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opening extract from

Killer Cat Strikes Back

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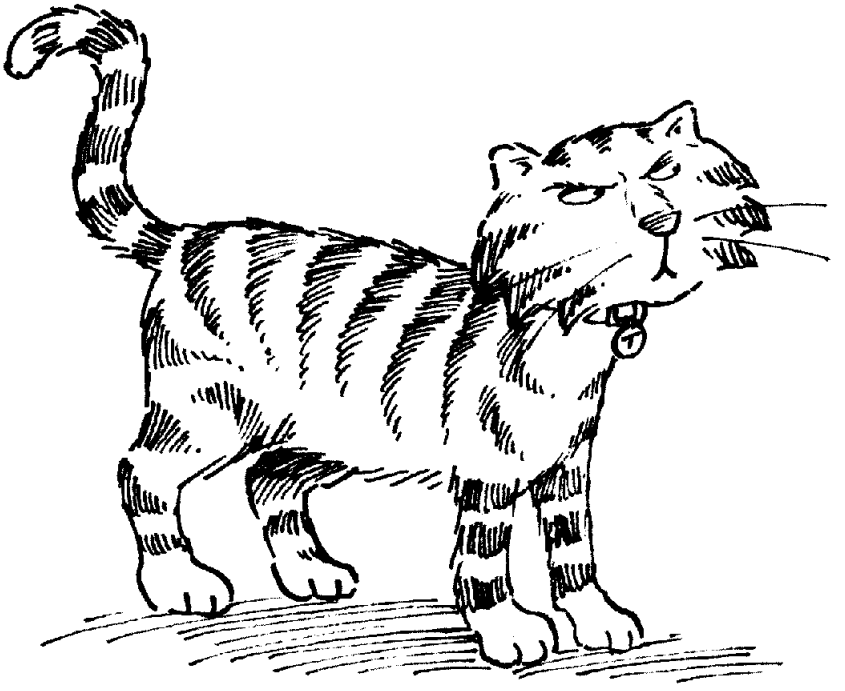
1: Not the best photo

OKAY, OKAY. SO stick my head in a holly bush. I gave Ellie's mother my mean look. It was her own fault. She was hogging my end of the sofa. You know – that sunny spot on the soft cushion where I like to sit because I can see out of the window.

Down to where the little birdy-pies keep falling out of their nests, learning to fly.

Yum, yum . . .

So I gave her this look. Well, she *deserved* it. All I was trying to do was get her to move along a bit so I could take



my nap. We cats need our naps. If I don't have my nap, I get quite ratty.

So I just stood there looking at her. That is ALL I DID.

Oh, all right. I was glowering.

But she didn't even notice. She was

busy flicking through the new brochure from the College of Education. 'What class shall I take?' she kept asking Ellie. 'What would suit me best? Art? Music? Great books? Dancing? Yoga?'

'Do they have classes in fixing up old



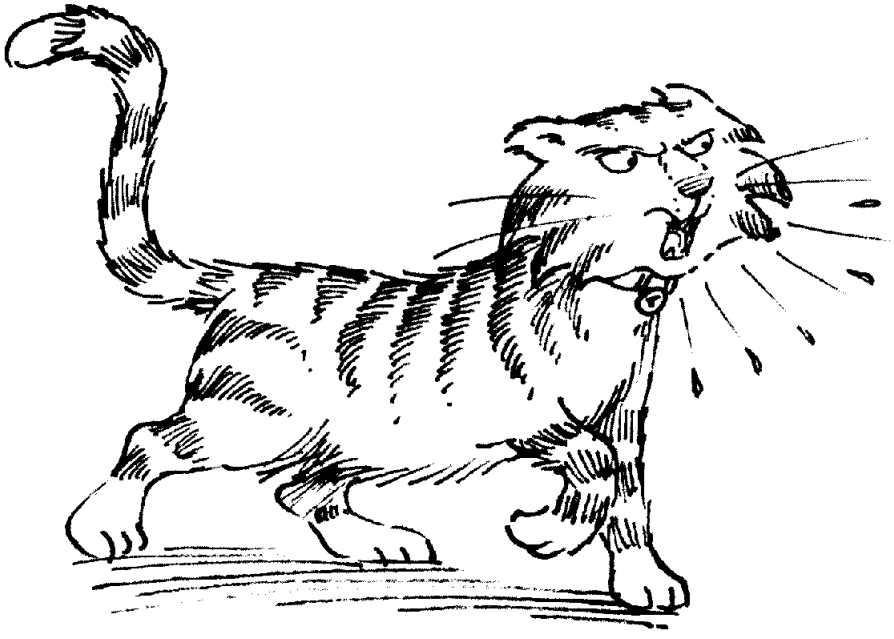
cars?' said Ellie's father. 'If they do, that's the one to take.'

He's right. That car of theirs is an embarrassment. It's a disgrace. It's just a heap of bits that rattle along the road sounding like a giant shaking rocks in a tin drum, spewing out smoke. And they will never, ever have the money to buy a new one.

The best class for Ellie's mother would be a 'Build A New Car Out Of Air' class. But I doubt if the college offers that.

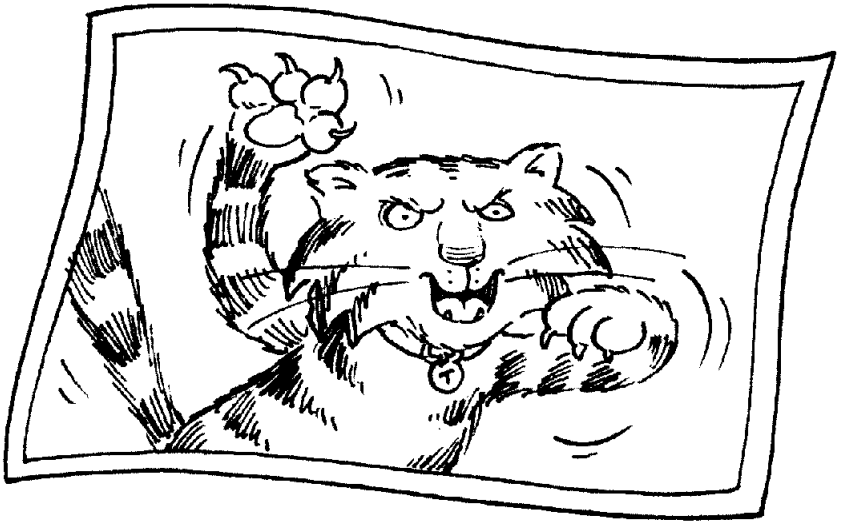
I upped the glower a little – not out of nastiness, you understand. Simply to let her know I wasn't standing there admiring her beauty. My legs were *aching*.

She looked up and saw me. 'Oh, Tuffy! What a precious little crosspatch face!'



I'm like you. I hate being teased. So I just glowered some more.

Oh, all *right.* If you insist on knowing all of it, I hissed a bit.



And then I spat.

And, guess what? Suddenly she was diving into her bag and had whipped out her camera and taken a photo.

It didn't show me at my best, I must admit. I looked a little grumpy.

And you could see a bit too much of my bared teeth.

And perhaps my claws looked a shade too large and pointy. And a bit

stretched out, as if I were about to lean forward and take a chunk out of someone's leg unless they shifted along the sofa a bit to let someone else on to the sunny patch.

No. Not the best photo of me.

But she seemed to like it. And it gave her an idea.

'I know!' she said. 'I'll take the art class. We do painting and pottery. But





the first thing I'm going to do is a portrait of Tuffy just like the one in the photo. Won't that be lovely?'

Oh, yes. Very lovely indeed. Lovely as *mud*.