

Excerpt from *The Catcher of the Wise*

*"The heart is deceitful above all things,
And desperately corrupt.
Who can understand it?"*
Jeremiah

Cain and Abel

Cain lay upon the jungle ferns,
And sought to catch his wind.
The Panther Prince was gasping
As he lay beside his friend.

"I beat you, fair and square," said Cain,
"You must admit I'm swift!"
"Belike it was the handicap,"
The Prince of Panthers sniffed.

Cain stroked the great cat tenderly-
Then gave his ribs a prod.
"I have to run," he told the prince,
"We're having tea with God!"

And off he ran-a slender boy
As golden as the sun;
For no one loved the Lord like Cain,
Not even Adam-One.

He saw them from a long way off,
around the garden bench,
And bounded up to kiss the Lord,
And Abel got a pinch.

Though Abel did not make a cry,
His face turned crimson red;
And God, who doesn't miss a trick,
took both their hands and said,

"You mustn't fight each other, boys,
It doesn't suit a brother.
What friends or playmates do you have,
Except for one another?"

Oh, Abel, you're a simple lad,
And Cain, your mind is deeper,

But love dissolves all differences
You are each other's keeper!"

They had a very pleasant tea,
And as God rose to leave,
Cain pulled out the report card
That he'd hidden up his sleeve.

With proud and beaming face
The boy then passed it onto God,
Who looked it up and down-
Then gave a plain and simple nod,

"It's fine," He told the anxious boy,
"Just what I would expect."
And then God picked wee Abel up,
And kissed him on the neck.

God left them in the twilight-
Little Abel waved good-bye,
But Cain tore his report card up,
And ran away to cry.

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