



## Who will bell the cat?

(Dave is sitting at his printing bench in the downstairs workshop. A short time ago, while looking out the window, he noticed Boots the Cat prowling through the long grass in the property just across the stream. He wondered if it would be a successful hunting session, and he now gets the answer, as he hears through the open door, the sound of Boots coming closer, the little bell on her collar jingling with every step.)

Dave: Here she comes, the mighty hunter! So, Boots-chan, what were you stalking in the long grass over there?

(At the moment, Boots can't talk - she has her mouth full, carrying something in through the doorway. She drops it on the floor near Dave's bench, and stands back to await the customary congratulations.)

Dave: Let's see, what's this ... aha, another big grasshopper! There seem to be quite a few of those lurking in the grass over there this week. Now that I've had a good look at it, let's put him back outside, OK?

(Dave scoops up the grasshopper, and takes it outside, where it leaps off his hand into the underbrush. Boots is now washing her face, in the usual post-hunt ritual.)

Boots: Yes ... nothing particularly special this afternoon, but I thought you might like that one ...

Dave: Well ... thank you. You know, I've told you many times that you don't really need to bring these trophies back into the house; you can just tell me how the hunt went.

Boots: No way! A hunt without a trophy is no hunt at all. If I couldn't bring something back to show you, I'd be embarrassed!

Dave: Which reminds me ... it's been a while since you brought back any birds, hasn't it?

Boots: I was hoping you wouldn't bring that up. This is indeed embarrassing. It's been weeks now since I caught one. I can't believe that I'm losing my touch. I'm not that old, you know!

Dave: Do you have any idea what might be happening?

Boots: No, I can't figure it out. I stalk carefully as usual; creeping forward ever so slowly. Everything seems to be normal, but just at the moment when I make the fatal pounce, they suddenly burst upwards into the air. They must have eyes in the back of their heads!

Dave: Maybe there are none left out there; after all, you certainly used to catch a lot of them!

Boots: Oh, there are still plenty of birds everywhere out there; that's not the problem. Do you remember that day a while ago when I lined up four of them next to your pillow during the night? Now that was a night to remember. What a magnificent hunt ... I'll never forget it!

Dave: And I'll never forget that morning either!

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Boots: And then that very same day, you so much appreciated my special gift to you, that you went out and bought a present for me - this new collar with the shiny round thing hanging on it! You really didn't have to do that, you know.

Dave: Oh yes I did ... And I'm glad that your owner agreed to let you wear it; she seemed quite happy about my present!

Boots: Anyway, enough chat. It's time for my afternoon nap, I'd like to daydream about the details of today's hunting ... may I sleep on the cushion here, next to your printing bench?

Dave: Be my guest; I'll try not to make too much noise while I'm printing ... Pleasant dreams!

Boots: *Zzzzzzzzz*

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