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Tiger West's Food

Mary Graham Bonner

Tiger West was a cat of considerable means. He had a cushioned bed, a white fluffy rug, a silk bow to match his mistress's gown, and a diet of strawberries, cream, and the tenderest white chicken. He was used to the best of everything.

But lately he'd been going out with the cats from down the street, and having considerably more adventure than was wise.

One afternoon there was a neighbourhood meeting on the back fence. Tiger West attended. Presiding over it was Mr. Black Cat — a thin, rough-furred animal who looked as though he had to fight for every meal and then got chased away before he finished. And yet Mr. Black Cat was the neighbourhood's acknowledged leader: President of the Night Singing Club, Vice-President of the Ash Can Visitors, Secretary of the Hunt Mice Club, Treasurer of the Garbage Guild, and judge of all local disputes — always addressed, therefore, as Your Honour.

This irritated Tiger West enormously.

"Do you enjoy strawberries and cream?" he asked Mr. Black Cat, with the air of someone sharing a great secret.

"Never had any," said Mr. Black Cat.

"I have them regularly," said Tiger West. "My master insists. And I only eat the white meat of chicken, naturally."

"It doesn't help my hunger to hear what you've had for breakfast," said Mr. Black Cat.

Tiger West pressed on. He mentioned the ice cream. He mentioned the cream again.

Mr. Black Cat raised his back.

"This cat," he announced, "believes himself superior to the rest of us. Put him out."

The cats chased Tiger West back down the street and all the way home. He sat



down in front of his bowl of warm milk, somewhat out of breath.

"How foolish of me," he said to himself. "To leave all of this for such terrifying adventures. Still — I was curious, and now I'm not. And I suppose that's worth something."

He drank his milk, quite contentedly.

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