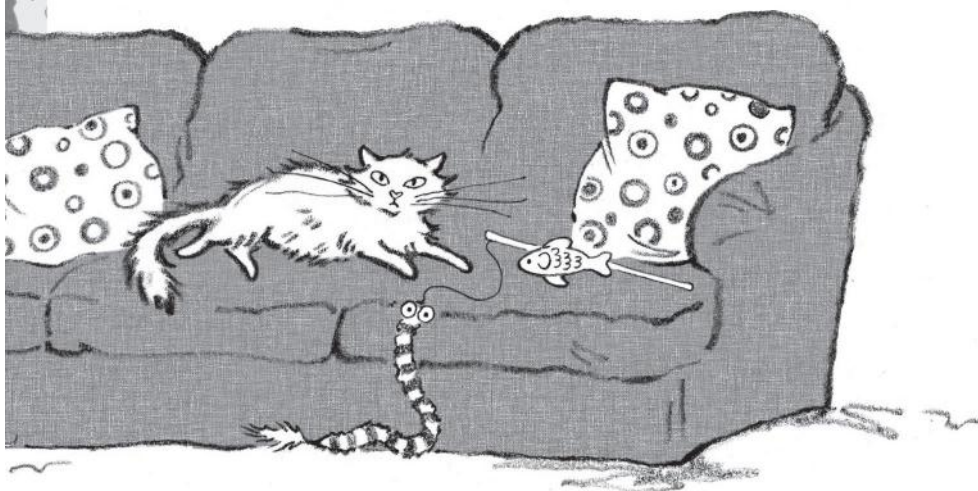


Chapter One

Marvellous Me

Oh, hello. Yes, you can come in, but you can't sit down because there's only room for me on this sofa.

I am a fancy cat. I prefer to be addressed by my FULL name, which is *Marshmallow Marmaduke Vanilla-Bean Sugar-Pie Fluffington-Fitz-Noodle.*



I'm not happy when people shorten it.

I pretend I haven't heard them, at first.

Here comes my human,

Amelia Lime.

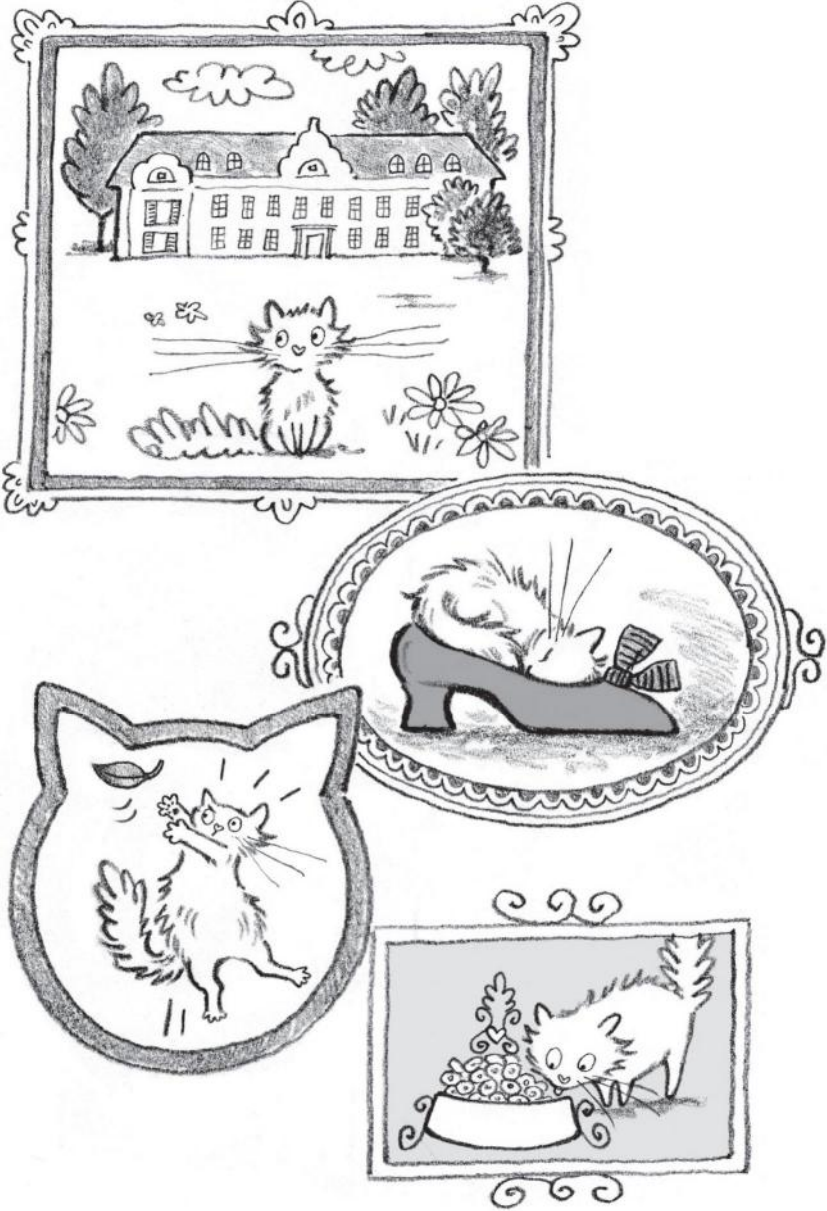


'Hello, Pie!' she says. See what I have
to put up with?

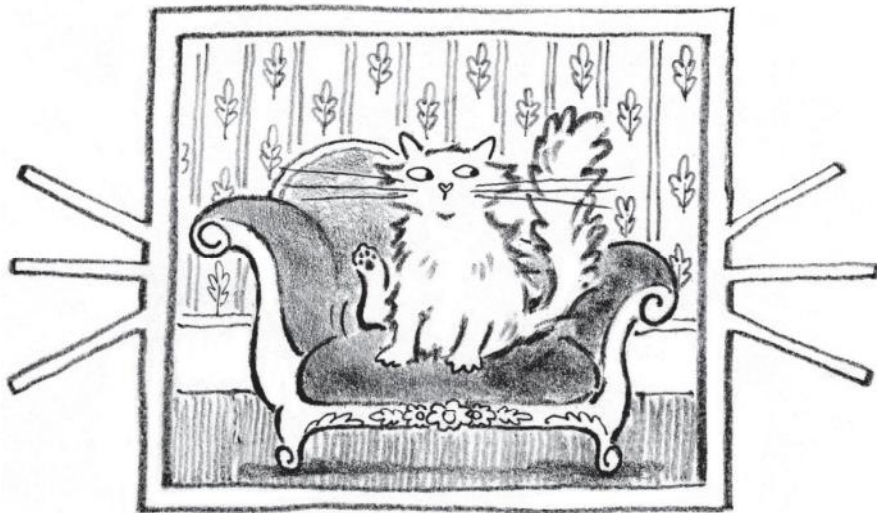
I live here with Amelia and her dad in a tiny top-floor flat in the middle of the busy city. I didn't always, though.



The Early Years



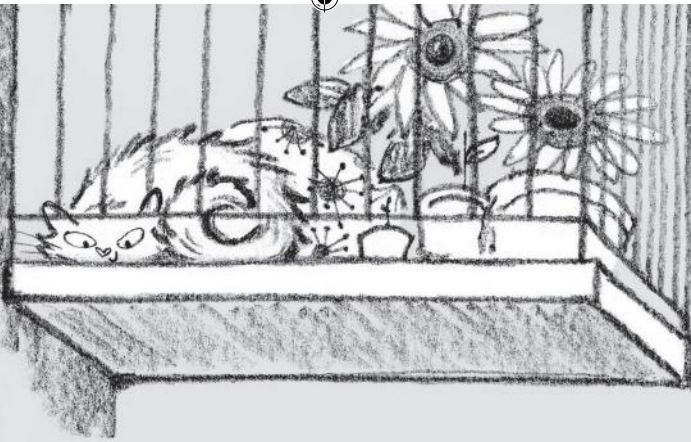
Until not long ago I lived in a huge house in the country with Amelia's rich Aunt Julia, until she jumped into her private plane to fly around the world and couldn't take me with her. So I was popped into the back of a taxi and sent over to Amelia. I would be company for her, everyone said.



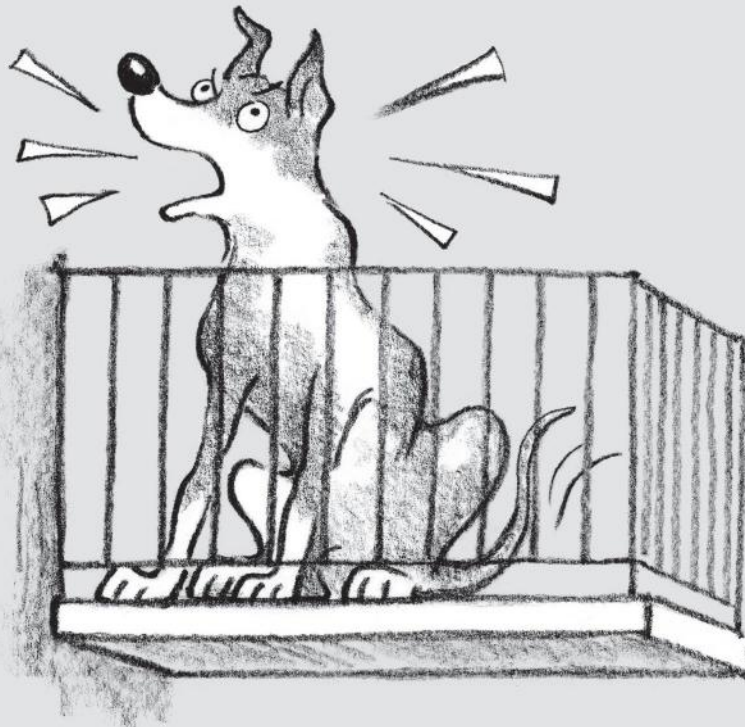
I like the easy life.

I spend a lot of time sitting in the
sunshine on our little balcony.





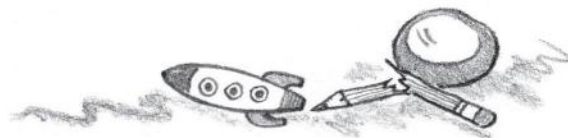
There's a dog called Buster in the flat below. When he is out on his balcony I look down on him, in every way, which drives him CRAZY and keeps me entertained for hours.



This afternoon Amelia throws down her school bag and excitedly rummages in her coat pocket. 'Look – just look at this!' she says, pulling out a conker, a broken pencil, a hair clip shaped like a space rocket and, finally, a crumpled piece of paper. I yawn, waiting for her to get to the point. 'They were giving out these leaflets in **Pawsitively Purrfect** when I went in to buy your **Shrimp Crunchies** . . . '

I can't help doing a little dribble. **Pawsitively Purrfect** is a very good pet shop, and **Shrimp Crunchies** are my favourite.

Amelia reads the leaflet aloud . . .





The Ace Animal Acting Agency

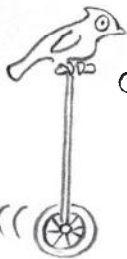
Dogs! Cats! Rabbits! Mice!

We are looking for animal actors for a wide range of exciting opportunities in the wonderful world of TV, film and theatre.

Does your pet have star quality?

A face for fame and celebrity?

Come along for an audition to join the Ace Animal Acting Agency, and we'll give your pet their perfect chance to shine.



On Saturday May 16th from 10am,
at the Community Centre.





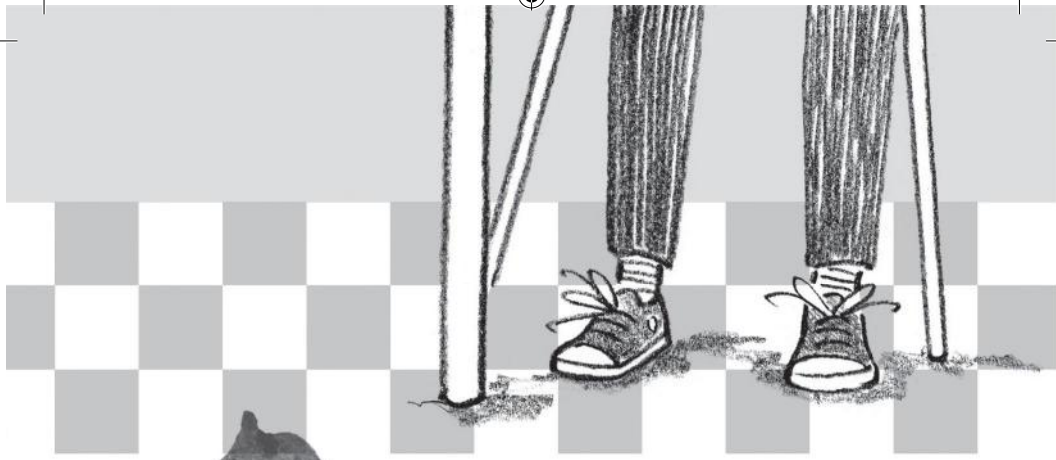
'It's REALLY SOON, Pie – only one week's time! Pie?'



But I've stopped listening. I'm too busy thinking about my tea. I pick up my toy mouse, Squeaker, and I go into the kitchen where Amelia's dad is working at the table.

'Hey, kiddo,' he says to Amelia, looking up from his laptop. 'How was school?'





'Hey, Dad,' says Amelia. 'Usual stuff.'

I pace up and down impatiently while Amelia sorts the **Shrimp Crunchies** into my bowl. They come in yellow, pink and white, but I will only eat the yellow ones.

Amelia's dad is reading her school newsletter while they eat their tea together.



‘Let’s see if there’s anything here you might like to do,’ he says. ‘Netball team try-outs?’

‘I don’t think so,’ says Amelia.

‘Twinkle Toes Dance Club?’



‘No way!’

‘Well, how about this – why don’t you enter the public-speaking competition? You can do it in pairs, it says here.’

Amelia’s cheeks go pink. ‘Oh no, that would be the WORST,’ she says.



‘Everyone would be looking at me, and I wouldn’t be able to find a partner to do it with anyway.’

She shows her dad the acting-agency leaflet. ‘This is loads better. I’d still get to do exciting things, but it would be PIE in the spotlight, not me. Pie deserves to be a HUGE star and I’m going to help him!’

I only really hear the last bit, as I tend to zone out if the conversation isn’t about me. A star? I feel like a star already, to be quite honest.

‘We MUST give the acting audition a go,’ Amelia carries on when I’ve finished my tea and I’m just giving



my whiskers a quick clean. 'They're sure to give you a place in their agency – they will love you!'

Of course they will. I lick a stray crumb that has got stuck up my nose. A class act, that's me.

