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Careful Cat

Laura Rountree Smith

*The Careful Cat said, "I cannot tell
how many times I fell down the well.
To remember, what is the use?
Let us consult Old Mother Goose."*

Once upon a time, the Careful Cat heard a bell ringing, and a great cry arose,

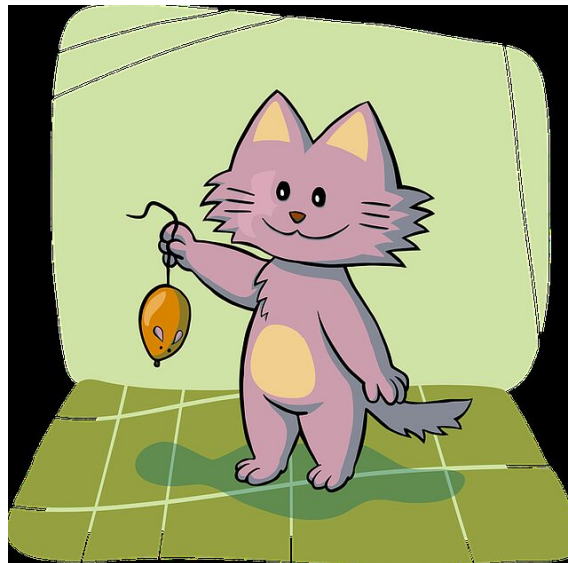
*"Ding, dong, bell,
Cat is in the well."*

She kept under cover but crept up into a tall tree to see what was happening. After a while, many animals passed by on their way home from the market, and they peeped into the well but could see no one. A voice cried,

*"Put down the rope and draw me out,
or Puss will be drowned without a doubt."*

While the animals were busy putting down the rope, the Fox, who had on his invisible cloak, hopped out of the well and seized the largest basket and went merrily homeward. "I will remember his slyness," remarked the Careful Cat.

*"Be very careful what you do,
don't let him play a trick on you,"* whistled the Merry Wind.



One day a little later, the Careful Cat was watching for mice in a barn when the Funny Fox came by and said,

*"If you take the road that leads to the mill,
there are so many mice you can get your fill."*

The Careful Cat thought it over all day, and when moonlight came, she said to the Funny Fox, "Maybe I would stumble in the moonlight." The Funny Fox only said,

*"There are so many mice, a million or more.
They are right outside the old mill-door."*

The Careful Cat decided to go at once and laughed at the idea of catching so many mice. The Merry Wind whistled again,

*"Be very careful what you do,
don't let him play a trick on you."*

The Cat reached the mill door and was going to catch a fat mouse when he was caught himself in a trap.

The Funny Fox slipped away, but the mill owner and others caught the Cat and gave him a beating because they thought he had stolen their chickens. When loose, the Careful Cat was so angry he jumped and jumped and behaved in a funny manner.

The Funny Fox said, as he went off, "He laughs best who laughs last."

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