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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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# Mrs Tabby Gray and her three little kittens

Mrs. Tabby Gray, with her three little kittens, lived out in the barn where the hay was stored. One of the kittens was white, one was black, and one gray, just like her mother, who was called Tabby Gray from the color of her coat.

These three little kittens opened their eyes when they grew old enough, and thought there was nothing so nice in all this wonderful world as their own dear mother, although she told them of a great many nice things, like milk and bread, which they should have when they could go up to the big house where she had her breakfast, dinner, and supper.

Every time Mother Tabby came from the big house she had something pleasant to tell. "Bones for dinner to-day, my dears," she would say, or "I had a fine romp with a ball and the baby," until the kittens longed for the time when they could go too.

One day, however, Mother Cat walked in with joyful news.

"I have found an elegant new home for you," she said, "in a very large trunk where some old clothes are kept; and I think I had better move at once."

Then she picked up the small black kitten, without any more words, and walked right out of the barn with him. The black kitten was astonished, but he blinked his eyes at the bright sunshine, and tried to see everything. Out in the barnyard there was a great noise, for the white hen had laid an egg, and wanted everybody to know it; but Mother Cat hurried on, without stopping to inquire about it, and soon dropped the kitten into the large trunk.

The clothes made such a soft, comfortable bed, and the kitten was so tired after his exciting trip, that he fell asleep, and Mrs. Tabby trotted off for another baby. While she was away, the lady who owned the trunk came out in the hall; and when she saw that the trunk was open, she shut it, locked it, and put the key in her pocket, for she did not dream that there was anything so precious as a kitten inside.



As soon as the lady had gone upstairs Mrs. Tabby Gray came back, with the little white kitten; and when she found the trunk closed, she was terribly frightened. She put the white kitten down and sprang on top of the

trunk and scratched with all her might, but scratching did no good. Then she jumped down and reached up to the keyhole, but that was too small for even a mouse to pass through, and the poor mother mewed pitifully.

What was she to do? She picked up the white kitten, and ran to the barn with it. Then she made haste to the house again, and went upstairs to the lady's room. The lady was playing with her baby and when Mother Cat saw this she rubbed against her skirts, and cried: "Mee-ow, mee-ow! You have your baby, and I want mine! Mee-ow, mee-ow!"

By and by the lady said: "Poor Kitty! she must be hungry"; and she went down to the kitchen and poured sweet milk in a saucer, but the cat did not want milk. She wanted her baby kitten out of the big black trunk, and she mewed as plainly as she could: "Give me my baby—give me my baby, out of your big black trunk!" The kind lady decided that she must be thirsty: "Poor Kitty, I will give you water"; but when she set the bowl of water down Mrs. Tabby Gray mewed more sorrowfully than before. She wanted no water,—she only wanted her dear baby kitten; and she ran to and fro, crying, until, at last, the lady followed her; and she led the way to the trunk.

"What can be the matter with this cat?" said the lady; and she took the trunk key out of her pocket, put it in the lock, unlocked the trunk, raised the top—and in

jumped Mother Cat with such a bound that the little black kitten waked up with a start.

"Purr, purr, my darling child," said Mrs. Tabby Gray, in great excitement; "I have had a dreadful fright!" and before the black kitten could ask one question she picked him up and started for the barn.

The sun was bright in the barnyard and the hens were still chattering there; but the black kitten was glad to get back to the barn. His mother was glad, too; for, as she nestled down in the hay with her three little kittens, she told them that a barn was the best place after all to raise children.

And she never afterwards changed her mind.