

THE FASTEST CAT ON EARTH

The cat we are about to meet is the fastest cat on earth. He is a regular whirlwind. He is so fast he can outrun anyone or anything. At least that is what he says. The fastest cat on earth was lying in a meadow, half dozing in the hot sun. He was waiting for a mouse or a young rabbit to go by, or even a butterfly—anything he could chase and catch and eat. But nothing stirred. It was very boring. Then he saw a crab scurrying toward the beach in that weird way in which crabs move, its ten skinny legs all going like crazy. "I hate crabmeat," the cat thought. "But maybe that crab and I could have a race. I would win, of course, but at least it would be something to do. "Hey, crab," he called. "Do you want to race? It would be fun." "It would be fun for you," the crab said in its tiny voice. "You're faster than me." It paused. "Of course, I'm smarter than you. Okay. I'll do it."

"We'll race down the path to that tree," the cat said. "On your mark, get set-go!" When the fastest cat on earth leaped forward, the crab grabbed the cat's tail and hung on tight. He weighed so little, the cat didn't even know he was there. The cat tore down the path as quickly as he could, with the crab dangling behind him. Just before the cat reached the

tree, he stopped, turned around, and looked back. The crab was nowhere in sight. But while the cat was peering back down the path, the crab quietly dropped to the ground and scurried across the finish line. "I knew I would beat him," the cat thought. "But not this easily. Of course, I am the fastest cat on earth. Yet he does have ten legs." Then he heard a tiny voice. "Hey, cat," the voice called. "I win!" When the cat saw the crab, he could not believe his eyes. "You win?" he said. "When did you pass me? I didn't see you anywhere." "You didn't?" said the crab. "Why, I was right behind you the whole way."