

## WHY CATS LIVE IN THE HOUSE INTRODUCTION by Tracy Hanson

Domestic cats like the one in our story have been in existence since Ancient Egyptian times, over 4,000 years ago. The cat's skills in killing pesky rodents may have first earned the affectionate attention of humans. In fact, cats were worshipped by Early Egyptians, who even mummified their beloved pets for their journey to the next world. These cats were even accompanied by mummified mice! Now however, in most cultures around the world people have cats for companions.

There are over [100 breeds](#) of domestic cats coming in all sizes, shapes and [colors](#). Do you have any cats? Take a picture of your cat(s) and write a story which includes its breed (if known) and coloring, as well as its habits and characteristics.

Or maybe you have your eye on becoming a veterinarian! Here is a page which outlines the [anatomy of a cat](#). Or should you want to explore more, you can read this [cat dissection guide](#).

Frankly, however, I am more into just playing with them and trying to figure out what they are thinking. Did you know that when a cat closes its eyes in the presence of another it is the ultimate sign of trust. Just like people, [cat's body language](#) will tell you a lot. In fact, even the [different sounds](#) and noises they make can tell you how they are feeling. Here's a video of [cat sounds](#) and their meaning.

So now that we have explored cats, both inside and out, let's paw our way down to the story.

## WHY CATS LIVE IN THE HOUSE

**Tales from the Grassland and the Forest  
by Agnes Ngoh Nzuh**

Rewritten for the Reader's Theater by  
Neba Bineh Grace and Tracy Hanson

CAT	RAT	LION	DOG	SQUIRREL
OLD WOMAN	NARRATOR 1	NARRATOR 2	NARRATOR 3	NARRATOR 4

**NARRATOR 1:** Many years ago, all animals lived happily together in the forest. They loved one another and always shared their food peacefully.

**NARRATOR 2:** Cat and Rat were loved very much by all the animals because they were smart and dependable. They carried goods and information from one animal to the other.

**NARRATOR 3:** They also informed the other animals to go into hiding whenever an enemy was around.

**NARRATOR 4:** Whenever Cat gave the animals something useful, he was decorated. Sometimes they rubbed him with black, gray, orange, brown, or white colors. That is why cats today appear in so many beautiful colors.



**NARRATOR 1:** Rat was only given one color, brown, because he was very small and lived in the soil.

**NARRATOR 2:** But as the years went by, the forest messengers were not so dependable or truthful. One day, Uncle Lion gave Cat some meat and grains.

**LION:** I want you to take this parcel to my nephew, Dog.

**CAT:** (to himself) I am too tired to take this parcel to Dog. I will go ask Rat to take the parcel for me.

Rat my friend, will you take this parcel and give it to Dog?

**RAT:** Certainly! (Sniff, Sniff) I wonder what is in the parcel. I think I shall open it and see.

**NARRATOR 3:** Well, we all know what it was he found!

**NARRATOR 4:** Yes, and Rat thought and thought what to do.

**RAT:** I wonder, (talking to himself) should I take this meat and grains to Dog or bring it home to share with my family?

**NARRATOR 1:** Of course, he decided to take it home and they all had a very nice meal.

**NARRATOR 2:** The next day,

**CAT:** Did you give the parcel to Dog?

**RAT:** Yes, I gave it to Dog and it was very happy.

**NARRATOR 3:** That same day,

**LION:** Did you give Dog the parcel?

**CAT:** I gave the parcel to Dog and he was very pleased with you.

**NARRATOR 4:** You see, Cat told a lie to Lion because he wanted another color.

**NARRATOR 1:** Two months later, Dog visited it's uncle, Lion.

**LION:** Did you get the parcel?

Dog: (Astonished) Which parcel are you talking about, Uncle?

**LION:** The parcel that I sent to you through Cat.



Dog : But Uncle, I didn't receive any parcel from Cat.

**NARRATOR 2:** So Lion and Dog decided to find out what happened to the parcel.

**LION:** Cat, did you really give the parcel to Dog?

**CAT:** Yes, of course I did.

**LION:** Perhaps we should check with Dog. He said he never received the parcel.

**CAT:** (Pleading ) pleaseee... pleaseee..., let me tell you the truth now.

**LION:** Do you mean you did not tell me the truth before? If you do not tell me the truth I will tell the big animals to remove all the colors we gave you.



**CAT:** I was very, very tired the day you sent me to Dog, so I gave the parcel to Rat to take to Dog. (weeping) 'The following day, when I met Rat, it told me it had given Dog the parcel.

**LION:** Why did you not tell me the truth from the beginning? I must tell the other animals that you are a liar.

**CAT** (crying) If the big animals decide to take off my colors then I will die. (angrily) I must get to rat.

**NARRATOR 3:** Lion told the story to the big animals. Cat was invited. The big animals then asked Cat to tell them the truth.

**CAT:** (crying) It is because I wanted another color that I lied to Lion that I handed the parcel to Dog myself.

**NARRATOR 4:** The big animals decided that Cat must be punished for having told lies to Lion. They also decided that Cat must bring Rat to them.

**NARRATOR 1:** Clever Fox advised the big animals not to send Cat to find Rat. So they decided to send the best friend of Rat who was Squirrel, to see what Rat was doing.

**NARRATOR 2:** Squirrel was reluctant to go see rat, but since it did not like lies she obeyed the big animals and went to invite Rat.

**NARRATOR 3:** When Squirrel arrived, she saw Rat and his family feeding on pieces of meat and grain.

**SQUIRREL:** It's true that you did not hand the parcel the cat gave you to Dog? I must go and tell the big animals. The cat must not be punished for nothing.



**NARRATOR 4:** Squirrel went back and reported what she had seen. When Rat heard that the big animals wanted to see him, he was afraid.

**RAT:** The truth has been discovered. I will be punished severely if I meet the big animals.

**NARRATOR 1** The animals waited and waited to see Rat but Rat did not come.

**LION:** Cat, if we do not see Rat, you will be punished.

**CAT** Please, allow me to bring Rat to you.



**NARRATOR 2:** The big animals agreed and Cat ran straight to Rat's house.

**CAT** My friend, are you the one who wants me killed? Why did you eat the parcel I gave you to give Dog? You met me the next day and told me a lie. I cannot suffer alone.

**NARRATOR 3:** Cat caught the rat by the neck and ran very fast to give Rat to the big animals.

**NARRATOR 4:** But when big animals saw Rat in Cat's mouth, they started laughing... “hahaha..hihihiiii....”

**NARRATOR 3:** and Cat laughed too..

**NARRATOR 1:** and Rat fell off its mouth and quickly ran to a hiding place.

**NARRATOR 2** The animals were disappointed that Rat had escaped. Some big animals proposed that Cat should be punished.

**NARRATOR 3:** “Cat”, they said, “had not told the lion the truth from the beginning”.

**NARRATOR 2** Others proposed on their part that Cat should not be punished.

**NARRATOR 3:** They said he had been a hard worker before.

**NARRATOR 4:** A final decision was taken. Cat was asked to bring back Rat.

**LION:** (Roaringly) Never come back here until you bring Rat to us alive. We want Rat alive!

**CAT** Where can Rat be. I've looked for months and I can't find it anywhere.

**SQUIRREL:** I know where Rat is. Rat is hiding in a hole under a very big tree.

**NARRATOR 2** Cat went there immediately. But Rat smelled Cat, and ran away.

**NARRATOR 3:** Cat gave chase.

**NARRATOR 1:** Rat ran into an old woman's house and Cat followed.

**NARRATOR 2** Rat climbed into the old woman's barn.



**RAT:** (panting) Old woman, allow me to stay with you. I will take care of your grains. I will make sure weevils do not eat your grains.

**OLD WOMAN::** Oh, that would make me very happy!

**NARRATOR 3:** Later, when cat arrived,

**OLD WOMAN::** What do you want in my house?

**CAT:** Old woman, Rat is not a good friend to live with. The rat will eat all your grains. The rat is a thief.

**NARRATOR 4:** The old woman was trying to see what the rat was doing and saw Rat was eating grains.

**OLD WOMAN::** You are right, Cat. Will you chase Rat away?

**CAT:** (happily) I will gladly do so old woman.

**NARRATOR 1:** Cat chased Rat.

**NARRATOR 2** It caught Rat and killed it.

**NARRATOR 3:** Cat tore Rat into pieces and ate it saying:

**CAT:** I will eat you just as you ate the parcel.

**NARRATOR 4:** Then Cat suddenly remembered. The big animals had asked him to bring Rat alive.

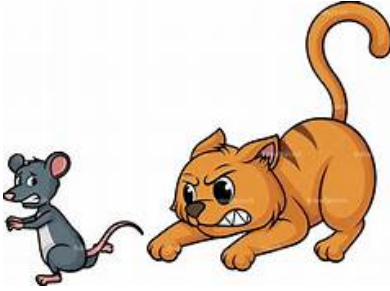
**OLD WOMAN: CAT:** Oh, I cannot return to the forest anymore. I was asked to bring Rat alive. If I tell the animals the truth, that I've eaten him, they will never believe me.

**NARRATOR 3:** So Cat went back to Old Woman.

**CAT:** Will you let me live in your house? I will chase all rats away.

**OLD WOMAN:** I would like that very much.

**NARRATOR 2:** And that is why cats live in houses rather than in the forest.



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