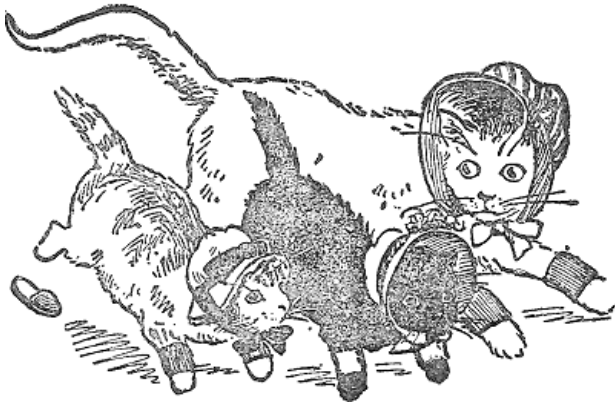


Name: _____

THE KIT-CAT CLUB



Cousin Jim is always laughing at us about our cats. The last time he came to see us, he began saying a teasing kind of rhyme beginning:

*"The dog will come when he is called,
The cat will walk away."*

We really almost had a squabble about it. But I think I quite showed him that he was mistaken in thinking that cats are heartless and stupid. Our cats always come when we call them, and very often when we don't. And as for affection, they are just full of it; you should see Alexander following us around the garden, or little Penguin sitting on mother's knee, when she is writing, with his tiny forepaws on the table just as if he wanted to help her.

Last winter, when mother was ill with a cold she caught helping to make the new rockery, and had to stay in bed, Sandy insisted on going to see her every day. It wasn't cupboard-love in the least, for she never feeds him. One day when her dinner was left on a stool outside her door, he sat up beside it and meowed piercingly to be let in. It is not every dog that would sit alone with a boiled wing of chicken, and never

so much as taste it. (Not that I want to say anything against dogs, they are quite nice, indeed, in their own way; but while everyone praises them, and takes pains to understand them, so many people won't take a bit of trouble to know what cats are really like, or to see their good qualities.)

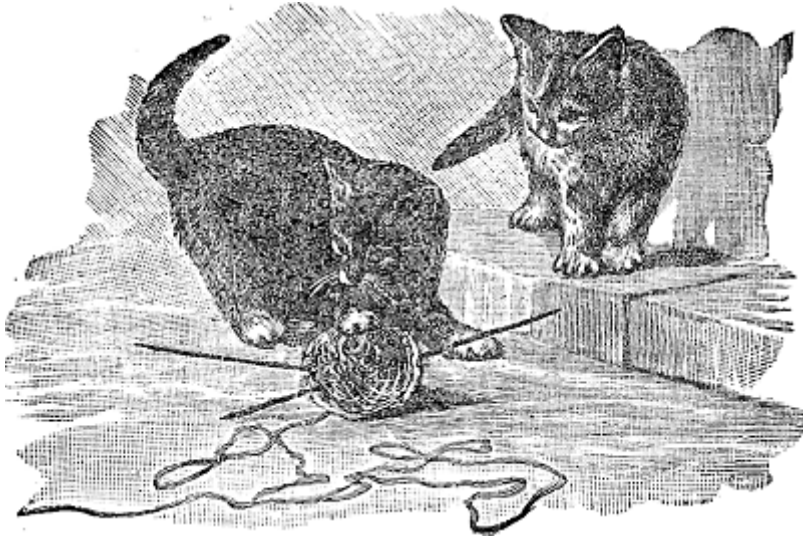
Mother always says that you must master a dog and keep him well-mannered and obedient principally by fear; dogs will obey the roughest, unkindest sort of people, who behave as badly as possible to them and everyone else. But a cat, she says, you can win only by being kind and polite. They will never submit to force or cruelty, but if you treat them properly they'll be just as fond of you and as faithful as any dog. Anyhow, that's how our cats are.



We have only three just now; mother would like to have four, but father says he thinks three is a very nice number indeed, and that if mother doesn't take care, she will be put in the newspapers like that old man—I forget his name—who has so many cats that his neighbors don't like it.

The largest and the eldest is Alexander (that is his real name, but we call him Sandy, for short); he is a most handsome cat, and his hair is very much the same color as Valentine's. We did mean to call him Marigold, but somehow it didn't seem quite to suit him, though the color matched. Perhaps his immense white whiskers and eyebrows made it seem absurd.

Then there is little Penguin; we call him that because he is marked so funnily with black and white, and looks exactly like one when he sits up and begs. He is a plump little cat with deep silky fur; he looks as broad as he is long, nurse says. He and Sooty are cousins; they are about the same age, and were brought to us in the same basket.



It is the most comical thing in the world to see them playing together at hide-and-seek. There is a large curtain over a door in the hall, and one of them gets behind this and expects the other to come and look

for him, and if he is rather long about it you will see a little head and a pair of bright eyes peeping round the curtain like a disappointed child. But when the other comes and begins to look, perhaps at the wrong side of the curtain, you hear a sudden scamper of soft little feet and a big bounce as the hiding one rushes out from his concealment and springs on his playmate. Then, they go tumbling over and over one another with their paws round each other's necks, squealing with fun and excitement.

We were perfectly miserable, I remember, when Sandy's mother died. Mr. Austin's keeper shot her because, he said, she used to catch his young pheasants and partridges. But I don't believe for a moment that she ever did; she was only fond of walking about in the woods, like

anybody else. It would be very hard if everyone who liked rambling out in the hazel-copse was supposed to be after his vexing little birds. But Mr. Austin has promised never to kill any of our cats again, and mother has tied a bell and a ribbon on each of them now, so that he may know them.



Poor Felicia! I shall never forget how we cried when she came crawling in and dragged herself up to where mother usually sits—mother was out that afternoon, though; she looked round, as if she were trying to find her,

and then she gave a faint kind of meow, and stretched herself out on mother's chair, and died.

She was such a clever cat! When Sandy was a tiny kitten, he was one of five that she was bringing up in the summerhouse at the end of the garden, and three of them were taken away ("made off with," as the gardener calls it). Well, the day after that happened, Sandy disappeared too, and nobody could think what Felicia had done with him.

So we watched her, and found that she used to go, very stealthily, to the arch that is all covered with Japanese honeysuckle, and climb up into it; and then we discovered that Sandy was up there, living quite cozily in a blackbird's nest six feet above the ground. I suppose she was afraid lest he might be "made off with" too, and thought he would be safer in another place.

We gave Felicia a splendid funeral in the garden. Valentine made her a beautiful tombstone out of wood, and painted it with white paint, and Christine composed some poetry for her epitaph. But somehow, when you've really been very fond of a pet, and it dies, the funeral and all that isn't much of a consolation.

There was another very clever mother-cat that we knew. She lived—and lives still, for aught I know—at a farmhouse where we used to go and stay every summer, near the sea.

We don't go there anymore now, because Mr. Lee and his wife, who had the farm, have gone to live somewhere else; but I daresay Angelina remains. She began by being the stable cat; but she was so pretty (and not shy as most stable cats are), that by degrees they allowed her in the house, till she took up her abode there altogether.



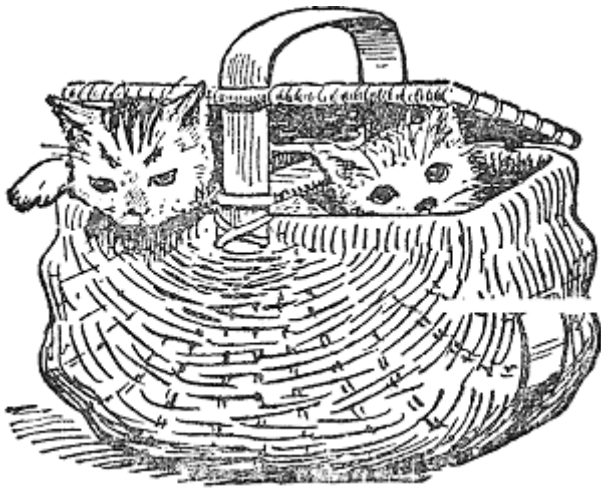
She was quite a small tabby kitten when first we persuaded Mrs. Lee to let her lie before the kitchen fire, and a lovely kitten she was, too; rather inclined to be long haired, with a fluffy white shirt-front, and great green eyes, and the sweetest expression imaginable.

Valentine used to say, when he saw her sitting upon the dresser, with Mrs. Lee's beloved willow-pattern plates behind her, looking dreamily at the

flies playing kiss-in-the-ring in the air, that if she were only white, and not tabby, he should believe she was that enchanted pussycat who turned into a beautiful princess when her head was cut off. She was not, for Mrs. Lee knew her mother quite well; and if she had been, I'm sure Val would never have had the heart to cut her little head off. Besides, it would have been very awkward supposing he did, and supposing she had turned into a princess.

I don't expect she would have cared to play our games, and I'm not quite sure that mother and father would have liked having her to live with us. Fancy father's having to walk downstairs before her backwards, with a gold candlestick in each hand, every evening! And I'm certain he never would have consented to wear court dress every day.

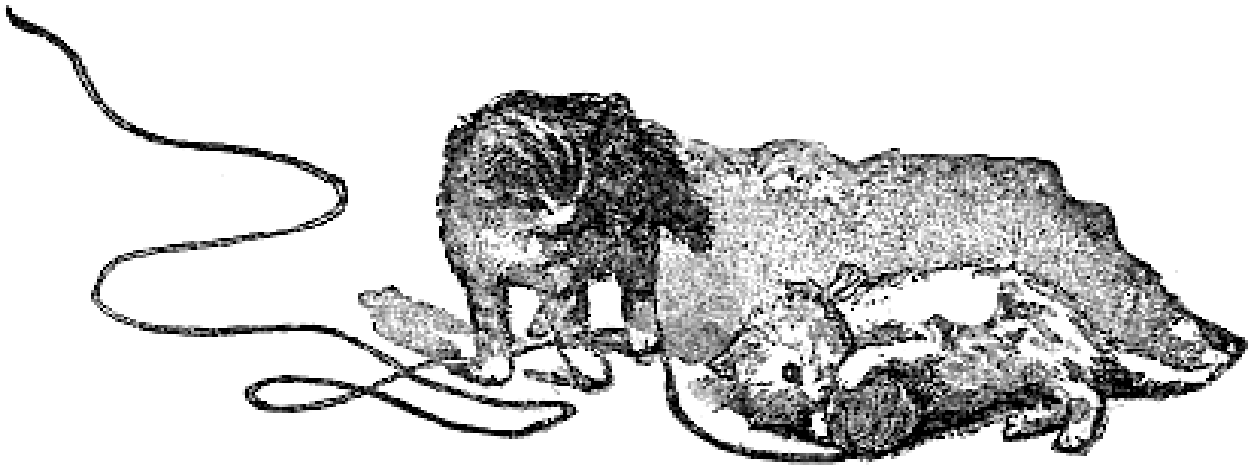
So, on the whole, it was just as well that she was only an ordinary mortal kitten. "You little mortal!" Mrs. Lee would call her, when she was more than usually mischievous!



Yet, ordinarily, she was not. Never was such a kitten for ridiculous pranks! She was very fond of being upstairs when Jan, who was only a baby then, was being put to bed. She would hide under the flounce of the bassinet and make sudden darts at

him. He didn't mind it a bit—in fact, I think he liked it, for he used to stretch out his little fat arms to the fat little kitten, and laugh.

But nurse did not altogether appreciate Angelina's attentions. She is not as devoted to cats as we are, and she was always rather nervous lest her baby might receive a chance scratch. However, the kitten would not be driven away, even when nurse blew in her face (which cats dislike more than anything); and one evening nurse got out of patience, and picking up one of Jan's little shoes, threw it quite hard at kitty, who, instead of being properly ashamed, or crying out because it hit her, seemed to think it must be some delightful new plaything made on purpose for her, for she pranced and patted it, and settled down to a long game with it.



1. This story was first published in 1912. List three things from the story which indicate that this story does not take place in the present day.

2. This story is written in the _____ person.

- a. first
- b. second
- c. third

3. Describe your favorite part of this story, and tell why you enjoyed it.

4. Describe your least favorite part of the story, and tell why you disliked it.

5. Which do you prefer—dogs or cats? Explain your feelings on this topic.

6. Briefly describe each of the following characters from the story.

<i>Alexander (Sandy)</i>	
<i>Angelina</i>	
<i>Cousin Jim</i>	
<i>father</i>	
<i>Felicia</i>	
<i>Jan</i>	
<i>mother</i>	
<i>Mr. Austin's keeper</i>	
<i>Mrs. Lee</i>	
<i>nurse</i>	
<i>Penguin</i>	
<i>Sooty</i>	
<i>Valentine</i>	

7. Who was your favorite character, and why?

8. Read, trace, and write each term from the story.

affection affection affection affection affection affection affection

comical comical comical comical comical comical comical comical

cruelty cruelty cruelty cruelty cruelty cruelty cruelty cruelty

disappointed disappointed disappointed disappointed disappointed

epitaph epitaph epitaph epitaph epitaph epitaph epitaph epitaph

obedient obedient obedient obedient obedient obedient obedient

rockery rockery rockery rockery rockery rockery rockery rockery

scamper scamper scamper scamper scamper scamper scamper

splendid splendid splendid splendid splendid splendid splendid

stealthily stealthily stealthily stealthily stealthily stealthily

whiskers whiskers whiskers whiskers whiskers whiskers whiskers