

Why Dogs Chase Cats and Cats Chase Mice

A Yiddish Folktale



Long ago, the dogs went to the king to ask him for help.

They asked him to make a new decree that said that people were not allowed to bother them.

The king agreed to help the dogs and wrote the new decree on a piece of paper. The king signed the decree and handed it to the dogs, making the dogs very happy.

But now the dogs had a problem: they needed a place to hide the decree for safekeeping. The dogs didn't know of any such a place, but they knew who did: the cats.

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Cats can squeeze into all sorts of nooks and crannies. They can get behind walls and under roofs. The dogs asked the cats to find a safe hiding spot for the decree. The cats agreed to help them and found a safe place inside a wall.

A year passed and suddenly some dogcatchers came to town. The dogcatchers began to round up the dogs in the streets.

“Stop,” cried the dogs. “We have a decree from the king that says that you can’t bother us.”

“Show it to us and we will leave you alone,” replied the dogcatchers.

The dogs ran to the cats. “Where is the decree?” they demanded.

“We will go look for it,” said the cats, who then ran off to look for the decree.

The cats finally found it, but the royal decree had been chewed to pieces by the mice. It was in tatters.

The dogs found out what happened. They were furious with the cats and began to chase them.

In turn, the cats were furious with the mice and began to chase them. The dogs chased the cats and the cats chased the mice. And that is how it has been ever since.

