

Cleo the cat

Christmas 2011



Once upon a time there was a kitten who lived happily in a country house. She was a kitten named Cleo and she had a girl and her old grandmother as a friend.

Every year the three got ready for Christmas.

Cleo, however, had a dream, she wanted to reach a river and meet the fish.

Unlike the other cats, Cleo did not want to eat them, but just make friends with them.

They fascinated her so much, with their swimming in the water, their elegant fins and their silence.

That was why she wrote a letter to Father Christmas, asking for a goldfish as a friend.

The old woman and her granddaughter Dorotea often went into the wood to gather logs, to warm up, but they did not want Cleo to follow them, so they left her alone in the farm to keep watch.

One autumn morning, while Cleo was dozing in front of the door, she heard strange noises coming from the clearing near the oak tree.

Intrigued, she stretched and looked around.

Dorotea and her grandmother had gone out early to collect chestnuts and Cleo was free to wander about.



It was so that she saw a large goose moving around near the oak.

Cleo was puzzled but approached and the goose ran away fearfully into the woods.

The curious kitten began to follow her.

The more the goose squawked, the more Cleo ran to catch it.

And amidst running and quacking midday soon arrived and the goose stopped in front of a door.

An old man who was a little chubby scolded her lovingly "My Guendaline, you know that you shouldn't run away, the forest is full of traps".

Guendaline looked at him admiringly, the old man handed her a bowl full of food and then added: "Soon if you want, you can come with me fishing, but watch out for cats, they could steal our fish".

Cleo listened hidden behind a thick bush and was surprised to hear about fish, she was not the usual cat that overeats after a fishing trip, she only wanted a goldfish to make friends with.

This is why she hid behind the bush, to see what was going to happen.

She did not have to wait long, because the old fisherman, fishing rod and goose in tow, went towards the river.

Cleo followed them stealthily so as not to be seen and finally saw in the clearing the water of an imposing waterfall.

The autumn air was fresh and there was a smell of dried leaves that mingled with the water.

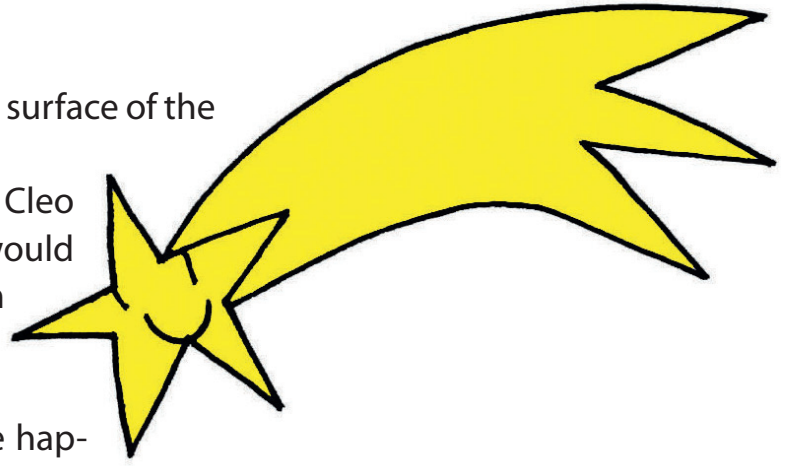
Guendaline jumped in for a swim and the old man sat down on a smoothed



boulder and got ready to fish.

A little goldfish appeared on the surface of the water.

It was the fish of her dreams and Cleo looked at him admiringly, it would have been really nice to take him home, put it in a glass bowl and play with it.



She could already imagined the happy event, when the fisherman got up and with a flash threw the fishing rod and caught the goldfish.

Cleo did not hesitate for a moment, stepped out of her hiding place and grasped the basket where the old man had laid the poor fish.

“Guendaline, get that cat,” the old man shouted.

But the goose ... was a goose and could not do anything, flapping her wings loudly, but to no avail.

Meanwhile, the cat ran with the basket in its claws, not intending to give it up.

Run running, she reached the forest, now the river was far behind her and even the old man’s shouting could no longer be heard.

Cleo came into the house with the fish, finally making her dream come true.

She went into the kitchen and took a pitcher, put some water in it and threw the fish in.

“Thank you – the red fish gasped – I could not stay out of the water anymore and then that old man wanted to eat me, us fish are good fried, in sauce or even roasted”.

But Cleo certainly did not want to eat it and immediately reassured him.



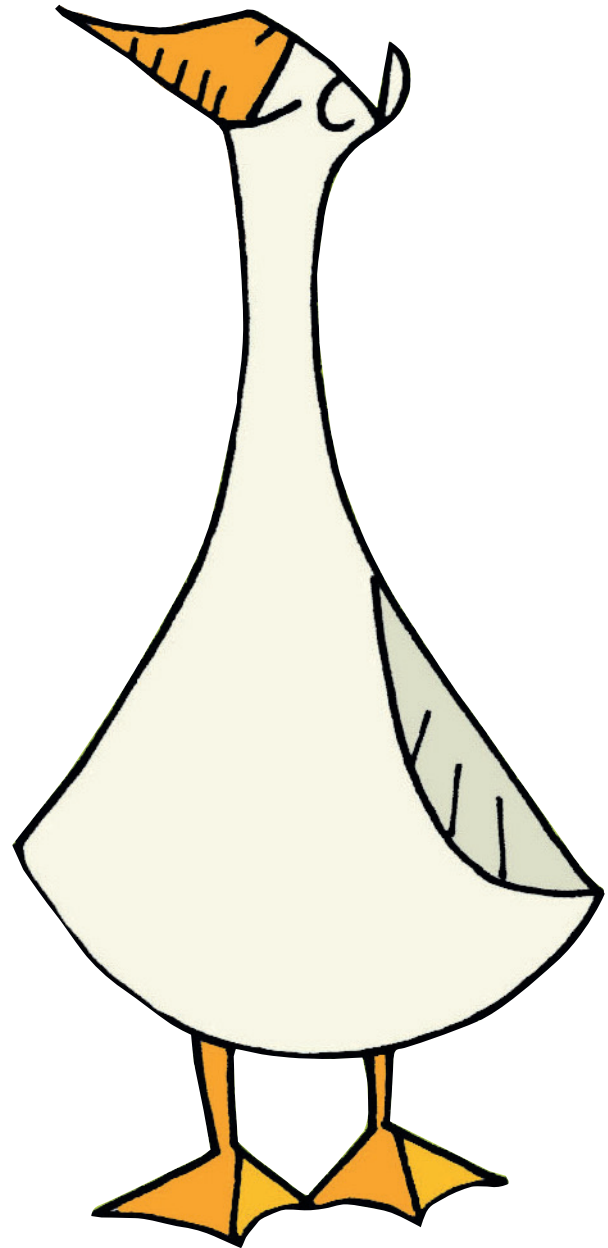
When Dorotea and her grandmother came home with lots of wood and a lot of chestnuts, they discovered their cat amazed in the company of a beautiful goldfish.

They could not understand how it had happened, but they accepted everything with great grace.

Father Christmas had received Cleo's letter, but he did not have to worry anymore because the goldfish was already there to cheer her days, only the old fisherman had remained dry-mouthed and so Father Christmas, just to put things right, led him back to the river, without the old man noticing.

And there were still many goldfish in the river, and the fisherman picked them up with a thick net, calling them one by one: "Come fish, I do not want to eat you, I'll keep you in a bowl".

And the fish came to the surface and after realising that the old man was not telling lies, they happily lay down in the fishing net.



In the woods it is said that the most beautiful houses are those of the old woman and the old man, because in those houses there is always a cheerful red fish that flickers in a transparent bowl and even Father Christmas loves to take a look every year, during his trip at night.

