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Opening extract from

Supercat vs the Chip Thief

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Chapter One

Toxic Sock Shock

James Jones looked at the tubby tabby snoring on his bed and sighed. The cat was fast asleep on his school jumper and James was already late. "Up you get, Tiger," he said.



He shoved his hands under the cat's saggy tummy to lift him. Tiger pinned himself to the pillow, made a fat, furry arch and wouldn't let go. James put his blazer on.

"Fine, I'll catch cold," he said. "Sleep, eat, poop! That's all you ever do. If Mum had bought me a pet wolf like I asked, at least I'd have someone to play with."

James had always wanted an exciting pet. It didn't have to be a wolf. He'd have been happy with a polar bear. Or a panther…



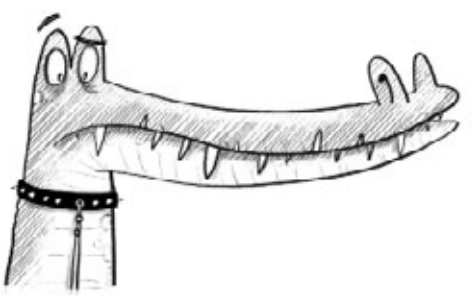
But he didn't get one of those. Instead, he was given a cat from the rescue centre.

It was a gift for his seventh birthday. He was so excited when his mother handed him the cardboard pet carrier. He couldn't wait to see what was inside. He could hear loud purring, so he guessed it wasn't a python. Maybe it was a lion cub? Or a cheetah? He opened the lid. Inside was...

"Are you pleased?" said his mum.

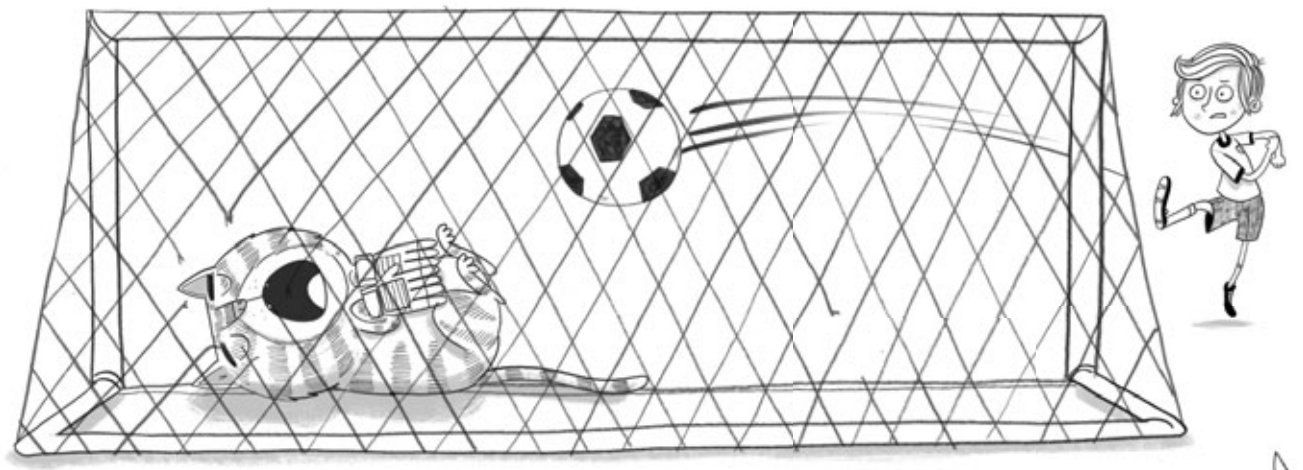
James looked at the roly-poly puss in the box. The cat opened one eye, blinked at him and went straight back to sleep.

"Can I swap it for a crocodile?" begged James. "I promise to take it for walks."



But three years later he was still stuck with the world's laziest cat. Tiger was cuddly and lovable, but he hardly moved.

He didn't want to go in goal:



Or have a sword fight:



Or pretend to be a spy:



Not even for a chicken leg.

James tried his best to bring out Tiger's wild side. He even named him after his favourite superhero, but while Tigerman was full of get up and go, Tiger the cat only got up to go to his litter tray. Or his food bowl. Or back to bed.

James didn't give up. He dressed as a lion tamer to make Tiger do circus tricks. Fat chance! Tiger looked at him as if he was mad, curled up on the stool and wrapped his tail over his eyes. Once, James pretended he was an Indian prince with a real pet tiger that liked to be taken for walks around the palace garden. He clipped Mimi's old reins to Tiger's collar, but when he went to lead Tiger outside, the cat just sat down. He refused to move. James dragged him along on his furry bottom, but Tiger slipped his collar and James found himself walking with nothing on the end of the reins.



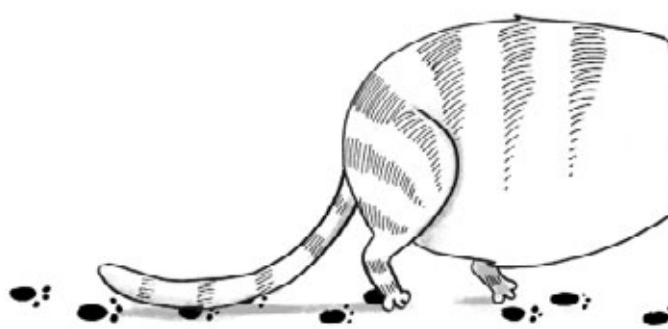
Maybe he could teach Tiger to hunt. Tiger had never caught a mouse in his life, but there was always a first time. James found a sausage in the fridge, tied it to a piece of string and ran round the garden with it.

"Chase it, Tiger!" he cried. "Chase it!"

Tiger rolled over in the rhubarb patch and stuck his nose in the air. James thought he'd sniffed the sausage and was about to pounce – but no. Tiger stood up, curled his tail into a question mark and ambled back to the bedroom.

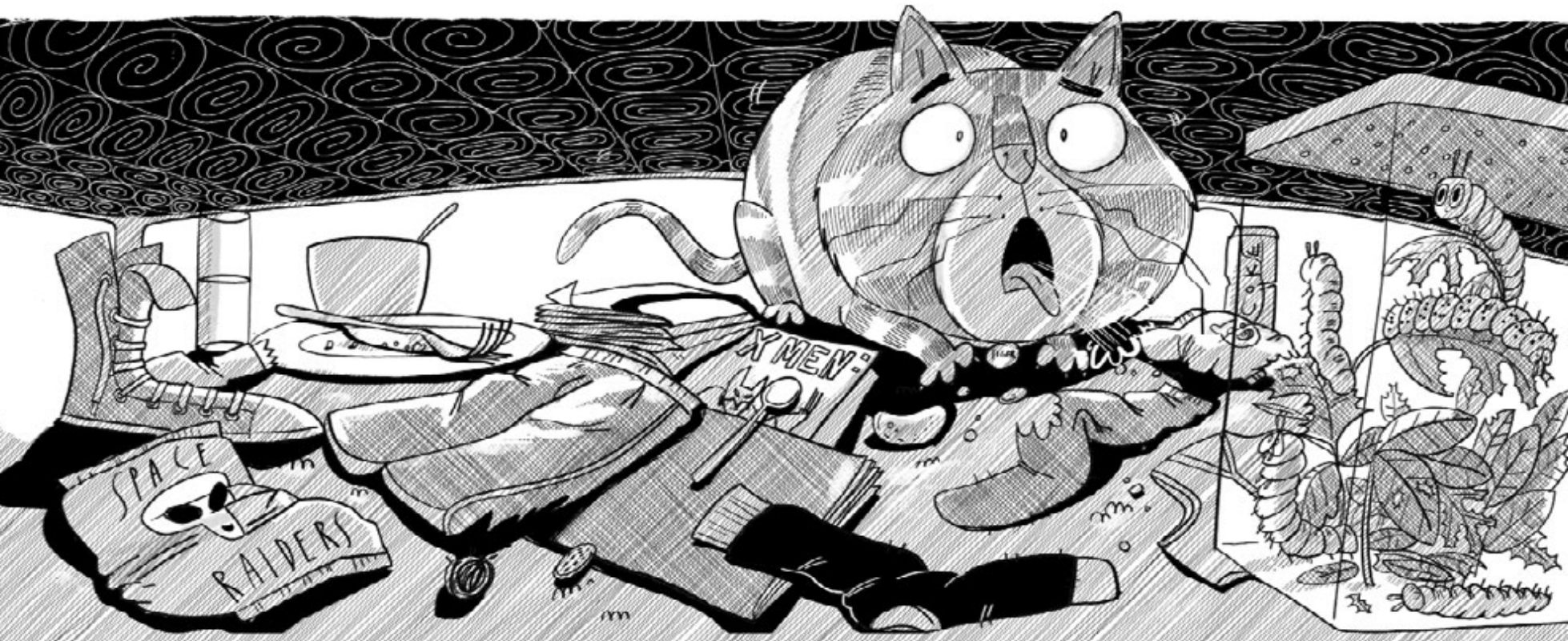
To be fair, Tiger didn't spend all of his time on James's bed. Sometimes he went *under* the bed. It was the place where James liked to keep dirty plates, along with his comics and caterpillar collection.

If Tiger was lucky, he might find a piece of pepperoni from an old pizza. Or some burger gristle. Or a lump of cheese. So as soon as James left for school, Tiger rolled off the bed to see what he could find below.



He picked his way through a sea of last month's pants. His nose twitched – what was that smell? Aha... it was an oven chip – his favourite! It was stuck to a mouldy sports sock by a blob of lard. Tiger licked it.

The greasy, cheesy chip-sock combo was delicious. He took such a big bite that he chewed a hole in the sock heel. He was enjoying it no end until suddenly a bit of wool went down the wrong way.



He tried to cough it up but no matter how hard he retched, it stayed put. His eyes bulged. Thinking he was about to choke, he gave a loud *GULP!* and swallowed hard.

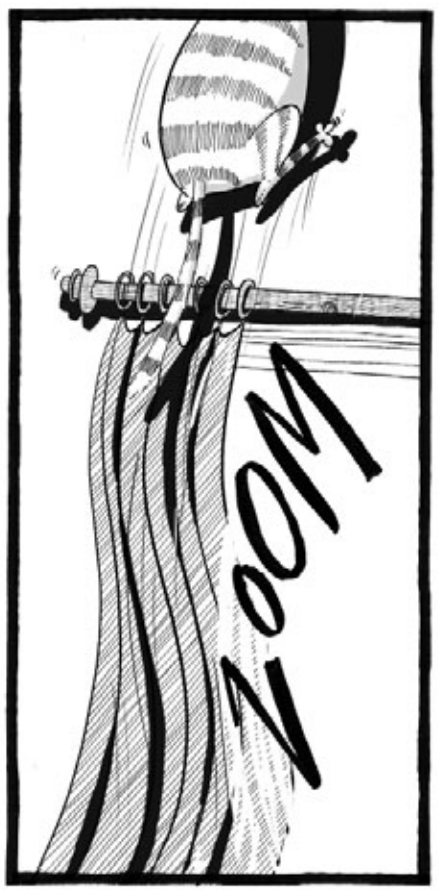
That moment changed Tiger's nine lives forever. As he lay on his back looking up at the bedsprings, the mouldy sock shred dissolved in his stomach. Tiger felt a strange sensation. His fur stood on end. His whiskers fizzed. His paws tingled. Fit as a kitten, he shot out from beneath the bed and sprinted up the curtains.



They sagged under his weight.

Just before the pole snapped,

he gave a giant leap and …









...landed on top of the wardrobe.



Tiger sat there in shock. He couldn't understand how he'd got here. The curtains were on the other side of the room. He'd never jumped that high or that far before. It was an impossible leap for an ordinary cat – so maybe he wasn't an ordinary cat any more! This morning, he hadn't had the energy to wash his bottom – but now?

I wonder if I can fly, thought Tiger, flapping his furry arms.

He fell off the wardrobe into the linen basket with a loud plop.