

Clayton was more of a cat it seemed than a catfish. He lived in the sea just like the other catfish and rummaged around the ocean floor looking for food and swimming with his friends. He had whiskers like the others, but instead of a tail fin, he just had a tail, much like an ordinary house cat. He was also very curious instead of cautious, just like a cat and not at all like a fish. Clayton always had an urge to swim to the surface of the sea and have a look around. He liked breathing the air and glancing at the birds that flew in the sky. This was all very peculiar behavior for a fish, even for a catfish named Clayton.

Clayton dreamed of living on land and exploring all the places he had never been. The other fish told Clayton he was crazy. He would never survive living on land because he was a fish and fish cannot live out of water. As time passed, Clayton's urge to leave the sea grew stronger and stronger. He just knew if he could figure out a way to leave the sea, he would do it.

One day as Clayton took one of his trips to the surface, he was caught in a big wave that washed onto the beach. He ended up on the sand and with eyes wide open he looked around. He was completely out of water and completely helpless, too. He just lay in the sand trying to figure out what to do next. Clayton had no arms or legs so he couldn't get around, so living out of water was not as easy as he thought it would be. He struggled and wiggled and was exhausted trying to get off the beach. He decided he would cry for help and maybe someone would be kind enough to help him. He took in a great big breath and to his surprise, he let out a great big MEOW! He tried again, and let out another great big MEOW! This finally caught the attention of a little girl who was playing on the beach.

The little girl found Clayton in the sand and thought what a strange creature he was. He sounded just



by Linda C. Yake

## Clayton The Catfish



like a cat and he looked like a cat, well sort of looked like a cat, she really wasn't quite sure. The little girl quickly wrapped Clayton up in a towel and brought him home. She introduced Clayton to her own cat, Misty. Misty took a look at Clayton and then sniffed. Misty was not at all impressed so she flicked her tail and walked away. Clayton flicked his tail too, that's about all he could do.

"I bet you must be hungry," the little girl said to Clayton. She opened up a can of cat food and fed it to Clayton who finished it all up. Misty just watched as

Clayton licked his whiskers and squirmed around in the towel and let out another meow. After a few days, fuzzy fur started to cover Clayton's body. The little girl continued to care for Clayton and Misty started to show more interest in him, too. Misty thought he kind of smelled a little more like a cat than a fish. The little girl continued to feed Clayton the cat food and Clayton continued to grow stronger and seemed to change more and more. The more cat food he ate the more he seemed to change into a cat. Soon he was covered with a beautiful coat of fur, little pointy ears appeared and four legs sprouted out from his body.

Misty and Clayton soon became good friends and Clayton learned more about cat things and started forgetting about fish things. Eventually Clayton was up on his four new legs and chasing Misty around the house. He was enjoying his new life as a cat instead of a catfish. He never wanted to go back to the sea and live like a fish ever again.

The weeks passed and Clayton looked just like any ordinary cat and acted like one too. He was able to go out and explore the world just like he always wanted to do. He was the happiest cat around and had such wonderful friends like Misty and the little girl who took such good care of him. He now knew he wasn't crazy like the other fish had once told him he was. He knew anything was possible if you wanted it bad enough.

That night Clayton was able to jump for the first time since becoming a cat. He jumped up on top of a table that held a big tank full of water. In the tank was a bunch a little catfish swimming around the bottom of the tank rummaging around for food. Clayton stared into the tank for a long time. Then he sniffed the tank flicked his tail and walked away. He was not impressed. He looked at Misty who was watching him and let out a great big MEOW! Together they walked away with tails flicking in the air.

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