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Opening extract from

The Ship's Kitten

Written by

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Chapter 1

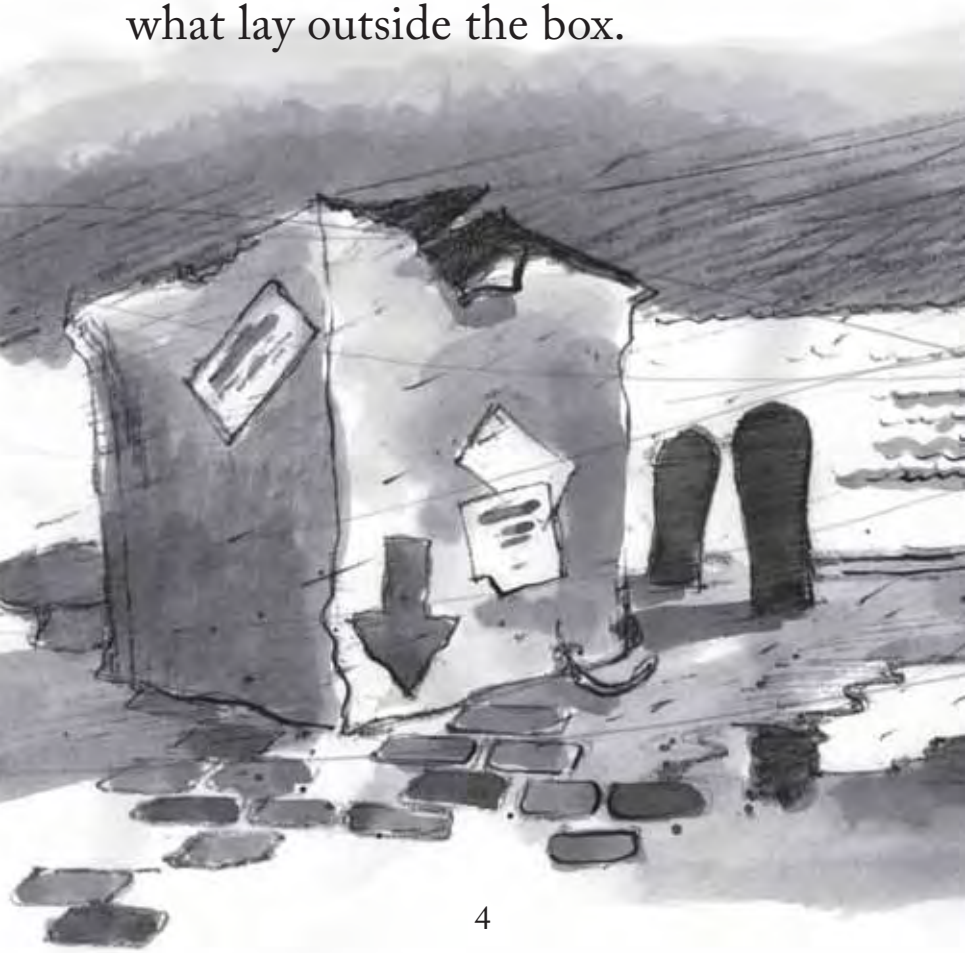
Somewhere in the world there is a country where the winter is always cold and rainy. Somewhere in that country is an island entirely surrounded by the stormy winter sea.



Somewhere in that island is a small fishing town with shops that shut for the winter but in the summer they sell sticks of rock with your name running through. Somewhere in that town is a harbour where the boats rock and bash against the pier in the squally wind.



Not so long ago in that harbour there was a cardboard box, all damp and sagging from the heavy rain. And somewhere in that cardboard box was a tiny little kitten with no name, and no home, and no idea of what lay outside the box.







The tiny little kitten crouched in a corner and shivered. Hunger pains growled in her tummy. She tried to meow but only made a sniffling sound instead.

The tiny little kitten knew she had to do something. She knew she couldn't crouch in the corner forever.

So she edged towards the middle

of the soggy box to a little gap in the lid where the four flaps didn't quite meet. Gingerly she rose up on her hind legs and poked her tiny pink nose up through the gap.





She took an enormously big sniff for such a tiny little kitten.

All at once all sorts of lovely, oily, fishy smells filled her nose. They made her whiskers quiver and her tummy rumble. She had to go and investigate. With a lot of scrabbling and clawing she struggled up through the gap.

She took a few wobbly steps,

blinking in the light, and fell off the box on to the harbour wall.

At once she shrank down and hissed. The wind hissed back and blew her ears flat against her tiny head. The rain hissed back and drenched her fur. Her tail drooped down and trailed in a puddle.





Wet and frightened, the kitten crept back towards the box but just then – *whoosh!* - a strong gust of wind sent the box flying off the harbour wall and into the foaming sea below.



The kitten battled her way against the wind over to a wooden crate where she crouched down and stared out at the sea.



The dark green sea boiled and crashed against the wall, fish glittering like diamonds beneath the foaming crests of the waves.