

Splat the Cat

By Rob Scotton

It was early in the morning and Splat the Cat was wide awake. Today was his first day at Cat School, and his tail wiggled wildly with worry.

"If I hide from the day, maybe it'll go away," he thought. But it didn't go away. "Time to get up," said his mom. "And time to get dressed."

"I don't have any clean socks, Mom. Maybe I should go to school tomorrow instead?"

"You don't wear socks," said his mom.

"Then I'm having a bad hair day, Mom. Maybe I should go to school tomorrow instead?" said Splat. His mom combed his hair and said, "Purr-fect!" "Now don't forget your lunchbox," said his mom.

"I'll need a friend today," thought Splat. And he dropped his pet mouse, Seymour, into his lunchbox.

"Welcome to Cat School," said a big, round cat. "I'm Mrs. Wimpydimple. And this is Splat. Let's welcome him into our class." Then Mrs. Wimpydimple began.

"Cats are amazing," she said. "We're clever, cunning, and quick."

"Am I amazing too?" asked Splat.

"Yes, you too," said Mrs. Wimpydimple.

"Cats climb trees, drink milk, and chase mice," she continued.

"Why do we chase mice?" asked Splat.

"It's what we do," replied Mrs. Wimpydimple.

"Why?" asked Splat. "Why?"

"Because." Mrs. Wimpydimple sighed.

"Lunchtime!" she announced. Splat opened his lunchbox. "MOUSE!" The cats did what cats do. They chased Seymour. Seymour hid behind a glass bottle, and when the cats saw his face through the glass, they screamed and ran away. Seymour ran after these cats.

"STOP!" cried Splat but they didn't. They pushed down Splat.

"Enough!" Mrs. Wimpydimple said, and it ended. "It's milk time." But the door to the milk cupboard was stuck. "No milk today," announced Mrs. Wimpydimple.

Splat whispered into Seymour's ear. Seymour nodded and then a moment later, the door swung open. Every cat had his milk. Mrs. Wimpydimple wrote again on the chalkboard—Cats DON'T chase mice.

"Hurray!" cheered the class.

Soon it was home time. Splat's mom returned and gave him a hug.

"I've got lots of friends today. Cats don't chase mice and I'm amazing." Splat said to his mom.

It was early the next morning and Splat was wide awake. Today was his second day at Cat School. And his tail wiggled wildly with excitement.

The Nightingale

Retold by: Violet Findley

Once upon a time, there was a king. He lived in a beautiful palace in the land of China. Behind the palace was a forest. In the forest lived a nightingale.

The nightingale sang so sweetly that he was known far and wide. People even wrote books about him. One day, the king read one of the books.

"This bird lives in the forest behind my palace, but I have never heard him sing. I must!" said the king. So he sent his most trusted servant to bring back the nightingale.

The servant went into the forest. By and by, he came upon a plain brown bird singing a sweet song. It was the nightingale!

"Will you come to the palace and sing for the king?" asked the servant. "Of course," said the nightingale.

At the palace, the nightingale sang and sang. The king loved the music so much that he cried.

"I will buy you a fancy cage so you can sing for me always," he said. So he did.

By and by, a present came from the emperor of Japan. Inside was a toy nightingale. It was made of gold and covered with jewels. The king wound up the toy bird and it sang.

"This is so pretty! I will place it in the cage with the real nightingale," he said. So he did.

By and by, the king seemed to forget all about the real nightingale. Feeling unwanted, he flew back to the forest.

"No matter. The toy bird is better," said the servant.

Every night the king listened to the toy bird sing. But one day, it broke.

"It will never sing again," the servant said sadly.

Years passed and the king grew very sick.

"My only wish is to hear the music of a nightingale," he said. He begged the toy bird to sing. But, of course, it did not.

By and by, the real nightingale heard that the king was sick and flew to his window. There, he sang a song so sweet that the king was quickly healed.

"Dear nightingale, you made me well. Come back! I will throw away the toy bird. Then you can live in the cage all by yourself," said the king.

"No, keep the toy bird," said the nightingale. "I like the forest, but I will come to your window every night to sing."

So he did. And his sweet music brought joy to everyone in the palace forever more.

The Larks in the Cornfield

Retrieve from: <http://www.bygosh.com/Features/072000/larks.htm>

There was once a family of little larks who lived with their mother in a nest in a cornfield. When the corn was ripe, the mother lark watched very carefully to see if there were any sign of the reapers' coming, for she knew that when they came their sharp knives would cut down the nest and hurt the baby larks. So every day, when she went out for food, she told the little larks to look and listen very closely to everything that went on, and to tell her all they saw and heard when she came home.

One day when she came home, the little larks were much frightened. "Oh, Mother, dear Mother," they said, "You must move us away tonight! The farmer was in the field today, and he said, 'The corn is ready to cut; we must call in the neighbors to help.' And then he told his son to go out tonight and ask all the neighbors to come and reap the corn tomorrow."

The mother lark laughed. "Don't be frightened," she said; "if he waits for his neighbors to reap the corn we shall have plenty of time to move; tell me what he says tomorrow."

The next night the little larks were quite trembling with fear; the moment their mother got home they cried out, "Mother, you must surely move us tonight! The farmer came today and said, 'The corn is getting too ripe; we cannot wait for our neighbors; we must ask our relatives to help us.' And then he called his son and told him to ask all the uncles and cousins to come tomorrow and cut the corn. Shall we not move tonight?"

"Don't worry," said the mother lark; "the uncles and cousins have plenty of reaping to do themselves; we'll not move yet."

The third night, when the mother lark came home, the baby larks said, "Mother, dear, the farmer came to the field today, and when he looked at the corn he was quite angry; he said, `This will never do! The corn is getting too ripe; it's no use to wait for our relatives, we shall have to cut this corn ourselves.' And then he called his son and said, `Go out tonight and hire reapers, and tomorrow we will begin to cut.'"

"Well," said the mother, "that is another story; when a man begins to do his own business, instead of asking somebody else to do it, things get done. I will move you out tonight."

Cock-a-doodle-hooooooo

by Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom

One stormy night, an owl walked into a farmyard. He was cold, lost and lonely, with no place to go, so he squeezed through a hole in a shed. It was warm and cozy in there, and he fell asleep.

In the morning Owl woke to a nip and a pinch. He heard clucking and squawking. He was surrounded by bony feet and beady eyes. HE WAS IN A HEN HOUSE...

"What a shame! He's no hen!" said one hen.

"We need a rooster. Maybe we could give him a try." said a speckled hen.

"So, can he peck like a rooster?" said one bossy hen. Owl tried to peck. The hens awarded him NO POINTS for pecking.

"Can he scratch like a rooster?" said another. Owl tried to scratch but NO POINTS for scratching.

"Can he cock-a-doodle like a rooster?" Owl tried a cock-a-doodle. NO POINTS for cock-a-doodling.

"Hoo-hoo!" cried Owl sadly. He liked the warm, cozy hen house and the yard dappled with spring sunshine. "I'll teach you how to be a rooster!" the speckled hen put her bony wings around him and she did. Owl learned how to march up and down, guard the hen house and puff out his feathers! He was doing very well until the other hens said, "Try and cock-a-doodle!" Owl tried very hard. He tried his best... but he was an owl after all, and he just hooted like an owl. The other hens were not impressed.

Owl got cross. He'd had enough. He was hungry and he was fed up with the silly hens. So he said, "I'm an owl, not a fowl! Owls aren't hens. We hoot in the moonlight. We don't peck corn, we catch... we catch...RATS."

"Rats!" squawked a hen, peering into the hen house. The rat was stealing eggs, eating corn, chasing chicks! When Owl heard this, he pricked up his ear tufts. He flexed his sharp claws and stretched his soft wings. Then silently as a floating feather, he flew across the hen house and gobbled it up. The hens were speechless!

They fussed around Owl in a flurry of feathers and clucks, "Our hero!"

And Owl puffed out his chest with a swagger and shouted, "COCK-A-DOODLE-HOOOO!"