



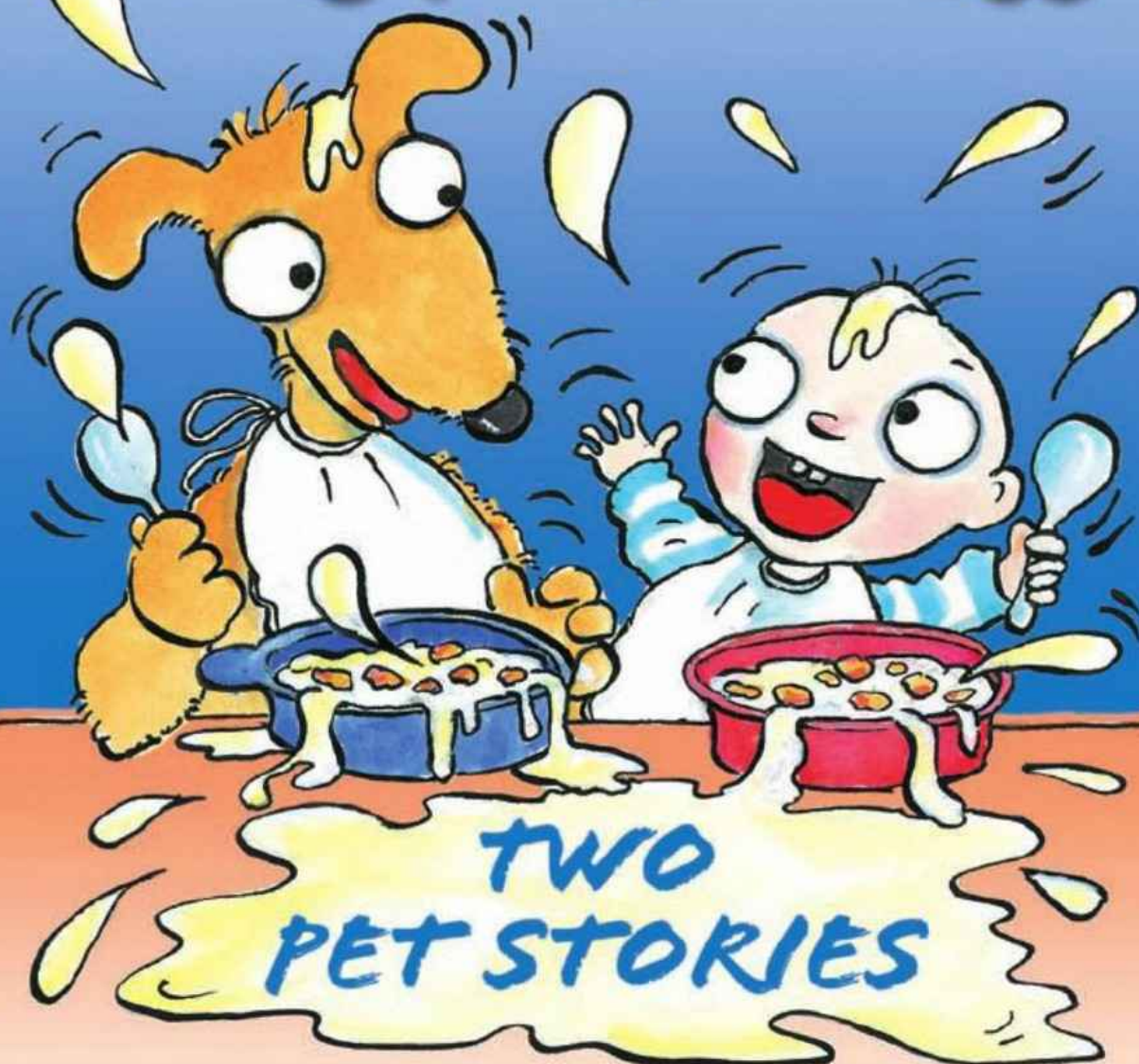
Oxford  
Reading  
Tree

ALL  
STARS

# TOFFEE

and

# Marmalade



Kes Gray    Linda Jennings

# TOFFEE and Marmalade

TWO PET STORIES

*Kes Gray*  
*Linda Jennings*



Illustrated by  
*Dee Shulman*

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.  
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,  
and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

Auckland Bangkok Buenos Aires Cape Town Chennai  
Dar es Salaam Delhi Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi Kolkata  
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai Nairobi  
São Paulo Shanghai Singapore Taipei Tokyo Toronto

with an associated company in Berlin

Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press  
in the UK and in certain other countries

Crunch Time for Toffee © Kes Gray 2002

A Cat too Many © Linda Jennings

The moral rights of the author have been asserted  
Database right Oxford University Press (maker)

First published 2002

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,  
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,  
without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press,  
or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate  
reprographics rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction  
outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department,  
Oxford University Press, at the address above

You must not circulate this book in any other binding or cover  
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

ISBN 0 19 919495 5

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Guided Reading Pack (6 of the same title): ISBN 0 19 919574 9

Mixed Pack (1 of 6 different titles): ISBN 0 19 919499 8

Class Pack (6 copies of 6 titles): ISBN 0 19 919500 5

Printed in Hong Kong

# Contents

## **Crunch Time for Toffee** 4

*Kes Gray*

Chapter 1 5

Chapter 2 22

## **A Cat too Many** 34

*Linda Jennings*

Chapter 1 35

Chapter 2 50

About the authors 64



# A Cat Too Many

*Linda Jennings*





## Chapter 1

“There’s only one not taken,” said Mrs Tidy. “That one.”

The tabby kitten was tiny, even for two weeks. A scrap of a thing, with a white face.

“Can I pick it up?” asked Nikky.

“Better not,” said Mrs Tidy. “It’s too small yet.”

Mrs Tidy had seven cats, as well as the mother cat and her four kittens. The room smelt of cats and fish, and Nikky's mother wrinkled her nose.

"Perhaps we'll leave it till she's six weeks old. Then we'll come to collect her — " she began, but Nikky tugged at her sleeve.

"No, Mum," she pleaded.



Nikky didn't care about Mrs Tidy's room smelling of cats and fish. She was crazy about cats.

“I wish we had a house like Mrs Tidy’s,” she said, as they walked home.



“One’s quite enough,” said Mum.  
“You’ll have to look after it, you know.”

“Of course I will,” said Nikky. “I know all about worming and grooming, and litter trays and —”

“OK,” said Mum, laughing. “I believe you.”



They reached their front door. They lived above Jim Mackenzie's corner shop. There was a ginger cat living among the wooden crates on the pavement.



Jim Mackenzie had made a bed for it in a crate marked *Best Apples*. It wasn't his cat, he explained, but it kept the mice away.

Nikky stooped down to look inside the crate and two large, green eyes stared out at her.

When she had first seen him, the cat had spat at her. Now he knew her, and a purr rumbled in his throat.



Nikky knew better than to stroke him, though. Mum had warned her that stray cats had often been badly treated. They might lash out.

“Poor thing,” said Nikky. “I wonder if he’s got enough to eat?”

“I expect so,” said Mum, opening the door. Given half a chance, she knew that Nikky would bring him tins of cat food every day.

Next day, Nikky went with Mum to buy a collar for her new kitten with her pocket money. When they got back, Nikky looked into the crate as usual. The ginger cat stared out at her, green eyes squinting, and spat.



“That’s funny, Mum,” said Nikky. “He hasn’t done that for ages.”

“Got out of his crate the wrong side, I expect,” said Mum.

“Cat’s been like that all morning,” said Jim Mackenzie. “It won’t let me near it.”

Just then, Nikky saw bloodstained paw marks, on the pavement.



“Mum,” she shouted. “I think the cat’s been hurt.”

Gently, Jim pulled the crate towards him. The cat whimpered with pain.

“Car accident, I reckon,” said Jim. “But I’m too busy to take it to the vet. It’s not really mine, anyway.”

Nikky stared at the shopkeeper in horror.



Jim Mackenzie didn’t seem to care. “It’ll be OK. These old strays are tough,” he said.

“Come on, Nikky,” said Mum. “Jim’s right. We can’t do anything.”

Nobody cares about a poor old cat, without a home, thought Nikky. As Mum pulled her unwillingly inside, she looked back. She thought she saw a ginger head poking out from the crate, but she couldn't really see through her tears.



Nikky worried about the cat all day. Mum was worried too, and she told Dad about it. She explained how difficult it would be to catch the cat and take him to the vet.

“You’re right, love,” said Dad. “He’d probably struggle, and you’d do more harm than good. I expect Jim will ask the RSPCA to put him down.”

“Put him down?” Nikky stared at Dad in horror. She knew Mum and Dad weren’t crazy about animals. But how could they let the poor cat be killed? She ran into her bedroom, slamming the door.



Then she made up her mind. She would smuggle the cat upstairs to her bedroom. She would look after him, until he was better.

Nikky took her new cat basket from the cupboard. She knew Mum would be cross. But this was an emergency! Very quietly, she slipped down the stairs.

The cat was still there.

His bad leg looked all red and bloody, and flies were buzzing round it. Nikky felt rather sick.



“Come on, Puss,” she said quietly, opening the basket.



“Did your Mum send you down, then?” asked Jim Mackenzie, coming over to her.

“Er, no,” said Nikky uncomfortably. She couldn’t tell him a lie.



“I’d like to know how,” said Jim. “Anyway, I’ve already phoned the RSPCA. They’re going to take him away.”

Just as Mum and Dad said!

Nikky tipped the crate forward so that the cat would slide out into the cat basket. But before she could do anything, he scrambled out, dragging his wounded leg behind him.



Then he jumped over the wall and into one of the gardens. It must have hurt him terribly.

“Nikky!” Mum came down the stairs. She had seen Nikky talking to Jim. She grabbed her angrily by the arm.

“What do you think you’re doing?”

“The cat — ” began Nikky, and Mum suddenly shouted at her.

“The cat - that’s all you think about, isn’t it? Well, let me tell you, if there’s any more of this nonsense, you won’t even have a kitten!”

Afterwards, Mum was a bit sorry. She sat Nikky down with a drink, and talked to her.



“You don’t mean it about the kitten, do you?” asked Nikky. She felt like crying.

“Of course not - but calm down, will you? Try to think of something else but that old cat and the kitten.”

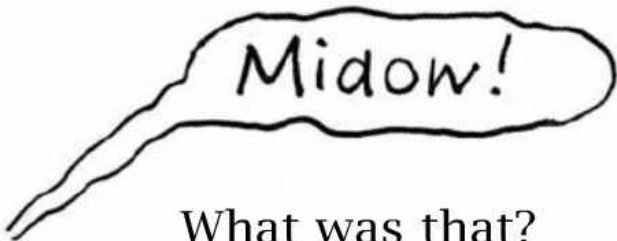
That night, Nikky wasn't thinking of her kitten.

She was wondering what would happen if the ginger cat turned up again. How could she stop Jim Mackenzie getting him put down?



## Chapter Two

Outside, it had begun to rain. She hoped the cat had found shelter. She hoped that his leg wasn't any worse.



Midow!

What was that?

Nikky's heart began to thump. She opened the window, straining to see outside.



And there it was – a cat with a bad leg, crawling out from the shadows.

Nikky pulled on her dressing gown and dashed out of her bedroom.



“Nikky, for goodness sake —” began Mum.

“Wait,” said Dad. “She may be right. I thought I heard a cat crying. I’ll go out and see.”

Dad grabbed a torch and hurried downstairs. He opened the back door.

“Well, I never!” he said quietly to Nikky, who had followed behind him. “Just look at this!”

The ginger cat was crouched by the door. He drew back as Dad shone the torch, but he did not run away.



“Now what?” said Mum, looking over Dad’s shoulder. “You’d better get the RSPCA, Mike. We can’t look after it.”

“Why not?” Nikky almost shouted.  
“We can’t let them take him away – they might put him down – you said so.”

“The RSPCA care about animals,” said Dad. “They would only do what was best for him.”



The cat suddenly slid behind them, crawled upstairs, through the open door, and into the kitchen. He crouched in the corner beside the fridge.

“I’ll ring them now – there must be an emergency service,” said Dad.



Nikky grabbed hold of his arm. “You *can’t* send him away, Dad. He’s come to us. He thinks we’ll look after him.”



“Don’t be silly, Nikky, he’s only a cat – how can he possibly think anything?”

Nikky crouched down beside the cat, and held out her hand. He snuffled at it with his damp, pink nose. Then he began to purr.

“Dad, look, he trusts me! Don’t phone the RSPCA, please.”

But Dad was already dialling.

“Hello?” he said.



Nikky gave one big, happy sigh. Dad hadn’t phoned the RSPCA. Mr Morgan was the vet!

The vet told Dad to keep the cat warm and dry and to give him fresh water and something to eat.

Mum sighed heavily, as she opened a tin of salmon.

“I hope you know what you’re doing,” she said.



Nikky watched the cat, as he crawled painfully from the corner and began to nibble at the salmon. He ate daintily, not as if he were hungry at all. He left half of it.

“That’s cats for you,” said Dad. “Best red salmon, and it turns up its nose.”

“It’s the shock,” said Nikky, who had read all about cats.



“I bet not – but that’s enough for tonight, Nikky. Off to bed!” said Dad.

Nikky lay for ages thinking about the ginger cat. How funny that he knew she lived upstairs! But what now?

She knew Mum wouldn’t change her mind. She didn’t like cats much, and they made her sneeze.

At last Nikky fell asleep to the sound of the rain beating against the windowpane.

Next morning, the cat let Dad pick him up and put him in the cat basket.

“He’s been someone’s pet at some time,” said Dad. “You can see that.”

“He’s a strong cat,” said Mr Morgan, when he examined him.



The vet cleaned the wound on the leg, and gave him an injection.

“It’s a nasty wound, but there are no bones broken,” he said, cheerfully.

“Bring him back in four days’ time.”

Mum looked at the notices on the vet's board. There were lots of people needing cats and kittens.



"Good!" she said. "Once his leg's healed, we can put a notice up."

Day by day, the cat's leg grew better. He had a loud, deep purr, and he wound himself round Nikky's legs, and round her heart. She decided to call him Marmalade.

Sometimes, Marmalade would miaow softly at Nikky's bedroom door. And in the morning, Mum would find him curled up on Nikky's duvet.

"I guess the next visit to Mr Morgan will be the last," said Mum. "I'll put a notice on his board."

When no one had replied to the advert within a week, Mum sighed.



Nikky picked up Marmalade and cuddled him. “He’s not ugly! He’s beautiful,” she said. “Anyway, I don’t want him to go.”

“Nikky,” warned Mum. “You know what we said. You can’t have a kitten *and* Marmalade.”



Nikky knew – and she had a big decision to make.

She went to see her kitten several times. The kitten was still very small, and wobbled round the room after her big, black brother. She had huge eyes and a heart-shaped face. Nikky loved her – but the kitten needed her big brother, and Marmalade needed Nikky.



It was Mrs Tidy who helped Nikky decide.

“The people who want the black kitten would like the tabby one, too,” she told Nikky. “I said I didn’t think you’d give her up, but —”

Nikky picked up her kitten for the last time, and snuggled it against her neck.

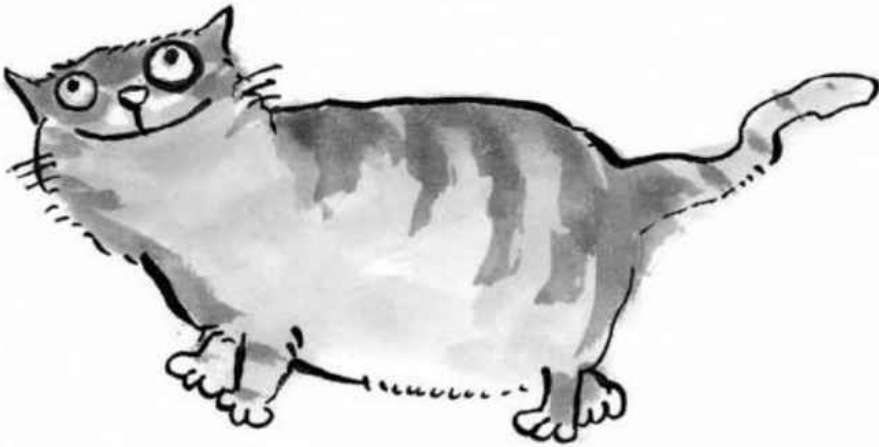


It licked her with a tiny, pink tongue.

“It’s all right,” she whispered. “They can have her – it will be best, really, seeing she’s so small.”

She followed Mum out, without looking back. On the way home, Mum bought a new blue collar. The one they’d bought for the kitten would be too small for Marmalade’s big neck.

Marmalade was sitting on the doorstep outside the flat, waiting for them. And Nikky could swear there was a smile on his big, square face as he followed them upstairs for his tea.





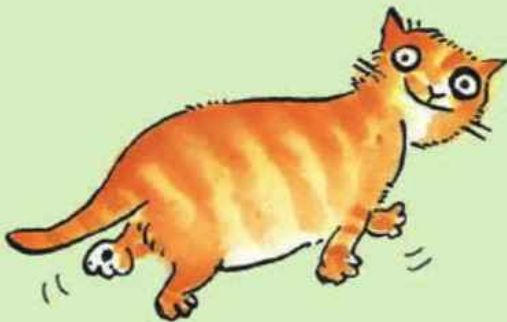
Oxford  
Reading  
Tree

ALL  
STARS

# TOFFEE and Marmalade

## TWO PET STORIES

Toffee the dog is in big trouble.  
Mum and Dad think she's eaten a whole  
bag of Doggybix. And that's  
only the beginning...



Nikky is mad about cats.  
She wants her own kitten. But who will  
help Marmalade, the old ginger stray?

Book Band 11 Lime

Orders and enquiries to  
Customer Services: 01536 452610  
For further information, phone the  
Oxford Literacy Care-line: 01865 353881

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

[www.OxfordPrimary.co.uk](http://www.OxfordPrimary.co.uk)

All Stars

★ Pack 3 ★

ISBN 978-0-19-915204-9



9 780199 152049