to turn your head towards it."

Stumbling and raging, Peppina set off home. She was within sight of her mother's house when she heard the donkey braying in its field. Quickly she turned her head towards it and a donkey's tail sprang from her forehead. She ran the rest of the way home as fast as she could, shrieking in anger and despair.

It took Lizina two hours and two cakes of soap to get rid of the oil and ashes that Father Gatto had covered Peppina in, but the donkey's tail was impossible to get rid of - it was as firmly fixed on Peppina's forehead as was the golden star on Lizina's. Their furious mother blamed Lizina for all her sister's woes and beat the girl mercilessly with the broom, then she took her to the well and lowered her into it, leaving poor Lizina at the bottom of the well weeping and crying for help.

Before all this happened, however, the king's son had passed the house and had seen pretty Lizina sitting sewing in the parlour. He had passed the house several times to admire the golden girl with the pretty pink cheeks and the long black hair. Finally, he summoned up the courage to ask her hand in marriage and Lizina had gladly accepted. The next morning, when the prince arrived to claim his bride, he found her wrapped in a large white veil.

"This is how maidens are received from their parents' hands," said the mother, who hoped to make the king's son marry Peppina in place of her sister, and had fastened the donkey's tail round her head like a lock of hair under the veil.

The prince was young and shy, so he made no objections, and seated Peppina in the carriage beside him. Their way led past the old house inhabited by the cats, who had heard that the prince was to marry a beautiful golden maiden with a star on her forehead and knew it must be their own dear Lizina. They were all at the window and as the carriage slowly passed in front of the old house, the cats began to sing "Mew, mew, mew! Prince, look quick behind you! In the well is fair Lizina, And you've got nothing but Peppina!"

When he heard this the coachman, who understood the cat's language better than the prince,

stopped his horses and asked if the prince had understood what the cats were singing. The prince threw back the veil and discovered the puffed-up, swollen face of Peppina, with the donkey's tail twisted round her head.

"Traitor!" he exclaimed and ordered the carriage to be turned round. He drove the greedy elder daughter, quivering with rage, back to the old woman who had tried to deceive him. With his hand on the hilt of his sword he demanded Lizina in so commanding a voice that the mother hastily pulled Lizina from out of the well. Lizina's clothing and her star shone so brilliantly that when the prince led her home to his father, the whole palace was lit up.

The next day Lizina and the prince were married and all the cats, from tiny kittens under their mothers' bellies to Old Father Gatto himself, were present at their wedding.

THE CAT'S ELOPEMENT

Once upon a time there lived a fantastically beautiful golden cat whose fur was as soft and shining as silk, and whose wise green eyes shone like emeralds. This cat's name was Gon, and he belonged to a music master, who was so fond and proud of his golden cat that he would not part with him for anything in the world.

Not far from the music master's house lived a lady who owned a charming little tortoiseshell pussy cat called Koma. Koma blinked her eyes so daintily, ate her supper so tidily and licked her pink nose so delicately with her little pink tongue, that her mistress sighed "Koma, Koma, whatever should I do without you?"

One day, both Gon and Koma went out for an evening stroll in the cherry blossom. By chance, they met under a cherry tree and immediately fell madly in love with each other. Golden Gon had wanted to find a wife, and though the other ladies in the neighbourhood paid him a great deal of attention, none of them appealed to him. But suddenly he found himself madly in love with the dainty tortoiseshell Koma and, to his joy, she was madly in love with him. However, both could see difficulties in their way since neither owner wished to part with their cat and neither cat wished to be parted from the other. Gon begged his master to set matters right by buying Koma, but her mistress would not part with the dainty little cat. Neither would the music master sell Gon to Koma's owner.

With their owners unable to resolve matters, the two cats decided to please themselves and seek their fortunes together. One moonlit night they crept out of their homes and ventured out into an unknown world. All that night and into the next day they marched resolutely on until they were far from home and certain that no-one would find them or part them from each other. Towards evening they found themselves in a large tree-filled park full of cool inviting shadows and soft grass. By this time, they were both hot and tired and longed to rest. Unknown to the cats, the park belonged to the princess. Just as they were looking for somewhere to rest, a huge, vicious guard dog sprang towards them, snarling and gnashing its teeth. Poor Koma shrieked in terror and rushed straight up a cherry tree while brave Gon stood his ground, ready to protect his beloved.

Alas, the dog was far bigger and fiercer than Gon, and all of Gon's courage was not equal to the dog's teeth. From her perch in the tree, Koma saw everything and she screamed with all her might, hoping that some one would hear her and come to rescue them. Luckily one of the princess's servants heard the commotion and he drove off the dog. The servant carried poor

injured Gon back to his mistress, leaving Koma quite alone in her tree.

The princess herself nursed Gon and he took many days to recover from the guard dog's attack. The heartbroken Koma had not dared come down from the tree to follow the servant and she did not know where to find Gon. Sadly she went her own lonely way in the world, finding food and shelter where she could and always hoping that Gon would return to find her. Although Gon recovered from the attack, even the attention paid to him by the princess could not console him. The kindly princess was delighted with his beauty and pretty ways and was kind to him, but he was heartsick for Koma and did not know how to find her.

The kind princess would have led a happy life, had it not been for a serpent who had fallen in love with her. The serpent constantly crept up on her and though her servants drove it away as often as they could, but it wasn't hard for the wily serpent to slip inside the palace. Although the serpent loved the princess, the princess was terrified of it. One day, as she sat playing musical instruments in her room, the princess felt something slither across her leg. She saw her enemy making his way to kiss her cheek and she shrieked, throwing herself backwards away from the snake. Brave Gon, now fully recovered and curled up on a stool at the princess's feet, immediately sprang on the serpent and killed it with a single fierce bite.

No longer threatened by the serpent, the princess praised and caressed heroic Gon, carrying him in her arms and giving him the best food to eat and the softest beds to sleep on. Still Gon was not happy as his beloved Koma was missing from his life and he did not know how to find her or how she fared without him. As time passed, Gon grew into a large and stately cat. Time passed on and one morning Gon lay before the house door, basking in the sun. He looked lazily at the world stretched out before him, and saw in the distance a big tabby ruffian of a cat teasing and ill-treating a much smaller tortoiseshell cat. Gon jumped up angrily and chased away the big cat. When he turned to comfort the little one his heart nearly burst with joy to find that it was Koma. At first Koma did not recognise him, but as soon as she did, her happiness knew no bounds. They rubbed their heads and their noses together again and again, while their purring could be heard a mile off.

Paw in paw, and tails intertwined, Gon and Koma appeared before the princess and told her the story of their life and how they had been parted when the guard dog had attacked Gon. The princess wept in sympathy and promised that they should never more be parted, but should live with her to the end of their days. By and by, the princess got married and her husband came to live in the palace in the park. She told the prince how brave Gon had saved her from the serpent and the prince swore that the two cats should never leave them, but should go with the princess wherever she went.

So at last Gon and Koma were together. They had many children, as did the prince and princess, and they all played together, and remained firm friends to the end of their lives. But what of the previous owners of Gon and Koma you might ask? Well, ask you might, but that is a different story.

THE BOY WHO DREW CATS (A JAPANESE FAIRY TALE)

A long time ago, in a small country village in Japan, there lived a poor farmer and his wife. They were good people with a number of children, although it was often hard to feed them all. At fourteen years old, the older son was strong enough to help his father around the farm while

the little girls helped their mother almost as soon as they could walk. However, the youngest child, a little boy, was not fit enough for hard work. He was cleverer than his brothers and sisters, but was small and weak and could never grow very big so his parents thought it would be better for him to become a priest than to become a farmer. They took him to the village temple and asked the good old priest who lived there if he would have their little boy for his acolyte. The old man spoke kindly to the lad and asked him some hard questions. So clever were the answers that the priest agreed to take the little fellow into the temple as an acolyte and to educate him for the priesthood.

The young boy learned quickly what the old priest taught him and was very obedient in most things. However, he had one fault - he liked to draw cats during study-hours and to draw cats when cats ought not to have been drawn at all. Whenever he found himself alone, he drew cats. He drew them on the margins of the priest's books, and on all the screens of the temple, on the walls, and on the pillars. Several times the priest told him this was not right, but still he did not stop drawing cats. He drew them because he could not really help it. He had what is called "the genius of an artist," and just for that reason he was not quite fit to be an acolyte. The priest reminded him that a good acolyte should study books, not drawn cats.

One day after he had drawn some excellent pictures of cats on a paper screen, his teacher spoke to him severely. "My boy, you must go away from this temple at once. You will never make a good priest, but perhaps you will become a great artist. Now let me give you a last piece of advice, and be sure you never forget it: avoid large places at night - keep to small."

The boy did not know what the priest meant by "Avoid large places - keep to small." He thought a great deal about this advice while he was tying up his little bundle of clothes to go away, but he could not make sense of it and was afraid to speak to the priest, except to say goodbye. He left the temple very sorrowfully and wondered what he should do. He was afraid to go straight home as he was certain his father would punish him for his disobedience to the priest. Then he remembered that the next village, twelve miles away, had a very big temple where there were several priests. He decided to go there and ask them to accept him as an acolyte.

What he did not know was that the big temple now stood empty because a goblin had frightened the priests away and had taken possession of the place. Some brave warriors had gone to the temple one night to kill the goblin, but none had been seen alive again. Not knowing any of this, the boy walked all the way to the village hoping the priests would treat him kindly. When he arrived it was already dark and all the villagers were in bed, but he saw the temple on the hill at the far end of the main street and he saw also that there was a light in the temple. He was not to know that the goblin made that light to tempt lonely travellers to ask for shelter at the temple. He set off at once to the temple and knocked on the door-post. There was no sound inside. He knocked again and again, but still nobody came so at last he pushed gently at the door and was glad to find that it had not been fastened. He went in and saw a lamp burning, but there was no priest in attendance.

He thought that some priest would be sure to come very soon so he sat down and waited. Then he noticed that everything in the temple was grey with dust and covered with cobwebs. He thought to himself that the priests would certainly like to have an acolyte to keep the place clean and wondered why they had allowed the temple to get so dusty. What most pleased him, however, were some big white screens, good to paint cats upon. Though he was tired, he looked at once for a writing-box, and finding a writing box, he ground some ink and began to paint cats.

He painted a great many cats upon the screens before becoming very sleepy. Still no priest had appeared and he was just on the point of lying down to sleep beside one of the screens when he suddenly remembered his former teacher's words: "Avoid large places - keep to small." The temple was very large and he was alone. Though he did not quite understand the advice, he began to feel afraid and looked for a small place in which to sleep. He found a little cabinet, with a sliding door, and went into it and shut himself up. Then he lay down and fell fast asleep. Very late in the night he was awakened by the most terrible noises of fighting and screaming. It was so dreadful that he was afraid even to look through a chink of the little cabinet and lay very still, holding his breath for fright. The light that had been in the temple went out, but the awful sounds continued and became more awful, and the entire temple shook. After a long time silence came, but the boy was still too afraid to move. He did not move until the light of the morning sun shone into the cabinet through the chinks of the little door and he cautiously got out of his hiding-place and looked about.

The first thing he saw was that all the floor of the temple was covered with blood. The next thing he saw, lying dead in the middle of it, was an enormous monstrous rat - a goblin-rat - bigger than a cow! But who or what could have killed it? There was no man or other creature to be seen. Suddenly the boy observed that the mouths of all the cats he had drawn the night before were red and wet with blood. Then he knew that the goblin had been killed by the cats which he had drawn. And then also, for the first time, he understood why the wise old priest had told him "Avoid large places at night - keep to small."

Afterwards, the boy went on to become a very famous artist. To this very day, some of the cats that he drew are shown to travelers in Japan.

A TALE OF THE TONTLAWALD

Long ago, in the midst of a country covered with lakes stood a vast stretch of moorland called the Tontlawald, on which no man ever dared set foot. From time to time a few bold spirits had been drawn by curiosity to its borders, and returned with tales of a ruined house in a grove of thick trees, and round about it were a crowd of dirty, ragged men, old women and half-naked children.

One night a peasant returning home from a feast wandered into the Tontlawald, and came back with the same story. A countless number of women and children were seated round a huge fire while others danced on the grass. One old crone had a broad iron ladle in her hand; every now and then she stirred the fire, but the moment she touched the glowing ashes the children rushed away shrieking and it was a long while before they ventured back again. Once or twice a little old man with a long beard had crept out of the forest, carrying a huge sack. The women and children ran by his side, weeping and trying to drag the sack from off his back, but he shook them off, and went on his way.

There was also a tale of a magnificent black cat as large as a foal, with teeth like daggers and eyes that shone red like burning coals, but men could not believe all the wonders told by the peasant, and it was difficult to make out what was true and what was false in his story, since he had drunk plenty of beer at the feast before wandering onto the Tontlawald. Nevertheless, strange things did happen there, and though the king gave orders to cut down the haunted wood, no one was ever brave enough to do so. A brave man had once struck his axe into a tree,

but his blow was followed by a stream of blood and shrieks like a human creature in pain. The terrified woodcutter had fled as fast as his legs would carry him, and after that neither orders nor threats would drive anybody to the enchanted moor.

A few miles from the Tontlawald was a large village. A peasant there had recently married a young wife who had turned the whole house upside down, and the two quarrelled and fought all day long. The peasant's first wife had given him a daughter called Elsa; she was a good quiet girl, who only wanted to live in peace, but her stepmother beat the poor child from morning till night and the peasant was too scared of his wife to do anything to stop the ill-treatment. For two years Elsa suffered all this ill-treatment, then one day she went strawberry-picking with the other village children. They wandered carelessly to the edge of the Tontlawald, where they found the finest strawberries. The children ate as many strawberries as they could, wandering further and further into the Tontlawald, until suddenly one of the older boys cried out "Run, run as fast as you can! We are in the Tontlawald!"

The children ran madly away, all except Elsa, who had strayed farther than the rest into the Tontlawald and did not want to give up picking the fine strawberries she had found. "The dwellers in the Tontlawald cannot be any worse than my stepmother," she said to herself, and besides she was very hungry as her stepmother didn't give her enough to eat.

Elsa looked up and saw a little black dog with a silver bell on its neck come barking towards her, followed by a maiden clad all in silk. The girl told the dog to be quiet then turned to Elsa and said "I'm so glad you didn't run away with the others. Stay here and be my friend, - we will play delightful games together and gather strawberries every day. No-one will dare to beat you if I tell them not. Come, let us go to my mother."

Taking Elsa's hand she led her deeper into the wood, the little black dog jumping up beside them and barking with pleasure. Elsa was astonished at the wonders and splendours before her. Trees and bushes stood before them, overburdened with fresh ripe fruit; bright birds darted among the branches and filled the air with song. The birds were not shy, but let the girls take them in their hands, and stroke their gold and silver feathers. In the centre of the garden, a house shone with glass and precious stones, and in the doorway sat a woman in rich garments. The woman who turned to Elsa's companion and asked, "Daughter, what sort of a guest have you brought to me?"

"I found her alone in the wood," replied her daughter, "and brought her back as a companion. Will you let her stay?"

The mother laughed, but said nothing. She looked Elsa up and down sharply then stroked her cheeks kindly and asked if her parents were alive, and if she really would like to stay with them. Elsa stooped and kissed her hand, then, kneeling down, buried her face in the woman's lap. Elsa sobbed to the woman "My mother died many years ago. My father is still alive, but doesn't care about me and his new wife, my stepmother, beats me all the day long. I can do nothing to her satisfaction, so please let me stay with you. I will look after the flocks or do any work you tell me. I will obey you, only please do not send me back to her. She will half kill me for not having come back with the other children."

The woman answered, "We'll see what we can do with you," and went into the house.

The daughter said, "Don't be afraid, I can tell by the way she looks at you that my mother will be your friend," and she told Elsa to wait while she went into the house to speak with her mother. Half-afraid and half-hopeful, Elsa waited for her strange new friend to return. At length the girl

returned holding a box in her hand and said that they could play together while her mother decided what must be done. "Have you ever been on the sea?" she asked.

"The sea?" asked Elsa, "I've never heard of such a thing!"

"I'll soon show you," answered the girl, opening the box.

At the bottom of the box lay a scrap of a cloak, a mussel shell and two fish scales. Two drops of water were glistening on the cloak and the girl shook the water onto the ground. In an instant, everything had vanished and as far as the eye could reach Elsa could see nothing but water.

Only under their feet was a tiny dry spot. Then the girl placed the mussel shell on the water and took the fish scales in her hand. The mussel shell grew bigger and bigger, and turned into a small boat, large enough for several children to sit in. The girls stepped in, Elsa very cautiously, and her friend used the fish scales for a rudder. The waves rocked them softly, as if they were lying in a cradle, and they floated on till they met other boats filled with merry, singing men and the girl sang back to them, in a strange language. Elsa noticed they sang the word "Kisika" over and over and this turned out to be the girl's name.

Though they felt they could have played on the sea forever, by and by they heard a voice calling them home. Kisika took the little box out of her pocket, with the piece of cloth inside it, and dipped the cloth in the water. They were back where they had started, standing on firm, dry land close to the splendid house in the middle of the garden. Kisika put the mussel shell and fish scales back in the box and the girls went inside the house. They entered a large hall, where twenty-four richly dressed women were sitting round a table as if for a wedding feast. At the head of the table sat the lady of the house in a golden chair. Elsa did not know which way to look. She sat down with the others and ate some delicious fruit while the women talked softly in a language she did not understand. At length the hostess turned round and whispered something to a maid behind her chair. The maid left the hall and returned with a little old man whose beard was longer than himself. He bowed low to the lady and then stood quietly near the door.

"Do you see this girl?" said the lady of the house, pointing to Elsa. "I wish to adopt her for my daughter. Make me a copy of her, which we can send to her home to take her place."

The old man looked Elsa all up and down, as if he was taking her measure then bowed to the lady and left the hall.

After dinner the lady said kindly to Elsa, "Kisika has begged me to let you stay with her, and you have told her you would like to live here. Is that so?"

Elsa fell on her knees at the lady's feet in gratitude for her escape from her cruel stepmother, but her hostess raised her from the ground and patted her head, saying, "All will go well as long as you are a good, obedient child. I will take care of you and see that you want for nothing till you are grown up and can look after yourself. You will be schooled with my own daughter, Kisika."

Not long after the old man came back with a mould full of clay on his shoulders and a little covered basket in his left hand. He put down his mould and his basket on the ground, took up a handful of clay, and made a doll as large as life. When it was finished he bored a hole in the doll's breast and put a bit of bread inside. Then, drawing a snake out of the basket, he forced it to enter the hollow body.

"Now," he said to the lady, "all we want is a drop of the maiden's blood."

"Don't be afraid," said her hostess, "this is not for any bad purpose, but rather to give you

freedom and happiness."

She took a tiny golden needle, pricked Elsa in the arm and gave the blood-stained needle to the old man, who stuck it into the heart of the doll. When this was done he placed the figure in the basket, promising that the next day they should all see what a beautiful piece of work he had finished.

When Elsa awoke the next morning in a soft feather bed to see a beautiful dress lying over the back of a chair, ready for her to put on. A maid combed out her long hair, and brought the finest linen for her use. The thing that gave Elsa the greatest joy was the little pair of embroidered shoes, for her stepmother had always made her go barefoot. In her excitement, she gave no thought to the rough clothes she had worn the day before; they had disappeared as if by magic. The living doll, now full grown and identical to Elsa, had been dressed in her old clothes and had gone back to the village in Elsa's place. When Elsa saw the doll, she was both astonished and frightened.

"Don't be frightened," said the lady, when she noticed Elsa's terror, "this clay figure can do you no harm. It is for your stepmother, that she may beat it instead of you. Let her flog it as hard as she will since it can never feel any pain. And if the wicked woman does not come one day to a better mind, your double will be able at last to give her the punishment she deserves."

From that moment on, Elsa's life was that of an ordinary happy child and she began to forget the mistreatment at her stepmother's hands. The happier she grew, the deeper was her wonder at everything around her and the more firmly she was persuaded that some great unknown power must be at the bottom of it all.

In the courtyard stood a huge granite block about twenty steps from the house. At meal times, the long-bearded old man went to the block, drew out a small silver staff, and struck the stone three times, so that the sound could be heard a long way off. At the third blow, out sprang a large golden cock, and stood upon the stone. Whenever he crowed and flapped his wings the rock opened and something came out of it. First came a long table covered with dishes ready laid for the number of persons who would be seated round it; this flew into the house all by itself. When the cock crowed for the second time, a number of chairs appeared, and flew after the table; then wine, apples, and other fruit, all without trouble to anybody. After everybody had had enough, the old man struck the rock again. The golden cock crowed afresh, and back went the dishes, table, chairs, and plates into the middle of the block.

When, however, it came to the turn of the thirteenth dish, which nobody ever wanted to eat, a huge black cat the size of a foal, with pearl-white teeth and brilliant orange eyes ran up and stood on the rock close to the cock, while the dish was on his other side. There they all remained, till they were joined by the old man. He picked up the dish in one hand, tucked the cat under his arm, told the cock to get on his shoulder, and all four vanished into the rock. This wonderful stone contained not only food, but clothes and everything they could possibly want in the house. Over time, Elsa learnt to understand the strange language spoken at mealtimes though it took her years to learn to speak it. One day she asked Kisika why the thirteenth dish came daily to the table and was sent daily away untouched, but Kisika knew no more about it than she did. The girl asked her mother and a few days later her mother spoke to Elsa seriously about the thirteenth dish.

"The thirteenth dish is the dish of hidden blessings. If we ate it, our happy life here would come to an end. The world would be a great deal better if greedy men did not seek to snatch every

thing for themselves, instead of leaving something as a thanks offering to the giver of the blessings. Greed is man's worst fault."

The years passed quickly, for there were always things to occupy the days, and Elsa grew into a lovely woman, with a knowledge of many things that she would never have learned in her native village. However, Kisika was still the same young girl that she had been on the day of her first meeting with Elsa and wanted to play childish games and complained that Elsa had grown too big for games. One day, after nine years, the lady called Elsa into her room. Elsa's heart sank when she saw the lady's eyes full of tears.

"Dearest child," she said, "you have grown into a woman and the time has come when we must part." Elsa begged to stay, perhaps as a maidservant to the gracious lady, but the lady said, "My child, it is time for you to return to the world of men, where joy awaits you."

"Please don't cast me out into the world. It would have been better if you had left me with my stepmother, than to have brought me to heaven and then send me back to a worse place."

"Do not talk like that, dear child," replied the lady sternly, but kindly, "You are a mortal, and unlike us you are growing older. Surely you've noticed that Kisika never ages? It's hard for me to let you go, but it is your destiny to have a husband and raise children."

Back in Elsa's home village, her stepmother had beat the Elsa doll night and day, though of course the doll felt no pain. When Elsa's father tried to stop her, the stepmother beat him as well. One day, in a rage, the stepmother had grabbed the Elsa doll by the throat and tried to throttle it. The snake came out from the doll's mouth and bit the woman's tongue, killing her at once. When Elsa's father came home, he found his wife's body swollen and disfigured and Elsa was gone. His neighbours had heard a commotion, but that was quite normal and they had taken no notice. Pleased to be free of his ill-tempered wife, he prepared her body for burial. Then, quite tired, he ate the piece of bread he found lying on the kitchen table. The next day, his neighbours found him sitting at the table, his face and body as disfigured as that of his wife and he was buried with his nagging wife. Everyone supposed that Elsa had finally fled from the beatings.

The morning Elsa was to leave, the lady placed a gold seal ring on Elsa's finger then strung a little golden box on a ribbon and placed it round her neck. The old man touched Elsa softly on the head three times with his silver staff. In an instant Elsa was transformed into an eagle. For several days she flew steadily south, neither tired nor hungry. One day as she flew over a dense forest, she heard hounds barking at her and then a sharp pain in her breast. The Elsa-eagle fell to the ground, pierced by an arrow. However, when Elsa recovered her senses, she found herself lying under a bush in her own proper form, quite uninjured.

As she was wondering what had happened, the king's son came riding by. Seeing Elsa, sprang from his horse, and took her by the hand, saying, "My lady, every night, for half a year, I have dreamed of finding you in this wood. I have searched it hundreds of times in vain and never given up hope. Today I was going in search of a large eagle that I had shot, but instead of the eagle I find the lady of my dreams!" He took Elsa on his horse, and rode with her to the town, where the old king received her graciously.

A few days later Elsa and the prince were married. The lady of the Tontlawald sent fifty carts laden with beautiful things to their wedding. In time, Elsa became queen of that land, but nothing more was ever heard neither of the Tontlawald nor of the fiery-eyed cat as big as a foal.

Fairytales from Around the World

About Dogs

The Dog and the Sparrow
The Small-Tooth Dog

Dog fairytales from around the world

The Dog and the Sparrow

(By the Grimm Brothers)

A shepherd's dog had a master who took no care of him, but often let him suffer the greatest hunger. At last he could bear it no longer; so he took to his heels, and off he ran in a very sad and sorrowful mood. On the road he met a sparrow that said to him, 'Why are you so sad, my friend?' 'Because,' said the dog, 'I am very very hungry, and have nothing to eat.' 'If that be all,' answered the sparrow, 'come with me into the next town, and I will soon find you plenty of food.' So on they went together into the town: and as they passed by a butcher's shop, the sparrow said to the dog, 'Stand there a little while till I peck you down a piece of meat.' So the sparrow perched upon the shelf: and having first looked carefully about her to see if anyone was watching her, she pecked and scratched at and snapped it up, and scrambled away with it into a corner, where he soon ate it all up. 'Well,' said the sparrow, 'you shall have some more if you will; so come with me to the next shop, and I will peck you down another steak.' When the dog had eaten this too, the sparrow said to him, 'Well, my good friend, have you had enough now?' 'I have had plenty of meat,' answered he, 'but I should like to have a piece of bread to eat after it.' 'Come with me then,' said the sparrow, 'and you shall soon have that too.'

So she took him to a baker's shop, and pecked at two rolls that lay in the window, till they fell down: and as the dog still wished for more, she took him to another shop and pecked down some more for him. When that was eaten, the sparrow asked him whether he had had enough now. 'Yes,' said he; 'and now let us take a walk a little way out of the town.' So they both went out upon the high road; but as the weather was warm, they had not gone far before the dog said, 'I am very much tired—I should like to take a nap.' 'Very well,' answered the sparrow, 'do so, and in the meantime I will perch upon that

bush.' So the dog stretched himself out on the road, and fell fast asleep. Whilst he slept, there came by a carter with a cart drawn by three horses, and loaded with two casks of wine. The sparrow, seeing that the carter did not turn out of the way, but would go on in the track in which the dog lay, so as to drive over him, called out, 'Stop! stop! Mr Carter, or it shall be the worse for you.' But the carter, grumbling to himself, 'You make it the worse for me, indeed! what can you do?' cracked his whip, and drove his cart over the poor dog, so that the wheels crushed him to death. 'There,' cried the sparrow, 'thou cruel villain, thou hast killed my friend the dog. Now mind what I say. This deed of thine shall cost thee all thou art worth.' 'Do your worst, and welcome,' said the brute, 'what harm can you do me?' and passed on. But the sparrow crept under the tilt of the cart, and pecked at the bung of one of the casks till she loosened it; and then all the wine ran out, without the carter seeing it. At last he looked round, and saw that the cart was dripping, and the cask quite empty. 'What an unlucky wretch I am!' cried he. 'Not wretch enough yet!' said the sparrow, as she alighted upon the head of one of the horses, and pecked at him till he reared up and kicked. When the carter saw this, he drew out his hatchet and aimed a blow at the sparrow, meaning to kill her; but she flew away, and the blow fell upon the poor horse's head with such force, that he fell down dead. 'Unlucky wretch that I am!' cried he. 'Not wretch enough yet!' said the sparrow. And as the carter went on with the other two horses, she again crept under the tilt of the cart, and pecked out the bung of the second cask, so that all the wine ran out. When the carter saw this, he again cried out, 'Miserable wretch that I am!' But the sparrow answered, 'Not wretch enough yet!' and perched on the head of the second horse, and pecked at him too. The carter ran up and struck at her again with his hatchet; but away she flew, and the blow fell upon the second horse and killed him on the spot. 'Unlucky wretch that I am!' said he. 'Not wretch enough yet!' said the sparrow; and perching upon the third horse, she began to peck him too. The carter was mad with fury; and without looking about him, or caring what he was about, struck again at the sparrow; but killed his third horse as he done the other two. 'Alas! miserable wretch that I am!' cried he. 'Not wretch enough yet!' answered the sparrow as she flew away; 'now will I plague and punish thee at thy own house.' The carter was forced at last to leave his cart behind

him, and to go home overflowing with rage and vexation. 'Alas!' said he to his wife, 'what ill luck has befallen me! –my wine is all spilt, and my horses all three dead.' 'Alas! husband,' replied she, 'and a wicked bird has come into the house, and has brought with her all the birds in the world, I am sure, and they have fallen upon our corn in the loft, and are eating it up at such a rate!' Away ran the husband upstairs, and saw thousands of birds sitting upon the floor eating up his corn, with the sparrow in the midst of them. 'Unlucky wretch that I am!' cried the carter; for he saw that the corn was almost all gone. 'Not wretch enough yet!' said the sparrow; 'thy cruelty shall cost thee thy life yet!' and away she flew.

The carter seeing that he had thus lost all that he had, went down into his kitchen; and was still not sorry for what he had done, but sat himself angrily and sulkily in the chimney corner. But the sparrow sat on the outside of the window, and cried 'Carter! thy cruelty shall cost thee thy life!' With that he jumped up in a rage, seized his hatchet, and threw it at the sparrow; but it missed her, and only broke the window. The sparrow now hopped in, perched upon the window-seat, and cried, 'Carter! it shall cost thee thy life!' Then he became mad and blind with rage, and struck the window-seat with such force that he cleft it in two: and as the sparrow flew from place to place, the carter and his wife were so furious, that they broke all their furniture, glasses, chairs, benches, the table, and at last the walls, without touching the bird at all. In the end, however, they caught her: and the wife said, 'Shall I kill her at once?' 'No,' cried he, 'that is letting her off too easily: she shall die a much more cruel death; I will eat her.' But the sparrow began to flutter about, and stretch out her neck and cried, 'Carter! it shall cost thee thy life yet!' With that he could wait no longer: so he gave his wife the hatchet, and cried, 'Wife, strike at the bird and kill her in my hand.' And the wife struck; but she missed her aim, and hit her husband on the head so that he fell down dead, and the sparrow flew quietly home to her nest.

The Small-Tooth Dog (An English Tale)

ONCE upon a time there was a merchant who traveled about the world a great deal. On one of his journeys thieves attacked him, and they would have taken both his life and his money if a large dog had not come to his rescue and driven the thieves away. When the dog had driven the thieves away he took the merchant to his house, which was a very handsome one, and dressed his wounds and nursed him till he was well. As soon as he was able to travel the merchant began his journey home, but before starting he told the dog how grateful he was for his kindness, and asked him what reward he could offer in return, and he said he would not refuse to give the most precious thing he had.

And so the merchant said to the dog, "Will you accept a fish I have that can speak twelve languages?"

"No," said the dog, "I will not."

"Or a goose that lays golden eggs?"

"No," said the dog, "I will not."

"Or a mirror in which you can see what anybody is thinking about?"

"No," said the dog, "I will not."

"Then what will you have?" said the merchant.

"I will have none of such presents," said the dog; "but let me fetch your daughter, and bring her to my house."

When the merchant heard this he was grieved, but what he had promised had to be done, so he said to the dog, "You can come and fetch my daughter after I have been home for a week."

So at the end of the week, the dog came to the merchant's house to fetch his daughter, but when he got there he stayed outside the door, and would not go in.

But the merchant's daughter did as her father told her, and came out of the house dressed for a journey and ready to go with the dog.

When the dog saw her he looked pleased, and said, "Jump on my back, and I will take you away to my house."

So she mounted on the dog's back, and away they went at a great pace, until they reached the dog's house, which was many miles off.

But after she had been a month at the dog's house she began to mope and cry.

"What are you crying for?" said the dog.

"Because I want to go back to my father," she said.

The dog said, "If you will promise me that you will not stay there more than three days I will take you there. But first of all," said he, "what do you call me?"

"A great, foul, small-tooth dog," said she.

"Then," said he, "I will not let you go."

But she cried so pitifully that he promised again to take her home.

"But before we start," he said, "tell me what you call me."

"Oh," she said, "your name is Sweet-as-a-Honeycomb."

"Jump on my back," said he, "and I'll take you home."

So he trotted away with her on his back for forty miles, when they came to a stile.

"And what do you call me?" said he, before they got over the stile.

Thinking she was safe on her way, the girl said, "A great, foul, small-tooth dog."

But when she said this, he did not jump over the stile, but turned right round again at once, and galloped back to his own house with the girl on his back.

Another week went by, and again the girl wept so bitterly that the dog promised to take her to her father's house.

So the girl got on the dog's back again, and they reached the first stile, as before, and the dog stopped and said, "And what do you call me?"

"Sweet-as-a-Honeycomb," she replied.

So the dog leaped over the stile, and they went on for twenty miles until they came to another stile.

"And what do you call me?" said the dog with a wag of his tail.

She was thinking more of her father and her own house than of the dog, so she answered, "A great, foul, small-tooth dog."

Then the dog was in a great rage, and he turned right round about, and galloped back to his own house as before.

After she had cried for another week, the dog promised again to take her back to her father's house. So she mounted upon his back once more, and when they got to the first

stile, the dog said, "And what do you call me?"

"Sweet-as-a-Honeycomb," she said.

So the dog jumped over the stile, and away they went -- for now the girl made up her mind to say the most loving things she could think of -- until they reached her father's house.

When they got to the door of the merchant's house, the dog said, "And what do you call me?"

Just at that moment the girl forgot the loving things she meant to say and began, "A great --," but the dog began to turn, and she got fast hold of the door latch, and was going to say "foul," when she saw how grieved the dog looked and remembered how good and patient he had been with her, so she said, "Sweeter-than-a-Honeycomb."

When she had said this she thought the dog would have been content and have galloped away, but instead of that he suddenly stood upon his hind legs, and with his forelegs he pulled off his dog's head and tossed it high in the air. His hairy coat dropped off, and there stood the handsomest young man in the world, with the finest and smallest teeth you ever saw.

Of course they were married, and lived together happily.

Addy, Sidney Oldall. Household Tales and Other Traditional Remains. London: 1895.

Esoteric cat

What people think and Remember

Cat Symbolism

Urban Legends : The dead cat in the package

Cat superstitions

Romanian proverbs

Famous Quotations

Cat symbolism

Astute

Clever

Secretive

Mysterious

Intelligent

Intuitive

Supernatural

Watchfulness

Selective

Independent

Cats themselves are quite resourceful and tend to give us messages of change, flexibility of adaptability. Often, when a cat makes an uncommon appearance in our lives it is a message for us to shake up our habitual routines and make some fresh changes in our lives, as well as be more flexible in our thinking.

Cats can also be quite aloof, and this too is often a message for us to distance ourselves from people or situations. Sometimes the best cure for a problem is to step away from it - the cat inherently realizes this, and we would be wise to recognize this need as well.

Lastly, the cat animal symbolism is about mystery. Unfortunately, its unpredictability has given the cat a bad name in some areas of folk lore, specifically witchcraft. When, in actuality, this is an asset that can be harnessed by us humans.

Sometimes displaying very strange behavior and antics, you can never really pin a cat down.

Simply put, the cat animal symbolism is synonymous with creativity and psychic power because of its sometimes unorthodox & "mysterious" behavior. This is also reflected in the Tarot, as we see the cat in the Queen of Wands card.

The good news is, this mystery is a message to us that we have the power over illusion. Cat animal symbolism reminds us to not fall prey to false beliefs, to not be a fool out of ignorance and derive understanding from our own internal wisdom. The cat beckons us to realize that when we turn within to our own hearts, minds and souls, and trust in ourselves we will always be shown the truth of matters.

Cat urban legends

The Dead Cat in the Package

THE DILLARDS THIEF-- in San Antonio, Texas

This is too funny! This could only be true, you can't make this stuff up.

Clutching their Dillard's shopping bags, Ellen and Kay woefully gazed down at a dead cat in the mall parking lot. Obviously a recent hit---no flies, no smell.

"What business could that poor kitty have had here?" murmured Ellen. "Come on, Ellen, let's just go..." But Ellen had already grabbed her shopping bag and was explaining, "I'll just put my things in your bag, and then I'll take the tissue." She dumped her purchases into Kay's bag and then used the tissue paper to cradle and lower the former feline into her own Dillard's bag and cover it.

They continued the short trek to the car in silence, stashing their goods in the trunk. But it occurred to both of them that if they left Ellen's burial bag in the trunk, warmed by the Texas sunshine while they ate, Kay's Lumina would soon lose that new-car smell. They decided to leave the bag on top of the trunk, and they headed over to Luby's Cafeteria.

After they cleared the serving line and sat down at a window table, they had a view of Kay's Chevy with the Dillard's bag still on the trunk. BUT not for long. As they ate, they noticed a black-haired woman in a red gingham shirt stroll by their car, look quickly this way and that, and then hook the Dillard's bag without breaking stride. She quickly walked out of their line of vision. Kay and Ellen shot each other a wide-eyed look of amazement. It all happened so fast that neither of them could think how to respond. "Can you imagine?" finally sputtered Ellen. "The nerve of that woman!" Kay sympathized with Ellen, but inwardly a laugh was building as she thought about the grand surprise awaiting the red-gingham thief. Just when she thought she'd have to giggle into her napkin, she noticed Ellen's eyes freeze in the direction of the serving line. Following her gaze, Kay recognized with a shock the black-haired woman with the Dillard's bag, THE Dillard's bag, hanging from her arm, brazenly pushing her tray toward the cashier.

Helplessly they watched the scene unfold: After clearing the register, the woman settled at a table across from theirs, put the bag on an empty chair and began to eat. After a few bites of baked whitefish and green beans, she casually lifted the bag into her lap to survey her treasure. Looking from side to side, but not far enough to notice her rapt audience three tables over, she pulled out the tissue paper and peered into the bag. Her eyes widened, and she began to make a sort of gasping noise. The noise grew. The bag slid from her lap as she sank to the floor, wheezing and clutching her upper chest.

The beverage cart attendant quickly recognized a customer in trouble and sent the busboy to call 911, while she administered the Heimlich maneuver. A crowd quickly gathered that did not include Ellen and Kay, who remained riveted to their chairs for seven whole minutes until the ambulance arrived.

In a matter of minutes the curly-haired woman emerged from the crowd, still gasping, strapped securely on a gurney. Two well-trained EMS volunteers steered her to the waiting ambulance, while a third scooped up her belongings.

The last they saw of the distressed cat-burglar, she disappeared behind the ambulance doors, the Dillard's bag perched on her stomach.

Analysis: *This classic urban legend, known to folklorists as "The Dead Cat in the Package," refuses to die a quiet death even though it's at least a century old, as San Francisco's venerated*

newspaper columnist Herb Caen observed in 1963:

The Story of the Dead Cat: a woman, for reasons unexplained, places her dead cat in a shoebox and, on the way to bury it, stops in a downtown department store. (Why?) As she is shopping, she places the box on a counter, and it disappears. A few minutes later, the store detective finds a lady shoplifter passed out in the powder room, the open shoebox on her lap. I first printed that in 1938 — it was hoary then — and it reappears in somebody's column at least once a year, as gospel.

The email version above, noteworthy for its down-home details like topping off a day of shopping at Dillard's with lunch at Luby's Cafeteria, has been circulating on the Internet since 1998.

A new variant, in which it is claimed that muggers in Austria stole a woman's handbag containing the corpse of her beloved pet rabbit, appeared in



Cat superstitions

- *Dreaming of white cat means good luck. - American superstition*
- *To see a white cat on the road is lucky. - American superstition*
- *It is bad luck to see a white cat at night. - American superstition*
- *If a cat washes behind its ears, it will rain. - English superstition*
- *A strange black cat on your porch brings prosperity. - Scottish superstition*
- *A cat sneezing is a good omen for everyone who hears it. - Italian superstition*
- *A cat sleeping with all four paws tucked under means cold weather ahead. - English superstition*
- *When moving to a new home, always put the cat through the window instead of the door, so that it will not leave. - American superstition*
- *When you see a one-eyed cat, spit on your thumb, stamp it in the palm of your hand, and make a wish. The wish will come true. - American superstition*
- *In the Netherlands, cats were not allowed in rooms where private family discussions were going on. The Dutch believed that cats would definitely spread gossips around the town. - Netherlands superstition*
- *To reverse the bad luck curse of a black cat crossing your path, first walk in a circle, then go backward across the spot where it happened and count to 13.*
- *English schoolchildren believed seeing a white cat on the way to school was sure to bring trouble. To prevent the bad luck, they were to spit or turn around completely and make the sign of the cross.*
- *Charles I, king of England, owned a black cat that he felt brought him luck. He was so afraid of losing it that he had it guarded day and night. As it happened, the day after the cat died, he was arrested.*
- *A cat sneezing is a good omen for everyone who hears it. - Italian superstition*
- *Dreaming of a cat is sometimes regarded as a sign of bad luck in the future. On the other hand, American folklore has it that dreaming of a white cat is good luck.*

- *In England, it was believed that if a black cat lived in the house, the young lass would have plenty of suitors.*
- *In France, it is believed that if you find one white hair on a black cat, Lady Luck will smile upon you.*
- *In Yorkshire, England, while it is lucky to own a black cat, it is extremely unlucky to come across one accidentally.*
- *In the early 16th century, a visitor to an English home would always kiss the family cat to bring good luck.*
- *In the Dark Ages, a cat was mortared, while still alive, into the foundation of a building to ensure good luck to the inhabitants.*
- *If a black cat crosses your path while your driving, turn your hat around backwards and mark an X on your windshield to prevent bad luck.*
- *It is bad luck to cross a stream carrying a cat. - French superstition*
- *Fishermen's wives kept a black cat at home to prevent disaster at sea.*
- *It is bad luck to see a white cat at night. - American superstition*
- *To see a white cat on the road is lucky. - American superstition*
- *Fisherman's wives kept black cats while their husbands went away to sea. They believed that the black cats would prevent danger from occurring to their husbands. These black cats were considered so valuable that they were often stolen.*
- *It is considered bad luck to pass a black cat after 9 pm*
- *In North America, it's bad luck if a black cat crosses your path and good luck if a white cat crosses your path. In Britain and Ireland, it's the opposite.*
- *If a black cat walks towards you, it brings good fortune, but if it walks away, it takes the good luck with it.*

Romanian proverbs and sayings

That which does not lick fresh milk is not a cat.

A cat will always steal-licking milk with her eyes closed pretending she is not stealing it.

While eating its baby, a cat pretends it is a mouse.

A scalded cat will always avoid cold water too.

However much a cat would like to eat fish, she will never wet its paws to catch it.

An old cat in the house is an invitation for cohorts of mice.

A smith's cat never fears noises.

As she wants you to notice her/ She will always purr.

A mouse will always say a cat is a tiger toy.

(Florin Rotaru)-epigram/ A cruel fearless lion,/Married a cat./Today at their 50s

sunset,/He miaous and she roars.

(aforism by Valeriu Butulescu)/ To children's joy, cats are provided with tails.

Famous quotations

There is no such thing as "just a cat".

Robert A. Heinlein

If you are worthy of its affection, a cat will be your friend but never your slave.

Theophile Gautier

Cats can work out mathematically the exact place to sit that will cause most inconvenience.

Pam Brown

Cats love fish, but won't touch the water.

Roman saying

After scolding one's cat one looks into its face and is seized by the ugly suspicion that it understood every word. And has filed it for reference.

Charlotte Gray

Cats are a mysterious kind of folk. There is more passing in their minds than we are aware of.

Sir Walter Scott

Cats do care. For example they know instinctively what time we have to be at work in the morning and they wake us up twenty minutes before the alarm goes off.

Michael Nelson

Artists like cats; soldiers like dogs.

Desmond Morris

I had been told that the training procedure with cats was difficult. It's not. Mine had me trained in two days.

Bill Dana

Sleeping together is a euphemism for people, but tantamount to marriage with cats.

Marge Percy

If there is one spot of sun spilling onto the floor, a cat will find it and soak it up.

J.A. McIntosh

The reason cats climb is so that they can look down on almost every other animal....it's also the reason they hate birds.

K.C. Buffington

The cat is the only animal without visible means of support who still manages to find a living in the city.

Carl van Vechten

People who love cats have some of the biggest hearts around.

Susan Easterly

The cat does not offer services. The cat offers itself. Of course he wants care and shelter. You don't buy love for nothing. Like all pure creatures, cats are practical.

William S. Burroughs

He seems the incarnation of everything soft and silky and velvety, without a sharp edge

in his composition, a dreamer whose philosophy is sleep and let sleep.

Saki

I believe cats to be spirits come to earth. A cat, I am sure, could walk on a cloud without coming through.

Jules Verne

Cat people are different to the extent that they generally are not conformists. How could they be with a cat running their lives?

Louis J. Camuti

The cat could very well be man's best friend but would never stoop to admitting it.

Doug Larson

In the beginning, God created man, but seeing him so feeble, He gave him the cat.

Warren Eckstein

A cat is more intelligent than people believe, and can be taught any crime.

Mark Twain

One of the oldest human needs is having someone to wonder where you are when you don't come home at night.

Margaret Mead

I think all cats are wild. They only act tame if there's a saucer of milk in it for them.

Douglas Adams

Siamese Cats have a way of staring at you. Those who have walked in on the Queen cleaning her teeth will know the expression.

Douglas Adams

I gave my cat a bath the other day... They love it. He sat there, he enjoyed it, it was fun

for me. The fur would stick to my tongue, but other than that...

Steve Martin

I simply can't resist a cat, particularly a purring one. They are the cleanest, cunningest, and most intelligent things I know, outside of the girl you love, of course.

Mark Twain

Of all God's creatures there is only one that cannot be made the slave of the leash. That one is the cat. If man could be crossed with the cat it would improve man, but it would deteriorate the cat.

Mark Twain

You can keep a dog; but it is the cat who keeps people, because cats find humans useful domestic animals.

George Mikes

Dogs come when they're called. Cats take a message and get back to you.

Mary Bly

For a man to truly understand rejection, he must first be ignored by a cat.

I love cats because I love my home and after a while they become its visible soul.

Jean Cocteau

There are two means of refuge from the misery of life - music and cats.

Albert Schweitzer

There are few things in life more heart-warming than to be welcomed by a cat.

Tay Hohoff

God made the cat in order that humankind might have the pleasure of caressing the tiger.

Fernand Mery

Cats are smarter than dogs. You can't get eight cats to pull a sled through snow.

Jeff Valdez

Way down deep, we're all motivated by the same urges. Cats have the courage to live by them.

Jim Davis

There is, incidentally, no way of talking about cats that enables one to come off as a sane person.

Dan Greenberg

The smallest feline is a masterpiece.

Leonardo da Vinci

Cats regard people as warm-blooded furniture.

Jacquelyn Mitchard

If you want to be a psychological novelist and write about human beings, the best thing you can do is keep a pair of cats.

Aldous Huxley

In a cat's eye, all things belong to cats.

English Proverb

Beware of people who dislike cats.

Irish Proverb

You will always be lucky if you know how to make friends with strange cats.

Colonial American Proverb

With the qualities of cleanliness, affection, patience, dignity, and courage that cats have, how many of us, I ask you, would be capable of becoming cats?

Fernand Mery

I like pigs. Dogs look up to us. Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals.

Winston Churchill

I have studied many philosophers and many cats. The wisdom of cats is infinitely superior.

Hippolyte Taine

A meow massages the heart.

Stuart McMillan

No matter how much cats fight, there always seems to be plenty of kittens.

Abraham Lincoln

Dogs believe they are human. Cats believe they are God.

The cat has too much spirit to have no heart.

Ernest Menaul

Time spent with cats is never wasted.

Women and cats will do as they please, and men and dogs should relax and get used to the idea.

No heaven will not ever be Heaven be; Unless my cats are there to welcome me.

How we behave toward cats here below determines our status in heaven.

Robert A. Heinlein

Dogs have owners, cats have staff.

It is impossible to keep a straight face in the presence of one or more kittens.

Cynthia E. Varnado

Thousands of years ago, cats were worshipped as gods. Cats have never forgotten this.

There are many intelligent species in the universe. They are all owned by cats.

No amount of time can erase the memory of a good cat, and no amount of masking tape can ever totally remove his fur from your couch.

Leo Dworken

One cat just leads to another.

Ernest Hemingway

As every cat owner knows, nobody owns a cat.

Ellen Perry Berkeley

People, who hate cats, will come back as mice in their next life.

Faith Resnick

One reason we admire cats is for their proficiency in one-upmanship. They always seem to come out on top, no matter what they are doing, or pretend they do.

Barbara Webster

I have noticed that what cats most appreciate in a human being is not the ability to produce food which they take for granted--but his or her entertainment value.

Geoffrey Household

As anyone who has ever been around a cat for any length of time well knows cats have enormous patience with the limitations of the human kind.

Cleveland Amory

If animals could speak the dog would be a blundering outspoken fellow, but the cat would have the rare grace of never saying a word too much.

Mark Twain

If cats could talk, they wouldn't.

Nan Porter

Cats are rather delicate creatures and they are subject to a good many ailments, but I never heard of one who suffered from insomnia.

Joseph Wood Krutch

The problem with cats is that they get the exact same look on their face whether they see a moth or an axe-murderer.

Paula Poundstone

Your cat will never threaten your popularity by barking at three in the morning. He won't attack the mailman or eat the drapes, although he may climb the drapes to see how the room looks from the ceiling.

Helen Powers

Those who will play with cats must expect to be scratched.

Cervantes

It's better to feed one cat than many mice.

Norwegian Proverb

Esoteric Dog

What People Think and Remember

Urban Legends : The Choking Doberman

The Mexican Pet

Family Dog Leads Wife to the Home of the Husband's Mistress

Proverbs from Bulgaria

Proverbs from Romania

Romanian Superstitions

Romanian evil Beasts and Spirit

Dog urban legends

The Choking Doberman

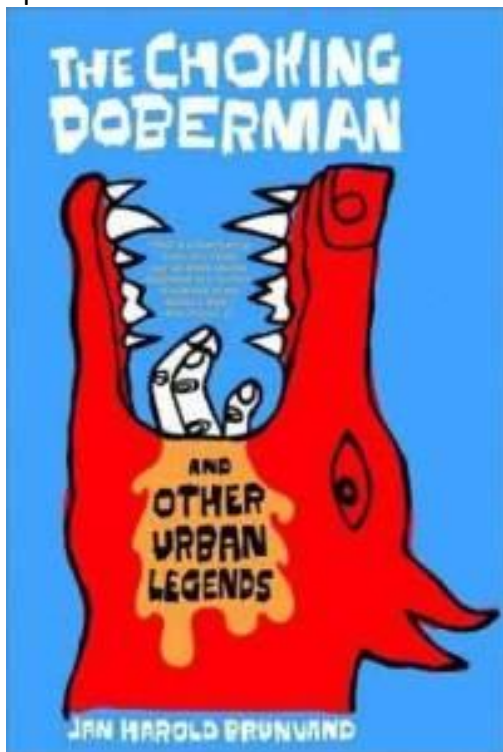
My cousin and his wife lived in Sydney with this huge Doberman in a little apartment off Maroubra Road. One night they went out for dinner and a spot of clubbing. By the time they got home it was late and my cousin was more than a little drunk. They got in the door and were greeted by the dog choking to death in the lounge room.

My cousin just fainted, but his wife rang the veterinarian, who was an old family friend of hers, and got her to agree to meet her at the surgery. The wife drives over and drops off the dog, but decides that she'd better go home and get her hubby into bed.

She gets home and finally slaps my cousin into consciousness, but he's still drunk. It takes her almost half an hour to get him up the stairs, and then the phone rings. She's tempted to just leave it, but she decides that it must be important or they wouldn't be ringing that late at night.

As soon as she picks up the phone, she hears the vet's voice screaming out:

"Thank God I got you in time! Leave the house! Now! No time to explain!" Then the vet hangs up.



Because she's such an old family friend, the wife trusts her, and so she starts getting the hubby down the stairs and out of the house. By the time they've made it all the way out, the police are outside. They rush up the front stairs past the couple and into the house, but my cousin's wife still doesn't have a clue what's going on.

The vet shows up and says, "Have they got him? Have they got him?"

"Have they got who?" says the wife, starting to get really pissed off.

"Well, I found out what the dog was choking on – it was a human finger."

Just then the police drag out a dirty, stubbly man who is bleeding profusely from one hand. "Hey Sarge," one of them yells. "We found him in the bedroom."

Analysis: "The Choking Doberman" has circulated in more or less this form for at least three decades, on as many continents. In his book of the same title, folklorist Jan Harold Brunvand cites a plethora of known variants, including a British version dating back to 1973. The legend became hugely popular in the United States during the early 1980s. It was published as an allegedly firsthand account in an American tabloid called *The Globe* in 1981, though subsequent research revealed that the pseudonymous author ("Gayla Crabtree") had actually heard the story secondhand in a beauty parlor.

Folklorists believe "The Choking Doberman" is a descendant of a much older (perhaps as old as the Renaissance) European folktale about a clumsy thief whose hand is either injured or amputated while committing a crime, marking him as the perpetrator. Among other interpretations it can be read as a "just deserts" tale in which the criminal, as a result of his own actions, undergoes a punishment appropriate to the crime.

The Mexican Pet

This woman and her husband go to Mexico. Outside their motel room, the lady notices a strange-looking small doggie. She feeds it for a couple of nights and eventually she lets the dog sleep in the room with them. She falls in love with this ugly, but adorable pooch and decides to take it home at the end of their vacation.

She carries the animal in a blanket onto a bus that is taking them to the airport. The new pet is licking her face as she snuggles with it. She notices a local older man on the bus looking at her. She asks the man if he knows what possible breed of dog she has grown to love. He tells her that it's not a dog she is cuddling, but it is actually a large type of Mexican rat.

Example:

As told by Lorraine Lovely...

This story was told to my husband by one of the truck drivers at work. It is supposed to be true, but then someone told him that he found it on the internet. I have not been able to confirm it.... The truck driver's wife works in Boston on the docks where this little white dog comes around at noon and everyone feeds it a little something from their lunch. The wife went home and asked her husband if he would mind if she got a dog. She told him about the stray that everyone has been feeding. He said that he didn't think she wanted a dog. She said it would be nice company since he was away from home a lot, so he agreed.

She went to work the next day and the dog did not show up, but the next day the dog was there. Everyone gave him something to eat and she coaxed the dog into her car and brought him home. She washed, cleaned and bathed him, and the dog slept with her the bed that night and the next night.

The next day she came home from work and found the dog had eaten her cat. The only thing left of the cat was the skull. There was no blood anywhere. She called the veterinarian who told her to bring the dog right in. He could not do anything for the cat, but the bones from the cat

could do injury to the dog.

She brought the dog right in and was in the waiting room when the nurse (assistant) asked her to step into one of the rooms immediately!! When she got in the room the vet asked her where she got the dog and she told her it was a stray she found where she works near the docks in Boston.

The vet told her she had to kill it immediately — that it was not a dog, but a 40-pound Cambodian rat that came in from one of the ships in the harbor. The rat was so big that it looked liked a small dog with a little snub tail.

Example:

As told by Matt Stone...

My best friend told me of this story. Supposedly true — it happened to them....

His family had just purchased a small puppy. They had only had it for a week or so and decided to take it to the beach with them. When they arrived, they found out that they could not take the puppy onto the public beach because of a city ordinance. Instead of traveling back home to leave the puppy or leaving it in a hot car, they left it on its leash... tied to the car.

After a few hours, they came back to the car to discover that someone had stolen their puppy. The leash and collar were still there, tied to the car. They searched all around the parking lot for the puppy. No luck. They did, however, find another scruffy looking dog wandering the lot with no collar. Instead of leaving with no pet, they decided to give the mutt a home.

They brought it home and kept it in the house with them for a week. They then decided to take the dog to the vet to get his shots, etc. Upon examining the dog, the vet made two discoveries: Their new pet was not a dog, but a large dock rat.

Their puppy was not missing, but had been eaten by the rat.

Analysis: A variant of this legend long told in Europe is called "The Turkish Pet," a testament to the fact that no matter where in the world it may turn up, the story conveys a xenophobic message: beware of foreign lands and all the strange and scary things that come from them. Death is a frequent motif in telling of this legend — the misidentified "dog" either kills another family pet, for example, is found to be dying from some unpleasant disease, or ends up drowning in the toilet.

Family dog leads wife to the home of her husband's mistress

Then there was the husband who was in the habit of taking the family dog for a nice long walk each evening. It was good exercise for both of them, his wife felt, and the dog became so used to the routine that it positively drooled to be taken out on schedule every night.

So when her husband was sick one evening, the wife took the dog out instead. And to her surprise the dog pulled vigorously at the leash and led her around the block to a house around the corner and began to scratch at the door. A female voice called out, "I won't be a minute, darling."

Soon the door was opened by an attractive young woman in a negligee, and the dog dashed in straight to a dish of meat that was waiting for him — as usual.

Origins: Sometimes

works of fiction are afterwards remembered as events that happened to real people. That is the case here — the 1930 Colette short story *La Chienne* (The Bitch) has become an urban legend in that its plot is often now related as a string of events that befell someone the teller almost knows (his sister's best friend's mechanic, in other words). In *La Chienne*, a soldier on leave during World War I takes his fiancée's dog for a walk. The pooch immediately leads him to a strange house wherein (it is implied) the girl is in the arms of her other lover.

A typical "adulterer caught" legend, this one features the irony of human infidelity being revealed by "man's best friend."

Dog proverbs from Bulgaria

- Feed the dog so that he can bark at you later. (When you have done a lot for someone and he has turned out to be not very thankful afterwards.)
- A dog that barks doesn't bite. (Who talks a lot will never have enough bravery to do something)
- The dogs are barking, the caravan is going on. (When things are going all right despite the critics.)
- To pull a knife at the face of a dead dog. (When you see someone is weaker than you but still you want to make him suffer.)
- The fast bitch bears blind dogs. (= Haste makes waste.)

Romanian Proverbs about Dogs

- (Valeriu Butulescu)/ In India, dogs still bark with an British accent.
- Everybody will ignore a dog that barks all the time.
- Good chees in a dog skin bag .(about clever but rude people).
- (Teodor Musatescu –aforism)/ He was so greedy that he was barking at night to save a dog's cost.
- (Inteleciune.ro)A dog sitting in the kitchen is not good at hunting.
- A dog may die because of a long walk and stupid people die worrying about other's business.
- A dog will not enter a house unless the door is open.
- A hungry dog will dream bones.

- Dogs never bark at a good man.
- Old friend, old dog. (lifelong friendships)
- Dog's teeth are good for a wolf's flesh.
- That who has been bitten by a dog, fears even its barking.
- Just don't trust all dogs wagging their tails.
- Not even dogs want a clean bone .
- Don't anger a well behaved dog.
- Don't look into the dog's mouth, but into its master's
- There is not just one dog with a short tail.
- Horses don't die when dogs want them to , neither servants when their masters wish.
- Don't throw stones at a barking dog.
- Any dog is bold at its own gate.
- A lazy dog will never be fed .
- A well fed dog will not run away for no reason from its master's door.
- A dog friendly with wolves will not a good watch for the herd
- A fluffy dog will warm only itself.
- Fear the silent dog and the quiet man.
- (aforism- Boris Marian Mehr)There is neither village without dogs nor dogs without a village.
- Normal dog packs are lead by shepherd dogs not by a twerps.
- (Vasile Ghica) . Some regimes neither allow dog killing nor making the bone larger.
- http://issuu.com/eurolibris/docs/c_-_despre_caini# excellent for Children – translation upon request by partners.

Romanian superstitions

Vampire-According to Romanian old beliefs, sick and dead people need being watched by their relatives while they are still in the house. Otherwise they may become vampires provided a cat or a dog jumps over the sick/dead body. Moreover, while carrying the deceased to the grave, under any circumstances a dog should not be allowed to pass under the coffin or the dead person will become a vampire.

Death & Evil- According to some Romanian popular superstitions, Evil most often finds a welcoming nest in a black or red dog's body. One should fear black and red dogs, then. Romanian superstitions also relate dogs to hell and death. They herald death : „when a dog howls, one will die in that household or those living there will soon leave for ever”. Another superstition says that the dead will not receive the alms of their relatives if a dog jumps over the table” and it's a sign of death when a dog snarls.

Building on its main function in the household, that of a watch dog, people believe dogs are able to sense evil spirits and warn people : „When a dog barks in the night, evil spirits prowl about the house”.

Cures -Old traditional cures include a dog's skull burnt and ground into fine powder mixed with

fruit homemade brandy as a remedy for abdominal rupture ; they also talk about a good bath in an infusion where a dog's head had been boiled to heal erysipelas

Romanian evil beasts and spirits in fairy tales

CAPCAUN

In the Romanian online dictionary CAPCAUN (kinokefalos) is described as a dog that according to the Romanian traditional mythology is an extraordinary beast with a man's body and a dog's head, sometimes with two heads and two mouths, that eat human beings. It is still used to describe cruel, wicked and savage people.

GHINION - The hoo-doo

A baby is always born with his/her own luck in the world of the „lucks”. The opposite of luck is the hoo-doo embodied by a dog or black cat , or by a stygma person (bald headed, with red hair, limpy, etc) . The hood –doo can give human beings the evil eye. Romanian tales collected by Petre Ispirescu are populated with such creatures and spirits.

Cats in the Project Countries

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Cats in the Project countries

ENGLAND

How cats got their purr

(Traditional British Fairy Tale)

There once lived a king and queen who longed for a baby daughter. Finally, just as they were giving up hope, the queen bore a girl child and the king and queen were the happiest people on earth. Only one thing marred their contentment. A gypsy witch had read the queen's fortune in return for some food from the royal kitchen and she had predicted that the child would be a girl. The gypsy had given the queen a dire warning and in anger the king had driven the old crone from his land. The old woman's warning weighed heavily on their hearts.

The old witch had said: "You will bear a daughter and she will be strong and healthy. However, she will fall dead if she ever gives her hand in marriage to a prince. Heed my advice. Find three pure white cats, with not a single white hair upon them, and let them grow up with your child. Give the cats balls of two types to play with - balls of gold and balls of linen thread. If they ignore the gold and play with the linen, all will be well, but should they ignore the linen and choose the gold, beware!"

The king sent out a royal decree and his subjects offered him cats and kittens of all types - tabby cats, ginger tomcats, tortoiseshell mother cats still nursing their kittens; he was offered black kittens, grey kittens and ginger kittens. These entire he sent away again, being only interested in three pure cats. After years of searching, three white cats without a single white hair were duly found and though they came from different places, they became good friends. The three cats loved their young mistress and she adored them. As the months turned into years, the linen balls continued to be the only toys the cats chose to play with. The gold balls lay dusty and forgotten.

When the princess grew old enough to learn how to spin the cats were happy as she was. They leaped at the wheel as it turned and at the thread as the princess spun it, behaving like kittens. She begged her playful cats to leave things alone but they ignored her and continued to play gaily. The queen was so happy that the cats played only with the linen balls and never with the gold balls that she simply laughed at their antics and frolics.

At sixteen years old, the princess was very beautiful. Princes from neighboring kingdoms and further afield asked her hand in marriage, but she remained indifferent to them all. She was content to live with her three beloved cats. One day, however, a prince arrived who was good and charming, wise and handsome, kind and virtuous and the princess fell deeply in love with him. Though he brought her gifts and visited often, he never once asked for her hand in marriage. One day she could bear it no longer and she confessed her love for him. Delighted and surprise, he expressed his own love for her.

The three white cats were in the tower room playing with the linen balls, but no sooner had the prince and princess professed their love for each other, than the cats seemed to notice the gold

balls for the first time ever and began to play with them. In horror, servants reported the dire news to the king and queen. However, it wasn't the princess who was struck down but the prince. He became gravely ill and nothing the physicians did could ease or cure whatever malady had struck him down.

In desperation the princess sought the gypsy who had made the prophecy about the cats and balls. The gypsy witch told her that there was only one way to save the prince. The princess must spin ten thousand skeins of pure white linen thread before midwinter's day. It was an impossible task - only 27 days remained before midwinter's day. No hand but hers could spin the thread and if she spun but one skein too few, or one too many, the prince would die at midwinter. The princess rushed to her spinning wheel and worked steadily day after day, but after only a few days she knew she could never spin ten thousand skeins. She burst into tears and her three cats sat by her feet to comfort and console her.

"If you only knew what was wrong I know you'd help me if you could," she said to the three silent white cats at her feet.

To her amazement, one of the three placed its front paws on her knee, stared into the princess's face, opened its mouth and spoke to her: "We know what is needed and we know how to help you," it said. "Cats have no hands, only paws, so we can do the spinning for you and it will not break the terms of the prophecy. Now we must get to work for there is little time left."

And so it was that the three white cats began to spin, each at a wheel provided for it. Each spun rapidly and beautifully. All day the three wheels hummed and when they were silent as evening came the princess looked into the room to find her beloved cats sound asleep next to hundreds of skeins of thread. The days passed and the skeins increased in number. Each time a skein was finished, the prince's health improved and the princess grew more hopeful. On midwinter's eve ten thousand skeins were ready and the prince was almost well.

The gypsy was amazed and pleased at the cats' work though she had been cheated of a life. She told the princess to be sure and show her gratitude to her faithful cats. The princess loved her cats well and wisely and she gave them all her glittering jewels, which they had always loved to play with. On her wedding day, they sat in places of honour on magnificent velvet cushions, each cat with a necklace of precious stones around its neck.

As the feast continued, the three cats curled up contentedly on their cushions and - as cats are wont to do - fell asleep. From all three came loud, contented purring. This was the reward the cats had received for their work. Though no cat would ever again speak, all cats would purr like the whirr and hum of a spinning wheel. From that day to this cats have continued to purr whenever they feel contented.

The cat that suck out the air from a baby

I wonder if you can shed any light on the old wives' tale that cats can suck the air out of babies. My daughter-in-law's mother (a RN) says that cats get in the bed with babies and lick their mouths and then suck the air out of them and the babies die.

Well, it's false, obviously. Take a close look at the shape of any cat's mouth and you can see it would have a devil of a time sucking the breath out of a baby (or anything else that breathes).

Maybe they taught something different in your daughter-in-law's mother's nursing school, but if you ask me it's not felinely possible.

According to some versions of this old superstition, breath-sucking cats are attracted to infants by the scent of milk. Animal experts say that's bunk. Cats are curious by nature and love to curl up next to other warm bodies. If the cat's in the cradle, it probably isn't looking for anything other than a comfy place to snooze.

The notion that cats can suck the breath out of babies dates back hundreds of years. It probably originated in medieval beliefs associating felines with evil spirits and witchcraft.

Personal Stories

Christine (70+) My Sri Lankan cat story

I lived for 4 years in Sri Lanka whilst I was growing up and whilst there I “inherited” a cat – I do not remember where he came from, but he was the most beautiful silver tabby cat. I loved him like no other. However, our Cook did not like cats and if he caught the cat in his kitchen his toe and the cat used to connect and out went the cat !! I was broken-hearted when it came time to come home to UK because my father said I could not bring the cat back. The quarantine laws then were very strict, so for months – along with bicycles which had to be re-homed, so did the cat. I tried everywhere to get someone on the camp to have my cat. Eventually, I was left with no alternative but to leave him with the cook (who hated him) and hope that Sabu would find a home quickly. It was one of my worst experiences to see as the camp bus took us away I looked back to see the cook holding the cat in his arms and my father (who could be quite cruel) saying “that cat wont last long with Sabu, he will kick it into the jungle as soon as we have turned the corner”. So I always wondered what happened to my beautiful cat.

The story does not end there In 2005 it was our Ruby Wedding Anniversary and sitting around with friends they asked me if money were no object what would I do for our Anniversary. Without hesitating I said “go back to Sri Lanka, to see” Bearing in mind this is nearly 50 years later, a Tsunami and 30 years of Civil War, my husband granted my wish and we returned to Sri Lanka. It was very difficult getting permission to go back to the Camp in Negombo because they were still at war with the Tamil Tigers and our former camp now belonged to the Sri Lankan Air Force and was heavily guarded. However, another long story but our Tourist Guide, a lovely lovely Sri Lankan man got permission and back we went. I asked if I could see the Cinema (where we spent many many hours) the Swimming Pool (where we also spent many hours cooling off in the heat of the day) my school (all still standing, and exactly as I had left 50 years before) and finally the bungalow where we had lived. The Sri Lankan Air Force man who had to accompany us said our bungalow would probably not be there now, there had been so many alterations over the years, but there it was, I walked around what had been our kitchen, and stood in the front garden, my husband suddenly shouted – I turned around, and there was a silver tabby. Not my cat of course – not even a cat can live 50 years – but obviously a descendant of MY cat – at least I like to believe.

Christine (70+) Whisky, the cat's story

We had a little cat once a few years ago, ginger & white, he was beautiful; such a pretty cat, but

we meant him to be an “indoor” cat. We were a bit worried about how he would get on with Shayne, but she very quickly realised that (as cats do) he was a bit of a menace meddling with things; his favourite place was to retreat under and up into the old radiogram we had under the window. Shayne got so used to me saying “where is that cat and what is he doing?”. She would crawl under the radiogram, grab him by the head, and deposit him at my feet. She was so gentle, although the story sounds horrendous, that he never felt a thing and got quite used to be carried around by the head. Unfortunately, the only night he went out and did not return was the night before I took my driving test. I was worried about the cat and mentioned to my neighbour that Whisky had not come back when called, my neighbours found him dead on the main road through the village on the morning of my test; they did not want me upset with my test in a few hours time that they collected him and buried him in one of their gardens, so I never actually saw him again. But I think of him often, and some of his antics.

The queen and the horse

At Heathrow Airport in England, a 300-foot red carpet was stretched out to Air Force One and President Bush strode to a warm but dignified handshake from Queen Elizabeth II. They rode in a silver 1934 Bentley to the edge of central London where they boarded an open 17th century coach hitched to six magnificent white horses. As they rode toward Buckingham Palace, each looking to their side and waving to the thousands of cheering Britons lining the streets, all was going well. This was indeed a glorious display of pageantry and dignity. Suddenly the scene was shattered when the right rear horse let rip the most horrendous, earth-shattering, eye-smarting blast of flatulence, and the coach immediately filled with noxious fumes.

Uncomfortable, but maintaining control, the two dignitaries did their best to ignore the whole incident, but then the Queen decided that was a ridiculous manner with which to handle a most embarrassing situation. She turned to Mr. Bush and explained, "Mr. President, please accept my regrets. I'm sure you understand that there are some things even a Queen cannot control." George W., ever the Texas gentleman, replied, "Your Majesty, please don't give the matter another thought. You know, if you hadn't said something I would have assumed it was one of the horses."

Romania

Legend of Noah

Poland

The pussy willow

The Pussy Willow plant actually got its name from an old Polish cat myth. The myth goes as follows:

One day, a mother cat was sitting on a river bank, sobbing because her kittens had fallen into the rushing water and were sure to drown because she couldn't get to them. Hearing her

piteous cries, the long reeds on the shore felt sorry for her.

Taking pity on the mother cat, the reeds bent over so that the kittens could grab onto their long leaves and stalks, saving themselves and giving the mother cat back her precious babies.

Ever since, the helpful reeds have grown beautiful velvety blooms atop their stalks, both as a reward and as a reminder of the tiny kittens that clung to them in order to save their lives. The name Pussy Willow refers to those velvety little blooms.

A Polish protector

In ancient Poland, Ovinnik, who appeared in the form of a black cat, was worshipped by many farming families because he watched over domestic animals and chased away evil-natured ghosts and mischievous fairies. (Like most creatures of Slavonic mythology, they were great until you didn't appreciate them or give them what they needed -- then they did things like make mischief that could have tragic results.)

Bad barking barn demon

He seems to bear some kind of incomprehensible grudge against threshing barns. He is always setting them on fire. What a horrible trick to play on a hard-working farmer.

If you see a black cat-like figure with glowing eyes which barks like a dog, keep away from the barn. Unless you've come to fill up his bowl. A decent offering of pancakes will keep him at bay.

Bulgaria

The Cat and the Stupid Peasants

A trader, coming back after business, found a cat on the road, starving and very weak. He took her, so that she would not suffer. In the evening he reached a village. There were a lot of mice. He stayed to sleep in an inn, let the cat free and she drowned all mice.

The next day the villagers gathered in the pub for a drink and did not see any mice, while earlier there were so many mice that they climbed on the table and licked of their glasses. They asked the innkeeper how he got rid of the mice.

- I gave them wine to drink, so they overslept - the landlord laughed.

Then he told them about the trader and his cat.

- Wow, what a good hunter! If only we could buy such an animal to clean our village of mice.

- I can sell you my cat - the trader said. - But she is very expensive.

- How much do you want? – The villagers began to bargain.

- Well, cover the cat with money and that will be the price.

The villagers agreed. They took out money and began to cover the cat. They showered the animal with money but the trader lifted the cat a little bit and they threw more money. The dealer then lifted up her tail and said:

- Here, bury it. That's what she needs most for hunting mice.

The villagers gave the trader a few saddlebags with money and he went and left the cat. The villagers, being stupid people, thought about it and it occurred to them that they did not ask the merchant what food to give the cat. They bolted after him and when he saw them he thought that they chase him for the money, because he lied to them, and he poked his horse to run. He raced and the villagers ran after him and shouted:

- Hey, hold on, man! Tell us what to feed your cat!

- With beef stew – the trader called back.

The villagers understood 'with you' and got frightened.

- If she is going to eat us, it will not do! – they said. – We'll do away with the cat.

They went back to the inn and sat aside. No one dared to approach the cat. After a while one of them ventured, took a chair and smashed it down on her. The cat escaped to the barn.

- What do we do now? – the villagers asked. - Tonight the cat will come and smother us! What to do to kill her?

The villagers jumped up, grabbed sticks and axes and started to hammer on the door of the barn and on the tiles, but the cat was nowhere to be seen.

- Why do we wonder, brothers? - the priest said. - Let light barn. A barn is not worth as much as we do.

No sooner said than done. They set the barn to fire. The smoke rose to heaven. The cat got warm, the flames began to hug her and, without looking, she threw herself at the door. And those who stood at the door got frightened, dropped their sticks and fled in different directions. The cat jumped on the shoulder of one of the villagers. He fell unconscious and the others thought he had taken position as a soldier and they threw themselves on the ground, too. The cat ran away, went to the church, and got on top of the beams. The villagers sent one of the most intrepid of them to look from afar what the scary animal was doing. He went and peered through the window. The cat was squatting on a beam, licking her feet and wiping her eyes. The fearless peasant thought she was threatening him and fled. The others asked him:

- What is the cat doing?

- Let it alone! – he answered. – The cat is threatening us! ... 'If I go out, no one will remain alive!' says she.

So, that is how the cat saved herself from the stupid peasants.

The Kitty and the Lion

A kitty bothered a lot his master, and once he took the kitten and left it in the woods. There a lion found the cat. He examined the kitten on all sides, he wondered, and then he said:

- You look like and can be of our nation, but why are you so small?

- Where I lived, you wouldn't grow up even as big as I have! – The kitty meowed.

- Well, whom did you live with before? What are their names and are they very strong? – The lion asked. - If you can, find me one of them, to fight with him and see if he will be stronger than I am.

Then the cat told the lion about men: they walk on two legs; they have two hands and do all the work with them. Their name is men and they are not very strong, but with intellect and cunning they defeat even the strongest animals in the world.

- If you want, follow me to find one of them and to fight – the kitty said.

The lion agreed and followed the cat. They walked the forest until they found a man who was chopping wood.

- Here he is! This is one of those men that I told you about – the cat said.

The lion went to the man, and after "Good Morning" and "Live healthier," he said:

- My friend, come to fight with me!

Man, as he saw the lion, got scared and hearing his words, began to tremble. But after he thought a little, he said to himself: "Courage! If I die, I die heroic rather than grandmotherly "- and as he was on the tree he shouted to the lion:

- All right, I agree to fight with you, but look at me! I came here in my lumberman clothes, so you will have to wait for me a moment while I go to the village and put on my fighting clothes.

- Okay, I'll wait! - The lion said and sat next to a large tree.

Now the man gained more courage and said:

- I am afraid that you will not wait for me. So, not to go to the village in vain and dress in clothes to fight, I'll tie it to a tree, so that you won't run away!

The lion consented. The man tied the lion tight and then took a nice stick and said:

- Now I'll show how I fight!

The man started to beat the lion with the stick till the lion tore the rope and took off running, and smashed the young forest. The kitten ran after the lion and they finally stopped at the end of the forest. The lion was barely breathing and snarled to the kitten:

- Really, they were very bad your masters! If I were you, I would not be able to live and grow up as you do! Now let's run, my friend, to another and distant forest, because we can't live near these scoundrels!

So the lion moved to live in distant forests, where people cannot find him easily. And the kitty who was accustomed to live in a warm place around the fireplace and to eat of the master's meal, abandoned the lion and returned to the people.

The Puss - Artist

There was a cat artist. All his hair was splattered in the seven colors of paint in which the Puss dipped his long fluffy tail and painted weird pictures on the walls of the houses, on cans of milk and other places. But nobody liked his pictures and instead of gratitude the Puss received sometimes a scoop on the back by angry milkmen. Actually not exactly no one – the naughty children and mice liked his pictures, but the Puss ate the mice, and thus his audience diminished, until in the end only the naughty children remained.

The problem was that the Puss painted on cans and walls such strange things that no sensible and obedient child, much less a reasonable and obedient adult could understand and like them. For example, the Puss painted an elephant with ten trunks and a propeller instead of a tail, a giant whale with three humps and long legs shod with golden hooves galloping along the bottom of the ocean, and on a can he even painted a rose playing the flute, sitting cross-legged and in front of her a rattlesnake danced with seven heads and thirteen tails.

- Are there such things somewhere? - the amazed naughty children asked.

- Yes – the Puss replied and dipped his tail in azure, gold and pink to paint something very red. - I saw them on my last journey to a very distant country where everything is different and where everything is not so boring.

Indeed, every spring the cat disappeared and returned at the beginning of summer, gaunt and dusty from his long journey, then immediately began to paint his strange pictures, to eat the gaping mice and to enjoy his friends, the naughty children, with tales of distant and very different countries where it is not really quite so boring.

Just at the time the cat ate the last mouse, an unusually serious and adult king ascended on the throne in the country. This king hated everything invented, unusual and different from the existing boundaries of his kingdom and the first thing he did after putting the crown of his bald head was to announce throughout the kingdom that whoever paints invented, different and non-existing things, will be most ruthlessly hanged in the middle of the capital square.

The king's guards captured the Puss just as he was painting an orange octopus with one tentacle and buffalo horns. They locked him in the darkest of the dark dungeons. The naughty children in the whole kingdom suddenly became unusually sad and even forgot to break windows and to dodge classes at school. "My orders have a good educational effect on the rising generation" – wisely said the king and scratched his large, empty and crowned gourd.

But a girl named Jana loved the Puss so much that she decided to do everything she can to become a naughty child, even to pull down the moon and the stars, if need be, but to save the meowing in the dark dungeon artist. And one dark night the girl ran away from home and slipped between the legs of dormant royal guard that after too much riding of sleek horses looked like hoops of a barrel. Jana squeezed through the bars of the dark dungeons, as she lighted up her way with fireflies, perched on a blade of grass. She got lost many times and then again she found her way in the maze of narrow corridors until finally, led by the sad meowing of the Puss, came to his cell - the deepest from the deepest, the darkest of the dark.

- Puss – she whispered quietly, - tell me how to release you...

- Meow – the Puss mewed, no longer sad but dismissively, because all true cats are ashamed of sadness. It can be done very easily. Take this hair, just be careful not to prick yourself with it because it is from my mustache and it is very sharp. And while you going back home, touch with it every wall and every jug of milk, on which I drew something, and see what will happen.

- Is that all? - the girl asked in surprise.

- That's all. I... Thank you. And now, good night. - And the Puss purred indifferently because real cats love to show courage even when they will be hung in the morning.

When Yana managed to get out of the deepest dungeons of the royal palace, it was already morning. On the first wall she saw, the cat had painted a dragon with three heads, as befits any dragon, but also with another head of the tail. And Jana touched exactly that head with exhaling flames nostrils. Instantly the head gaped and ... there was such a strong sneeze that the wall swung and Jana found herself in the branches of the nearby bushes. And when he stopped rubbing her eyes in amazement, she saw that the dragon was not on the wall, but sleepily blinks with her four pairs of eyes in the street.

- Why did you tickle my nose when I was sleeping? - the dragon asked. - And are you not afraid of me?

- N-not really – Jana replied. – The Puss who painted you told me about you.
- Oh, the cat-traveler who loves to draw. How is he? Does he still carry in his fur those wonderful paints?
- They will hang him today – Jana answered.
- What? To hang the best artist among cats! And for what?!!
- Because they do not believe you exist.
- Really? - the four heads of the dragon roared simultaneously and the peaceful blue flames in her nose turned red and enormous with anger. – They will see if I exist, they will see all right!
- Over there, on the main square! - Jana cried after the dragon that already clumsily raced through the streets and her four heads repeated as a confused echo: "They will see! ... They will see! ... "

And Jana, holding high above her head like an arrow the sharp hair, rushed through the streets to animate the drawings of the Puss.

When Jana finally revived the last picture the tired girl went to the square to see what was going on and saw the following:

All serious and reasonable people in the kingdom had gathered in the square, half of them had passed out and the other half ran around and moaned as if the end of the world had come, but the scene really looked like the end of the world.

Amazing monsters were running, crawling and flying between the people, spiders as big as barrels, flying hyenas, grinning from ear to ear, grinning predatory palms, round hounds, square pigs and what not.

The hangman had climbed on the scaffold and below him the rose sat cross-legged and played the flute, making the seven-headed dragon with thirteen lines dance.

The naughty children danced on roofs and walls and shouted triumphantly, "Did you see them! Did you see them! "

And above all the Puss-artist hovered, riding the winged elephant with a propeller instead of a tail. One of the ten elephant's trunks sensibly and seriously was holding the collar of the wise king who was screaming like a cowardly mouse, "I believe I believe! I believe! "

It was a wonderful day when strange things appeared in which everyone believed. After that day the inhabitants of the country rushed to travel and after their journeys they painted

pictures of what they saw on the walls and soon there was not an unpainted wall. Nobody painted on the cans of milk because the milkmen drew pictures on them and they enjoyed the fame of good artists and even better travelers. Only the Puss disappeared – there were too many artists and he had no place to paint, and besides there were no mice to stare at the pictures. Since then The Puss wanders from country to country and probably he ever will come here some day.

Personal Stories From Bulgaria

The story of Cleo Cleopatra(the story from Detelina Nakova)

The story of Cleo Cleopatra is the name which my mother gave to the little black kitten, which we (me and my brother) gave to her as a present. My mum has always loved cats and we knew that she would take care of that kitty in the best possible way. Two years ago (when Cleo was almost a year old) an incident happened - Cleo fell from the 7-th floor of the building where my mother lives. Many things are spoken about the curiosity of the cat and they are really true... Fortunately, for Cleopatra the statement that cats have 7 lives, also was true: -) Cleo survived after this flight. After the surgery one leg was amputated, but she continues to live her new life as a healthy, playful and loved cat.

The story of the Yoana Aleksieva

I was decided to wanted to be a vet, when I was four years old. My passion was unlocked of an old television serial, that I was followed in the time, that which one of the main characters, was a veterinary. I was in loved to the fact that, if I became vet one day, I can touch the different animals, that I can save lives and to be truly useful. Then in similar like children's way, I was realized that, what I want to do, when I grow up. From first grade, I was started to said, that I want to become, a vet and that's my dream. Few people believed me, since I was little and each claimed that while growing up, I will change my desire many times. Not known! After seventh grade I have exams and when I saw the results I was applied in vocational schools of veterinary medicine in Stara Zagora. For my lucky and happiness, I was accepted and then I was realized, that is the first step towards the fulfillment of the dream is already a reality. Five years that continue my secondary entity I understand more and more that this is really the thing that I wanted to do all of my life and that gives me a great comfort.

I'm a student for first year at Trakia University, Stara Zagora veterinary profession. Determined to be realized as such after 5.5 years.

Before I applied for a student I was decided to skip one year and work. I was found my perfect job. In job advertisements in a newspaper, was that said it is looking for a man to divorce two dogs. Initially I was thought it was a joke because in Bulgaria rarely have this kind of work. Still, I arranged an interview and when it came and I was met the dogs I was fell in love with them - Husky and Nyufautlend. It was one of my best years in my life. My work with them was a pleasure and at the same time a big challenge, because the two dogs generally weigh about

110 kilograms and I'm only 50 kg . Initially, I was a little scared if I can do this and if they get used quickly to my commands , but for my surprise , quickly passed . They were very polite and kind. During the year I was experienced a lot of things with them. One fought with another husky that cause them , and his owner didn't do nothing to help me to broke up them . It was in the winter, when it happened and the streets were in frost . With all of my forces, I clenching my straps, but eventually I was fell and they started running towards the other dog . Once I was able to deal with the situation I was in great stress and when they got their trays. They immediately knew, they were guilty and started to cuddle me. Then again I was realized that the animals are unique creatures, that I love with all my heart. They was always knows when I'm in the mood and when I'm not, and every time they gives me strength with their actions.

I personally have a dog , and generally I've always had pets. My dog is a mix between a Cocker and bangs shpaniol . Her name is Daisy and is very sweet and lazy, due to the fact, that she is seven years old. For those years, we experienced many things as difficult and happy moments. When they gave it to me, I had no idea what breed it is, but as I saw her I was loved her . She was two months - a unique baby . When she was small , she was very playful and always made me laugh. She is definitely a dog with character and always had something wild in her spirit. Unusual and very different is my Daisy. She was always selects the dogs wit who be friends and always make clear, how far was the borders and how can you play with her. This trait of her character I like the most, since I was a lover of animals to be complete dog training . I like everything to be in range and not consuming animal is completely animal .

For me personally, the animals are everything. From them I was learned a lot and I think humanity has much to learn from their behavior, the way in which they express their feelings and respect . I admire their courage and cunning. Of their ways by which to defend and protect themselves from their enemies. I dream of one day left for a year or two in Africa and closely monitored lifestyle of some of my favorite animals, like elephants .

When it comes to animals, I can talk very much. I really admire them and I am extremely pleased to work with them. As a final , I can say only one thing: Love animals and feel their another real and wild love!

PS: Here are some pictures of my dog, dogs that I was worked and my work with the other animals.





This is Kris
(the story of Yanitca Nrdelcheva)

He is naughty, sweet and lovely.



We met each other in a shop for animal food. I had turtles and I was looking food about them.

The seller told me that the kittens were born two months ago. He said that there were in birth of the kitten and he was called because he is a veterinarian. Three beautiful kittens were born and after the owner said that they have to looking for good families for them. The seller asked if I wanted to see them. He said he will only open the cell and the cell is high and the kittens will not jump. But at this moment a fluffy soft orange ball jumped into my arms. I was worried that the kitten is well. But he was so happy in my arms and began to purr. I could not separate with him. When I got home with Chris in my arms, I realized that I don't know how to care about him. I have to read books and to looking information in internet, to learn many thing about feeding, cats habits, diseases. Now Chris has a personal veterinarian, he is vaccinated, and he is regularly treated against parasites. Sometimes it is very careless and had to attend midnight veterinary clinic because he hit his eye and cannot open it. Every day we have time for games, brushing and cuddling. Chris is a part of our family and we love him a lot but having a pet is not only a pleasure but also big responsibility.

ROMANIA

The Legend of the Cat Born on Noah's Boat

They say the cat was made during the Great Flood. They say that although Evil was safe on Noahs Ark, it felt like playing tricks to God and drown the boat. That is why he started making lots of mice that were supposed to make holes in the boat and thereby drown it. Noah eventually found out about the Evil's trick and in a rage took off his scarf and threw it after the mice. As soon as the scarf touched the deck it turned into a cat that chased and killed all mice. One only pair escaped hiding away deep down in a corner, but Noah's Ark was saved. Since then the cat has chased and eaten mice. For this reason the cat is seen as a good animal, sometimes bringing luck, a bit nasty but still dear to God.

Other stories say that cats have got the Evil in them because they eat mice that are made by the Devil. They also say that the Devil in cats can be seen the form of sparks springing from their fur and eyes at night. It is a sign of the evil among us and people should fear that, superstitions reveal.

DOGS IN THE PROJECT COUNTRIES

Myths, Urban Legends, Personal Stories

England -The Story of Gelert

The Microwaved Pet

Christine's Personal Stories

Bulgaria – The Fox and the Dog

Poland – The Tatra Cave Dogs and other Myths from Easter Europe

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Whipping the evil in cats and dogs

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7 Personal Stories about being a dog owner or not

England

Legends and Myths for dogs

The Story of Gelert

Many years ago, in a castle deep in the rugged mountains of Eryri, in the county of Gwynedd, lived a brave and well respected prince called Llewelyn. This prince loved to hunt and his favourite hunting dog was a faithful and fearless hound called Gelert. Gelert accompanied Llewelyn everywhere and was always to be found at the head of the pack. No game was too big, too strong or too fierce for Gelert, whose bravery knew no bounds.

This prince had a beloved son, a swaddling babe whose mother had died in childbirth. Llewelyn had loved his wife dearly and been broken hearted by her death. His only consolation had been his son. On her death-bed, Llewelyn had promised his wife that he would cherish the boy and this he did.

He looked forward to the day when the two of them could ride out together, tracking the wolves and the other wild animals found in the ancient hills and the dark forests of Gwynedd in those far off days.

One day, Llewelyn and his men were preparing to go out hunting. The baby lay fast asleep in his cradle, his nurse in attendance nearby. The day was cold and damp but a huge log fire blazed in the bedchamber and the cradle was covered with warm furs. The baby was safe and snug. Nevertheless, Llewelyn decided to leave his loyal hound, Gelert to protect the homestead. As he left he gently stroked the dog's huge, shaggy head.

"Guard them well, Gelert," he said. "Until I return."

Gelert's tail thumped the ground slowly and his eyes remained on his master's face until Llewelyn softly closed the door behind him.

It was late when the prince returned home. He was tired but victorious. A sumptuous feast was being prepared and he strode through the great hall towards the bedchamber, eager to see his son and relax in front of the great fire.

But as he entered the room he beheld a terrible sight. Furniture lay upturned, tapestries had been ripped from their hangings and the baby's cradle lay empty on the floor. The luxurious furs that had previously covered the cradle lay scattered nearby, torn to shreds and smeared with blood.

As Llewelyn stood rooted to the spot, he felt a soft, warm, velvety nose nuzzle the palm of his hand. He looked down to see Gelert's trusting eyes gazing up at him. The dog looked exhausted but wagged his tail weakly. His head and paws were stained with blood.

"You wicked creature!" roared the prince. "This dog has killed my son!" and without further ado he drew his dagger and plunged it deep into Gelert's side. As the dog slumped to the ground, the prince heard a soft whimpering from behind the upturned cradle.

As the dog lay dying, Llewelyn gently picked up his son. Too late, he turned to see the half covered body of a huge wolf lying dead on the floor. Thanks to Gelert, the baby remained unharmed. Filled with remorse, Llewelyn knelt and gently stroked his faithful friend and Gelert's tail thumped the ground slowly for the last time.

Gelert's body was buried outside the castle walls, close to the river. The huge stone slab, inscribed with Gelert's name, still marks the grave and the village nearby still carries the name 'Beddgelert' – Gelert's grave.

Urban Legend

The Microwaved Pet

A friend of a friend had a grandmother who was a little bit "dotty." One day, Grandma had just bathed her miniature poodle, Pierre, and was about to towel-dry him when the phone rang. It was her daughter, reminding her that they had arranged to meet for lunch a half hour earlier. Grandma apologized for being late and said she'd be there as quickly as she could.

As she began towel-drying Pierre, it dawned on her that there was a quicker way to do it: the microwave. So she put her beloved pet inside the oven, set the dial to "defrost" and switched it on.

A half a minute later, as Grandma was donning her coat to leave, she heard a muffled explosion in the kitchen.

Pierre the poodle was no more.

Comments: In classifying this story as an urban legend, I don't mean to suggest that nothing of the kind has ever happened — surely it has. I am suggesting that, generally speaking, when a tale such as this is told as "true," the teller has no direct knowledge nor any evidence whatsoever to back it up; having heard the story secondhand, he or she has simply assumed it is true (or might be true) and passed it on, with or without personal flourishes. These are defining characteristic of an urban legend.

"The Poodle in the Microwave" (a.k.a. "The Microwaved Pet") enjoyed its first wave of popularity in the mid-1970s. In part, it's a cautionary tale reflecting societal ambivalence toward technological change (a recurrent theme in contemporary folklore). Greater convenience entails greater risks, such stories seem to say, so we should approach new technologies with caution. Yet "The Microwaved Pet" also harkens back to warnings dating back to the 1940s, if not

earlier, about dogs and cats suffering injury or death after crawling unnoticed into old-fashioned gas ovens. While one can always quibble over the "function" or deeper meanings of urban legends, it's safe to say that they almost always serve as a barometer of our everyday fears.

Personal Stories

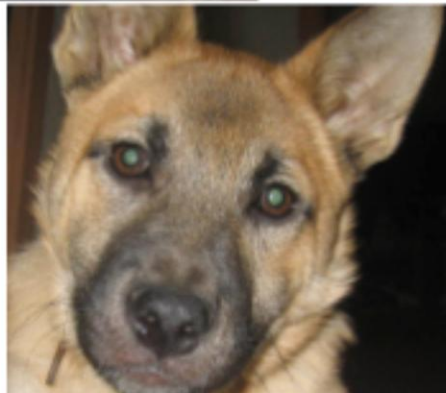
Christine (70+) Shayne's story

Shayne was the first dog we had after we married. Our next door neighbour came to us one evening and said she had a new dog – a Rough Collie – and the whole litter was going to have to be put to sleep because they had been bred in time for Xmas – arrived late – so the family could not sell them after Xmas. My husband said he had always wanted a Rough Collie, ever since seeing the film "Lassie Come Home" but how could we have a dog when we were both working long hours away from home? We convinced ourselves that a dog alone for most of the day was better than a dead dog, so off we went to find out that there was only one left, so we had her. We named her Shayne because at the time we did not know this was Irish for John !!

For the first 2 years, she was virtually uncontrollable. She would not come when she was called, she was so independent and stubborn. She used to love to find any kind of water, the smellier and most foul water and roll over in it, I forget the times we came back from a walk with a stinking mess in the car. One day we were on holiday in Cumbria and passed by a shop selling walking sticks. We planned to walk the next day, so for a £1 and a bit of a laugh – I bought my husband one of these wooden walking sticks. The next day in the Lake District (so called because of all the lakes) we were walking towards one of the lakes, when she went running off again, we shouted to her but she just kept on running, straight into the water. The trouble was that there was a waterfall, and she got caught in the current created by the water and was being dragged under. People around us were shouting that she needed rescuing, so eventually we caught up and my husband waded as far out in the lake as he could (he could not swim) and held out the stick. To his amazement she caught hold of the stick in her teeth and he was able to pull her back. Everyone was cheering, and clapping !!

She was always very brave, and when we first had Sheba (see previous story) and Sheba was very frail, they both got into the field at the back of our house which had horses in it. One of the horses was very bad-tempered and would attack people who walked in his field. So he chased after Sheba and had nearly caught up with her, she was so terrified, Shayne could see what was happening and (of course Collie's can run very fast indeed – being original sheepdogs), she caught up with the horse and to our amazement she flew through the air, and caught hold of his tail. How she did not get kicked by his hooves we just don't know but he was so shocked to suddenly find this big dog attached to his tail, that he stopped and it just gave Sheba time to run back to the fence and back into her own garden. This was seen by lots of our neighbours who were too far away to help but were astonished to see one dog rescue another.

Shayne lived until she was 17 and was a grand old lady.



Top left – Shayne,

Top right – Sherry
Centre – Scout – AKA Scooby-do
Bottom left – Jess
Bottom right Genna

(Christine 70+) - Sheba's story

I was asked years ago when we already had a Rough Collie (Shayne) if we had thought of having a "friend" for her. To cut a long story short there was another Rough Collie sitting in a kennels many many miles away who needed a home because she had been left there by her owners when they emigrated to Australia intending to send for her. She had been there for 6 months and the kennels had not been paid so they were going to have to put her to sleep. I went up to the kennels and felt so sorry for her, looking so dejected, and not in very good condition. See Picture. I brought her home there and then, paid £5 per her. When I got home I took her to my vet for him to see her, inoculate her etc. He said "what is it". I said "it's a Rough Collie" thinking what is the matter with this man. He said "is it now"? I had to admit she looked a very poor specimen of a pedigree Rough Collie. Well, he said, I cant inoculate her – she has mange. I had to look it up I had never heard of that, but it is a skin condition which causes the dog to pull its own fur out in lumps and it is very contagious. I of course was worried about my other beautiful collie. So, we started a course of the most awful stinking powder which I had to mix into a paste and rub into her skin. Every time I thought she was getting better and the fur was starting to grow again, I would get up in the morning and she had pulled all her fur out again... It took a year to get her right, in the meantime I asked the vet how much I owed him. He would not let me pay him. He said she was the greatest challenge he had ever had, and he only asked for permission to use her as a case study for the Veterinary College to show what could be done with such a dog instead of destroying them. (<http://www.rvc.ac.uk/>)

She lived to the age of 15 and was the most placid, calm, loving, faithful friend we ever had. It was almost as though she knew what had been done for her and she repaid us 100 times over. She was still alive when my son was born and she used to lie by the pram and protect him.

Christine (70+) Sherry's story

Sherry was another rescue; with a story of her own. Again, no-one wanted her because she was not the right colour for a Rough Collie – people prefer that they be sable & white, and she had a lot of black in her coat, which did not matter to us. We heard about her, that she again was the last of the litter and had been named Black Heart. We did not like this name so my son suggested some of her coat reminded him of a glass of sherry, a beautiful rich brown. So she became Sherry.

Christine (70+) Goldie's story

Again Goldie came to us when our son was about 7; he was a great little swimmer and his swimming coach used to breed Rough Collies. He came to us one day and said that the coach wanted to know if he wanted another Rough Collie. When we saw her we thought immediately was a beautiful golden color she was, and our son immediately named her Goldie. She could not be shown or bred because her ears were not right, a collie's ears (according to the Kennel Club) should fold over, they should not stick up !! The breeder had tried to make her ears fold over by

sticking bits of weighted sticky stuff, (just what lengths will they go to to ensure that the dog conforms to these standards. However, this had not worked and her ears would still stick up. We took her home with us, again she had the most beautiful temperament, was never a bit of bother, until she got frightened by loud bangs, fireworks etc. We were once holidaying in Dorset and had not realized that the Army Shooting Range & Tank manoeuvres were about 5 miles away. We could not hear the bangs, but she could. We came back from shopping one day, opened the caravan door (we had left her there because it was cool and quiet) – no dog, we could not understand how she could have escaped from a locked caravan. After many minutes had gone by whilst we puzzled as to what could have happened, we finally realized that the caravan window opened up and out; she had obviously become very frightened by the loud bangs and pushed and pushed the window until it released and she had jumped the 6 ft. or so to the ground. So, having worked out how she had escaped, we now had to find her. We set off down the lanes, no-one had seen her, she had vanished into thin air. Finally, on the off chance, we revisited a shop at a nearby camp site we had visited the day before for supplies and there she was, happily tied to a drain pipe, she would have stayed there for days, because people were petting her as they went in and out of the shop and I suppose she felt safe with people around her.

(Christine 70+) - Sadie's Story:

I always wanted my husband to buy me a Welsh dresser – from Wales – which he used to visit every week for his job. A Welsh dresser is a (usually dark oak wooden cabinet on which you display plates & crockery). One day he phoned me on his way back from Wales and said meet me in the car park I have something for you. I thought “Oh goodie, here comes my Welsh dresser”. When I arrived in the car park there sitting up in the front of his lorry, was the most beautiful little Shetland Sheepdog (a miniature Rough Collie). She was so pleased to see me, she had traveled hundreds of miles in the front of this lorry with my husband. So I said “what have we here” He said “well, it IS a present from Wales – her owner has to go into a Hospice, her husband cant cope with the dog, so they begged me as a dog lover to take Sadie and find a good home for her”. Well she never did get to a good home, she came to ours. She was a little pet, a darling. She never had a lead, she would walk just in front of you and she always led the way. She used to love to walk across the fields at the back of the house to go see the men playing football on their football grounds. She would stand on the touchline watching them running up and down after the football, and that was her treat. Eventually, after a few years, I just had a feeling she was not quite right. Nothing I could explain, but I took her to the vet, who examined her and said, I cant see much wrong with her, she seems fine but I will run some tests. A few days he phoned to ask me to go and see him. “You are right, I don't know HOW you knew, but she has kidney failure. I was devastated. What can we do. “Not much” he said, only give her your best attention. Well a few months later we were doing a Caravan Rally in Yorkshire. It was a beautiful warm sunny week, and she kept looking at the refrigerator very anxiously. So I got some ice cubes out for her, she was so grateful, she lay down with her ice cube and kept licking it until it was all gone, then she begged for more. So, for the whole week my friend Ann & I had to keep our fridges stocked with ice cubes for Sadie !!! It was of course a sign that her kidneys were getting worse and she was thirsty all the time. Eventually, one day, my son phoned me at College and said “I hope you are coming home soon because I think Sadie is worsening”. That

was the end, I had to take her to the vet who quietly & quickly put her to sleep. She went very peacefully, as she had lived – no trouble to anyone – I think it is the hardest thing to do to part with someone who has been part of your life and asks no more than food & water but gives back love, companionship, faithfulness and much much more.

Christine (70+) Bella's story

All our dogs seem to have sad stories, don't why this would be. I was visiting the vets one day and saw a poster in the office asking if anyone would give a home to a 10 year old Shetland Sheepdog. I thought how sad, why does she need a home at that age, but it seemed her owner had had to go into a home, her husband had to go and live with his son and daughter in law, they did not allow dogs in the house, so poor Bella had been living in the car outside. She was so fat, she could not walk. I took her to the vets and he said "Oh, I know Bella, but she should not be like this – her owner used to run the Dog Training School in the nearby town, and Bella was used to going there every day and doing the training with all the other dogs, why she is this weight I just don't know". Well if you had been living on the backseat of a car for a year with no exercise..... So, he said you must, must get that weight off her. She will not live much longer if you don't. So poor Bella had to go on a very strict diet, with lots of exercise. By the time we got her weight to a reasonable level she was now 11, but at least in better shape. By this time, I had the suspicion that she could hear too well, the vet confirmed that she was deaf. She also had developed cataracts, and could not see very well either. We caravanned with these lovely friends and Bob was a big hunk of a man, he used to feel sorry for her, would pick her up, tuck her under his arm and carry her the rest of the way home. One day we were walking along the towpath of a river, turned around, just in time to see Bella attach herself to a complete stranger, we think she thought it was Bob and was hoping for a lift home. She caused us many anxious moments during the last 4 years of her life, because if we let her out we would never know where she would get to; she once wandered off on a very cold New Year's night, the 4 of us searched and called for her, stood in the snow, freezing to death, no sign of Bella. Eventually we decided to split up and go 4 different ways hoping to find her before she froze to death. Bob wandered into a big old house and garden, whistling & calling for Bella, a man suddenly appeared with a shotgun and asked him what the He thought he was doing. Bob replied he was just looking for his dog because it was deaf & blind. Eventually, we did find her and she had no idea of the fact that she nearly got poor Bob shot. !!

Christine (70+) Genna's story

Genna was another Shetland Sheepdog. I had just lost a dog, and I always believed that they should have their own company as well as a human, so I pestered my husband to get me another Sheltie for my birthday. He went everywhere, and no-one was breeding Sheltie's at that time, eventually he heard that one might be available in Scotland. He went all the way to Scotland and there was poor Genna – in a trailer in the back of the property – again, no –one wanted her because she was technically too big to be a Sheltie. For some reason, in the breed she had genetically gone back to her roots and been born somewhere between a Rough Collie and a Sheltie. Of course they could not show her, nor breed from her, so she was cast out. Back she came to our house by lorry. She could not travel very well, and was sick all the way back. My

poor husband had to fumigate the lorry afterwards !!

Christine (70+) Jess's Story

Jess came to us when we had lost nearly all our dogs; we only had Genna, who was a funny individual and did not always take to other dogs, especially if they came into her home, her territory. She was very protective, but we thought she should have a mate. So we went to a dog shelter nearby (actually founded by the lady who rescued Bella). We said we wanted a dog as company for Genna. We were shown a big book, with lots of pictures of Border Collies (another form of sheepdog – more common than Rough Collie because they are the ones which farmers train to manage their sheep, especially in rural areas. My husband immediately picked on this one particular dog, yes this one, he said. We saw the kennel staff look at each other dubiously. “Are you sure, this one is a big dog”. Yes, my husband said, there is something about this one. So, they told us the story. She was now 10 years old (as Bella had been), she had been physically and sexually abused, they had tried to re-home her 3 times and it had not been successful. She was terrified of children, she was afraid of men, and lots of other things as well, as we were to find out. My husband was adamant that this was the one for him. So we paid (more than we had ever had to pay for a dog in our lives), we had to pay for the fact that she had been spayed, vaccinated, and her kennel fees etc. It. They were so strict, that we had to take Genna into the kennels put her with Jess to ensure that they would be “friends”. As we loaded Jess into the back of the 4-wheel drive finally, they told us that she could not travel, she also had car-sickness. Well, to people who travel hundreds of miles with a caravan and a dog who is sick this was a bit of a shock. However, she never once was sick, so what that was about we don't know. However, she did one day nearly kill me. Out walking in a town, I passed a shop selling all sorts of lamps, and all of a sudden she saw a fan attached to the wall in the window of the shop. Well, that was that, what a fan meant to her we could never find out but anything which revolved would frighten her to death; and off she would go. On this occasion she dragged me across a very wide footpath and virtually into the road in front of a car. I just could not hold her, she was so panic-stricken.

One of her first occasions out we went to Derbyshire intending to walk up the Tissington Trail – which is an old railway track, where the railway lines have been removed and you can walk, cycle, ride a horse, whatever, for miles up and down the most beautiful countryside of the Derbyshire Peak District. It was a very quiet day, not many people about because it was so cold. We let them both off the lead, and Jess ambled away. We called her and called her, she just ignored us and kept on going. So, I got quite angry, and shouted “OK, keep going, you obviously don't want us any more” We turned back the way we had come, and almost immediately heard the sound of galloping, she arrived by our heels, as if to say “well here I am, don't think you are leaving me here”.

Everyone we ever met loved Jess instantly. They could never understand what a beautiful, loving animal she was, and how she could have been abused and still love people with such a forgiving nature.

Eventually when Jess died aged nearly 18, before she went we had Scout, we thought she would be the boss now, but no, Jess relinquished all rights to that role. She was happy to tag along and do whatever he wanted to do. She also became his surrogate mother. He was still quite young and I think he missed his mother, so she gave him that comfort.

Christine (70+) and finally Scout's story

We always seem to fall for a sob story – my neighbour came to see me and asked if I would take another dog from someone she worked with. She was quite angry that this family seemed to get through a lot of dogs, they had them, then found something wrong with them, and in this case this was a puppy called Scooby-do – so named by the little boy of the house because he reminded him of Scooby-do. Apparently Scooby-do was so boisterous he had knocked the small baby over quite a few times and so he had to go. They brought him round for me to see. Well we had always had female dogs, and my husband said “well male dogs always take a lot more controlling than females”. Well that was true at least. He WAS boisterous – in fact he was down right crazy, mad as a coot !! Down to the vet he went, the vet said well if you had him castrated, he would be a lot calmer. So we did. It did not make a bit of difference, he was still mad.

Eventually after a long period of my husband saying, he will have to go, we cannot manage him either – one day he took him to Wales with him in the lorry. Well, what it is about Wales and dogs I do not know, but back came Scout (as he had to be re-named, at our age we felt quite silly called “Scooby-do” and the nearest we could think of was “Scout”. Well Wales sent back a completely different dog. He had suddenly found Christianity..... or whatever it was. He was now totally and utterly devoted to my husband. He cannot go anywhere without Scout, he follows him to the bathroom even. He sits on the stairs, staring at the front door if husband has to go out without him, and he stays there until he returns. It is quite sad really, to see him wasting his life away waiting for his master to come back.

Now he is nearly 9 years old, a bit of an old man and when he got to nearly 7, he suddenly had a fit one day. Frightened the life out of me, I had heard of dogs having fits but never experienced it in all my 70 years of being around dogs. I took him down to the vet and explained. He asked how old he was, then looked on his record and said “ah, yes, if a dog is going to start fitting, for some reason, it is usually before they are 7 – and Scout is 6 years and 10 months”. !!! Really can you think of anything so unfair in life. Unfortunately when we travel abroad for our work the local kennels will not take him now, he is a liability. So my lovely neighbour looks after him whilst we are away. Sometimes his fits happen about once a month, sometimes he misses a couple of months and we start to hope, then he will have another one. I suppose some people would say, well that's the final thing, we are not paying vets bills, put him to sleep – but how can you ?

Bulgaria Fairy tales

The Fox and the Dog

The Fox walked through the woods, talking to herself:- Oh, what a pretty fox I am! What eyes! They shine brightly and they see everything. And my feet! Not feet, but spindles. They carry me

through the wood like whirlwind, as if they do not touch the ground. And my ears! They hear everything and miss nothing. But the best of all is my lovely tail. It is light and soft, real silk fluff.

Just at that moment a hunting dog appeared out of nowhere and swooped over her.

The Fox raced to flee to her burrow and the dog - after her. She runs, the dog runs, she runs, the dog runs and - ah-ha - will catch up. But he could not catch her. The Fox's quick feet outran the dog. She tucked up in her hole and hid inside. The dog crouched in front of the hole and huddled there.

- I'll wait – he said. – She might come out.

When the Fox took a breath, she asked her feet:

- Feet, my little legs, what did you say when the dog chased us?

- We - the Fox's four paws responded in one voice, - said, Run, Foxie, run!

- Dear legs! I will knit you socks! – The Fox promised and continued: - What about you, eyes? What did you say?

- Right in the hole, Foxie! Right in the hole! That is what we said answered the eyes.

- Dear eyes, I will buy you eyeglasses! – The Fox pledged and turned to her ears.

- What about you, ears? What did you say?

- Almost there, Foxie! Almost there! – They replied.

- Dear ears, I will buy you ear-rings! – The Fox promised and wrung her neck to her tail.

- And you tail, what did you say?

- Hold the tail, dog, hold the tail! That is what I said – the tail replied.

The Fox flew into a rage.

- What? – she shouted. - Thunder hit you! You can not say that! I will give to the dog for punishment!

And without thinking much, the Fox showed out her tail.

That was what the dog was waiting. He threw himself, bit the tail and began pulling it out.

The Fox pulls inside, the dog pulls outside. The Fox inward, the dog outward, till he finally drew her out and flew at her throat.

Poland

Tatra Cave Dogs and Other Cave Dog Myths in Eastern Europe

Cave dogs are mythical creatures reported by Polish (and other eastern European) speleologists. Some people suspect that the mysterious Tatra, Poland, cave dogs are feral dogs that run among the peaks at night, and only stay in caves during the day. This may be the reason why few people see them, and how the legend came into being. The myths refer to spirit animals that attack and bite humans who spend time in the caves. Other legendary dogs, called "cave dachshunds," reportedly exist in Polish caves. These small dogs jerk the overalls of speleologists for scraps, especially while they crawl through tight tunnels. These invisible cave dogs supposedly pester people who explore their cave dens. Reports about cave dogs were figured to be the product of human imagination. However in Bulgaria, in Bezdenen Pczelin cave, a group of Polish speleologists found some half-blind feral dogs that showed little reaction to light. These Bulgarian cave dogs were left by bad people in caves, and have adapted to living in dark caves and lost their sight. Zoologists and zootechnicians also detected some negative morphological changes in body and head structure. Sojourning in a cold and moist environment with a monotonous and poor diet brought further degeneracy.

A. Radomski i K. Grotowski (Polish speleologist) also found strange dogs in Kuczeszka Pasztera cave in the 1960s, and dogs are reported to live in other caves in Bulgaria. Some stories are about dogs that lived in caves long ago. The oldest people heard about them from their fathers and grandfathers. People did not see these dogs but sometimes heard them when they threw dead goats, cows, or other animals over a precipice—cave dogs then fed on these animals.

An expedition from Slovakia left for Tatra in 2001 to search for its mythical cave dog. Unfortunately they did not find anything. It is possible there are some feral dogs living there, apart from normal dogs. In the western part of the Tatra Mountains are found many caves and remainders from karsic activities. Nowadays, caves dogs are considered only legends connected with activities of speleologists.

The true cave dogs are not a distinct wild dog, but a feral breed of domestic dog living in Bulgarian caves and fissures and similar places in the world, adapting to life in cold and dark places. Once other forms of cave dogs existed—the Primitive Cave Dog (*Canis lupus* [*Canis* spp.]). These animals were characterized by considerable sizes, strong body structure, and with a developed instinct of defense of their hideouts. This behavioral feature clearly separated it from smaller canids that were rather cowardly, along with their aggressive defense of prey from larger predators. These animals were the ancestors of modern domestic dogs and lived with the

first people about 10,000 years ago. The first domestic dogs were similar to dingoes and come from wolves.

There are a few recent reports of cave dogs throughout the mountainous regions in Poland. Some accounts came as recently as 2007, in the southern regions of Stary Sącz, in the Dunajec and Poprad range in the Sądecki Beskid mountains, and Żywiec in the Żywiecki Beskid mountains, from Slovak speleologist, Jano Ducár, who before coming back to Lomnice na vlak, saw a dog leaving a wide hole among the rocks in the cavern. He was told that "čierny pes" is not a problem for speleologists because their caves are spacious and large—the dogs living there have many places to hide. This was, perhaps, the mysterious feral cave dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*)—a descendant of normal domestic dogs.

Romania

Romanian Christian Orthodox legends

St Julian (Ilie)'s legend or whipping the evil spirits in cats and dogs

St Julian is one of the warrior saints in the Orthodox calendar. Like the gods from the old ages, St. Julian drives a fire charriot and rushes through clouds on a storm troubled sky striking devils and sinners altogether. Scared, devils hide in trees, under roofs, in the body of some animals, particularly cats and dogs. St. Julian sends them and all the fire whip in an attempt to kill all devils. That is why cats and dogs need to be kept out of the house on a stormy rainy weather.

St Peter's(Petru) legend - How wolves were turned into shepherd dogs

This is the legend of St. Peter walking among people as an old man to know them better and help as much as he could. So, once he met a shepherd on top of a mountain who could not leave his sheep even for one moment because of a pack of starving wolves prowling about. St Peter approached the shepherd's herd as an old poor man and asked him something to eat. The shepherd felt sorry for the old man but was not very willing to leave his herd fearing the pack of wolves. Willy-nilly, he went to his hut to get the poor man a bit of something to eat. At this time the old man was watching the herd. As soon as the shepherd left, a starving she wolf and a he wolf came from the nearby bushes. When St Peter saw them he raised one of his arms to the sky, whispered a few words and suddenly the two beasts started crawling at the old man's feet. While caressing them on their heads, the old man was telling them that following that very minute their duty would be to watch the good man's herd forever. Back with a slice of bread and one of cheese in his hand, the shepherd saw the wolves crawling and wagging their tails at the feet of his guest. He knelt and thanked the old man in amazement. The he- and she-wolves have been watching the good man's herd ever since. Later on, the shepherd sold the cubs of the two wolves to other shepherds and since then the ex-wolf dogs and the shepherd have been friends.

St Peter's legend - A story about the origin of strays

God and St Peter were walking on the Earth and after a long time they very much wanted to find a household and stop for some rest. It was late in the afternoon when they finally saw a huge fire in a forest clearing. Shepherds were milking their sheep. God and St Peter got closer and suddenly ten giant hounds fiercely cornered St Peter on the point to tear him into pieces. St Peter cursed them for shamelessly getting to a human being as he was. God said nothing. The shepherds approached and quieted the dogs inviting the two in. All were happy of the encounter. After eating they all went to sleep up until next morning. God and St Peter thanked the shepherds for their hospitality and food and were on the point to leave when the dogs jumped up again to tear St Peter to pieces. Then, very upset, St Peter told God to make the dogs less frightening and more fearful of man. God smiled and said that shepherds needed them as they were. Yet, St Peter went on complaining about their numbers. Then, God separated the dogs. Half of them took their way to the forest and half stayed to watch the herd. And God named 'wolves' the ones released into the forest and as nobody was going to look after them, God let them find themselves their own food. When they failed to do so, God said, it was St Peter's duty to feed them. Ever since the once dogs have become St. Peter's wolves. They plunder to feed themselves and when they do not find food, they start howling and calling St Peter to get them a cow, sheep or a human being - sinners in particular. Since then, people have been avoiding working, washing their hair and using a comb on St Peter's day - which were perceived as sins - not to be given to the wolves.

St Peter's legend – The story of making the shepherd dogs

Another legend says that St Peter was walking alone and arriving at a herd he asked the shepherd something to eat. The man said that he could not leave his herd as there was a pack of wolves around ready for plunder. St Peter insisted and the man finally went to get something to eat. In no time a pack of straying wolves approached the herd. St Peter took out two apples from his pocket and threw them in the way of the pack. While rolling over the two apples turned into two completely new beasts, similar to but a bit smaller than the wolves; they chased the wolves away. St Peter was looking lovingly at the wonderful animals he had given life to when the shepherd came back with the promised food. He looked at the two beings in amazement and understanding it was God's doing fell on his knees in front of the old man. St Peter asked him to raise and always remember that the bigger animal was a he-dog, the other one a she-dog and that they would be the ancestors of all dogs meant to watch sheep and all domesticated animals. St Peter left after blessing the dogs, the shepherd and the herd. Therefore, the shepherd told himself - those apples gave birth to the present day dogs. That is why dogs should only be good and the most reliable friends to men.

A saying based on this story : dogs will always pray to God for his masters to have 9 sons to feed them well; the opposite is true for cats : cats pray to God to let all die in a household except the oldest women of all, hopefully blind, so it could snatch even the last bread crumbs from her hand.

Personal stories

Dumitra (58)– I live in the countryside. I have got a large household with a big front yard and a garden at the back of the house. My parents used to keep domestic animals around the the house. We always had dogs to watch our household and cats to catch mice. At the present we have got 3 dogs and 2 cats . I received one of the dogs- a stray- as gift last year ; we found the other two in the street some time ago and took them at home with us. I would adopt another one, but only a male puppy. Myself and my husband look after them. My grandchildren don't really care, but played with them when they were puppies.

We spend about 30 Eur per month for their food and many times we give them leftovers which they love a lot. We take them to the vet when needed and we have got a health record for each of them. They are not registered yet by means of a chip, but we will do it because this is the new law. The most difficult thing about keeping them is protecting the vegetables and flowers from being dug out and keeping the yard clean. Sometimes when we have guests we have to chain them up in the back yard as they bark a lot and one of them bites.

Viorica (64)- We have had cats and dogs around the house ever since our daughter was born. We raised her with pets around. Not more than two dogs and a cat at a time, and lately since we have retired, just one dog. Never strays. We became attached to different collie breeds. Our first was Sonia, a beautiful 'Lassie' that never had puppies but then she died young from food poisoning. It was heartbreaking. After that we have been very careful with feeding and walking our dogs. Living in an apartment is not always the best experience when keeping pets. After Sonia we moved to a house with a small yard and garden and took a bearded collie puppy . Her name was Hera. She was a nice shepherd dog, again one with long hairs. You can imagine how I had to clean carpets and sofas. Brushing her hair was also a reason for long debates in the family. Walking and aashing her on rainy days, too. She gave us 8 puppies every time she got pregnant. Cute, clever, a good friend and watch dog that was keeping me company when I was ill in bed or working from home. She died of cancer in my arms after her last series of 8 puppies. She was 13. The vet said it was cancer. We don't agree. We think it was bad surgery at the vet's. But that is the past. Luckily we kept one of her puppies, Marie. She is 'blond' with green eyes. The most beautiful dog I have ever seen. She turns the heads when we walk her in the park. She is 7 years old now. Never had puppies . She is good company, very playful but becomes jumpy at high pitch noises. She helped both me and my husband organize our daily timetable after retirement. That is invaluable .

We never perceived our dogs as a burden. We have been feeding them properly, looked for advice at the vet's , given them regular vaccines, walked them daily, around 4 km walks in the morning and in the evening . Helps with keeping us fit.

Our pets have always been at the top of our shopping list, so they have got what they needed before we needed to think of the money left in our wallet. We spend about 50 Eur per months, food and meds included for Marie. We have not bought her health insurance .

Marie has got an ID with her health record. She is chipped and the vet's advice is to have her spied as she is too old (8) to have puppies.

I am not sure I would adopt a stray. Unless it is a puppy, a stray cannot be trained to be a pet,

we believe. They need their freedom and sooner or later they leave the adoptive family. We may be wrong though.

Serbanescu (57) – I have got a cat . It was given to me by a neighbor. She has got her own place in a shelter in the yard although she is allowed to come into the house too. She was an adult when I adopted her and very healthy as she never needed to be taken to a vet. I spend 1-2 hours feeding and caressing her as well as cleaning after her . I give her leftovers from my table . We have got a place outdoors where we keep leftovers for her. I cannot afford to keep a dog and that is why I would not adopt one.

Flori (38) – I have got a dog . My son found it on a farm last year. It was a smallish puppy, about one month old. We decided to take it at home as it was wintertime and somebody had to look after it. We called it Nero. It grew old and we took it to my parents in the countryside where there is a huge yard and garden. We go to see Nero every week . Food is not expensive, just around 10 Eur per week. We also took Nero to the vet for vaccines and registration. So our dog has got an ID and health record. It is important to keep track of the health checks and tests. Nero is very important for my family. As soon as we arrive at my mum's we go to see him before anything. We all love Nero. It is lovely and we would adopt another one. But we need my mum's approval. We cannot keep a dog in our apartment because we are 4 in a 2 room apartment and we are very crowded.

Ionela (39), I do not have a pet because I and my family live in a one room apartment. If I had more space I would adopt a stray puppy. I don't think I would like an older dog because we would like to raise and train it. Nevertheless, we are aware it is not easy to get used to a new family member and this is probably another reason why we do not have a cat or a dog in our home yet. Our parents live in the country side and have god watch dogs. But do not keep them indoors, not even in heavy winter times. So, maybe we need to learn more about this issue.

Iuliana (16): I do not like cats and dogs. My parents too. We have never had one . I am not sure I would like to adopt one, but if I had to, I would adopt a puppy. I am a bit afraid. As I can see from my friends, it is not easy to look after a pet. Most of the times their parents do it. Even walking the dog seems a burden for them. I am not sure I would be different. I need to learn more about pets to be sure I am capable to keep one.

Florica (62)– I have got 2 dogs. One was given to me and I picked the other from the street. It is a tradition in my family to keep dogs. They relax and sooth me. They make me feel good. I keep them inside. I do not dedicate time specifically to them because they are always around. Nevertheless, I think I spend about half to one hour to feed and clean after them. I walk them myself and my son does it too sometimes. My dogs have got a health record notebook because vets do not usually keep a track record for individual dogs so I need to know treatment and vaccine time schedule. I never calculated how much I spend for keeping my dogs. They are part of the family so the budget is for all of us. If I could afford I would adopt a stray, of course.

Urban Legends from Romania

Lady, the dog of a family from Bacau became a hero when she caught a thief in spite of her being 14 years old and, above all, deaf. The unlucky burglar broke into the flat thinking there was nobody at home. He looked through the rooms and took several cigarette packets, some money and jewelry, but in the bedroom he saw Lady. She had not heard him rambling about but when she saw the strange man she jumped on him and bit him up until he ran away. The police found the burglar at the hospital where he was having his wounds treated. The investigators agreed that old Lady had been of great help, particularly because the burglar had not left any evidence behind and the chance to identify him had been small.

Ioan (68)-A story now repeated by all friends and acquaintances. Ioan had to look after the family bearded collies, Hera and Marie, for several months before the new house will have been finished. He used to leave early in the morning for work and come back home at about 5 p.m., take the dogs out, stop at the pub in the neighborhood for a glass of beer, and then walk them for one or two hours. One morning, when he opened the door to leave for work both dogs sneaked out and started running and playing. Because he was already late, he let them be but called a friend and asked him to have a look and keep the dogs safe. At about 5 p.m. he came back home. No Marie, no Hera meeting him at the door. He looked around and still not seeing her, called my friend. He told him he could not find Marie and Hera but had had no time to let Ioan know. Ioan panicked. He started asking neighbors but nobody had seen them. He walked around the building and the park and asked other dog owners about Marie and Hera. Nobody had seen them. He was already sure he would never see them again. He went to bed late that night but could not sleep. On the next day he woke up early and started looking for them again. Nothing until 8. He had to go to work. When he finished his working hours, he sadly left for home. The flat looked unfriendly without Marie and Hera. So he went out for a walk and while passing by the pub he usually was going to for a glass of beer, he saw Marie and Hera sitting there. They saw him too and jumped into his arms and started licking his face. They sat down for a beer. The pub owner came to their table, caressed Marie and Hera and gave them something to nibble. He told Ioan that he had sheltered Marie and Hera the night before but somehow they had left in the morning. Now he was surprised to see them back at the time Ioan usually comes for a beer. Ioan keeps saying that it is a good idea to have stable habits and companions. At least this way you always have a chance to find them unharmed.