

The following is a sample story from 'Tell Us Another'.

## Return to a Fresh Start

It was the school holidays. The Smith children lived in Birmingham. They were very pleased with themselves, because their family owned a caravan. Every Summer Dad would hitch the caravan to the family car and the three children, Roger, Sally, and Kevin would all squeeze into the back seat, not forgetting to wear their seat-belts! Mother sat in the front seat, while Dad, was the driver.

They were off to the seaside in Wales for two weeks holiday. The family owned a beautiful big grey Tom cat called, 'Tiger'. Sometimes the family would neglect the cat. However, they did not do this intentionally. Sometimes, they just forgot that Tiger was there.

Just as Dad was driving away, Roger shouted out, 'What about Tiger? We have forgotten the cat! We cannot leave Tiger behind, Dad!' So Dad had to go down the garden, and look for Tiger. He lifted Tiger off the garden wall, and passed the cat to the children inside the car.

The children set the cat on the ledge, along the back window. Dad warned the children, that if the car stopped at the traffic lights, they were not to open the window, in case Tiger might jump out and escape. At last they were off to the seaside! The Smith family had a lovely holiday in Wales. Most days were sunny, and the children spent the time enjoying themselves on the rocks, sand and in the sea. Each time they had a meal, they also put out a dish of cat food, or a saucer of milk for Tiger. Their beloved cat never went far away from their caravan.

When the holiday came to an end, the family packed their belongings into the caravan. They began the drive home again. Again, they allowed Tiger to sleep on the ledge near the back window of the car. When they reached Birmingham, the air in the car was rather warm. Kevin the youngest member of the family, forgot his father's warning. He opened the side window to get a breath of fresh air, just as the car stopped at the traffic lights. Before they could do anything, Tiger moved very quickly, and jumped out through the open window. In a moment he was gone from sight.

Mr. Smith stopped the car, and the family jumped out. They all helped to search the gardens alongside the road, but no-one could find Tiger. All they could do was to get into the car and drive home with very sad feelings. They all loved Tiger! There was no doubt about it, they had really lost their cat. Sally most of all missed Tiger. She cried every night when she was in bed.

Three weeks passed by. The school holidays were over, and the children went back to school again. On the third day, at playtime in the school yard, Sally was with her school friends, when she saw a big thin grey cat walking very slowly as if it were very tired. She thought to herself, 'I must run into the cloakroom and bring a sandwich from my bag. I'll share it with this hungry-looking cat.'

When Sally brought the sandwich, to her amazement, the big thin grey cat jumped up on to her shoulder and began to mew. Sally was a little bit frightened of the strange cat. Then all at once she realised that the cat was her own Tiger. He had been trying to find his way home for three long weeks. No wonder he looked so thin! Three

weeks without a proper meal is a long time.

Sally brought Tiger into the classroom. Her Teacher allowed Tiger to remain until school was over. The Teacher said that Tiger had come back to school after the Summer holidays just like the children! The children laughed at that. The Teacher taught the children about being kind to animals. In the art lesson, the children painted a picture of a cat.

After school, Sally cuddled Tiger all the way home. Roger and Kevin were delighted to see Tiger, and they made him a special saucer of warm milk. The family were delighted to see Tiger again, but deep inside they felt a little ashamed of themselves for not looking after the cat more carefully in the first place. They all made a promise to themselves, that they would make a fresh start. At home, as they sat around the meal table, they made a family resolution. They agreed that in future, they would take more care of their cat.

Maybe cats are a little like pigeons, which have a 'homing instinct.' Three weeks is a long time to have to walk through the streets of Birmingham, but the cat came home, that is the important thing. Schools are a kind of a home from home. Someone has said that where the heart lies, the feet will wander. Coming back to school, we also, can make a fresh start. We, too, can try harder than ever before!

### **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we thank you for our world.

We thank you for insects, reptiles, animals, and fish.

May we learn about animals in the wild. Help us to value farm animals.

May we never be cruel to animals.


Grant that like the family in the story, each one of us will make a fresh start and be good learners in school. Amen.


### **Hymn**

Have You Seen the Pussy Cat? (J.P. 72)

#### **Teachers' Note:**

 Pets need proper care.

 The family had neglected the cat by nearly leaving it behind, and by allowing it to jump out of the car.

 Many animals have a 'homing instinct'. Children also love to return home and to return to school.