

1932

My Tomcat Whisky

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Recommended Citation

Joel, Helmuth. "My Tomcat Whisky." *The Hornbook* 1, no. 1 (1932).
Available at: <http://scholar.dickinson.edu/hornbook/vol1/iss1/11>

The Hornbook is a literary magazine published by the Belles Lettres Society at Dickinson College between 1932 and 1962. For more information, please contact scholar@dickinson.edu.

MY TOMCAT WHISKY

AFTER you read the title of this story, you will be surprised when I tell you that my tomcat Whisky brought me six kittens yesterday. I must confess I was astonished myself! When Whisky came to our house, my friend Oscar was visiting me. He tried to assure me that he was an expert in zoology and especially in cats. "It is a tomcat, my boy; take that from me. My great-grandmother used to tell us that tomcats have much larger foreheads than their female companions."

I did not find that the forehead was broad, but I could not compare it with that of another tomcat. So I nodded my own broad head and Oscar saw in that nodding good occasion to explain in a long sermon why he believed himself correct. Usually he begins by telling of an uncle of his great-grandmother's and after a while he comes to his own opinion. At last I believed him. I gave the name Whisky to my tomcat, every day expecting his head to become broader.

Yesterday after six weeks' absence, Whisky brought me six kittens. My faith in Oscar and Whisky is shaken.

There is no secret about the name Whisky. The reason for it is very simple, because his—pardon me—her father belongs to the family of the "Black and White". All members of this family have on their fur two black spots. The first one goes from the nose to the left ear and the other one runs over the whole thigh. The remaining fur is white.

Whisky's father lives in the neighborhood; he is a perfect representative of the family, "Black and White". Seeing him walk down the street everybody gets the impression that he is an aristocrat. His manners are really excellent. I for myself believe his character is not so good. His cleverness makes him selfish and in spite of the fact

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that he is the best fighter in the vicinity, he supposes anything is permissible for him. He lives with an old general and wears a mustache like his master's, martial and provoking.

Whisky herself owed her life to a misalliance between her father and a lady cat living quite near the general's house. She comes from the lower classes and does not possess anything except her beauty. Naturally she is of a dark type and but for her four white paws nothing can give her soul that little bit of purity she needs.

Nobody could anticipate that the general's Mustafa and Pussi would become a pair one day. It is my opinion now that it was purely accidental. One night, when Mustafa left his warm home, he intended only to take a little moonlight walk in order to sleep better. Although it was May he did not go to the tomcat-club because he did not like to mix his noble voice with the voices of the common people who had their glee club meeting that night in the light of the full moon. He really was embarrassed when the president summoned him, the honorary member, to participate in a serenade with Pussi. He never would have confessed that he was really curious to hear the concert. No, he wanted to take a little walk.

It was on the roof of house number twenty-four where he saw his companions. They were sitting around a chimney and on this chimney lay Pussi. Funny—for once he forgot about his rank and went nearer. Do not believe that he gave Pussi a glance, not at all. He only intended to shake paws with the president of the club, nothing else. Mustafa leaned on the chimney, while the crowd sang with open mouths and enraptured smiles on their faces.

"Many new men this year," he thought, and counted contentedly quite a few "Black and White's." This night was the initiation of the young tomcats into the club and with this serenade they had to prove that they were able to become ordinary members.

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"I have often told them that singing to a lady brings discord. Why can't these people follow my advice and sing to our dear friend, the moon?"

These were the thoughts of Mustafa and I think he was right. Suddenly Pussi mewed. The song was interrupted because the tenor went to the chimney to start a solo. Excitement broke out in the ranks. This youngster, not initiated yet, was going to break the rules on the first evening. He was a wonderful fellow, looking like a tiger. The only proof of his youth was his short moustache of the latest fashion and his indiscretion in breaking ranks. But, indeed, Pussi was able to inflame hearts. Her black fur glittered in the moonshine.

The excitement became greater when the other tomcats noticed that Pussi seemed to be interested in this young saucy. Nobody did anything against the tiger, but all eyes were directed at Mustafa. This valiant hero, known as the best fighter, was the hope of all the cowards who were sitting about but who feared to challenge the tiger. Mustafa stretched himself. He did not look at the others. Nonchalantly he jumped on the chimney. For a moment the tiger was bluffed, but then he assumed the same pose.

Mustafa growled a threat. The adversary sneaked nearer. When the youngster attacked the old tomcat the drama came to its highest point. It was a shame, but Mustafa felt the blood flow down behind his ear. The first time he only played with his strength. At last, because his rank would not permit of his losing the fight, he used the famous swinger which has made him well-known and not to be forgotten. He moved back a little and the inexperienced tiger became careless. Suddenly he swung his paw and met the other just above the right eye. The tiger cried, fell down from the chimney, and disappeared in the shadow of a roof. Thus first love often ends tragically and with tears.

The end of this story nobody knows. The general

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wondered that Mustafa came home early the next morning. The moon went down a long time before. Chatter-boxes say that Mustafa and Pussi got married the same night. Maybe. The proof of this misalliance sits on my knees, as I write. Whisky was left by her mother very soon. I have already said that Pussi was a lady cat who did not take life very seriously. Whisky seems to have more sense of duty. Proudly she looks upon her six kittens and nurses them like the best mother-cat in the world.

Oscar came and saw them. "Well, my boy, did I not always tell you that you had a female cat, when you asked me? Listen, I studied zoology and I know about cats", he said. I remembered the story beginning with the uncle of the great-grandmother's; therefore I kept quiet and looked out the window. Mustafa was ambling down the street. His moustache is the same, martial and provoking. He seems to be a bachelor again.

Helmuth Joel.

MOUNTAINS

I stand in a valley with mountains on every side, far flung mountains, which close the prospect of the world beyond, close the paths of travel, cruel mountains which make the valley stifling. My only help is the mist, the thick fog that gathers and blurs out the world around me. The moisture bathes my face, and I fling out my arms in a new found freedom. Gradually the black mist creeps over me and dims my brain. My senses are drugged and I seem to fall asleep.

Marie Formad.