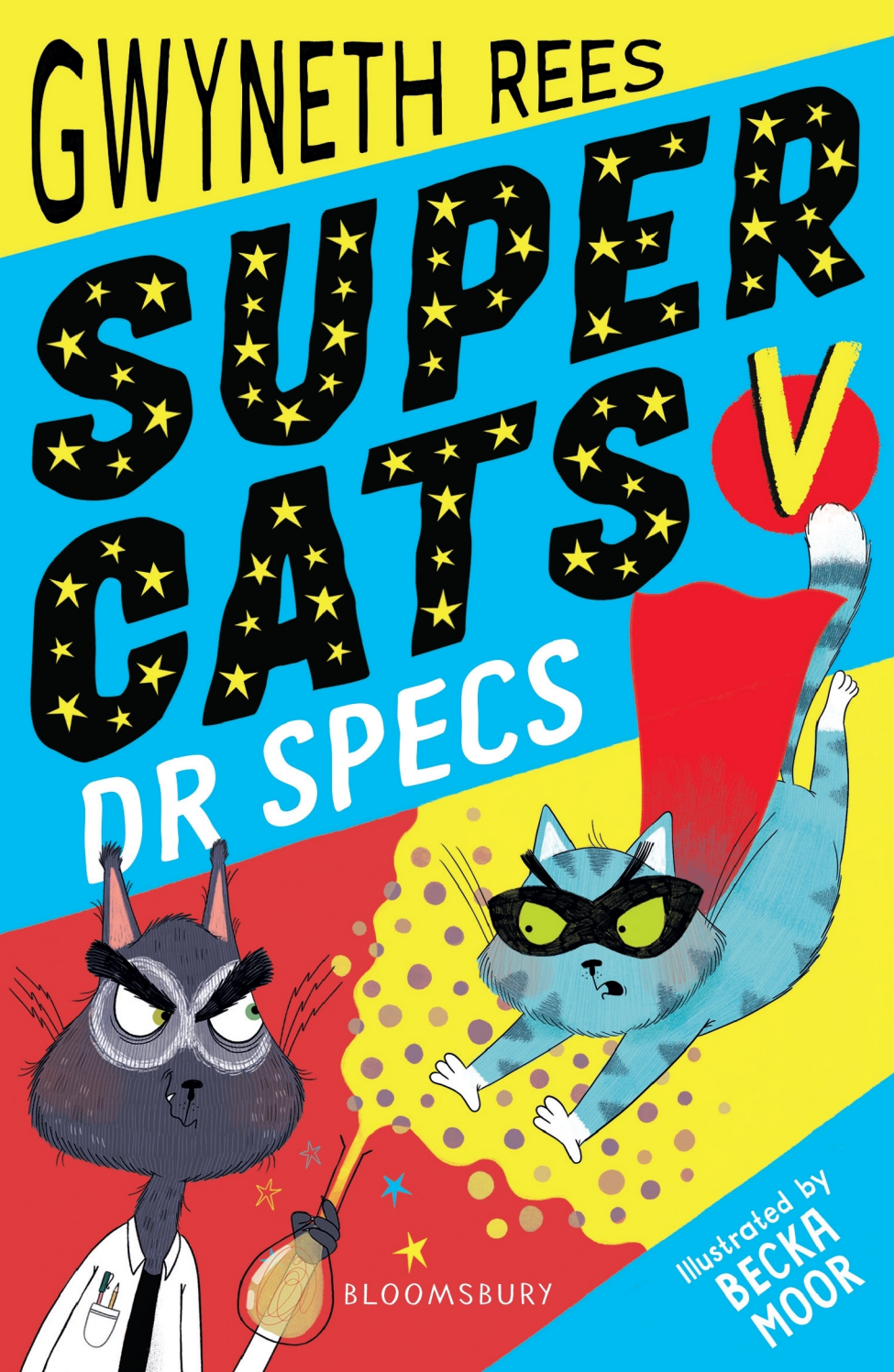
GWYNETH REES

SUPER CATS V DR SPECS



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Illustrated by BECKA MOOR


SUPER
CATS V
DR SPECS

Books by Gwyneth Rees

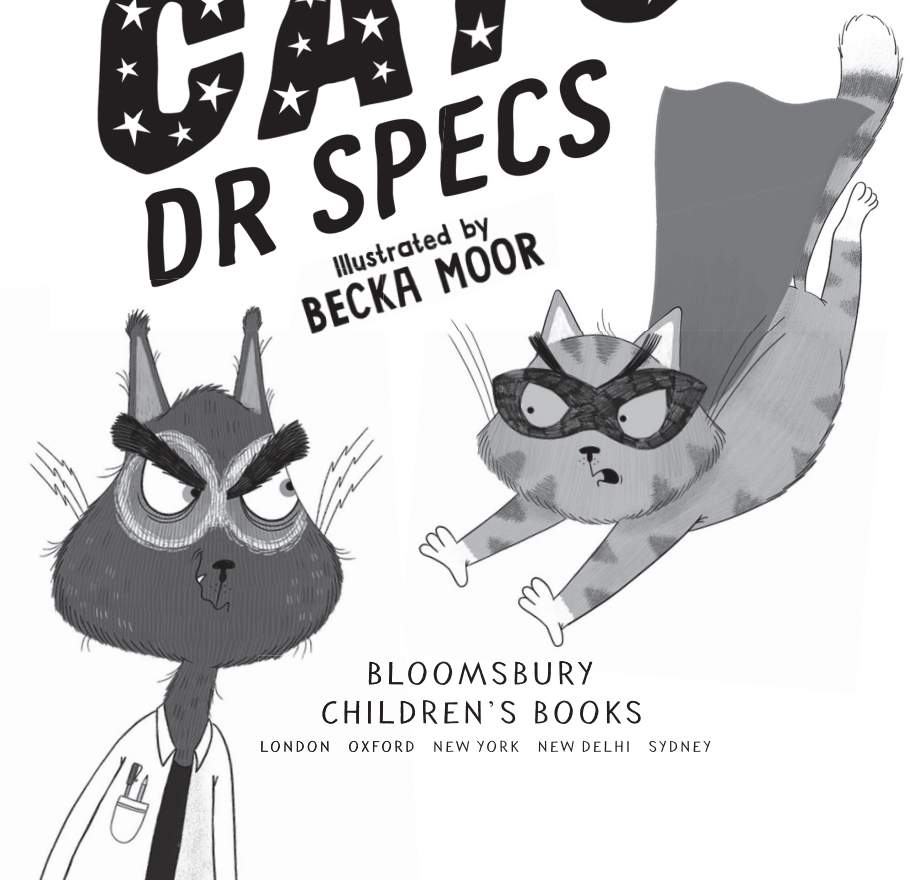
Super Cats
Super Cats v Maximus Fang
Super Cats v Dr Specs

For older readers
Cherry Blossom Dreams
Earth to Daniel
The Honeymoon Sisters
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The Mum Hunt

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To my mother, Evelyn,
with love

CHAPTER ONE

A PURR-FECTLY CRIMINAL CAT

Tagg and Sugarfoot heard the theme music coming from the television and grinned at each other. Their whiskers shot forward excitedly as they raced to join the other cats at Super Cat Headquarters, who were all jostling for position in front of the large TV screen.

Tiffany Fluffiface was the most famous

cat on human TV (her cat-food commercials were legendary), and she had just started her own TV chat show, called *Cat Chat*, that aired after all the humans had gone to bed. Alongside Tagg and Sugarfoot, all the cats at Super Cat HQ were now glued to the screen, even the leader of their organisation – Topaz Top Cat!

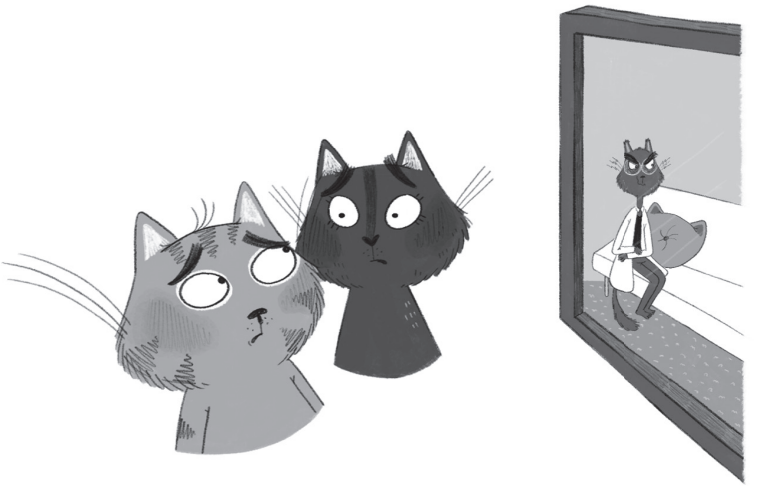


'The subject I want to discuss on the show today, fellow felines,' Tiffany announced, her beautifully groomed fluffy tail swaying elegantly as she addressed the camera, 'is that of SUPER CATS! Super cats are cats with hidden powers! They might be able to fly or become invisible, they might have superior strength or lightning speed. But one of the big questions we're asking today is – are they *good* or are they *bad*? And do we need them or would we be better off without them? Today's guest is someone who has a very strong opinion on the subject … so please welcome … the brave … the clever … the ingenious … the braintastic … DR SPECS!'

The camera swung over to Dr Specs, a skinny, long-legged black cat with a circular white patch around each eye, which gave him

the appearance of wearing human glasses. He swaggered confidently across the studio and sat on the low sofa next to Tiffany.

Tagg and Sugarfoot stared at the screen, dumbstruck! Dr Specs was the criminal who had recently escaped from Cat's End Prison.



They had been pursuing him for weeks with little success. They could hardly believe he was now brazenly appearing on television.

‘Topaz!’ Tagg exclaimed. ‘Should we leave now and capture him at the TV studio?’

Topaz narrowed her eyes and leaned closer to the television screen. ‘Let’s see what he has to say for himself first,’ she replied, as Tiffany started the interview.

‘Dr Specs …’ Tiffany began in her purriest voice, ‘do tell our viewers all about yourself.’

‘Well, Tiffany, I am first and foremost a scientist and an inventor – the most ingenious cat inventor who ever existed, if I say so myself!’ He gave a little laugh. ‘I’ve spent my life inventing things that are useful to a cat who wants that little bit of extra security and power! I’ve made exploding cat crunchies, spyware disguised as fleas, collars with state-of-the-art weaponry sewn in, false teeth that release

blood to fake your own death and escape your enemies.'

'Fascinating! And how did your work lead you to become involved with super cats?' Tiffany asked.

'Well, I used to work for Topaz Top Cat, the head of the Super Cat Organisation, but it soon became very clear to me that she didn't like my inventions. You see, these cats don't want ordinary cats to be on an equal footing with super cats.'

'Really? So are you saying the super cats felt threatened by all your marvellous inventions? Are you saying they *want* us to remain powerless?'

'Exactly, Tiffany.'

'And yet many of us imagine that super cats only want to *help* ordinary cats. Could

we have got that wrong?' She paused to give the camera a serious look. 'So, Dr Specs, can you tell us why *you* believe super cats are so dangerous?'

Dr Specs leaned in towards the camera, his whiskers shooting forward and his eyes becoming slits as he hissed, 'Fellow cats, what you need to know is that *super cats* – with their special superfeline abilities – cannot be trusted! All too often that power goes to their heads and they use their abilities for evil! SUPER CATS are the biggest threat to us ordinary cats! And I have PROOF!'

Suddenly the picture on the screen changed to footage of a terrible thunderstorm, and Tiffany Fluffiface's voice could be heard saying, 'This was the scene just a few weeks ago in the seaside town of Cats Haven, when

super cats Maximus Fang and Gory Gus unleashed their powers of weather control and telekinesis.'

The footage faded, and back in the studio Tiffany was speaking into the camera again. 'One cat who was badly injured in this storm, and whose home and mouse-catching business were totally destroyed, is here with us now. Mr Sniffer, please tell us what happened to you.'

'Good morning, Tiffany,' miaowed a croaky voice, as the camera panned to a one-eyed, scrawny-looking moggy who was now seated on the sofa between Tiffany and Specs. His head was bandaged and both front paws were in plaster. 'All I can say is that I have never been so terrified in all my life. At first I thought it was just a particularly bad

thunderstorm, but then the roof was ripped straight off my house!'

'Oh my goodness!' exclaimed Tiffany. 'Of course that would be terrifying for anyone.'

'Then I saw two cats in the sky, one with purple rays coming out of his eyes, and the other controlling the lightning as if he was a conductor and the weather was his orchestra!'

'Oh my!' gasped Tiffany. 'And they would be the infamous Gory Gus and Maximus Fang?'

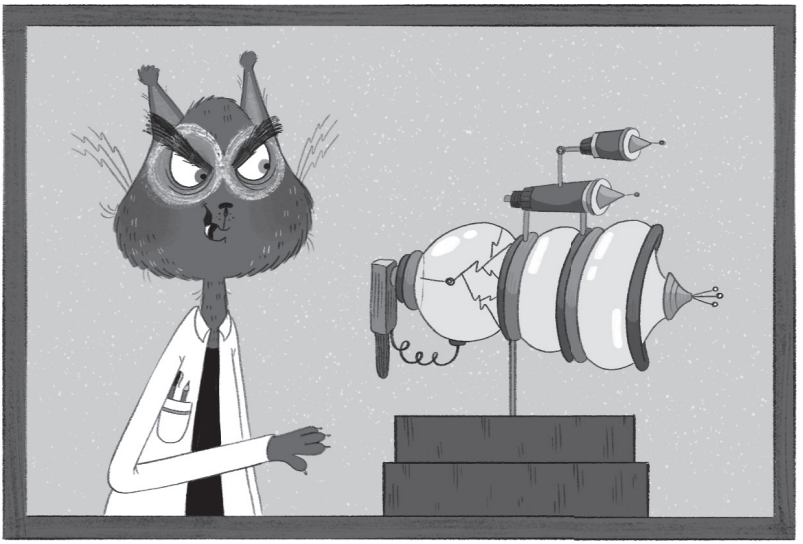
'The very same! And let me just say that these cats were out of control! They didn't care who they harmed or what damage they caused!'

'So how were they stopped?'

'Well, even the other super cats couldn't stop them! The only way was to remove their

powers completely and neutralise them – and a jolly good thing too!'

'It was my neutralising weapon that stopped Maximus Fang and Gory Gus from destroying the world,' Specs added crisply. 'But instead of thanking me by releasing me from prison, Topaz and the other super cats stole my weapon and kept me locked up. Well, now I'm free and I am campaigning for equality for all cats. Let us have no more super cats! We just don't know what they'll do next with their powers. I have already started building more weapons that will be available to ordinary cats, so they can protect themselves against super cats in the future. In fact these cats are not "super" at all. They only create havoc and are secretly intent on destroying our world as we know it!'



'Hear, hear!' agreed Mr Sniffer enthusiastically. 'I think all super cats should be neutralised. Their powers must be disabled so that they no longer pose a threat to the rest of us.'

Tiffany stood up to shake paws with each of her guests as they left the sofa. She then

turned to the camera.

'Well, that's all the time we have for today, *Chat* fans, but I'm sure you'll agree that was absolutely riveting. I'll certainly be getting a neutraliser as soon as I can. Join me next time for more *Cat Chat*!' Tiffany signed off with a swish of her tail as the theme music played, signalling the end of the show.

At Super Cat Headquarters, Topaz Top Cat turned from the screen to the other cats in the room, who all looked horrified.

'That evil criminal is trying to blacken our good name,' she mewed crossly.

Sugarfoot miaowed her agreement loudly. Tagg felt almost too queasy to mew. He was imagining what his life would be like without his superpower. It wasn't just that his power

came in handy in difficult situations – his superpower was a part of him. Losing it would be like losing a part of himself. Without it he couldn't imagine even *feeling* like the same cat.

Tagg's older brother Rowdy growled, 'Do you think Specs is still at the television studio?'

'I don't know, but there's only one way to find out,' said Topaz. 'Tagg and Sugarfoot – go there and look for him.' She flexed her claws impatiently. 'Rowdy, you hold the fort here. I'm going to the lab.'

'Again?' Rowdy said with a frown. 'But don't you think we need to start planning—?'

'I need to supervise the scientists,' Topaz snapped. 'Call Marshmallow and get a backup team on standby.'


SC
TO THE LAB

As they watched her go, Tagg asked, 'Is it true Topaz has hired more scientists to work on Dr Specs's neutralising weapon?'

'Yes. She's moved it from the lock-up to the lab. It's much less secure there, but she's obsessed with finding a way to reverse the neutralising effect. That's why she wouldn't destroy the weapon when we first captured it from Specs. And now she's so preoccupied with it, I think it's completely clouded her judgement!'

Tagg and Sugarfoot looked at each other. It was totally unlike Rowdy to criticise their boss and neither of them knew how to respond.

Rowdy suddenly switched into leader mode as he tapped Tagg impatiently on the shoulder. 'Why are you still here, agents? You already

know what your mission is! Now GO! And remember to be careful. Dr Specs might not be a super cat, but we don't know what sneaky tricks he has ready to catch us out!'