



THE OLD LADIES WHO LIKED CATS

by
Carol Greene

Old ladies aren't the only people who like cats. I doubt if there is a child in your classroom who has not asked for a kitten. Cats are carnivores which were domesticated by the Egyptians to keep rodents at bay. Otherwise, the grain that needed to be stored would have quickly disappeared. Society depended on these household cats, and when they died, the body was often mummified. The cat food of today had to be invented when there were not enough mice to go around!

Since the studies of Charles Darwin, scientists have had a greater understanding of the importance of food chains. Food chains begin with the energy from the sun being trapped by a green plant and turned into food. Only at this link in the chain can animals join! *Without green plants and the sun, there would be no animal life on earth.* We actually see two food chains (this could be the beginning of a food web) in this story, but both are destroyed when the cats are not allowed out at *night* to hunt the mice. One link is missing (the old ladies, of course) and the whole town collapses until the mayor finally listens to the old ladies.

Food Chain #1: **sun**---**clover**---**cows (milk)** ---**sailors**

Food Chain #2: **sun**---**clover**---**bees**---**mice**---**cats**---**old ladies**

MATERIALS: pictures and/or costumes for each food chain group

ACTIVITY: Have students draw a picture or get a costume for the role they will play in the food chain. Divide your class into groups to represent all *links* of the food chains. Have each group "remove its link" and then explain in its own words what happens to the chain when its link is removed. Do any missing links affect the safety of the town?

EXTENSIONS: Find pictures of food chains in magazines and ask students to identify the links and draw the chain. Present the activity as a play in an assembly for an appropriate age group. Actually, this activity is AGELESS!

SOURCE: Life Science textbooks are a great source of information about food chains and food webs.

STANDARDS:

BSL: 4.1, 5.1, 5.4, 8.3, 9.1, 9.3, 9.5, 9.7, 12.9

NCTM: 3d, 4d, 4e, 7a, 9c, 13d, 13c

SCS: C1, C2, C3, F2, F4, G1, H1, H3, H4

Greene, Carol. The Old Ladies Who Liked Cats. Harper Collins Publishers, 1991. ISBN#0-06-022104-6.