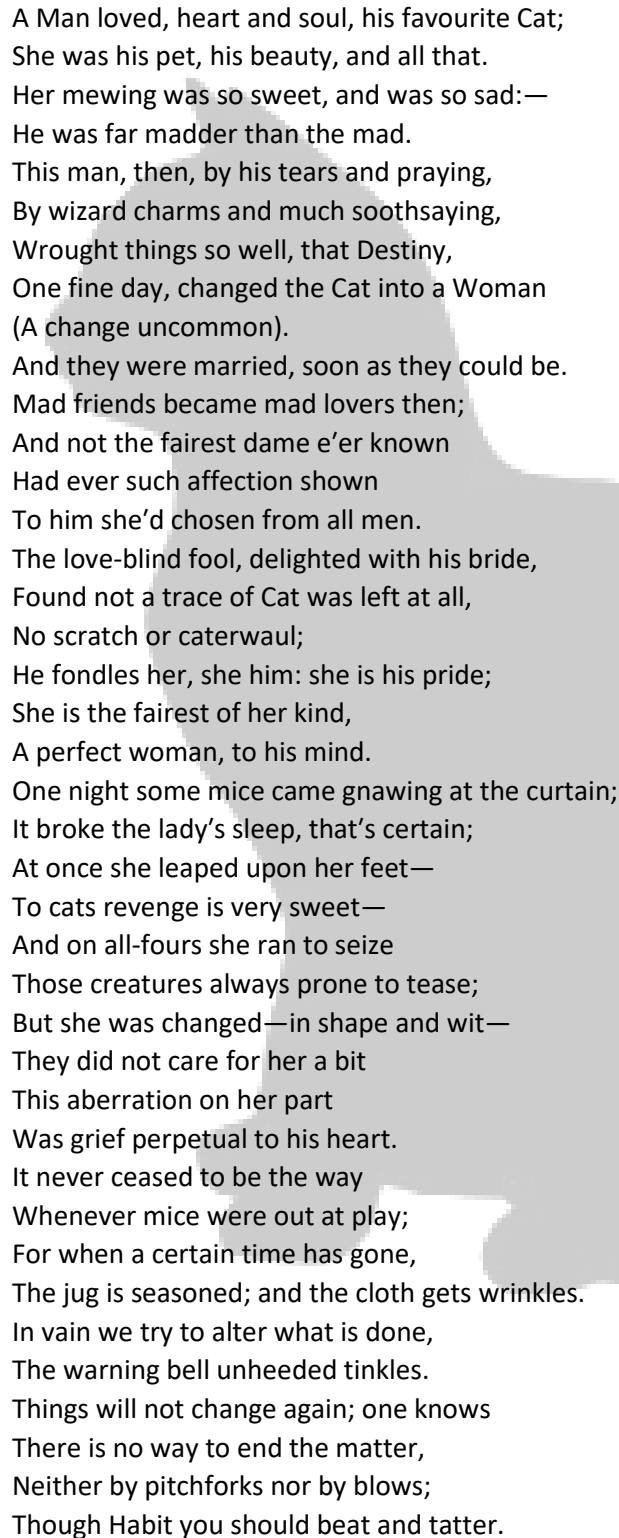


The Cat Changed Into A Woman: A Fable

by Jean De La Fontaine

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A Man loved, heart and soul, his favourite Cat;
She was his pet, his beauty, and all that.
Her mewling was so sweet, and was so sad:—
He was far madder than the mad.
This man, then, by his tears and praying,
By wizard charms and much soothsaying,
Wrought things so well, that Destiny,
One fine day, changed the Cat into a Woman
(A change uncommon).
And they were married, soon as they could be.
Mad friends became mad lovers then;
And not the fairest dame e'er known
Had ever such affection shown
To him she'd chosen from all men.
The love-blind fool, delighted with his bride,
Found not a trace of Cat was left at all,
No scratch or caterwaul;
He fondles her, she him: she is his pride;
She is the fairest of her kind,
A perfect woman, to his mind.
One night some mice came gnawing at the curtain;
It broke the lady's sleep, that's certain;
At once she leaped upon her feet—
To cats revenge is very sweet—
And on all-fours she ran to seize
Those creatures always prone to tease;
But she was changed—in shape and wit—
They did not care for her a bit
This aberration on her part
Was grief perpetual to his heart.
It never ceased to be the way
Whenever mice were out at play;
For when a certain time has gone,
The jug is seasoned; and the cloth gets wrinkles.
In vain we try to alter what is done,
The warning bell unheeded tinkles.
Things will not change again; one knows
There is no way to end the matter,
Neither by pitchforks nor by blows;
Though Habit you should beat and tatter.

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Author

Black Cats: A Digital Library

You'll not be master of the place,
Saddle or bridle—how you will;
For if the door's slammed in its face,
It comes back o'er the window-sill.

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