

Master Pussy Cat

A man had an old cat that wasn't any longer able to catch mice. So one day the owner took him and drove off to the woods to get rid of him. Said he to himself, "What do I need him for? It would be foolish to feed him any longer. He will be better off wandering by himself in the woods." So the man threw the old cat down and drove away.

A vixen happened to be running by shortly after this. She noticed the cat and spoke to him. "Who are you?"

"I am Master Pussy Cat," he replied.

Said the vixen, "If you will be my husband, I shall be your wife."

The cat agreed to this and the vixen led him to her house. She tried her best to please him. Whenever she caught a chicken, for example, instead of devouring it herself, she would bring it home to the cat.

One day a little rabbit saw the vixen and said to her, "Sister Foxy-Loxy, I am coming over one of these days to pay you a visit." But the vixen replied, "Master Pussy Cat is at my house and he will tear you apart."

The rabbit told the wolf, the bear and the wild boar about Master Pussy Cat, so they got together and began to figure out a way to see this fierce creature. One of them had an idea: "Let's make him a dinner!" So they began to consider who was to go for what.

Said the wolf, "I'll get the meat so that we'll have plenty to put into the borsch."

The wild boar said, "I'll get the beets and the potatoes."

The rabbit added, "And I'll get the cabbage."

As for the bear, he volunteered to get the honey for dessert.

They managed to find everything and started to prepare the dinner. When they had finished making it, they began to consider who was to invite Master Pussy Cat to dinner. Up spoke the bear: "I am so fat that I couldn't run away if I were pursued."

"And I am clumsy," added the wild boar.

"As for me, I am old and somewhat short-sighted," said the wolf.

Thus the little rabbit was left to do the errand, so off he hopped to the vixen's place. The vixen ran out and saw the rabbit standing near her house on his hind paws. "What do you want?" inquired the vixen.

The rabbit replied, "The wolf, bear, wild boar and I wish to invite you and Master Pussy Cat for dinner."

And the vixen answered, "We'll be there, but you must all hide, for Master Pussy Cat will tear you apart."

The little rabbit ran back and said to the animals. "The vixen said you were to hide when Master Pussy Cat comes because otherwise he'll tear you apart." So they started to hide. The bear climbed up into a tree. The wolf slunk under a bush. The wild boar rooted around amongst some dry branches and twigs. And the little rabbit crept into a small clump.

Suddenly the vixen came, bringing with her Master Pussy Cat. She led him to the table. There he espied plenty of meat, so he said, "Meow! Meow! Meow!" but the other animals didn't understand what he was saying. They imagined that he was not satisfied with the dinner and was saying, "Now! Now! Now!"—meaning that he was going to eat them up immediately. They all sat there scared to death.

Master Pussy Cat climbed up onto the table and started to eat so heartily that he almost burst. When he had finished it he stretched himself out on the table. The wild boar was lying near the table in amongst the dry twigs and branches. Suddenly a mosquito bit his tail so he twitched it. The cat thought it was a mouse rustling in the bushes, so he caught the wild boar by the tail, whereupon the boar jumped up and took to his heels. Master Pussy Cat was afraid of boars so he leaped up into the tree and tore up the branches. He climbed close to where the bear was seated. When the bear saw Master Pussy Cat climbing up to him, he started to climb higher and higher. He got up so far that the limb couldn't hold him and down he fell toward the ground—wham!—right on top of the wolf, almost squashing the poor wretch. Then they all started up and scuttled so fast that you could scarcely see them. The little rabbit also followed them and landed goodness knows where. When they finally met once more they said to one another, “That Master Pussy Cat is certainly a real runt, but he almost did us in!” And they didn't realize that he was far more afraid of them than they were of him!