The Cat that Walked by Himself

by Rudyard Kipling

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

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

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

In the Wild Wood, the animals saw the strange light and wondered what it meant. The Dog smelled the wonderful aroma of warm milk. He walked to the cave, lay by the warm fire and drank the warm milk.

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

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

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

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

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

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

With that, the Cat walked into the cave. When the Woman gasped, the Cat said “I made the Baby laugh. You gave me your kind thanks, and by our agreement, I may sit inside the cave.”
The Baby was sad that the Cat had left him and began to cry again. “I will sing the Baby to sleep,” said the Cat. He lay next to the Baby and purred, long and low, until the Baby was fast asleep.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

____ The Woman made a bargain with the Cat.
____ The Dog gnawed the bone.
____ The Woman found a cave.
____ The Cat ate the Mouse.
____ The Woman gave the Cat warm milk.
____ The Cat tickled the Baby.

Vocabulary
Circle the answer that means the same as the word.

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

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

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

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

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

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

AROMA BARGAIN CAVE COMPLIMENT COW FOLLOWED GNAWED GRASS HORSE MAGIC MOUSE NATURE POUNCED PROMISED ROAST WALKED WISE WONDERFUL