

ANIMAL BOY

Chapter 2

The next day, Josh watched as Ellie left for school. She was still angry that her brother was getting to have the day off and she wasn't. His mum was also staying home in order to look after him. Josh felt fine but the doctor had insisted that he take some time off to recover from his accident before going back.



In the mirror, he could see a bump on the front of his head and a tiny plaster that was covering up a cut. It seemed that the helmet had thankfully taken most of the impact.

Josh could hear his mum coming up the stairs. She entered his room, carrying a tray with two pieces of toast, some cereal and a glass of milk.

“How are you feeling?” his mum asked as she placed the tray on the table next to his bed.

“I’m OK, Mum. Thanks for the breakfast,” Josh said, getting back into bed before taking the first chomp out of his toast.

“Good,” his mum said with a smile. “Now, make sure you eat all of this and don’t forget to drink the milk. You will need it to keep your bones nice and strong.”

She gave Josh a cheeky pinch on the arm.

“Now, I just need to pop to the shops to get tonight’s dinner. Make sure you get some rest – and no TV.”

“Yes, Mum,” he said, shovelling cereal into his mouth.

After he had finished breakfast, his mum took the tray away and closed the bedroom door behind her. Josh reached into his bedside table drawer, pulled out a comic and started reading.

“I don’t care what you say, Felix,” came a voice from outside Josh’s bedroom window. “Tuna is a lot nicer than cod!”

Josh put down his comic and started listening to this strange conversation.

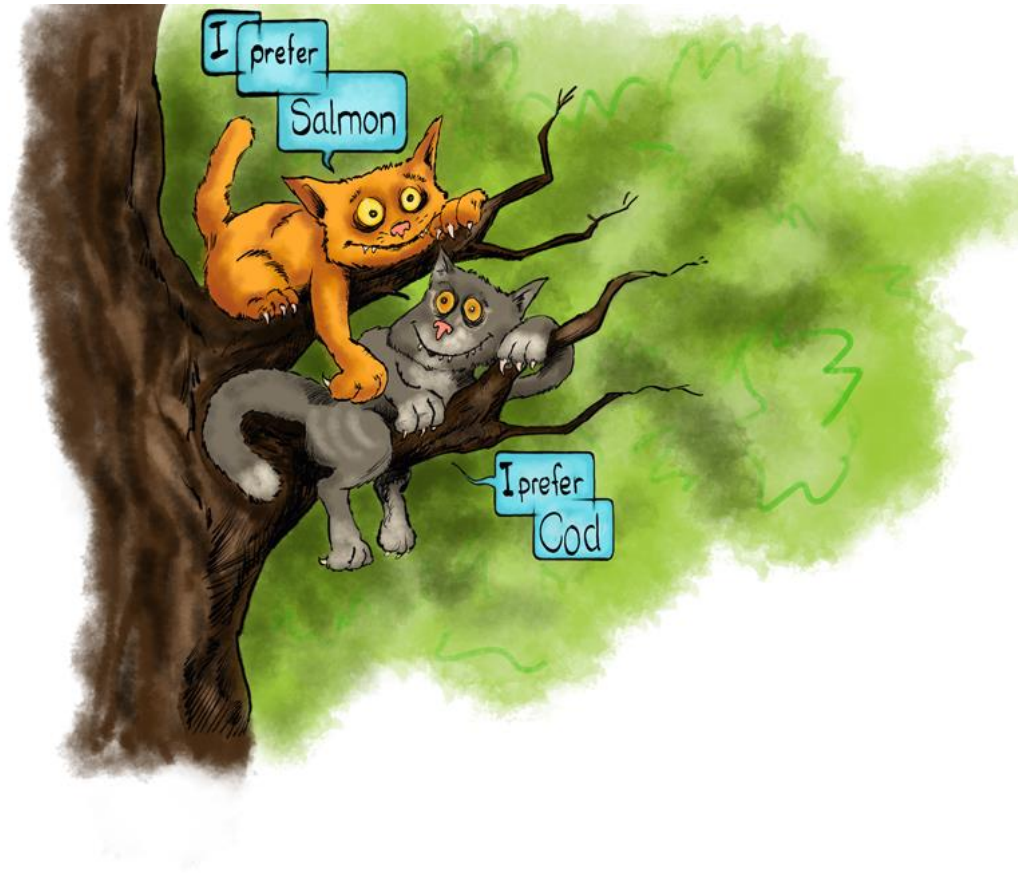
“No way, Molly!” said another voice. “Cod is *so* much tastier!”

He went over to the window and looked out into the front garden to see who was talking. He couldn’t see anybody.

“What?” shrieked one of the voices. “You must be kidding!”

Josh still couldn’t see anybody. He then looked up into a nearby tree. He could see two cats on a branch. He blinked his eyes in disbelief; it looked as if they were talking to each other!

“Well, we can both agree that tuna *and* cod are much better than that cat food we have been getting recently,” one of them said, pulling a funny face.



Josh was *sure* it was the two cats that he could hear! He could understand every word!

“Hey, you two!” he shouted.

The cats both looked over at Josh, their eyes wide open in a state of shock.

“Excuse me, what did you say?” one of them called over, clearly unsure whether to believe what was taking place.

Josh didn’t want to appear crazy, but he leaned out of the window and started to speak. “I don’t know if you can understand me but I was wondering if you two could keep it down a little,” Josh said. “I’m supposed to be resting.”

The cats turned to look at one another. They gave out two loud meows and raced down the tree trunk, springing over the wall and into the neighbour’s garden.

Josh shut the window and shook his head. He wondered whether the knock to his head was making him imagine things, or whether he had in fact understood the cats.

Was he now able to speak cat? He had too many questions racing around in his head. He flopped back down on his bed and fell asleep.