

THE COMPLIMENTING CAT



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The Complimenting Cat

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Cleo the Cat lived at the tip-top of Cherry Lane, in a bright blue house that looked like a teapot. With teacup windows and a biscuit-shaped doorknob, it was the perfect place for a cat full of big ideas.

Each morning, Cleo stretched her silky paws, arched her back, and yawned as sunlight warmed the kitchen floor. What adventure would today bring—chasing shadows? Finding socks?

But today, something tickled at her whiskers: she'd collect as many smiles as she could, using her kindest, brightest words. With a flick of her tail and a song in her heart, Cleo set off, just a little bit silly in her step.



First stop: Mrs. Bunny's garden, blooming with lollipop-pink and chick-yellow roses. Mrs. Bunny wore a floppy hat and snipped daisies with golden scissors.

"Your garden is the most beautiful I've ever seen!" Cleo called. "I bet bees hold parades here every morning."

Mrs. Bunny's ears wiggled. "Oh my! Thank you, Cleo. I thought only the worms noticed!"

Her smile bloomed like a sunflower. Cleo skipped away, heart fizzy and warm.



By the muddy bend, Benny Badger was digging a deep hole—probably for buttons, marbles, or a long-lost sandwich.

“Hi Benny!” Cleo chirped. “You have the strongest paws in the woods! Maybe you’ll find a land made of mud pies!”

Benny peeked out, dirt on his snout. “No one’s ever said that. You made me feel like a real explorer!”

Cleo beamed. Another smile! She waved as Benny dug even deeper.



At Willow Pond, Lola Duck floated backward, spinning for the pond dance contest.

“Lola! You glide like a cloud on a summer breeze!” Cleo cheered.

Lola fluffed her feathers. “Want to see my Duck-Tornado?”

Cleo laughed as Lola spun, sending sparkles across the pond. Skipping along the shore, Cleo waved to dragonflies, her tummy tumbling with joy.



Under a twisty willow, Gus Mouse stacked cheese blocks into a wobbly tower.

Cleo knelt beside him. “You’re so patient, Gus! I’d never balance cheese like that. You’re clever—even when things fall.”

Gus gave a shy smile. “You think so? I just keep trying.”

Cleo grinned. Another block stayed up! They high-fived with tails before she scampered on.



By lunchtime, Cleo felt light as a dandelion puff. But behind a big oak, she heard a sniffle.

Oscar Owl sat on a low branch, feathers ruffled, eyes sad.

“I’m not good at games,” he hooted. “No one wants me on their team.”

Cleo sat beside him. “Oscar, you’re our bravest night-watcher. You help us find things in the dark. That’s something only *you* can do.”



Oscar blinked. “Really? I guess nighttime needs heroes too.”

He fluffed his feathers and smiled—a soft, hopeful smile.

Cleo’s heart fluttered. Compliments made her friends shine, even
in the quiet shadows.



On her way home, Cleo paused at a puddle. “Cleo,” she whispered,
“you’re a good friend. And you have the fluffiest tail on Cherry
Lane!”

Just then, her friends arrived—each with a gift: a daisy, a button,
a feather, cheese, and a shiny acorn.

“Thanks for making us smile!” they cheered. “We brought you a
thank-you picnic!”



As the sun melted into the sky, they shared sandwiches, stories,
and giggles by firefly light.

Cleo purred. A daisy-and-cheese sandwich was surprisingly tasty
with pond lemonade.

That night, under her patchwork quilt, Cleo whispered, “There’s
something wonderful in every friend—even in me.”

And with that, she floated into dreams—of bees, duck tornadoes,
and adventures made from kind, magical words.

Before You Drift Off...

How did Cleo's kind words make her friends feel today?

Can you think of a nice compliment we could give someone in our family tomorrow?