

Uncle Jake had come to the window in great excitement to say that a balloon was coming down right in the hay-field, and they all rushed to the door, seeming to forget Phil entirely. I did not in the least know what a balloon was, and was just going to see, when I suddenly thought about Phil: I could at least bark if he should pick up that dreadful knife. So I stayed close by him; and it was a good thing that I did, for presently that cat climbed up on the back of his chair, rubbed herself, purring, all around his neck, and, I am quite certain, whispered something in his ear. He instantly drew the sugar-bowl toward him, pulled out a lump, and offered it to her. To do her justice, she refused to take it, but you ought to have seen her grin when he popped it into his own mouth!

I barked as hard as I could, and said just what I thought about that cat, and about their leaving him alone. Two or three of them came back in a minute, and thanked me for staying and barking, and said they didn't know what they could have been thinking of, to leave Phil alone with the sugar-bowl and bread-knife, and that they were very thankful he fancied the sugar-bowl first. As for that cat, she was down on the rug, curled up in a ball and apparently fast sleep, by the time they came in. And of course I could not make them understand where she had been, although I tried to with all my might. I never can get used to people's being so stupid about what I wish to tell them: I am sure I speak quite as plainly as Aunt Nancy and Uncle Jake do, and nobody pretends not to understand *them*.