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The Cat Who Couldn't Take a Nap

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The Cat Who Couldn’t Take a Nap
A play to be danced to...

Characters:
Narrator
Cleo Belber, who dances all the actions described
Rebecca, lives in Vermont
Edouard, lives in Vermont
Jake, a dog who joins in one dance
Lucy, another dog who instigates another dance

Setting: House in Vermont
Time: the present

Narrator: One day Cleo Belber woke up with an irresistible urge to lick her arms.

Cleo: Umm . . . how soft and furry my arms are today. What? I don’t have fur. That is, I don’t usually have fur. But I seem to have lots of it today. Lots of lovely, brindled fur! Why, I’m beautiful today!

Narrator: She jumped up, much higher and with greater ease than she usually jumped, and Cleo was a good jumper, and she bounced over to a mirror to get a good look at her new, beautiful fur.

Cleo: Why . . . why . . . I’ve turned into a cat!

Narrator: And sure enough, she had. She had turned into a lovely tortoise shell cat, just like the one her grandmother’s friend Rebecca has.

Cleo: I look just like Rebecca’s cat, Cassandra! I think I’ll call myself Cassandra today.

Narrator: And she leapt off the bureau . . .

Cleo: Whoa . . . jumping is a lot different when you’re a cat! I can jump farther and higher than when I was a human. I’m leaping! Better get used to this . . .

Narrator: . . . and realized that not only did she look like Cassandra, she in fact, was Cassandra for the day and that she was at Rebecca and Edouard’s farm in Vermont.

Cleo: This is fun! I can leap all over the place! Cleo leaps and pirouettes and a few pas de chat

Oh, there’s Rebecca. Rebecca, look at me!

Rebecca: Cass, you are one lively cat today. Look at you prancing about. Edouard, look at this creature! She’s downright majestic today!
Edouard: Not too bad for an old girl.

Cleo: Humph. An old girl.

Narrator: Cleo had forgotten that Cassandra was ten.


Rebecca: Good kitty.

Cleo: Meow. Hum. I guess it makes sense that I meow instead of talking. Comes with the job of being a cat. Shouldn’t be surprised. Wonder what’s to eat around here? Ohh, what’s in that bowl? That smells good . . . ohh, it is good. Salmon, my favorite. *Leaps up onto a table and eats from a bowl.*

Why is this delicious salmon up so high that I have to jump for it? Must ponder this question. But now I think I’ll take a nap. What’s this enormous warm thing here on the floor . . . I’ll just snuggle up next to it and take a little snooze.

Narrator: And Cleo did just that. But after only a few moments, the giant pillow she had snuggled up next to suddenly moved. *A Jake-and-Cleo pas de deux begin on the floor.*

Cleo: What’s this? What’s this? What on earth could it be? Oh, my goodness . . . it’s a huge dog! This dog is . . . is . . . ten times bigger than I am!

Jake: [sniffs her and she sniffs him] It’s me, Jake. You don’t recognize me? I live here, too, you know.

Cleo: Oh, of course! I don’t know where I left my mind this morning. Sorry, Jake. [To the audience] I won’t tell him that I’m not really Cassandra but Cleo Belber. Jake is very sensitive. That might confuse him. He’ll get upset. [To Jake] What a pleasure to see you, Jake.

Jake: Well, Ok, but you see me every day. Oh, I’m so taken for granted around here. I really must move around a bit more, and remind everyone of my presence. Oh, my.

Cleo: I think I’ll saunter around and look for another place to take my nap. How about this cabinet. Looks nice and cool in here.

Narrator: Cleo, now called Cassandra the cat, had found the linen closet. What a perfect place for a cat.

Cleo: So many soft things in here: cool, clean sheets nicely folded, towels, face cloths, all stacked. I’ll just climb to the top of this stack and make myself comfortable. What beautiful colors. Oh, good, there’s a plush red towel on top.
Narrator: Cleo made her way to the top of the pile, did a little paw exercising (we don’t call it scratching) . . . and settled herself in for a nap.

Cleo does these things. But almost immediately, she starts to slip. Clowning acrobatics.

Cleo: Oh, oh, oh, no . . . what’s happening . . . a landslide . . . an earthquake . . . help!

Rebecca: What’s going on in here? Oh, Cassandra! All of the sheets and towels and pillow cases are tumbling out the door of the closet and to the floor. You’ve knocked down everything! How did you manage to knock down everything?

Cleo: The world slid out from under me! My nap was rudely interrupted! I’m leaving. [Exits]

Rebecca: Ohhh. Now I have to put it all back.

Narrator: Well, Cleo got out of there lickety split and found herself in another part of the house.

Cleo: Hello! What’s this? A back porch? How nice! I think I’ll just wander around a bit and see what I can see. Oh! Flashes of blue and red . . . oh my! They’re birds! They’re flocking to feeders down there in the yard. They look yummy . . . hum . . . I think I’ll watch for a while and then I’ll take my nap. Wow! There’s a cardinal! And a rosy breasted grosbeak! And his wife next to him, big as he is and with brown streaks on her head. What a lovely sound. I can imitate that sound because I just learned how to whistle. Here goes: Meow. Oops. Forgot again. Oh! What was that emerald green flash and I mean a flash. I can move like that!

Cleo dashes from one end of the porch to another, imitating a hummingbird. Pas de bourrée couru.

That was fun. Wow. Look at that black squirrel! I’ve never seen a black squirrel before although Rebecca told me about it. Where did a black squirrel come from? Most squirrels are red or gray. That thing is as big as I am. I sure wouldn’t want to tangle with that guy. Or girl. Now that scrawny little chipmunk on the sunflower seed feeder . . . heh, heh. Ok, get ready, set, pounce!

She lunges and hits her nose on the screen. Backwards somersault.

Oh, I forgot it was a screened-in porch. How utterly humiliating. I hope no one saw that. Oops, here comes Rebecca. I’ll pretend I was doing jumping jacks all along. Cleo does five jumping jacks. Rebecca enters.

Rebecca: Cass, you’re so frisky today, let’s play some. She dangles string before Cleo.

Bet you can’t catch it!

Cleo: Meow, meow. Sure I can catch that, Rebecca. You know what a good catch I am. Although I am better at soccer than I am at playing ball. Meow, meow.

Cleo bats at swings at the string, rolling around on the floor. Then she leaps. Acrobatics. I’m tired. I think it’s time for that nap I keep postponing.

She walks away from the string.
Rebecca: That was quite a show. I hope it didn’t get to be too much, old girl, huh? Ok. Here, have a treat.

Sprinkles cat nip on a cat bed. Exits.

Cleo: /Yawns/ Old girl again, huh? Hum. . . well, she didn’t see my hummingbird imitation. Old girl, indeed! What is this soft round plushy pillowy thing and what did she just sprinkle on it? It looks very comfortable. I think I’ll just climb up for a quick nap.

Climbs into a cat bed. Stretches her claws into it, sniffs it.

And it surrounds me perfectly. And it smells divine. What is it? Yum, yum. The sun is perfect, just here.

Falls asleep. Wakes up to another dog sniffing her.

Cleo: Hey, hey, what are you doing?

Lucy: Wake up, let’s play.

Cleo: Let’s play what?

Lucy: Let’s play chase! You run and I’ll chase you.

Cleo: I don’t believe it. This dog wants me to run. This dog is chasing me. Where should I go? She’s after me. Oh, my goodness. She’s nipping at my heels! This is not fun, this is no good. There are the stairs but where do they lead? Now, where am I? I’ve never been in this room before. I see a glimmer of sunshine through that small door, better go that way. I’m outside. Run!

Cleo does all of these actions, pas de bourrée couru. Enter Rebecca and Edouard.

Rebecca: Lucy! You cut that out right this minute! Lucy!

Lucy: Oh, all right. I’ll stop.

Cleo: Whew! Thank goodness she’s obedient. But why did she want to chase me?

Lucy: I wasn’t going to hurt you. I just wanted you to run. And you did! Thank you very much.

Cleo: You’re welcome. I guess . . . but oh, what are these beautiful yellow flowers?

Cleo luxuriates in a patch of buttercups, batting at some of the taller flowers.

Rebecca: Look at Cassandra playing in the buttercups.

Cleo: Buttercups. Perfectly named. Cups of butter. What a perfect spot to ponder the glories of nature. And what was that other idea I wanted to ponder? Oh, yeah, why they put the food up so high that I had to jump for it. Well, now I know. To keep it from all these dogs. So what can I ponder now? The yellow of buttercups. I’m getting awfully sleepy. Yawn. What a perfect spot for a nap.
Cleo settles herself in for a nap.

Rebecca: [To Edouard] Think I can just leave her like this?

Edouard: Why not? She looks comfortable.

Rebecca: What if she can’t get back in the house? She’s never been out before.

Edouard: If she got out, she can get back in.

Rebecca: Lucy chased her out. She may not remember how to get back in. I’d better take her in. Besides, it’s time for her flea medicine. Come on, big girl. Let’s go.

Crouches to call Cleo. Cleo wakes up.

Cleo: Oh, no! Not flea medicine!

Edouard: Minou, minou, minou.

Crouches to call Cleo.

Cleo: Who’s meowing in French? I can speak French, too. Je suis là! Je suis là!

Goes to Rebecca and Edouard.

Edouard: Did you just say something in French?

Rebecca: No.

Edouard: I could swear I heard . . . must be losing my hearing.

Rebecca: No, not your hearing, just your mind. Ha, ha!

Rebecca leads Cleo back into the house, up the stairs, and puts her on the bed.

Gives flea medicine.

Rebecca: There you go.

Cleo: Oh, it’s cold.

Cleo shivers. Rebecca exits.

I’m exhausted. It’s hard being a cat. And I have so many things to ponder. I think I’ll go back to being Cleo.

Narrator: And before you could say kitty, kitty, Cleo was back in her room, her fur vanished, and she looked like a normal girl again.

Cleo: So I’m home again in my own room. Checks herself in the mirror. And I look like myself again. Well, that was fun. But I’m really sleepy. Maybe now I can finally take a nap.

Gets in her bed and falls asleep.

End of Play.