

7. THE CAT'S PARADISE

Just imagine that we come from school or office and have no place to go. What would we do? How unsafe and uncomfortable we would feel!. Our homes are small beautiful worlds where we enjoy the love and care of our parents.

"The Cat's Paradise" presents a contrast between freedom and comfort. Louis, a fat domestic cat of Cherie experiments to leave her home to enjoy the attractive life of streets. Fascinated by the act, Louis is happy to wander around. He comes to his senses when he feels the pangs of hunger in his stomach. He had never fetched his food. In fact the food had always come to him. He realises that the streets are beautiful only when seen from behind the window panes of one's home. In reality the situations are quite difficult.

Do you have any pet animal at home? How does it behave in different situations? Does it like to be indoors or roam freely outside with other animals? Read the story and find out how Louis changes his mind about freedom after roaming outside with other cats.

Also, find out whether this holds true:

East or west , home is the best.

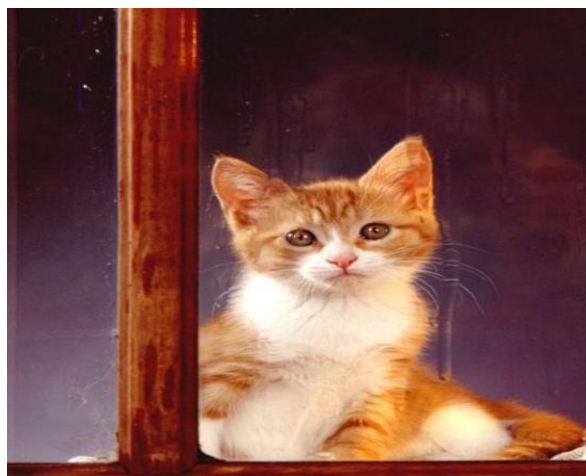
Louis was a fat cat who was very fortunate. He lived in luxury. His companion, a woman named Cherie, fed him salmon and caviar. He slept on feather pillows before a fire. Still, Louis often stared longingly out of the window. When he stretched his neck, he could sometimes see cats across the way, romping across slate roofs and lolling beneath the sun.

Louis wanted just one thing: he wanted to live the life of those cats on the rooftops. "Paradise!" he purred. And he vowed the moment he had the chance, he'd run away to paradise.

One day a miracle happened. Cherie forgot to close the kitchen window, and when she turned her back, Louis leaped out.

"How beautiful!" he crooned. He could smell sunshine and trees, flowers and baking croissants. He trembled with just the tiniest bit of fear when three cats meowing menacingly approached, but they laughed at Louis. "Silly goose! What are you scared of?" they asked. Louis decided he'd meow too. He opened his mouth and joined in their wailing. When the others lolled along the rooftop, Louis lolled right beside them.

Before long, an old tomcat stepped forward. "Bonjour," he said, "my name is Tom. I see you don't know the ways of the world. I'd be glad to



teach you."

"I accept!" Louis said gratefully. He had never had a cat friend.

Louis was soon following Tom and his gang as they darted through the streets. Like them, he drank water from gutters and it tasted sweeter than cream. Everything seemed beautiful. When a female cat passed by, Louis gasped with admiration. "Good day," Louis said to the female, but the others bit his neck and shoved him out of the way.

"Never mind her," Tom said. "You'll meet lots of lovely females out in this world."

They continued walking beneath the warm springtime sun, enjoying the sights and the smells. They languidly made their way back to the rooftop where they'd met.

Louis was starting to feel hungry. "What do you eat up on these roofs?" he asked Tom.

"Whatever we find," Tom replied.

Louis was embarrassed; he had never hunted for food. He began to look around, but he couldn't find a thing and feared he might starve. Then, suddenly, he saw a man preparing a meal through a window. On the man's table, just above the windowsill, lay a juicy flesh chop. Without thinking, Louis jumped through the window and onto the table. He snatched the chop, but before he could get out the window, the man saw him and reached for a broom. He smacked Louis so hard that the chop dropped from his mouth. Louis just managed to escape before the broom came down again.

Tom was standing just outside the window, shaking his head. "Food on tables isn't for us," he said. "We eat from the gutters and alleys. We'll wait until dawn and find our food in the garbage heaps."

Louis was horrified. "Wait all night?"

Tom calmly nodded his head. "You'll learn," he said sagely.

They left the rooftop to roam dark alleyways. Night dragged on far too slowly for Louis. The evening mist made him shiver. As rain began falling and the brisk winds blew, Louis began to think how dreary the world outside was after all. There was no sun, no warm roofs, no playing and prancing. His paws slipped on the cobblestone streets, and he began to dream of Cherie's house and his nice pillows.

Suddenly Tom hissed, "Quick, over here!" He was gliding close to the side of a building. When they reached the shelter of a door, Tom whispered, "That man with the hook and basket out there? See him? He's the animal catcher. If he finds us, we're dead!"

Now Louis was shivering with fear as well as cold. Rain and wind and men with hooks? Garbage and slippery streets? What more could happen out here?

Louis heard rustling. He turned and saw three men carrying garbage out to the streets. He raced to inspect it. He longed for a nice piece of meat, a little salmon and some caviar. He rifled through the bags, but he found just three dry bones.

Tom, Louis could see, was an artist. He rifled through the garbage slowly and diligently, and he found a few strips of thin, stale meat. As the cold rain fell onto Louis, all he could think about was his warm, dry prison, where a bowl of salmon and caviar surely awaited him.

When the sun began to rise, Tom looked at him and winked. "You've had enough of life out here, haven't you?"

"I have," Louis said meekly.

"Do you want to go home?" Tom asked.

"I do," Louis said, "but how do I find my house?"

Tom wearily shook his head. "When I saw you leave your house yesterday, I knew a fat cat like you wasn't meant for the joys of freedom. Follow me." Louis followed Tom along cobblestone streets, up to slate rooftops, along paths he barely remembered. Soon they were at Cherie's window. Tom turned to him and said, "Here you are. Goodbye!"

Louis could not bear to leave his friend out here in the wilds. "Come with me," Louis said. "I'll share my bed and food. Cherie is generous."

Tom waved a paw. "I'd die in there with all those fluffy pillows and rich foods. That's for weaklings. I need to be free!" He turned and jumped up on the roof and disappeared.

Louis slipped inside. When Cherie saw him, she screamed, "Bad boy!" But she gathered him in her arms and fed him caviar. Later, stretched out before the fire, Louis rested his head on his feather pillows and closed his eyes. Now he understood that paradise was a place where he might be locked up forever, but he would always have fresh meat, fluffy pillows and a fire.

That was paradise, after all. For a cat, that is.

Emile Zola (Translated from the French)

New words

salmon, caviar, romp, loll, croon, croissant, bonjour, dart, gasp, shove, chop, smack, prance, rustle, rifle, meekly, fluffy

Glossary

salmon:	one of several species of fish
caviar:	eggs of a fish, roe, considered a delicacy

romp:	(esp. of a child and an animal) play with energy
loll:	sit , stand or lie in a relaxed way
croon:	sing or say something in a soft and low voice
croissant	crescent shaped roll made of yeast dough
bonjour:	it is a French word which means ‘good day’
dart:	move or run rapidly
gasp:	breathe with an open mouth because of pain or surprise
shove:	push someone or something roughly
chop (n):	a slice of meat
smack:	to hit someone or something with force
prance:	walk energetically or move in a lively way
rustle:	make a soft, dry sound
rifle:	to search thoroughly with the intent to steal
meekly:	gently; quietly
fluffy:	soft and woolly

Thinking about the Text

A. Answer the following questions:

1. What kind of life did the cat lead?

2. Why did the cat feel a need to leave the comforts of the house?

3. In what ways was life on the tiles different from life in the house?

4. What advice did the tomcat give about meat on tables?

5. What did the tomcat feel about life in a house?

6. What (according to the fat cat) was true happiness?

B. Complete the following sentences:

- a) Louis wanted to live the life of.....
b) Tom wearily shook his head because.....

Language Work

Use the following words and expressions in sentences of your own:
In the midst of, the whole day long, romping, fixed belief, resolved, signs of, from afar, desolate, succulent

Grammar Work

Clause

A Clause is a group of words which forms part of a sentence and has a Subject and a Predicate. e.g.;

I have a watch which is studded with diamonds.

In the above sentence, there are two clauses, i.e.,

‘I have a watch’ and ‘which is studded with diamonds.’

The first clause, i.e., ‘I have a watch’ is called the Principal or Main Clause and the second clause, i.e., ‘which is studded with diamonds’ is called the Subordinate or Dependent Clause as its sense is complete only when read with the Principal or Main Clause.

NOTE: Some sentences contain two or more Principal or Main Clauses and no Subordinate or Dependent Clause at all.

EXERCISE

Now identify the Principal or Main Clause/s and the Subordinate or Dependent Clause/s (if any) in the following sentences:

1. He must weep, or he'll die.
2. Walk quickly, else you'll not overtake him.
3. This is the house that his brother built.
4. You may do as you please.
5. He threw the stone but it missed the aim.
6. She neither obtains success nor deserves it.
7. Whatever you do, do well.
8. We rested when evening came.
9. Tell him the news as you have heard.
10. I returned home because I was ill.

Let's Talk

Activity

Instruct the students to sit in two groups. In the light of the lesson, let one group speak about the cats that live with humans. The second group will speak about the cats that are roaming freely outside. With your prompts, allow the students to come to a conclusion about who has a better life

Let's Write

Write a paragraph about the main idea of the story using the following points:

- Louis lived the life
- he was not satisfied with the life of luxury
- why not satisfied
- life outside
- life inside
- impossible for tomcat to live outside

Note: i) The 's' in Louis is silent.
ii) Cherie is pronounced sherry.
iii) Naïve is pronounced nah-eev.

Teacher's Page (The Cat's Paradise)

1. Dear teacher, while teaching this story ask a few guided questions of the students to arrest their attention. Ask the students to concentrate on the presentation part so that they are able to answer these questions, e.g.; How does Louis change his mind about freedom after roaming outside with other cats? What are the Tomcat's ideas of living within the four walls?
2. The teacher should acquaint the students with words new to them, explain their meanings and train them in pronouncing them correctly.
3. In the introduction, the teacher can talk about some pets and their behaviour in different situations and also tell them to be humane to animals.
4. The students may also be told how a story begins, reaches its middle and finally ends.
5. The teacher should concentrate on developing four basic skills LSRW through this story.

PAPER BOATS

Day by day I float my paper boats one by one down the running stream.
In big black letters I write my name on them and the name of the village
where I live.

I hope that someone in some strange land will find them and know who
I am.

I load my little boats with shiuli flowers from our garden, and hope that
these blooms of the dawn will be carried safely to land in the night.

I launch my paper boats and look up into the sky and see the little
clouds setting their white bulging sails.

I know not what playmate of mine in the sky sends them down the air to
race with my boats!

When night comes I bury my face in my arms and dream that my paper
boats float on and on under the midnight stars.

The fairies of sleep are sailing in them, and the lading is their baskets
full of dreams.



R.N.Tagore

New Words

float, running, shiuli, bloom, launch, lading

Glossary

float: stay on the surface of a river

running: flowing

shiuli: a kind of flower like jasmine

bloom: flower

launch: put paper boats in water

lading (n) : the action of loading a ship or a boat; the act of bailing and dipping

Reading is Fun

1. Who is the speaker of the poem?

2. When does the child float the paper boats?

3. What does the child write on the paper boats?

4. Why does the child do so?

5. What does the child put in the paper boats?

Language Work

- A. Choose the correct compound word for each of the following from the box given below:**

1. Work that involves handling papers.
2. A book with a cover made of thin card.
3. A small piece of bent wire used for holding papers.
4. Money in paper form rather than coins.
5. A place where newspapers are sold.
6. A small heavy object put on top of pieces of paper to keep them in position.

paper clip	paper money	paperback
paperweight	paperwork	paper shop

B. Match the words in Column A with their opposites from Column B:**Column A**

black
live
strange
little
dawn
safe
night

Column B

die
known
dusk
day
white
big
dangerous

Let's Talk

If you were the child in the poem, what would you tell your classmates about the paper boat?

Let's Write

How do we send messages nowadays? Write about a few of the methods in your notebook.

Teacher's Page (Paper Boats)

1. Ask the students whether they like the rainy day.
2. Ask them if they have ever made any paper boat and made it float on water.
3. Making the classroom situation more exciting, ask the students to make paper boats of different colours and decorate them. Also make them to write some messages on them.
4. Ask the children to make as many things from paper as they can make.
5. Ask the children to learn the names of ten flowers in their mother tongue.