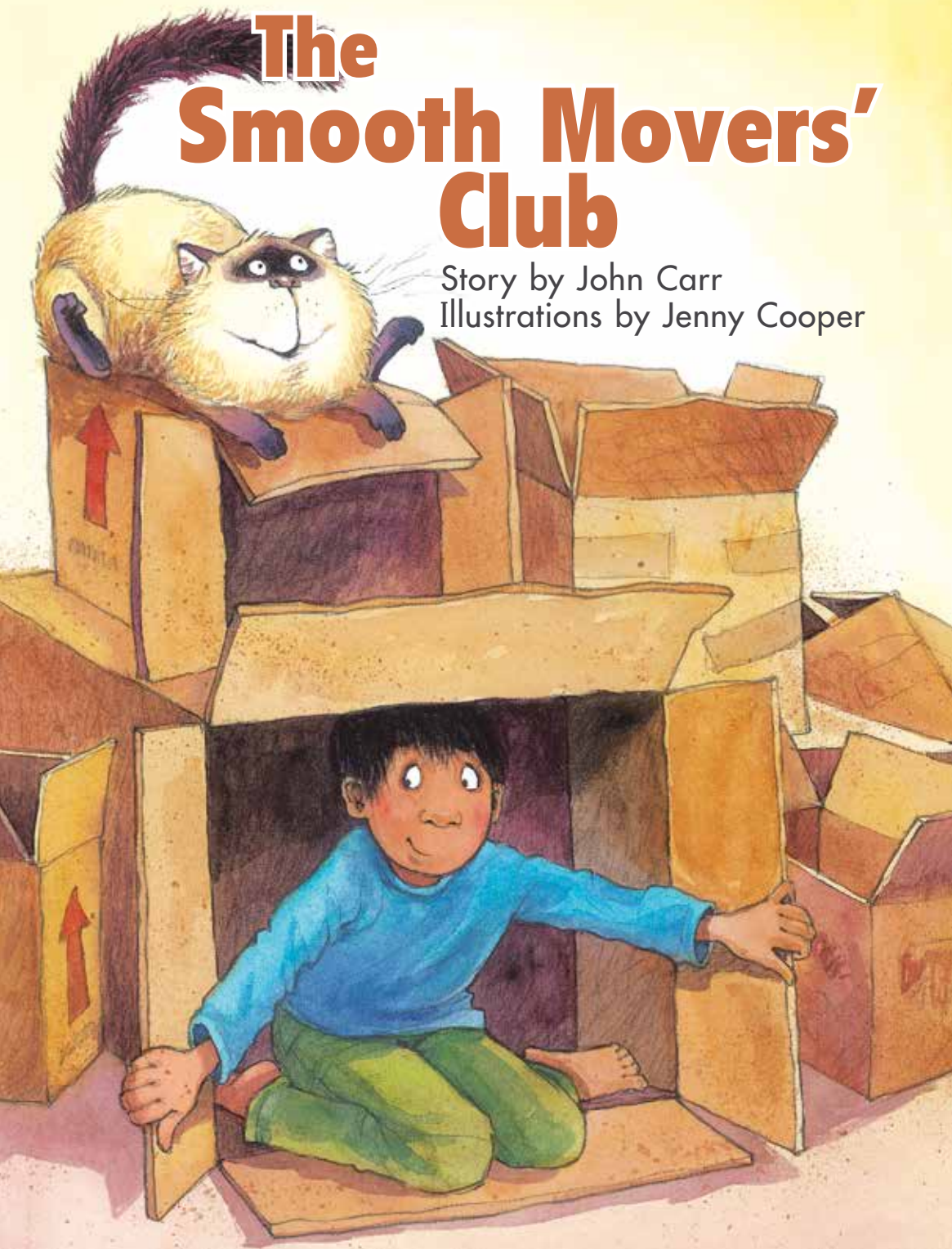


The Smooth Movers' Club

Story by John Carr

Illustrations by Jenny Cooper



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Published by Wendy Pye Publishing Limited for SPCA Education

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ISBN: 978-0-947508-70-8

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Distributed in New Zealand by The SPCA
50 Westney Road, Mangere, Auckland 2022

Printed in China through Colorcraft Ltd, Hong Kong.

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Chapter 1

“Yuck!” I said. “It says here that sometimes if cats are stressed when they move house, they soil the floor in the new house.”

“It’s not the cat I’m worried about,” said Dad. Then he laughed so loud that Noah, my cat, jumped off my lap and ran into the laundry.

Dad was making fun of me again, just because of something I did when I was a baby.

Dad knew that moving homes wasn’t easy, especially for children and pets, and he wanted our move to another city to go smoothly.

So he formed the Smooth Movers’ Club. It had two members. Dad was the president and it was his job to make sure the move went smoothly for me. I was the vice president, and it was my job to make sure the move went smoothly for Noah.

That’s why I was reading about the best way to move pet cats.



Chapter 2

During the two weeks before the move, I was busy. I didn't want Noah stressed. I didn't want him ruining the carpet in the new house.

I helped Noah get used to the cat-carrying crate because the car trip would be quite long. I made a comfortable bed in it out of a cushion and towel and left it open on the floor in the laundry.

Each day I put his food bowl closer to the crate and then inside it. By the day of the move, Noah was eating and sometimes sleeping in it.



Things went well on the drive to the city. I shared the back seat of the car with Noah and his crate. We stopped several times for a drink and some fresh air but I didn't let him out in case he ran away.

As we pulled up to our new house, Dad looked over into the back seat. Noah was asleep. Dad smiled and gave me a high five.

"Smooth move, Mr Vice President!" he said.
"Smooth move!"



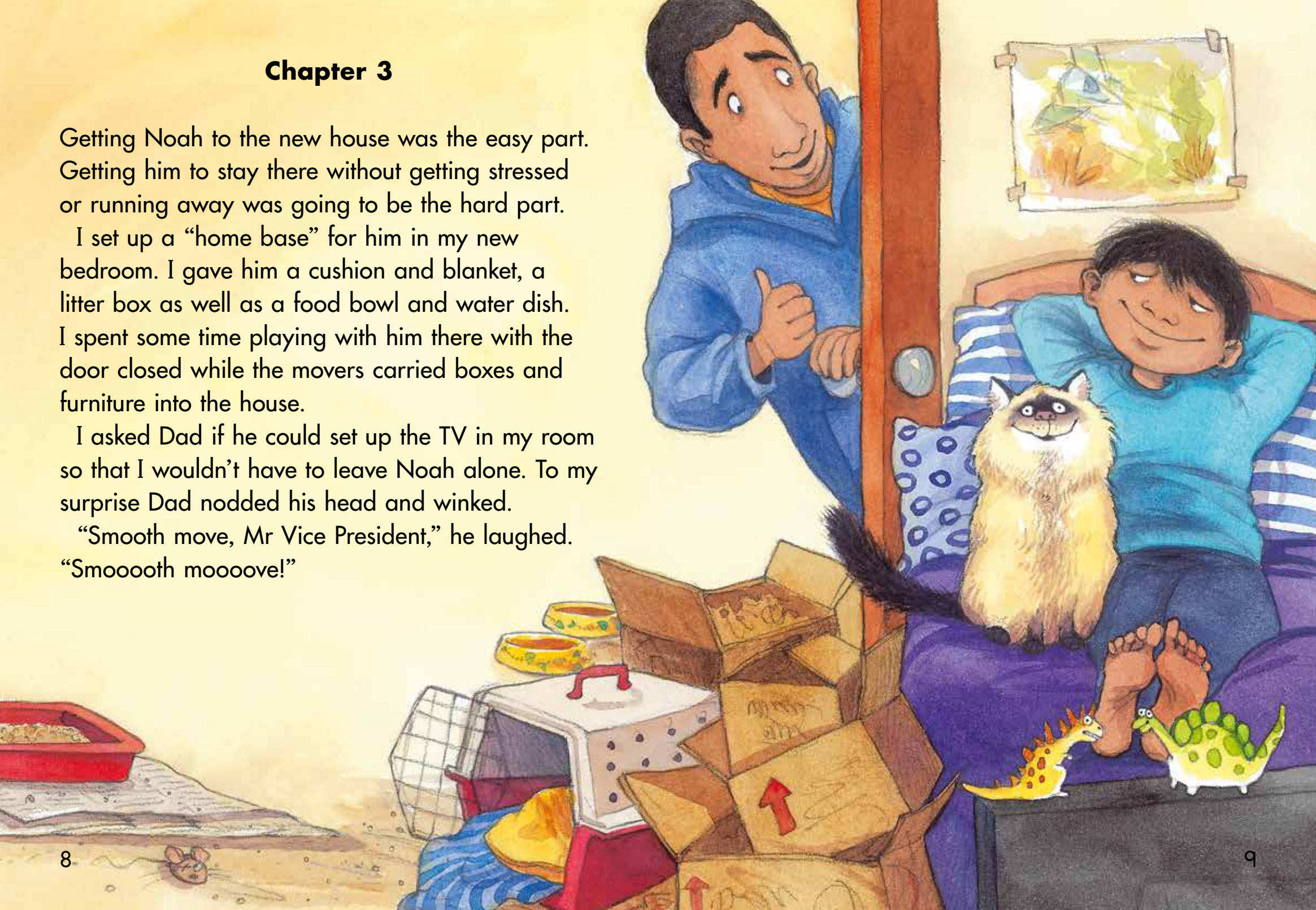
Chapter 3

Getting Noah to the new house was the easy part. Getting him to stay there without getting stressed or running away was going to be the hard part.

I set up a “home base” for him in my new bedroom. I gave him a cushion and blanket, a litter box as well as a food bowl and water dish. I spent some time playing with him there with the door closed while the movers carried boxes and furniture into the house.

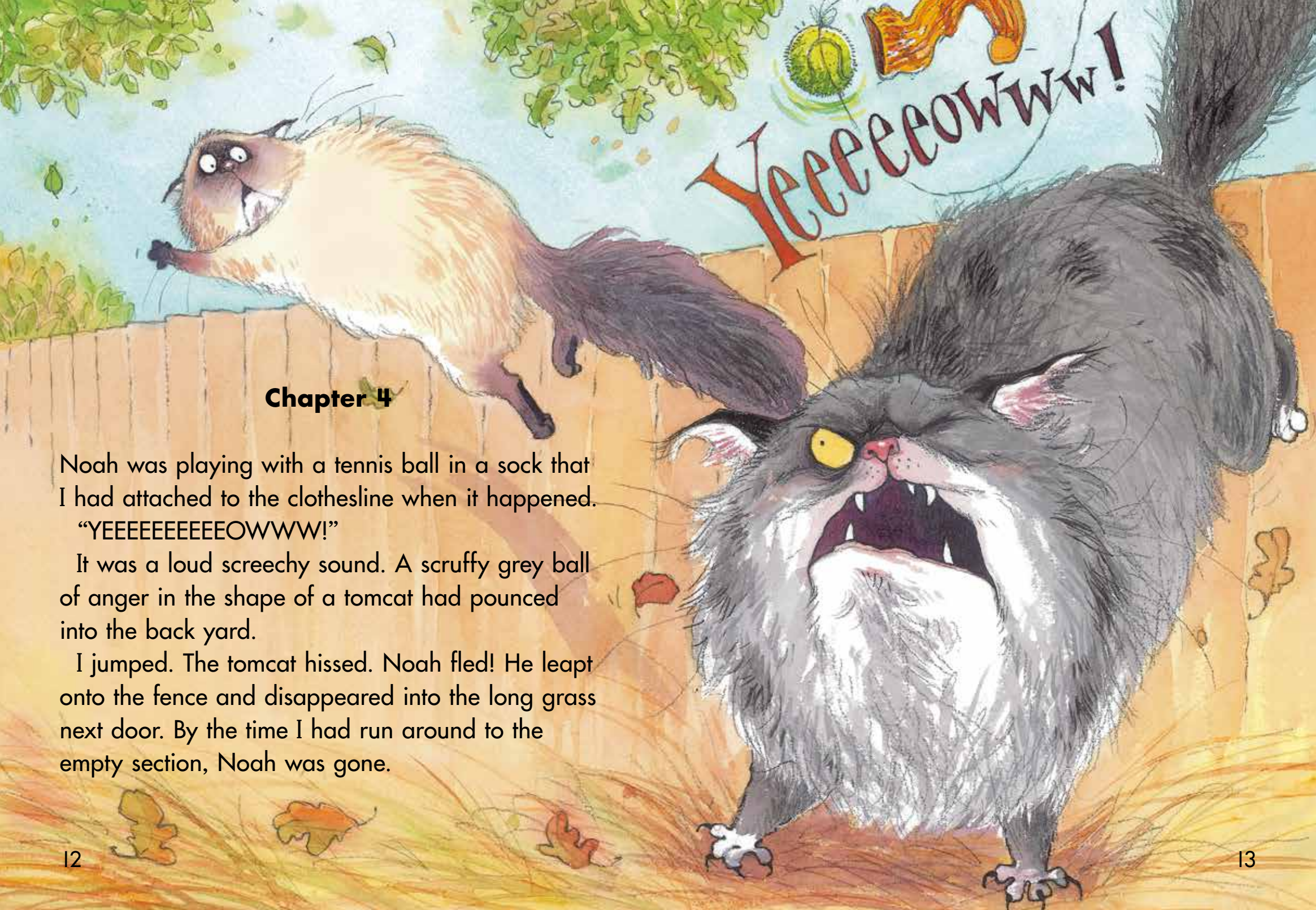
I asked Dad if he could set up the TV in my room so that I wouldn’t have to leave Noah alone. To my surprise Dad nodded his head and winked.

“Smooth move, Mr Vice President,” he laughed. “Smoooooth moooove!”



Things went just as smoothly over the next few days as I let Noah explore a new room every day. This helped him get used to the size, shape and smells of our new house. It wasn't until I allowed him to explore the outside of the house that smooth turned lumpy.





Chapter 4

Noah was playing with a tennis ball in a sock that I had attached to the clothesline when it happened.

“YEEEEEEEEEEOWWW!”

It was a loud screechy sound. A scruffy grey ball of anger in the shape of a tomcat had pounced into the back yard.

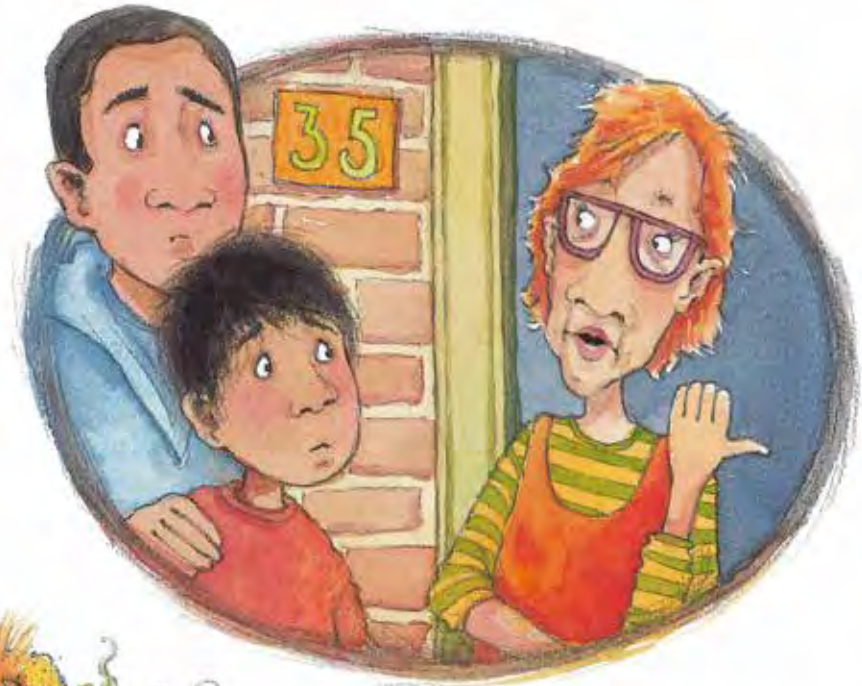
I jumped. The tomcat hissed. Noah fled! He leapt onto the fence and disappeared into the long grass next door. By the time I had run around to the empty section, Noah was gone.

Chapter 5

Dad and I searched the neighbourhood all afternoon. We didn't find Noah but we did meet our new neighbours and learnt a lot about the grey tomcat that had scared Noah away.

"His name is Muscles and he belongs to the people who lived in your house," said Mrs Granger. "He has found his way back to his old house and he doesn't want to leave."

Mr Baxton gave us the phone number of the SPCA and a watermelon.



Mrs Burgher let us put a “missing cat” poster in her dairy. She also let her son Helmut join Dad and me on the search.

Ms Greene gave us orange juice and told Dad how Muscles often ate food she put out for her own cat, Whiskers.

“Once he got into my house through Whiskers’ cat flap and soiled the kitchen floor!” she said.

Dad looked at me and laughed. “I know what it’s like,” he said.

By nighttime, we still hadn’t found Noah. I was so sad. I looked at Dad and said, “It wasn’t such a smooth move today was it, Mr President?”

Dad smiled. “Don’t worry, Mr Vice President,” he said. “Life is like peanut butter. Sometimes it’s smooth, and sometimes it’s crunchy. Tomorrow it will be smooth.”



Chapter 6

Next day Helmut turned up. He had a skateboard under his arm and a big smile on his face.

“Let’s go and find that cat,” he said.

“It’s good to see you’ve got your skateboard, Helmut,” Dad laughed. Helmut pretended it was the first time he’d heard that joke and laughed. I was glad Dad was making jokes about someone else for a change.

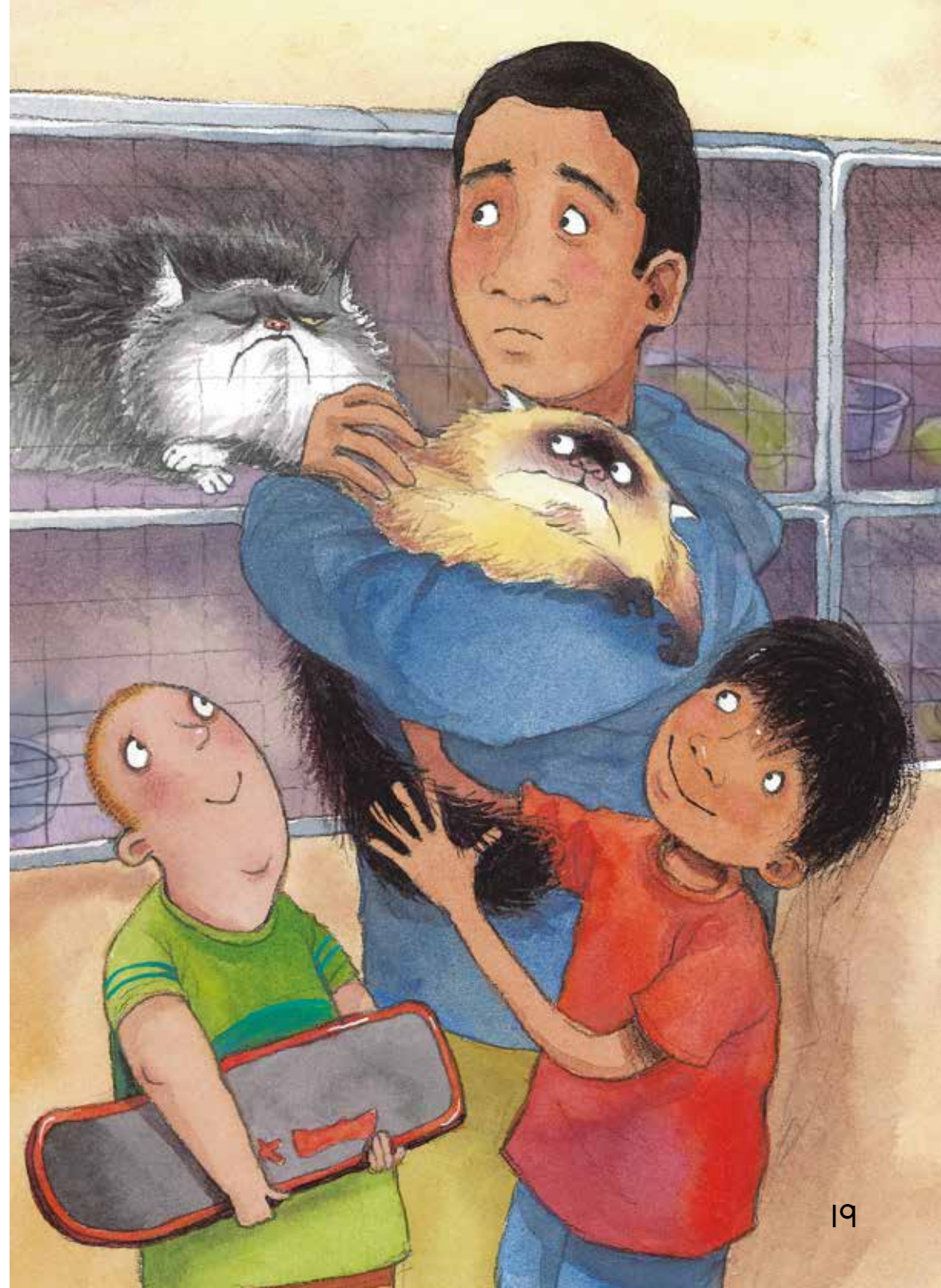
Helmut knew where the SPCA was so we drove straight there. The lady in the office said that two cats had been brought in over night. One of the cats had a microchip under its skin and its owner was coming to pick it up.

“There he is,” said Dad as he lifted Noah out of the cage. “He doesn’t look too happy to be here.”

I could see why. Asleep in the cage next to Noah was a big grey cat.

“His name is Muscles,” said the lady. “His owners are taking him home today.”

“We know Muscles,” said Dad, “and we’re glad he’s going to his new home.”



Chapter 7

Everyone was happy when we got home, except Noah. He was a bit grumpy because Dad got the SPCA to microchip him before we left. It meant the SPCA would know who he belonged to if he ever got lost again. He also bought Noah a new safety collar with ID tag and a bell. We got a microchip-activated cat door, too.

“This means Noah can get in and out but other cats like Muscles can’t,” said Dad.

Noah didn’t look too happy, but I sure did.

“Smooth move, Mr President,” I said.

“Smooth move.”



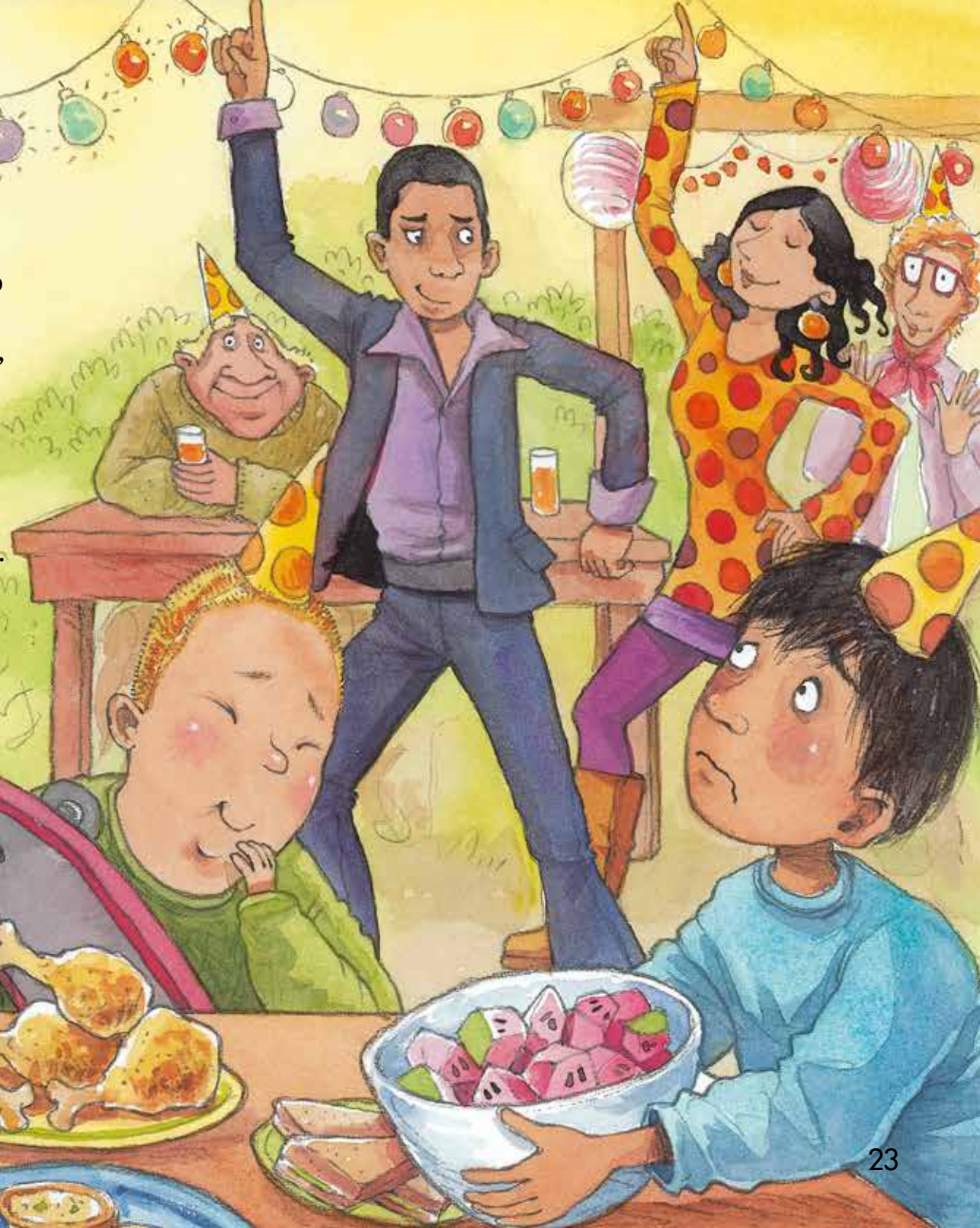
Chapter 8

It didn't take long for Noah to get used to his new cat flap. After a few weeks we were all settled into the new neighbourhood.

Dad invited the neighbours to a "Smooth Movers' Club Barbecue". It was the president's job to cook the sausages and make jokes. It was the vice president's job to make a fruit salad with Mr Baxton's watermelon and to keep an eye on Noah.

When the dancing started, Helmut and I decided it was our job to sneak away to the skateboard bowl. Dad didn't notice. He was too busy dancing with Ms Greene. As I went past I winked at him.

"Smooth moves, Mr President," I said, "Smoooooooooth Moooooooooves!"



Hints for Settling Cats into a New House



Whether you are getting a new cat or moving your old cat into a new house, there are some things you can do to make sure the move goes smoothly:

- Cats make great pets.
- Set up a room such as the laundry or bathroom and keep your cat there for two or three days.
- Make sure the room is “cat comfortable” with water, food, toys, a litter box and a comfortable place for your cat to sleep.
- Allow your cat to explore her new home slowly, one room at a time.
- Keep your cat inside for three to four weeks so she won’t get lost or run away. Kittens need to be kept inside for six to eight weeks.



Visit kids.spcaeducation.org.nz to learn more about caring for cats