

The Fastest Cat On Earth

by Alvin Schwartz

Narrator 1 Cat
Narrator 2 Crab
Narrator 3

Narrator 1 The cat we are about to meet is the fastest cat on earth.

Narrator 2 He is a regular whirlwind.

Narrator 3 He is so fast he can outrun anyone or anything.

All Narr. At least that is what he says.

Narrator 1 The fastest cat on earth was lying in a meadow, half dozing in the hot sun.

Narrator 2 He was waiting for a mouse or a young rabbit to go by,

Narrator 1 or even a butterfly

Narrator 3 anything he could chase

Narrator 3 and catch

Narrator 1 and eat.

Narrator 3 But nothing stirred.

Narrator 2 It was very boring.

Narrator 1 Then he saw a crab scurrying toward the beach in that weird way in which crabs move, its ten skinny legs all going like crazy.

Cat I **hate** crabmeat. But maybe that crab and I could have a race. I would win, of course, but at least it would be something to do.

Hey, crab, do you want to race? It would be fun.

Crab It would be fun for you. You're faster than me. Of course, I'm smarter than you.

Okay. I'll do it.

Cat We'll race down the path to that tree. On your mark, get set-go!

Narrator 1 When the fastest cat on earth leaped forward, the crab grabbed the cat's tail and hung on tight.

Narrator 2 He weighed so little, the cat didn't even know he was there.

Narrator 3 The cat tore down the path as quickly as he could, with the crab dangling behind him. Just before the cat reached the tree, he stopped, turned around, and looked back.

Narrator 1 The crab was nowhere in sight.

Narrator 2 But while the cat was peering back down the path,

Narrator 3 the crab quietly dropped to the ground and scurried across the finish line.

Cat I knew I would beat him, but not this easily. Of course, I am the fastest cat on earth, yet he does have ten legs.

All Narr. Then he heard a tiny voice.

Crab Hey, cat. I win!

Narrator When the cat saw the crab, he could not believe his eyes.

Cat You win? When did you pass me? I didn't see you anywhere.

Crab You didn't? Why, I was right behind you the whole way.

Discussion Questions

1. **What generalizations can be made about cats based upon the details you've heard?**

Most cats are fast.

Most cats like to chase things.

Most cats have a tail.

Few cats usually eat crabs.

2. **What could you say about crabs in general, based on the details you've heard?**

Most crabs move in a weird way.

Crabs usually have ten legs.

Most crabs don't weigh a lot.

3. **What can you say about folk tales based upon this selection and others you know?**

Many folk tales have a tricky ending.

Many folk tales have animal characters.

Boastful folk tale characters often get tricked.

Small animals often outwit larger ones.