

THE NINE LIVES OF
FURRY PURRY
BEANGAT



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Illustrated by

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SIMON & SCHUSTER

First published in Great Britain in 2020 by Simon & Schuster UK Ltd

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1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Simon & Schuster UK Ltd
1st Floor, 222 Gray's Inn Road
London
WC1X 8HB

www.simonandschuster.co.uk

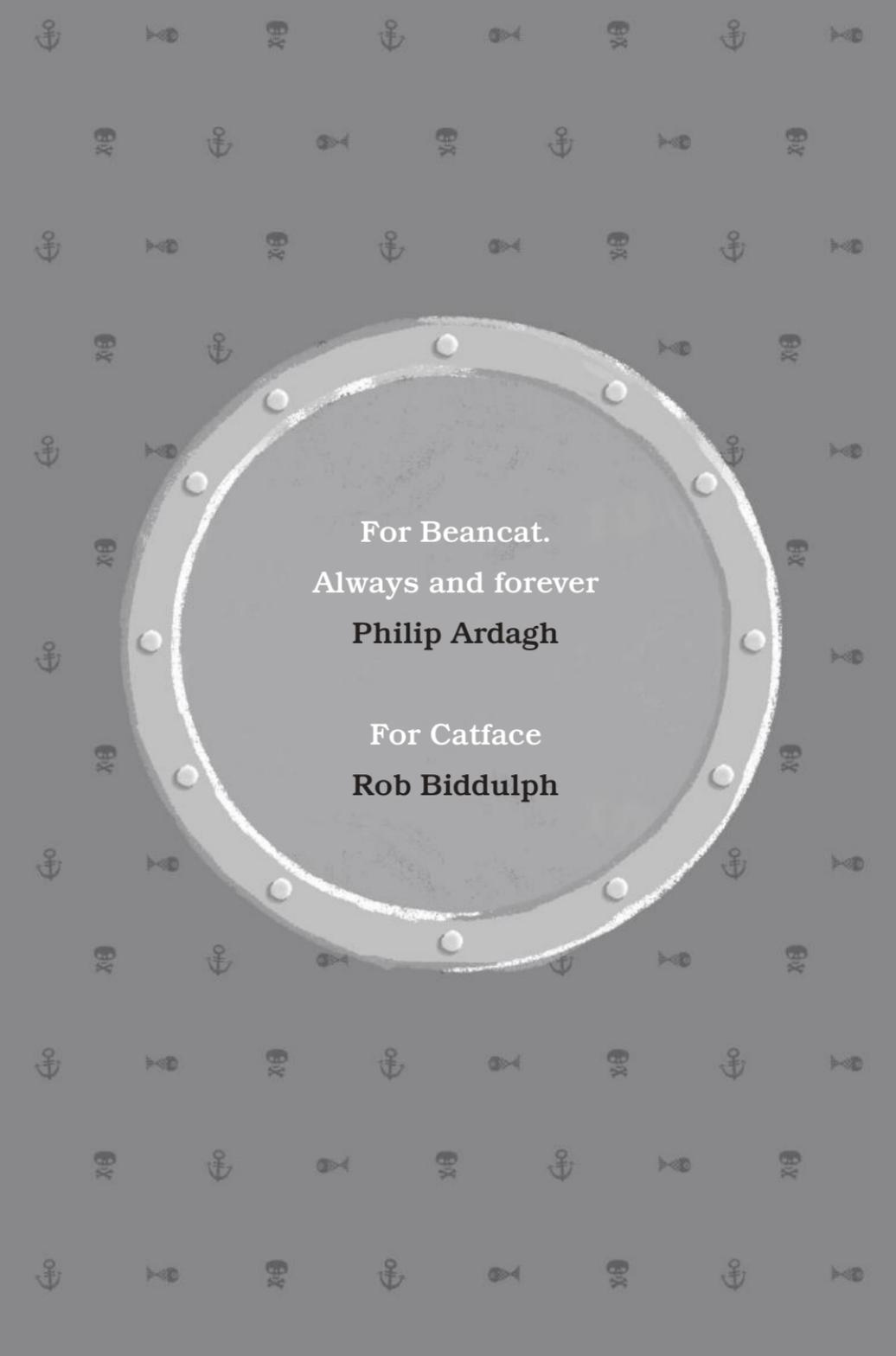
Simon & Schuster Australia, Sydney
Simon & Schuster India, New Delhi

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

PB ISBN 978-1-4711-8401-3
eBook ISBN 978-1-4711-8402-4

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product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to
actual people living or dead, events or locales is entirely coincidental.





For Beancat.
Always and forever

Philip Ardagh

For Catface
Rob Biddulph

Furry Purry Beancat found a patch of sunlight, followed her tail around in a circle three times, then settled herself down in a furry ball of purry cat. She yawned, lowered her head to the ground and pulled her beautiful fluffy tail in front of her little pink nose.

Where will I wake up next? she wondered, slowly closing her big green eyes and drifting off to sleep . . .





CHAPTER 1 'ALL ABOARD!'

Furry Purry Beancat opened her big green eyes to find that she was sitting on top of a pirate captain's hat. She peered down to discover that the pirate captain's hat was on top of a pirate captain's HEAD.

That makes sense, she thought, but what a strange place to—







Just then, a large cannonball went whistling past her beautiful ears.

Weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

‘PREPARE TO REPEL ALL BOARDERS!’ shouted the pirate captain, whatever that meant. His deep voice boomed up through the hat and through Beancat’s furry, purry body.

The captain reached up, scooped up Furry Purry Beancat and put her down on the ship’s deck behind a barrel marked **SHIP’S BISCUITS.**

‘You’ll be safe here, Beancat,’ he said.

Safer, thought Beancat, but probably not as safe as if I were curled up in a



cat basket in the corner of a creamery! I wonder where I am now?

This was all *very* exciting for her who, before falling asleep earlier that day, had been somewhere completely and utterly different. You see, Furry Purry Beancat isn't just your average cat. Oh no. Because Beancat often falls asleep in one place and time, and then wakes up somewhere completely new! Wherever an adventure needs her, that's where Beancat will be. And now it seemed adventure was calling on the high seas!

The pirate captain's hands were big and hairy but he'd been as gentle as gentle can be when he'd taken Furry Purry Beancat from the top of his head.



Now THERE'S a man who knows how to treat a cat, she thought. He must be my human, which means that I'm a pirate captain's cat! How excit-

Another cannonball went whizzing by – **Weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!** – narrowly missing the ship's wheel this time, and crashing into a railing at the far edge of the deck, causing it to splinter into the sea.

A pirate toppled after it, to cries of, 'MAN OVERBOARD!'

Now, Furry Purry Beancat certainly knew what THAT meant. She jumped up on to the barrel of ship's biscuits for a better view. She saw another ship alongside this one, and people leaping



across the gap between the two. Some of them were swinging across on ropes.

Wherever I am, it seems I've arrived in the middle of the action! thought Furry Purry Beancat.

The attackers were shouting at the top of their voices, trying to look and sound as frightening as possible. There was the **FLASH-BANG** of firing flintlock pistols, puffs of smoke and the endless **THUD** of boots and shoes and bare feet landing on the deck.

Furry Purry Beancat did a really big cat yawn, one where you could see the roof of her mouth, with teeth bared like a tiger: **YAAAAAAAAAAWN!**

It seemed to say, *If you're trying to*



impress me, you're not doing a very good job at it.

Furry Purry Beancat is VERY good at cat yawns.

The pirate captain charged away to face the invaders of his ship, cutlass in hand, his scarlet coat flowing behind him as he ran. The coat looked as if it must have been very fine once, but Beancat's beady cat eyes picked out the fact that the coat's gold brocade was frayed and that a good many buttons were missing.

The captain had a pair of flintlock pistols tucked into his belt, his jet-black hair in a ponytail, and a great big grin on his face when he turned to look back and saw Beancat on the barrel.





‘Defend the *Rapier* to the death!’ he commanded.

The Rapier must be the name of this ship, thought Beancat. *And what a great pirate captain my pirate captain makes!* She watched him join the battle that had begun on deck. Well, perhaps ‘battle’ wasn’t exactly right . . . There was plenty of fighting, but it didn’t seem to be very well organized at all!

There must be something I can do to help! Beancat thought. *This is my ship and he’s my captain!*

‘You’d better get down from there if you don’t want your ears blown off, Beancat!’ said a voice above the din of clashing swords, wild shouts and punches. The



voice was thick and rich, like treacle.

Furry Purry Beancat looked to her left, to her right, then up, then—

‘Down here, you numbskull!’ said the voice. ‘It’s me! Gordon.’

She looked down on to the deck. A beady-eyed rat was looking up at her. He had beautiful glossy dark-brown fur – not as beautiful as Beancat’s fur, of course – and a mischievous twinkle in his eyes.

Now there’s a surprise! thought Beancat. *A cat and a rat.* She jumped down next to Gordon. *And, by the way he’s talking, we must be friends!*

‘Let’s hide in here,’ said the rat, hopping into the middle of a large coil of rope.

‘We should still get a good view.’



Furry Purry Beancat jumped in next to him. 'What's going on?' she asked. She wanted to know who was attacking and why.

'Watcha mean, what's going on?' asked Gordon. 'We're under attack, Beancat!'

'Yes, but I was having a cat nap on the captain's hat,' Furry Purry Beancat explained, 'so I missed the start of it all.'

'Typical!' Gordon grinned, showing a neat row of ratty teeth.

'Dunno why Captain Topaz lets you get away with it!'



So, *his name is Topaz*, thought Furry Purry Beancat, storing away the information.

Both animals fell silent and peered over the top of the rope to watch the fighting.

Furry Purry Beancat tried to think about what she knew about pirates, apart from the skull-and-crossbones flag and treasure maps, of course. *They attack ships, take prisoners and steal chests of gold . . .*

‘Who are they, Gordon?’ asked Furry Purry Beancat.

Gordon gave her a funny look.

‘Why are you looking at me like that?’ she asked.

‘Are you havin’ another one of your



forget-it-all moments?’ asked Gordon. ‘Who do you think’s attacking us? The Archbishop of Canterbury or One-Eyed Bart?’

Furry Purry Beancat watched Captain Topaz clashing swords with one of the attackers. The man was wearing a similar coat to the captain’s but it was black rather than scarlet. He had a patch over where his left eye would be . . . ‘One-Eyed Bart!’ she cried.

‘Correct!’ said Gordon. ‘Give the cat a fish!’

Furry Purry Beancat could tell that both Bart and Captain Topaz were very good swordsmen. The clanking of cutlass against cutlass was loud and went on for a



long time. Meanwhile, the other members of the two pirate crews were fighting each other every which way!

Furry Purry Beancat watched pirates:

-  wrestling
-  punching
-  chasing each other with clubs
-  throwing anything and everything they could find
-  running after each other up and down the rigging

This looked truly DANGEROUS!

She could just make out a pirate, up in the crow's nest at the very top of the tallest mast, wearing a red bandanna with



white spots on his head.

He was dropping coconuts on One-Eyed Bart's men and he appeared to have a good supply!

The loud **TOCK!**s of coconuts coming into contact with human heads, followed by the cries from the poor pirates, were enough to make Furry Purry Beancat swivel her ears in the opposite direction!

'What say we go somewhere quieter?' said Gordon.

'And safer,' said Furry Purry Beancat. 'Good idea!'

Gordon didn't need asking twice. He dashed off. As she followed, Beancat noticed that the end of the rat's tail was missing from what looked like an old



injury, long healed.

They darted past battling pirates including the two ships' cooks: one armed with a metal ladle and the other a huge wooden spoon!

Furry Purry Beancat had spotted them earlier. They'd been using the kitchen utensils like swords, but now they'd switched to hitting each other over the head with them instead.

CLUNK! 'Ouch!'

THWACK! 'Ooof!'

Gordon suddenly took a flying jump and disappeared down an open hatch.

Without a second thought, Furry Purry Beancat followed him, leaping into the depths of the ship. As she fell through





the air, she turned over a few times – rather gracefully, in fact – her beautiful fur all fluffed up. She ended with her party trick of turning upright just in time so she hit the ground – well, *deck* in this case – paws-first.

Furry Purry Beancat felt good inside, proud of her balletic manoeuvres!

She looked around the lower deck. Everything seemed much more peaceful here. Empty hammocks swung gently with the movement of the water. They were obviously sailing on a calm sea; quite a contrast to all the clattering and banging and shouting going on above deck.

‘Oh, there you are, Gordon!’ said a relieved rat in a shaky voice, peering out



from under a piece of sacking in a shadowy corner. 'I was beginning to get worried.'

'You worry about EVERYTHING, Ethel,' said Gordon. 'It's just not rat-like!'

As Ethel stepped into the light, Furry Purry Beancat saw that she looked very like Gordon – the same beautiful, brown fur – except she was a little smaller and had a full-length tail. 'Hello, FPBC!' she said.

'Hi, Ethel,' said Furry Purry Beancat, having heard her name from Gordon. She tried to sound as casual and *of-course-I-know-who-you-are* as possible.

It was second nature for her to pretend to be at home wherever she awoke!



‘Where are the kids?’ Gordon asked Ethel, looking around, his eyes adjusting to the darker corners after the bright sunshine up above.

‘I thought we should take advantage of the distraction on deck to search the kitchen for food,’ said Ethel proudly. ‘I’ve sent all eight of them there.’

‘Alone?’ Gordon gasped.

‘No, not alone!’ said Ethel. ‘Of course not! I sent them with Uncle Morris.’

Gordon’s eyes widened. ‘You put your bruvver, Morris, in charge of the kids? He couldn’t k—’

Just then, a man came falling through the open hatch in the ceiling – which was the floor of the deck above – and landed



on the floor, far less gracefully than Gordon or Furry Purry Beancat.

THUD!

‘Ooof!’ he groaned. ‘Aaargh.’ Next, he rubbed the back of his head. ‘Ouch!’ Then he struggled to his feet.

‘I’ll get you, you—!’ The pirate proceeded to say a VERY rude word (which made Ethel blush beneath her fur) as he shook his fist up at the open hatch to the person, out of Beancat’s view, who’d knocked him down there. He hobbled over to the wooden steps leading up and out of the hatch that Beancat and Gordon had jumped through – more ladder than staircase – and made his way back up to the main deck.



'Let's hope Morris is in one of his more sensible moods,' said Gordon, under his breath. 'He'll need his wits about him in this free-for-all.'

Suddenly, there was a loud **BOOM** from above.

Furry Purry Beancat began cleaning the white of her front paws (as cats often do after a bit of a shock). Because she has such long fur, she had to turn her head to one side and then turn it back again with her tongue out to get in a really good, long lick. Furry Purry Beancat is particularly proud of her four white paws.

Gordon and Ethel must be married, she thought as she washed. *With LOTS of children.*



‘Do you think this is serious?’ asked Ethel. Taking Beancat’s lead, she began washing her nose and whiskers with her tiny front paws. Furry Purry Beancat suspected that this too was more of a worry-wash than a proper clean. After all, there was plenty to worry about!

There was a distant explosion and the ship tremored.

‘What do you reckon, Beancat?’ Gordon asked, turning to her.

Furry Purry Beancat stopped cleaning mid-lick and put her paw back on the lower-deck floor. ‘Captain Topaz has been the captain of this ship for as long as I can remember,’ she said, which was true. Even if that ‘for as long as’ was only since waking



up on his head! 'And I don't think he'll be giving up being captain any time soon.'

'That's the spirit!' said Gordon.

'But I think it's important we do all WE can to help him and the crew,' she added. 'This ship is our home too!'

In the background, behind their conversation, was the constant sound of fighting from up above.

THUNK!

BING!

BISH!

BASH!

BOSH!

Just then a boy, wearing little more



than rags, ran down the wooden steps in bare feet. He was streaked in dirt all over; so much so that it was impossible to tell what colour his hair actually was underneath it all.

Neither nervous Ethel nor Gordon moved.

This surprised Furry Purry Beancat (though she was careful not to show it). Surely ship's rats weren't popular with the sailors? Shouldn't they hide. . . and fast?



Roald Dahl-Funny-Prize-winning author **PHILIP ARDAGH** has been published for around thirty years, written more than 100 titles and been translated into forty languages. Books range from his bestselling and international award-winning *Eddie Dickens adventures* — celebrating twenty years in 2020 — to his prize-winning *Grubtown Tales*, the *Grunt* series, illustrated by Axel Scheffler, and *High in the Clouds*, a collaboration with Sir Paul McCartney, currently being developed as a film by Netflix.



ROB BIDDULPH is a bestselling and multi award-winning author/illustrator and the official World Book Day Illustrator for 2020. His first picture book, *Blown Away*, won the Waterstones Children's Book Prize in 2015. His second book, *GRRRRR!* was nominated for the CILIP Greenaway Medal and the IBW Children's Picture Book of the Year in 2016.

DON'T MISS ALL THE ADVENTURES OF ...

FURRY PURRY BEANCAT



THE NINE LIVES OF
FURRY PURRY
BEANCAT



PHILIP ARDAGH

Illustrated by
Rob Biddulph

**COMING
SOON!**

THE REAL FURRY PURRY BEANCAT

PHILIP ARDAGH didn't have a pet as a child, except when looking after the class tadpole one weekend. He was in his twenties when he got his very first pet, a long-haired tabby-and-white cat called Beany. 'I loved her to bits!' he said. 'She was very furry and very purry!' Beany lived into her eighteenth year and, in creaky old age, sat with Philip in his study as he wrote. One day, it occurred to him that – if he slightly skewed the meaning of a cat having nine lives – she could have

eight other exciting lives . . . and the idea of

**THE NINE LIVES OF
PURRY FURRY BEANCAT**

was born.

