

## **Cat And Dog**

BY LADY BELL

CHARACTERS.

TOWSER.

PUSSY.

TOWSER.--What a night! I am tied up in the yard, and told to bark if I hear a noise. Suddenly I hear a screeching and pecking in the poultry-yard, fowls flapping about in all directions. Of course I bark as loud as I can, my master comes out to see what it is about, he finds one of the hens missing, and beats me as if I had killed it. I do call that hard on a steady, respectable dog like me.

*Enter PUSSY without seeing TOWSER.*

PUSSY.--Well, I do call it hard! Everything that is broken in the house, they say is done by the cat. Now, this morning, again, a beautiful Venetian looking-glass is broken, and so my mistress would not give me a saucer of cream for breakfast.

T.--(*Seeing PUSSY.*) Bow! Wow!

P.--Mew! Mew!

T.--Good-morning, Mistress Pussy.

P.--Good-morning, Mr. Towser. I hope you're well.

T.--I am very tired. I had to bark a great deal in the night.

P.--Really! I am sorry to hear that. You must do as I do, come and sleep on the hearth-rug during the day.

T.--I only wish I could, but I am much too busy a dog for that.

P.--Are you? What do you do all day?

T.--First of all, I have to be ready to bite the postman's legs when he comes at eight, and then to bark at him as he goes across the road.

P.--It must be difficult to bark--I am sure I should never manage it.

T.--It is very difficult indeed--I am the only person in the house that can manage it. Then when the postman has gone, I go into the kitchen to help the cook to get rid of the bones and scraps that are left.

P.--The worst of bones is, they are so dreadfully hard. I much prefer a saucer of milk, or a fish's tail. Oh how delicious that is!

T.--Oh, I couldn't touch a fish's tail. Then when my master is at breakfast, I have to beg, and that is very hard work, as I am on my legs all the time, balancing things on my nose.

P.--If I were you, I would arch my back instead, and rub myself against the master's legs.

T.--Of course I could arch my back if I wanted to do so, but I don't care to. Then after breakfast, I have a few minutes' rest before the fire.

P.--Oh, isn't that comfortable! Rolled round in a basket. It is so nice to purr a little, and then gradually go off to sleep.

T.--To tell the truth, I don't care to purr, I think it is so stupid. One might as well be a kettle or a bumble bee at once. What I like to do is to come and scratch at the door, just after it has been shut, to smell round the rug, to turn round two or three times, and then lie down quietly.

P.--To curl round with one's head nestled in between one's fore-paws.

T.--Oh, I like to sleep with my paws straight out.

P.--The result is, you don't sleep nearly so long.

T.--Because I haven't time. Then when my mistress goes out driving, I have to bark at the pony when he starts. And I have to go out with the carriage, and pay visits, and I jump upon strange people's laps, and make their dresses all muddy in front.

P.--That must be delightful! But I shouldn't care to go with the carriage, I would rather stay at home and enjoy myself, and scratch the visitors who come here. By the way, can you draw in your claws?

T.--Draw them in! Certainly not.

P.--You don't mean to say you can't do such a simple thing as that?

T.--Of course I could if I liked, but I don't choose. I think you ought to make up your mind either to have claws, or not to have them: not to be popping them in and out as you do.

P.--But it's so convenient when I walk about at night, to be able to steal about gently and then shoot out my claws when I see a mouse.

T.--Oh, how tempting that sounds! Then it's always at night you hunt?

P.--Oh, always. There is no one to see or to disturb you.

T.--Exactly. Now, when I go out with my master, if I go after a hen or a rabbit, I am beaten at once.

P.--Fancy being beaten for a hen!

T.--Isn't it absurd! Just for an idiotic bird like that!

P.--Who can't lap, or scratch!

T.--Nor bark, nor do anything!

P.--Never mind. I killed one last night, I am glad to say.

T.--You killed a hen?

P.--Certainly.

T.--Well, I do call that hard on me! My master beat me as hard as he could because of that hen.

P.--Well! Were you beaten for that wretched, tough old hen? That *is* funny!

T.--Yes, that is a good joke, madam, I dare say! But we shall see.

P.--Don't be angry about such a trifle.

T.--I will be revenged still more. I have already broken a Venetian looking-glass, to show my indignation.

P.--Was it you who broke the looking-glass?

T.--Certainly it was.

P.--Then we are quits. My mistress insisted that I had broken it, and would not give me my saucer of cream.

T.--Oh, that really is funny! We are quits, then. Shall we be friends again?

P.--Certainly, if you like.

T.--And, as a proof of our friendship, next time you come to kill the hens, I won't bark.

P.--That's a bargain. I'll steal two more to-night, and give you one.

T.--Oh, what a good plan! Let's go and choose them.

P.--Two nice fat ones!

*(He offers her his arm. He says "Bow! Wow!" She says "Mew! Mew!" They go out.)*

