



The Disappearing Cat

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Word Structure

Multisyllabic words using word parts

carefully	disliked	hopelessness	reappeared
replacement	unbearably	unhappiest	unprepared





Henry Tucker was the unhappiest boy in Port Town. His cat Chase had disappeared six weeks ago. At first Henry wasn't worried. Chase often got the urge to wander, but he always reappeared in a few days. Henry thought that Chase would have lots of good stories to tell about his trips—if only Chase could talk!





After Chase had been gone for three days, Henry started searching for him. First he looked carefully in all the places that Chase might hide. Chase wasn't in the shed in the garden or in the maple tree by the fence. He wasn't under the porch of the red house on Vine Street.





Chase wasn't in the boxes behind the bookstore or by the food market. He wasn't in the tall grass or under the hedges around the pond.

Next Henry posted signs all over town. The signs had the word *Missing*, a picture of Chase, and a phone number. Henry waited by the phone, but no one called.





As the days went by, Henry grew discouraged. His dad took him to the animal pound. There were lots of cats there, but no Chase. Dad said, not unkindly, "Maybe you want to get another cat."

A replacement for Chase? That idea was unacceptable to Henry. Chase was much too remarkable a cat.





Henry thought about Chase all the time. He recalled that Chase often sat on Henry's desk while he worked. Chase gracefully tucked his paws and watched Henry with big green eyes. Now the desk looked impossibly empty. At night in bed Chase would curl up right next to Henry. It was a bit uncomfortable at first, but Henry got used to it. Now his bed felt unbearably lonely.





Cat ownership was often hard and messy, but all that Henry recalled now was Chase purring and rubbing on his legs. Henry had disliked it when Chase misbehaved. Now Henry wished that Chase would come back and misbehave as much as he wanted. Henry slumped lower on the steps. He was filled with fear and hopelessness.





Suddenly Chase reappeared in the yard. Unprepared for this sight, Henry didn't move. Then he grabbed and hugged the cat tightly. Chase squirmed free and licked his ruffled fur. He looked at Henry as if to say, "How about refreshments?"

Henry smiled and refilled the food and water dishes. Chase was home.

