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Opening extract from
**The Great Cat
Conspiracy**

Written by
Katie Davies

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THE GREAT
CAT
CONSPIRACY

Katie Davies



Illustrated by Hannah Shaw

SIMON AND SCHUSTER

MY VILLAGE

by Anna.





School

The Police Station



My House

Back Lane

Shed

Joe's House

Suzanne's House

Miss Matheson's

Vicage

Mr Tucker's House

Mrs Rotherham's House

For Harry, of course

Thanks to Alan, and Mum and Dad
and Venetia at Simon and Schuster.

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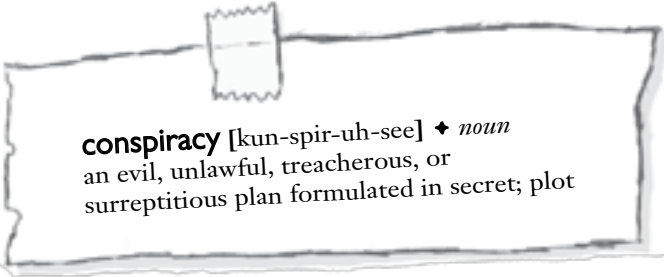


🐾 CHAPTER 1 🐾

Cat Conspiracy

This is a story about Tom, and the Cat Lady, and everything that happened when the New Cat vanished. After it went missing, Mum said that me and Tom had to stop talking about the New Cat, and telling everyone how it had been kidnapped by the Cat Lady, and all that. She said, 'Anna,' (that's my name) 'you can't go around accusing old ladies, and bandying words like "conspiracy" about, which you don't even understand.' But, like I told Tom, I *did* understand what a conspiracy was. Because me and my friend Suzanne looked it up in my dictionary, when we first heard there was one, off Graham Roberts at Sunday School.

And this is what it said:

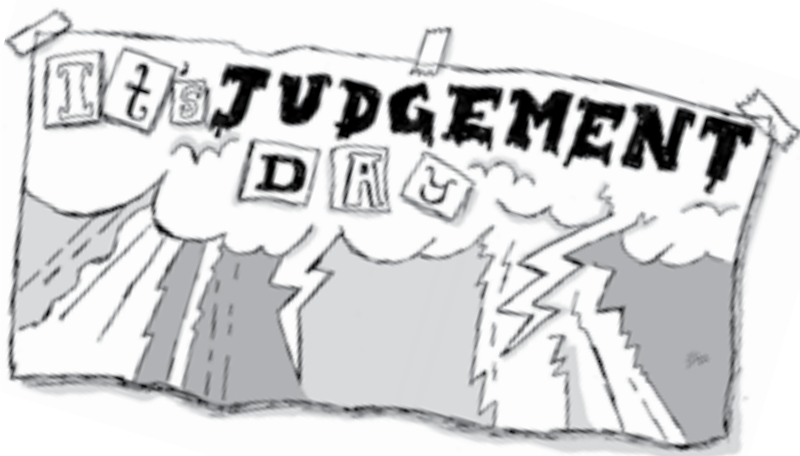


conspiracy [kun-spir-uh-see] ♦ *noun*
an evil, unlawful, treacherous, or
surreptitious plan formulated in secret; plot

And what the dictionary said was probably right. Because ours wasn't the only cat that had vanished. Emma Hendry, in Mrs Peters' class, couldn't find her cat, either. And nor could Joe-down-the-road's babysitter, Brian. And Graham Roberts said he had *seen* the Cat Lady kidnapping cats, and taking them into her house, himself. And he said, 'with my *very own eyes*,' and swore it was true on Mrs Constantine's *life*. Mrs Constantine is in charge at Sunday School.

She is the Vicar's wife.

Suzanne said that Graham swearing on Mrs Constantine might not count, because Graham sometimes lies. And you're only supposed to swear on the life of someone you *like*. And Graham didn't even have Mrs Constantine going to heaven when he did his big collage called, 'IT'S *JUDGEMENT* DAY!' Because he made her out of an egg box and she was too big to fit.



Anyway, like I told Mum, me and Tom did know *some* things about the Cat Lady, and where the New Cat was, and what had happened to it, and so did Suzanne. Because we were the ones who had sent out the Search Party. *And* we were the ones who were actually *in* it. And the whole *point* of a Search Party is to find things out.

It was Tom who first noticed that the New Cat had vanished. Tom is my brother. He's five. He's four years younger than I am. I'm nine. I've got another brother and a sister too, called Andy and Joanne, but they're not in this story because they're older than me and Tom and they don't really care about cats or conspiracies or anything like that.

If it wasn't for Tom, no one might even have minded that the New Cat had gone anywhere.



Because, before we couldn't find it, Tom was the only one in our house who cared about the New Cat, and what it got up to.

Mum said that *she* cared about what the New Cat got up to as well because, she said, '*I'm* the one who has to clean up after it all the time.'

But that isn't really the same kind of caring.

Most cats don't need to be cleaned up after. That's why Mum said we could get a new one, after our *Old* Cat died, and why we weren't allowed a dog, like me and Tom wanted. The New Cat isn't like most cats, though. The New Cat makes more mess than anyone's dog does. It makes more mess even than Tom. And it's not easy-to-clean-up-mess, either. Not like jigsaws, and sticklebricks, and Spiderman pants and all that. The mess that the New Cat makes is

normally *dead*. Because, whenever it leaves the house, the New Cat *hunts*. And, after it's been hunting, it brings the things it has hunted inside, and puts them in places for people to find. Sometimes the things it



brings in are still a bit alive.

Like the hedgehog curled up in a ball, which it rolled in through the front door.

And the greenfinch with one wing, which was flapping behind the fridge. And the frog in the log basket, which me and Suzanne were going to bury, until we got it in the garden, and it hopped



out of its box.



Most of the time, though, the things that the New Cat brings in are *definitely* dead. And sometimes they're so dead it's hard to tell what they *would* have been when they were *alive*. And that's when you only find a few feathers, or a bunch of bones, or a pile of slimy insides.

