

WARRIORS

GRAPHIC NOVEL

THE RISE
OF SCOURGE



ERIN HUNTER

#1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR

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WARRIORS

THE RISE OF
SCOURGE

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THE RISE OF SCOURGE

CREATED BY
ERIN HUNTER

WRITTEN BY
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ART BY
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COLORS BY
DANIELLE WEIRES



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FIRST EDITION

Dear readers,

Scourge, leader of BloodClan, is the closest thing to evil we will ever encounter in the forest.

When I first created him, I must confess I didn't think about his past. I just needed a truly terrifying cat—one who didn't seem physically threatening at first, but who had a hunger for violence and bloodshed that far exceeded anything the Clan cats had seen before. If ever a character were purely bad, Scourge is it. He certainly made a powerful enemy for Firestar, leader of ThunderClan, when Scourge challenged all four Clans to fight for control of the forest.

But when I stopped to consider what might have shaped his character, I realized that this was a story that could be very interesting to explore. A manga novel seemed like the perfect opportunity to go back to Scourge's origins and track his path from cute fluffy kit (because ALL kits are cute and fluffy, right?) to evil tyrant. I didn't want to make excuses for his behavior because no amount of misfortune or bullying could justify that sort of savagery; instead, I was curious to see how another smart, ambitious, and courageous young cat (is anyone else thinking FIRESTAR?) could end up following a much darker, blood-soaked path.

So walk in Scourge's pawsteps—if you dare—and see if you still judge him as harshly by the end. Every cat deserves to have his story told, and this is Scourge's hour.

**Best wishes always,
Erin Hunter**

WARRIORS

THE RISE OF
SCOURGE







THAT'S US.

MY BROTHER SOCKS...

...MY SISTER RUBY...

...AND ME.

MAMA CALLS ME TINY.



AND THAT'S MAMA.
HER NAME'S QUINCE.

READY
OR NOT...

...HERE I COME!

THMP

FOUND YOU!

MOWFF

HA
HA
HA!

RUBY! SOCKS!
COME HERE AT
ONCE.



YES, MAMA?



YOU SHOULDN'T
PLAY SO ROUGHLY
WITH YOUR BROTHER!
YOU KNOW BETTER
THAN THAT.

I HATE BEING SMALL.

BUT MAMA, HE'S
TOO WEAK, AND HE
MEWLS TOO MUCH. HE
ALWAYS GIVES AWAY
WHERE HE IS!



IT'S NO FUN
TO PLAY WITH
HIM.

*ALL I WANT IS FOR
MY BROTHER AND SISTER
TO LIKE ME.*

HE'S YOUR BROTHER,
RUBY, AND YOU SHOULD TREAT
HIM BETTER. I DON'T WANT TO
SEE ROUGHHOUSING LIKE
THAT AGAIN.



*I'D GROW IF
I COULD.*



WE'RE ALL PRETTY EXCITED WHEN
MAMA SAYS WE'RE GOING OUTSIDE.



WE'VE NEVER BEEN
OUTSIDE BEFORE.



THE NICE HOUSEFOLK
WHO GIVE US FOOD PUT
SOMETHING AROUND
OUR NECKS.



I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS,
BUT IT MAKES A LITTLE
TINKLY SOUND. I LIKE IT!

WE SEE ALL KINDS OF
THINGS WE'VE NEVER
SEEN BEFORE.

PLUS I REALIZE...

...THERE'S EVEN MORE
TO SEE, ON THE OTHER SIDE
OF THIS FENCE!

I THINK I KNOW WHAT THIS IS. I THINK I'VE HEARD
MAMA TALK ABOUT IT A COUPLE OF TIMES.

I THINK IT'S
THE FOREST.

TINY! TINY,
COME HERE!

HEY! SOCKS AND RUBY ARE
PLAYING A NEW GAME!

WHY DON'T THEY GRAB IT?
WHY'RE THEY JUST BATTING
AT IT LIKE THAT?

I DON'T THINK THEY'RE
DOING IT RIGHT.



CAN I PLAY?

...I GUESS.



HEY!

I GOT IT!
I GOT IT!



GIVE ME
THAT.

HUH?

YOU'RE NO FUN.
YOU DON'T PLAY
RIGHT.



...BUT I
GOT IT!



MAMA?

YES, TINY?



DO YOU KNOW ABOUT...

...ABOUT THE FOREST?


A LITTLE BIT.



IT DIDN'T SCARE YOUR FATHER AS MUCH AS IT DID ME... HE EXPLORED THERE A COUPLE OF TIMES AND TOLD ME ABOUT IT.

IT'S A DARK, SHADOWY, DANGEROUS PLACE... AND THE WILD FOREST CATS WHO LIVE THERE ARE QUICK AND FEROCIOUS.





THEY HAVE TO
FIGHT EVERY DAY
TO SURVIVE.


THEY FACE
AWFUL MONSTERS
AND ALL KINDS OF
BEASTS...

AH-HA!

EEEEP!



WILL WE EVER
GO TO THE FOREST,
MAMA?



...AND ONLY THE
STRONGEST WARRIORS
MAKE IT THROUGH.





WE GO OUT INTO THE GARDEN
A FEW MORE TIMES...

...BUT SOCKS AND RUBY
DON'T LET ME PLAY WITH
THEM ANYMORE.

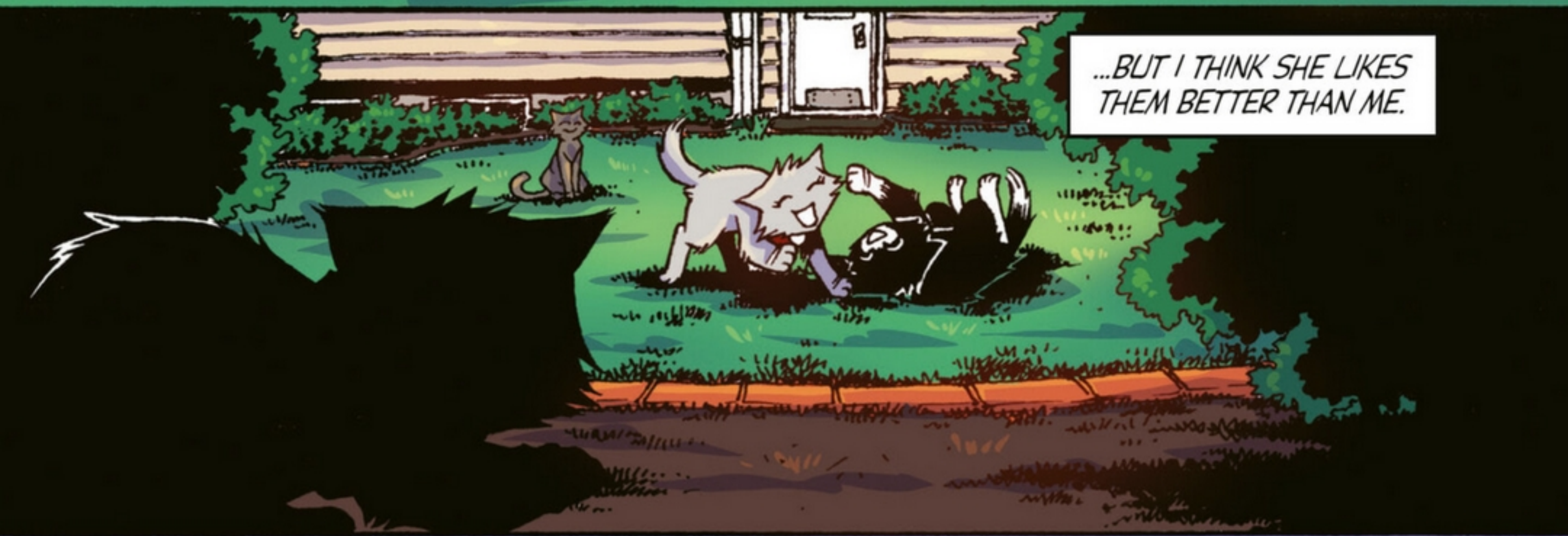
MAMA DOESN'T SAY IT...



GOOD! VERY
GOOD! PUT YOUR
WHOLE BODY
INTO THE SWIPE,
SOCKS!

RUBY, DON'T
FORGET YOUR
BACK CLAWS!

...BUT I THINK SHE LIKES
THEM BETTER THAN ME.





SOCKS? RUBY...?

WILL YOU
SHOW ME HOW TO
FIGHT, TOO?



FORGET IT, RUNT!

HA HA HA!
CAN'T CATCH
US!



COME ON,
GUYS...I JUST WANT
TO PLAY...

GUYS?
...WHERE'D YOU
GO?



SOCKS! RUBY!
YOU TWO COME OUT
OF THERE THIS
INSTANT!



I THOUGHT I TOLD
YOU ABOUT HOW TO TREAT
YOUR BROTHER!

BUT MOM, HE'S
SUCH A LITTLE
PIPSQUEAK!

MAMA SAYS SOMETHING
ELSE TO THEM, BUT I DON'T
LISTEN. IT'S NOT MY FAULT
I'M SO LITTLE!

THAT'S ALL THEY CARE
ABOUT, THOUGH. BEING BIG
AND STRONG IS ALL THAT
MATTERS.

WE DON'T
LIKE HIM!



I'LL SHOW THEM.

I'LL WAIT UNTIL
THEY'RE TAKING A
NAP...



...AND THEN I'LL SHOW THEM
WHO'S BIG AND STRONG!



OWEE



OH...

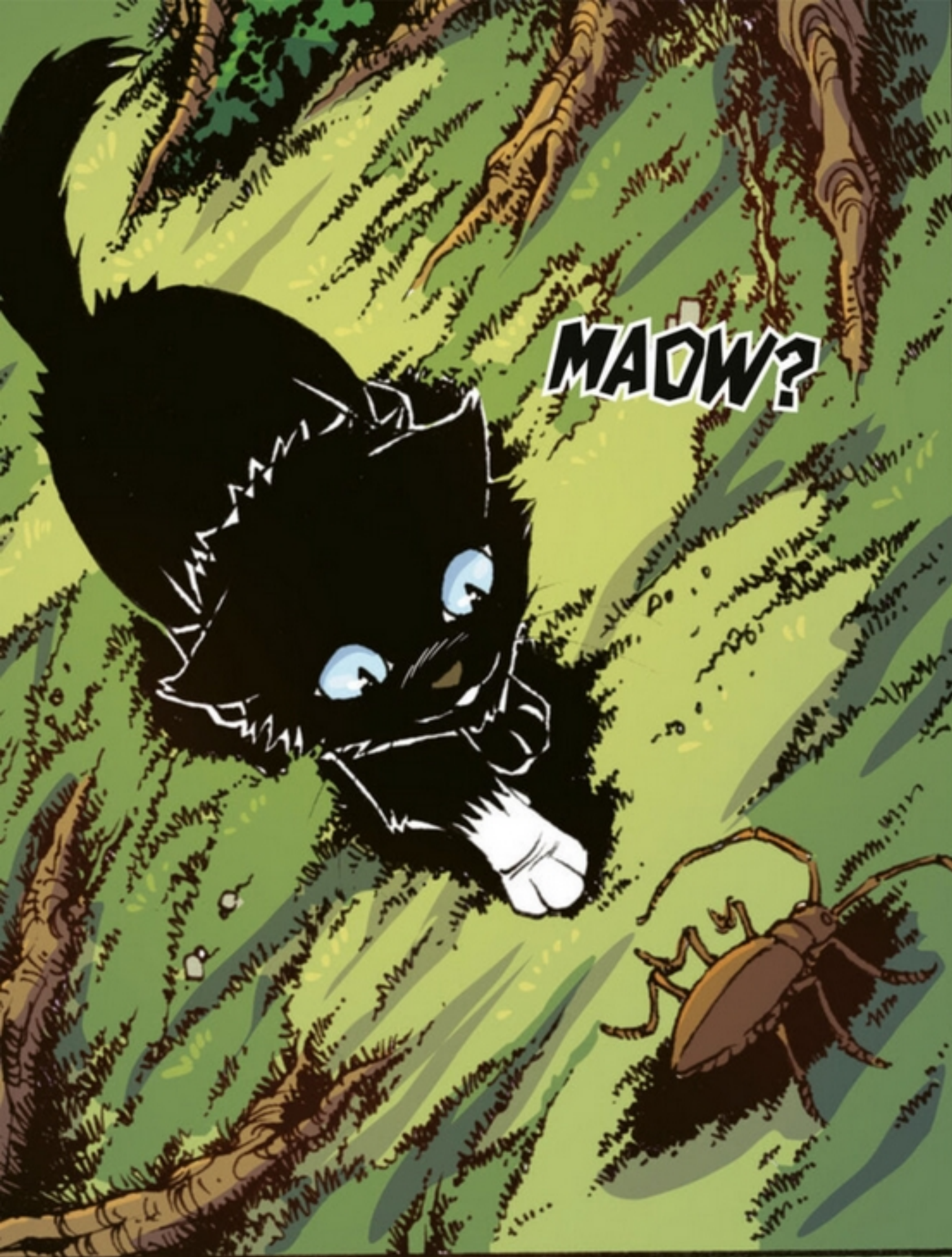


OH, WOW...

THE TREES ARE BIGGER THAN
I THOUGHT. EVERYTHING IS
BIGGER THAN I THOUGHT.



BUT I'M NOT SCARED. I'M NOT.
'CAUSE I'M STRONG.



WOW...WOW!

MROW?

THIS IS THE BIGGEST, COOLEST
THING I'VE EVER SEEN!

RRF...

MRRF...

I MADE IT!
I MADE IT! I—



FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP

CAAW

FLUTTER
FLUTTER


I DID IT! I DIDN'T RUN, OR
CRY, OR ANYTHING! I DID IT!

I'M STRONG!

TINY! TIIINY!
WHERE ARE YOU?

TIIINY!





AH HA HA HA HA...
CLIMBED A TOWER,
HE SAYS...

AND DON'T FORGET THE GIANT
BIRD! HEE HEE HEE...YOU'RE TOO
LITTLE TO HAVE BIG ADVENTURES
LIKE THAT, TINY!


IT'S TRUE! IT IS! PLUS,
I, I BUILT A HOUSE OUT OF
TWIGS AND LEAVES, AND I
LIVED IN IT!

AND THEN I
CAUGHT A FOX,
AND I ATE IT!

WELL, I THINK
YOU'RE A VERY BRAVE
LITTLE CAT.

WE KNOW
YOU'RE LYING,
TINY.

YEAH. YOU'RE
JUST A LITTLE
LIAR.



SOCKS, RUBY,
BE QUIET. I NEED TO
TALK TO YOU.

MAMA SAID SHE
THOUGHT I WAS
BRAVE...

...BUT I DON'T THINK
SHE BELIEVED ME
AT ALL.

SOON YOU'LL BE GOING TO
YOUR NEW HOME. IF YOU LEARN
TO BEHAVE YOURSELVES.

NOBODY HERE BELIEVES ME.
NOBODY HERE EVEN LIKES ME.

WE MIGHT EVEN
SEE EACH OTHER IF
YOU DON'T LIVE TOO
FAR AWAY.

WELL, I'LL SHOW THEM.
WHEN I GET BIG ENOUGH...

AWWW... MAMA,
I DON'T WANT TO
LEAVE! DO I HAVE
TO GO?

YES, DEAR. SOON
YOU'LL HAVE YOUR OWN
HOUSEFOLK TO TAKE CARE OF...
AND A BRAND-NEW BACKYARD TO
PLAY IN.

...THEY'LL ALL SEE.



A COUPLE OF DAYS
LATER WE HEAR STRANGE
VOICES OUTSIDE...



AW, LOOK
AT THE LITTLE
KITTIES!



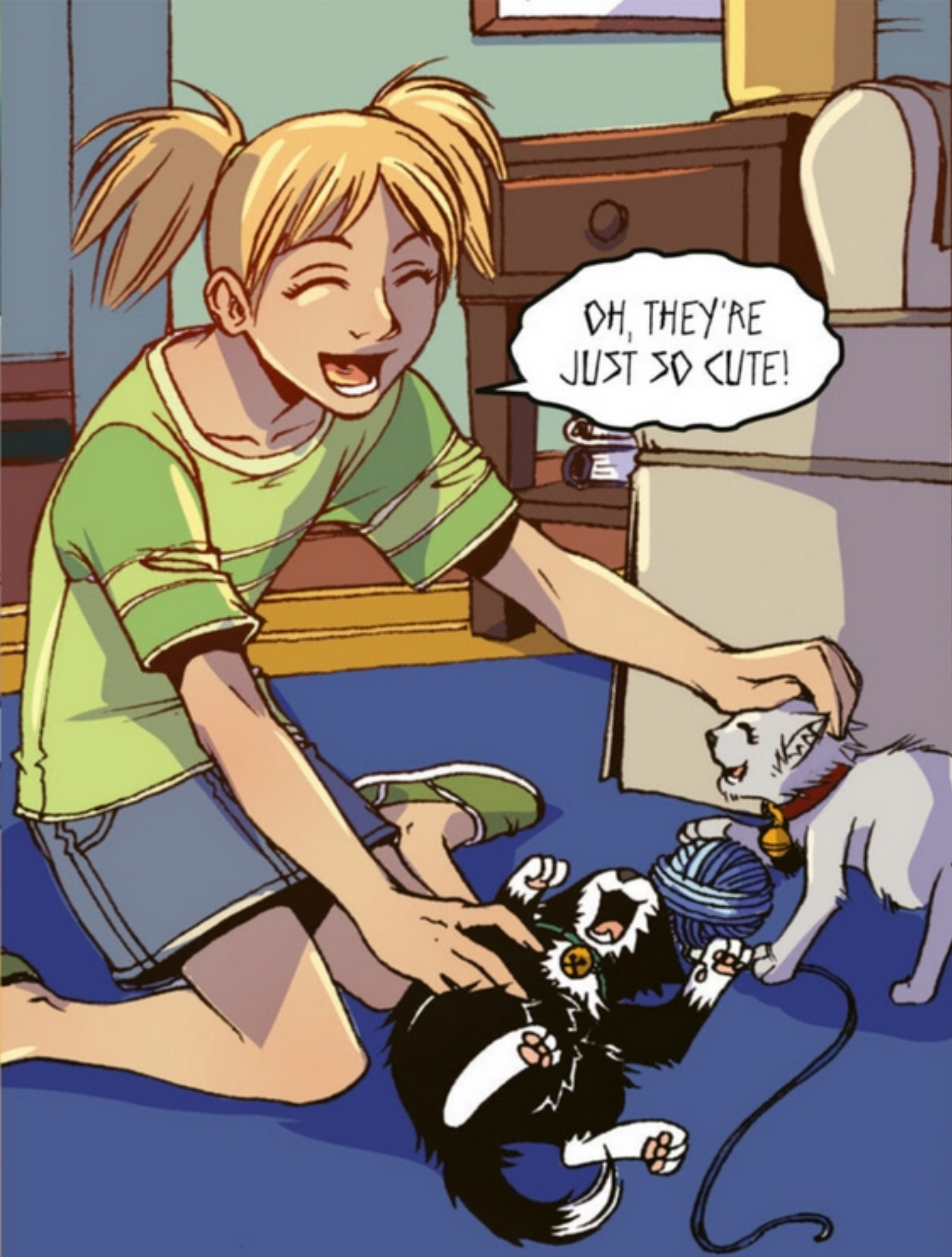
HERE—PLAY WITH
THIS BALL. AND ACT
ADORABLE...!

SOCKS AND RUBY DON'T FOOL
ME. THEY'RE JUST PRETENDING.



...AND THE NEW HOUSEFOLK MAMA
WAS TALKING ABOUT COME IN.





WELL, I DON'T
WANT TO PRETEND.

AND I DON'T WANT TO GET
ANYWHERE NEAR SOCKS OR RUBY.



THE HOUSEFOLK
CLUB WANTS US.
NOT YOU.

AND YOU KNOW
WHAT HAPPENS TO UN-
WANTED KITTENS?



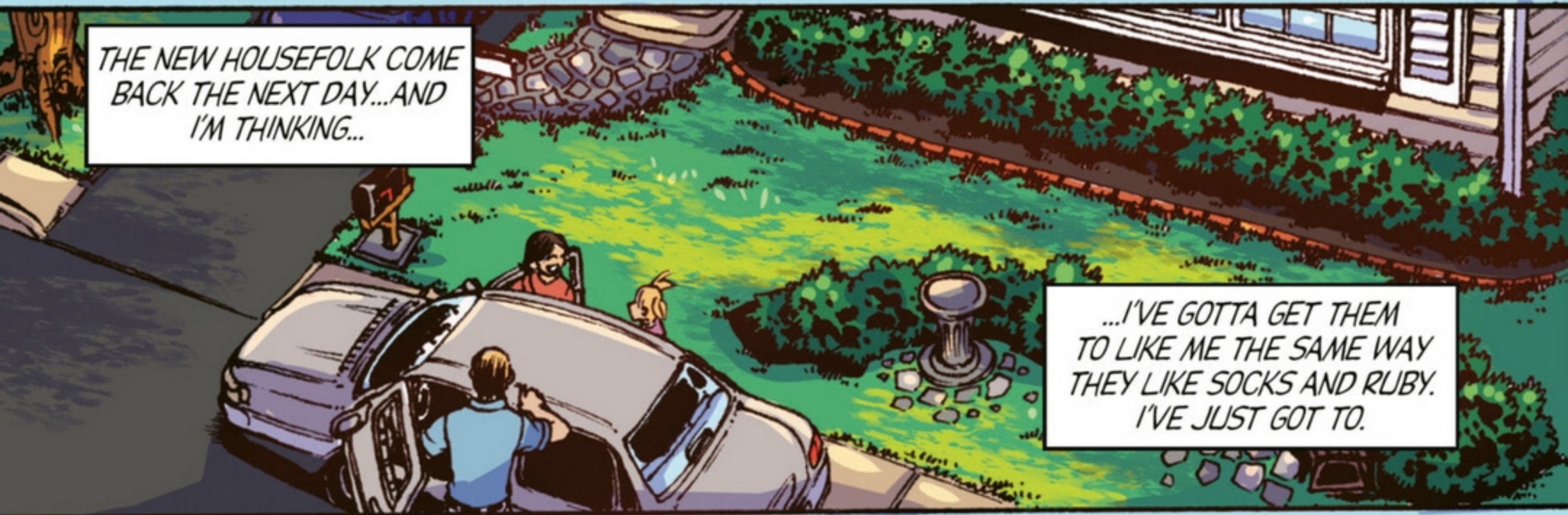
THEY GET
THROWN IN THE
RIVER.





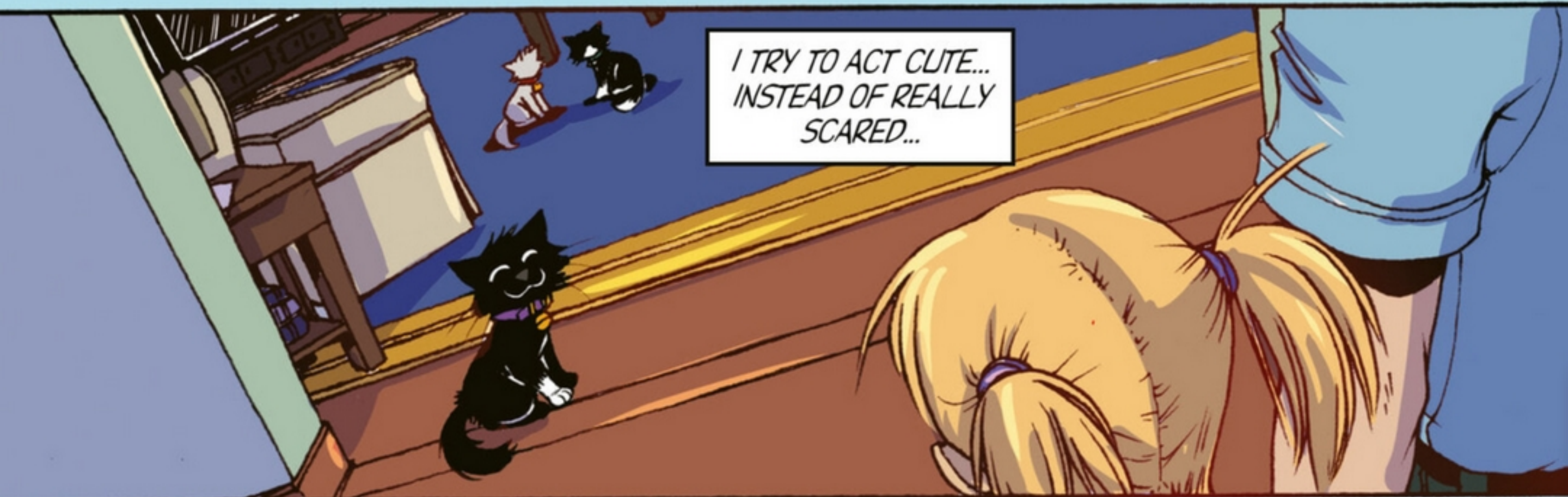
I DON'T WANT TO GET
THROWN IN THE RIVER!

I THINK ABOUT WHAT RUBY
TOLD ME THE WHOLE REST OF
THE DAY AND ALL NIGHT, TOO.

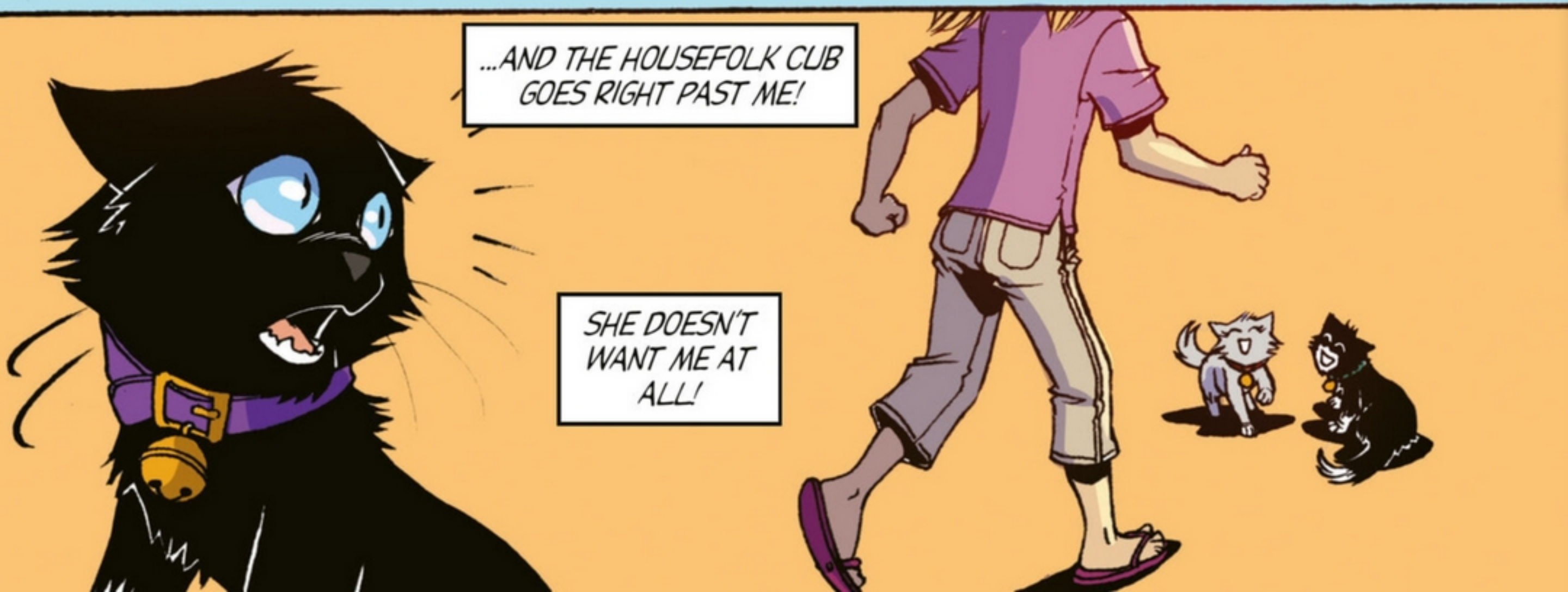


THE NEW HOUSEFOLK COME
BACK THE NEXT DAY...AND
I'M THINKING...

...I'VE GOTTA GET THEM
TO LIKE ME THE SAME WAY
THEY LIKE SOCKS AND RUBY.
I'VE JUST GOT TO.




I TRY TO ACT CUTE...
INSTEAD OF REALLY
SCARED...



...AND THE HOUSEFOLK CLUB
GOES RIGHT PAST ME!


SHE DOESN'T
WANT ME AT
ALL!




THEY'RE NOT GONNA
THROW ME IN THE RIVER.




I WON'T LET 'EM.
I WON'T LET 'EM.



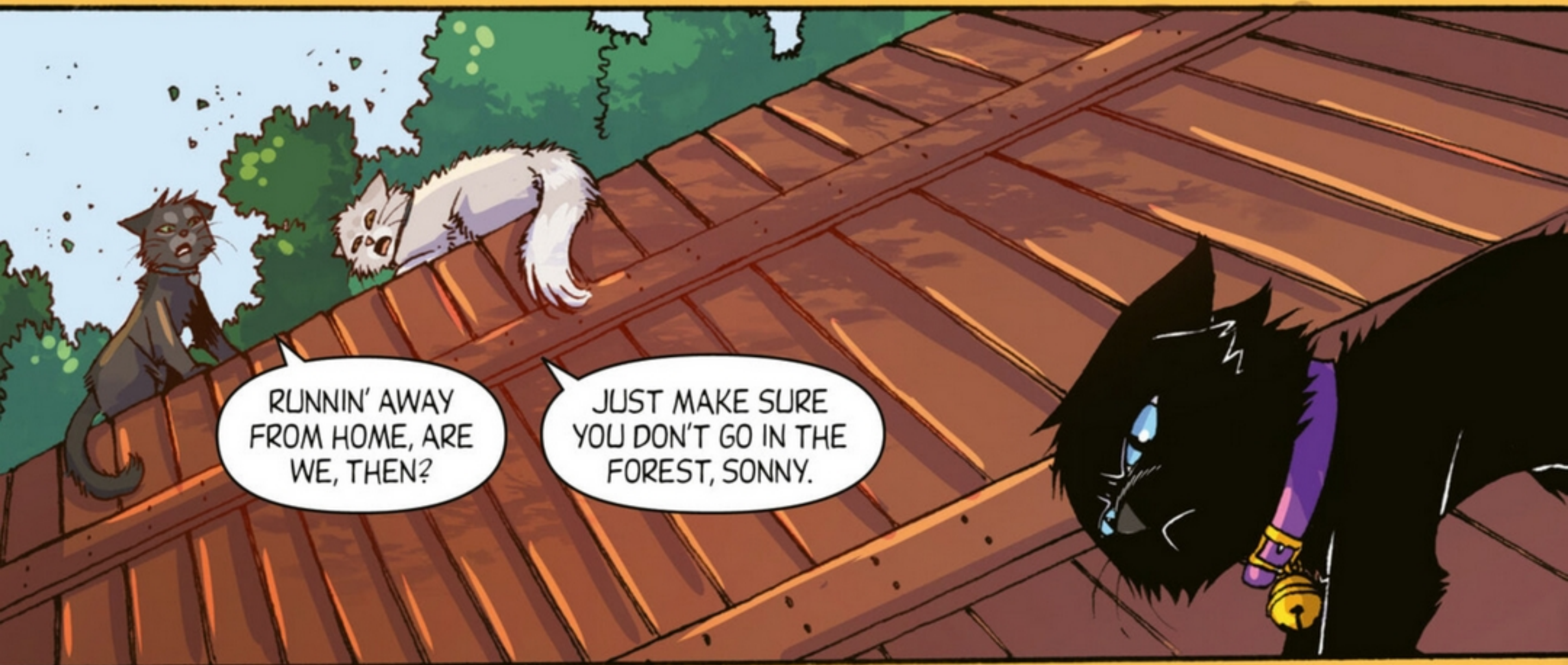
GOTTA GET AWAY...
GET AS FAR AWAY
AS I CAN...



FAR AWAY AS
I—HUH?



WELL,
WELL. LOOK
AT THAT.



RUNNIN' AWAY
FROM HOME, ARE
WE, THEN?

JUST MAKE SURE
YOU DON'T GO IN THE
FOREST, SONNY.



WHY
SHOULDN'T
I GO IN THE
FOREST?

I'M NOT
TOO SMALL! I'M
PLENTY BIG!



YOU'RE MUCH
TOO SMALL TO GO
VENTURING IN
THERE.

WHY, THOSE FOREST
CATS WOULD EAT UP A
CAT AS SMALL AS YOU IN
A SINGLE GULP.

AND
I'M STRONG,
TOO!



RIGHT THEN I CATCH A SCENT...
SOMETHING WARM...SOMETHING
SCRUMPTIOUS. IT'S RIGHT OUT
THERE IN THE WOODS.

I'M NOT AFRAID OF THE
FOREST, OR ANYTHING IN IT.



THIS IS SO GREAT! I'M IN THE FOREST,
AND IT SMELLS WONDERFUL, AND
THE LEAVES FEEL SO GOOD ON MY
PAWS, AND I—



THEY CAN SAY WHAT
THEY WANT TO.

I'M GOING
EXPLORING.



—UH-OH!





WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? THIS IS THUNDERCLAN TERRITORY!

THISTLECLAW, HE'S ONLY A KIT. IT'S NOT AS IF HE POSES A THREAT TO US.



AN INTRUDER'S AN INTRUDER, BLUEFUR! YOU'RE ONLY SAYING THAT BECAUSE HE'S A KITTYPET.

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN TOO SOFT ON THEM.

FOREST CATS! REAL LIVE FOREST CATS! I...I...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. IF I RUN, THEY'LL CATCH ME! BUT IF I DON'T...



I THINK THE KITTYPET SHOULD BE TAUGHT A LESSON. ONE HE'LL REMEMBER.

SO BE IT, THEN.

HERE, LET'S PUT IT TO MY APPRENTICE. WHAT DO YOU THINK, TIGERPAW? HOW SHOULD WE HANDLE THIS?

NOW, HOLD ON, THERE'S NO NEED FOR THIS—

I HAVE TO FIGHT. I HAVE TO.
MAYBE I CAN DO IT! MAYBE I
CAN BE STRONG, AND—





WARRIORS DO NOT
NEED TO KILL CATS
TO WIN A BATTLE,
REMEMBER?

STOP, TIGERPAW!
THAT'S ENOUGH!

I WAS JUST
DEFENDING OUR
TERRITORY.

AND YOU'VE
DONE THAT. THIS KIT
HAS LEARNED HIS
LESSON.

YEAH.

YOU'LL NEVER
FORGET ME.





I HURT EVERYWHERE.

I'VE GOT TO GET HOME.

BUT WHEN I GET THERE,
I REMEMBER. I DON'T HAVE A HOME.
SOCKS AND RUBY ARE GONE NOW...

...AND IF I GO BACK, THEY'LL
THROW ME IN THE RIVER.

GOOD-BYE, MAMA.


CAN'T GO HOME...CAN'T
GO IN THE FOREST...

...SO THIS IS MY ONLY CHOICE. I'VE
HEARD MAMA TALK ABOUT THE
TWOLEGPLACE BEFORE, BUT...

...THERE'S JUST SO MUCH...
SO MUCH...

VIROOOM


IT'S LIKE WALKING INTO SOME
KIND OF BAD DREAM.



I DON'T EVEN REALIZE I'M
HUNGRY TILL I SEE THE TWOLEG
FOOD ON THE GROUND.



I'VE HAD A LITTLE NIBBLE OF
TWOLEG FOOD BEFORE. IT TASTED
REALLY GOOD! MAYBE I CAN—



HSSSSS

GET LOST,
SCRAP!



THIS IS JUST LIKE SOCKS AND RUBY, BUT
WORSE! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE, I'VE
GOT TO FIND SOMEWHERE THAT—



HEY! YOU!
LITTLE BIT.

YEAH, YOU
HEARD ME. YOU LOST?
WANT SOMETHING
TO EAT?



YOU...
YOU DON'T MIND
SHARING?

I CAN'T RESIST
KITTENS DOWN ON THEIR
LUCK. C'MERE.



THIS IS
DELICIOUS. WHAT
IS IT?

CHICKEN. I'M
SURPRISED YOU DON'T
KNOW, YOU BEING A
KITTYPET AND ALL.



I KEEP HEARING
THAT WORD. WHAT'S
A "KITTYPET"?

IT'S WHAT YOU
ARE. CAT THAT LIVES
WITH THE TWOLEGS.
THAT COLLAR GIVES IT
AWAY.

I WOULD ASK WHAT
YOU'RE DOING OUT HERE,
BUT HEY... NONE OF MY
BUSINESS.

SO KITTYPETS LIVE WITH
TWOLEGS. AND THEY WEAR
THESE COLLARS.

WELL, I DON'T LIVE WITH
TWOLEGS ANYMORE.



AND I DON'T WANT TO
WEAR THIS COLLAR.



BUT...I CAN'T...CAN'T
GET IT...OFF!



STUPID COLLAR. STUPID CATS.
I'LL FIND A WAY TO GET THIS
THING OFF, AND WHEN I DO, I'LL—



MRRRAHRR!



IT'S A DOG! DOGS CHASE
CATS, AND, AND EAT THEM
SOMETIMES, AND I THINK I
MIGHT PASS OUT—

—BUT WAIT.



SA-A-AM!
SAMWISE!
HERE, BOY!

THIS DOG IS OLD.

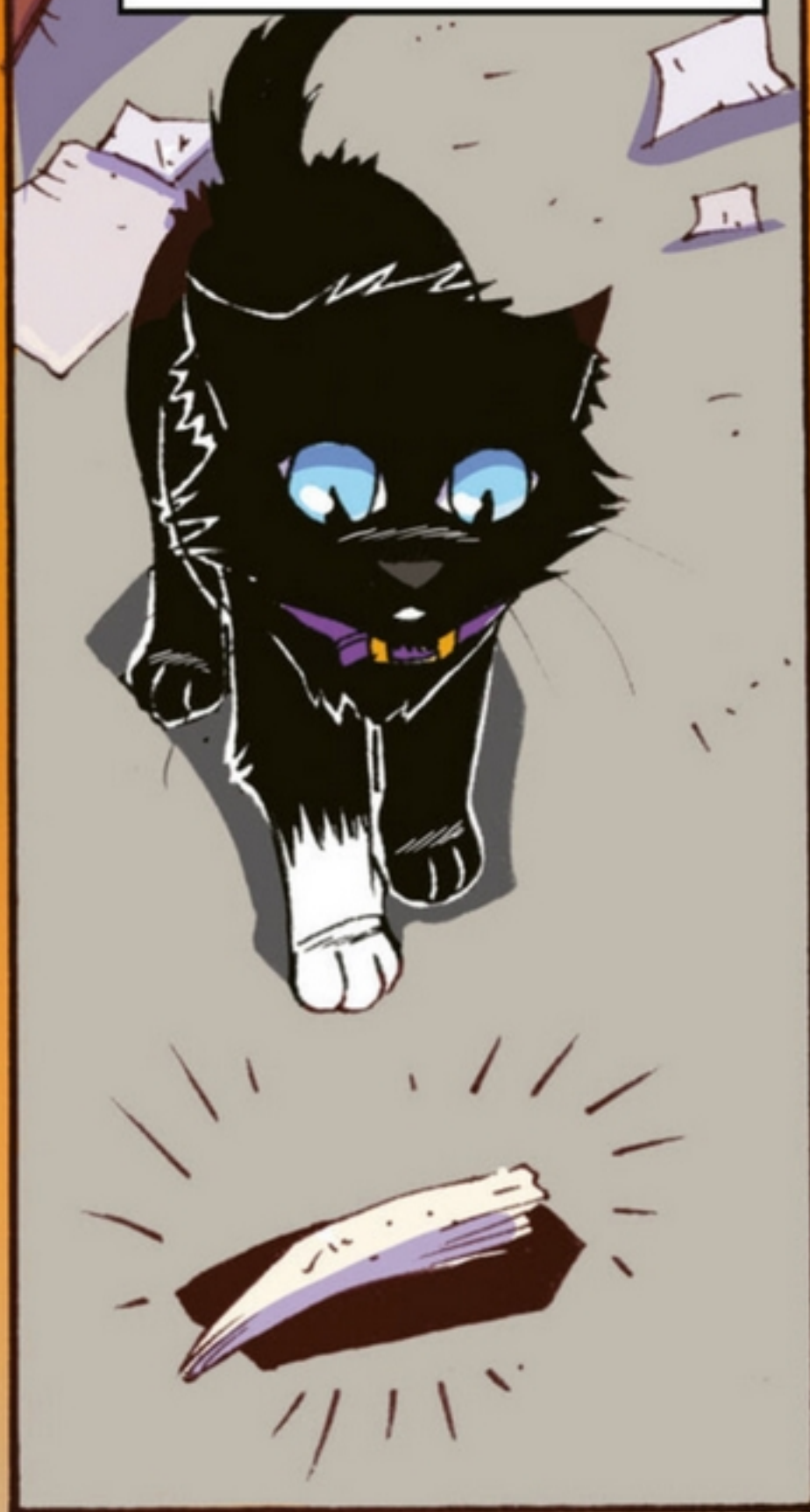


WHUFF

SO OLD HE CAN BARELY MOVE.
HE'S NOT GONNA EAT ME.

THAT'S WHEN I SEE HIS TOOTH.

IF HIS TEETH KEEP FALLING
OUT, HE WON'T BE EATING
ANYTHING.



BUT MAYBE I
CAN USE IT...



...TO GET THIS
THING...OFF ME...

UGH!



...STUPID
COLLAR.



YOU'LL NEVER FORGET ME...

...WILL YOU?
NEED?

NO.

I'LL NEVER FORGET.

THE NEXT DAY, I CAN'T
FIND THE OLD SHE-CAT
WHO LET ME SHARE
HER CHICKEN...

...SO I'VE GOT
TO PLAY NICE.

EXCUSE ME...

...MAY I
PLEASE SHARE
YOUR FOOD?

WHERE'D
THAT TOOTH
COME FROM?



— I RIPPED IT RIGHT
OUT OF A DOG'S HEAD!

HUH?

OH, THE
TOOTH...I—



THE DOG WAS GOING
AFTER SOME FOOD I HAD
STASHED AWAY...



...SO I HAD TO PUT
IT IN ITS PLACE.



IT WAS PRETTY FIERCE,
BUT IT COULDN'T STAND
UP TO ME.

ONCE IT WAS DEAD, I
PRIED OPEN ITS MOUTH
AND TOOK THIS TROPHY.



IS THAT
A FACT?



YOU? YOU
KILLED A DOG
AND TOOK ITS
TOOTH?

HUH.



HELP
YOURSELF.

I DON'T THINK THEY
BELIEVE ME, NOT
ALL THE WAY.

BUT RIGHT NOW,
I DON'T CARE.



HOURS GO BY, AND I DON'T
FEEL TOO BAD. MY BELLY'S
STILL FULL, AND I FIND A
QUIET PLACE TO SLEEP.

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN
THAT WOULDN'T LAST.

HEY, YOU
IN THERE. YOU
IN THE TIRE.

HUH?

ARE YOU
TALKING TO
ME?

MY NAME
IS BONE, AND THIS
IS BRICK.

WE WANT
TO SPEAK WITH
YOU.



UH...OKAY.

ABOUT
WHAT?

IS IT TRUE
THAT YOU FIGHT
DOGS?



ALL OF A SUDDEN IT FEELS
LIKE THERE'S A ROCK IN MY
STOMACH. WHAT DO I SAY?
WHAT DO I DO?

UM...YES...?

GOOD. PLEASE
FOLLOW US.

DUGGAN'S

I DON'T THINK I HAVE A CHOICE.
THE TWO CATS TAKE ME DEEPER
INTO TWOLEGPLACE THAN I'VE
EVER BEEN BEFORE...

...AND THEY SHOW ME A PLACE
I WOULD NEVER GO ON MY OWN.

OKAY...SO...
WHAT'S THE
PROBLEM?

IT WON'T LET ANY
OF US NEAR THE FOOD.
WE'VE TRIED TO CHASE IT
AWAY, BUT IT'S TOO BIG.
TOO STRONG.

A BIG DOG
HAS MADE ITS DEN
BACK HERE.



WILL YOU
FIGHT THE DOG
FOR US?



I TRY TO SAY SOMETHING, BUT MY
TONGUE WON'T WORK. IT'S JUST
AS WELL, BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW
WHAT TO SAY ANYWAY.

DO I SAY YES? DO I SAY NO? ...HOW
AM I SUPPOSED TO FIGHT A DOG?



MAYBE HE WAS LYING
THE WHOLE TIME. MAYBE HE'S
NEVER FOUGHT ANYTHING
BEFORE.



EITHER WAY. YOU
HAVE UNTIL MOONHIGH
TO DECIDE WHAT YOU'RE
GOING TO DO. AND IF
YOU DECIDE NOT TO
FIGHT...

...IT WOULD BE
BEST FOR YOU TO
LEAVE THIS PLACE.
FOR GOOD.



IT'S NOT A ROCK IN
MY STOMACH NOW.

IT'S A BALL OF ICE.

I FIGURE I CAN GET A
BETTER IDEA OF THINGS
IF I CAN SEE MORE.

IT'S NOT TOO HARD TO
CLIMB UP TO THE TOP OF
THE BIG TWOLEG DEN.

WOW...THERE'RE A LOT MORE CATS
AROUND HERE THAN I THOUGHT!

AND THEY'RE ALL...



...REALLY HUNGRY.



THE DOG'S KEEPING
THEM FROM A LOT
OF FOOD.


I REMEMBER MAMA TALKING
ABOUT HOW SAVAGE THE
FOREST CATS WERE...

...BUT I DON'T THINK
THESE CATS ARE
ANY BETTER.





I DON'T WANT TO...
I REALLY DON'T WANT TO...



...BUT I'D BETTER GET A
LOOK AT WHAT'S CAUSING
ALL THESE PROBLEMS.

OH...NO...

IT'S *HUGE*.

*I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT THIS
DOG! I CAN'T! I'M JUST A KIT!*



*PLUS I'M
SCARED TO
DEATH.*

*BUT...ALL THOSE CATS DOWN
THERE ARE AFRAID, TOO. WE'RE
ALL AFRAID TOGETHER.*



*I THINK ABOUT RUNNING AWAY
AGAIN. BUT WHERE?*




*LIKE IT OR NOT...
I THINK THIS PLACE IS
MY HOME NOW.*

I HAVE TO FIGHT.



EVEN IF IT KILLS ME.



I HEAR THEM WHISPERING.
SOME OF THEM ARE SAYING
I MUST BE CRAZY.

THEY MIGHT BE RIGHT.
WHAT AM I DOING?

THERE IT IS. THERE IT IS.
JUST STAY CALM. KEEP
WALKING. STAY CALM.

WHAT WAS I THINKING?
HOW AM I GOING TO FIGHT THIS
THING? I'M TOO SMALL! I'M
WAY TOO SMALL!

HOLD ON. IT'S—THE
DOG ISN'T LOOKING
AT ME. WHY ISN'T IT
LOOKING AT ME?

RRRRRRHHH



RRRRRRHHH



WHAT'S IT
GROWLING AT?

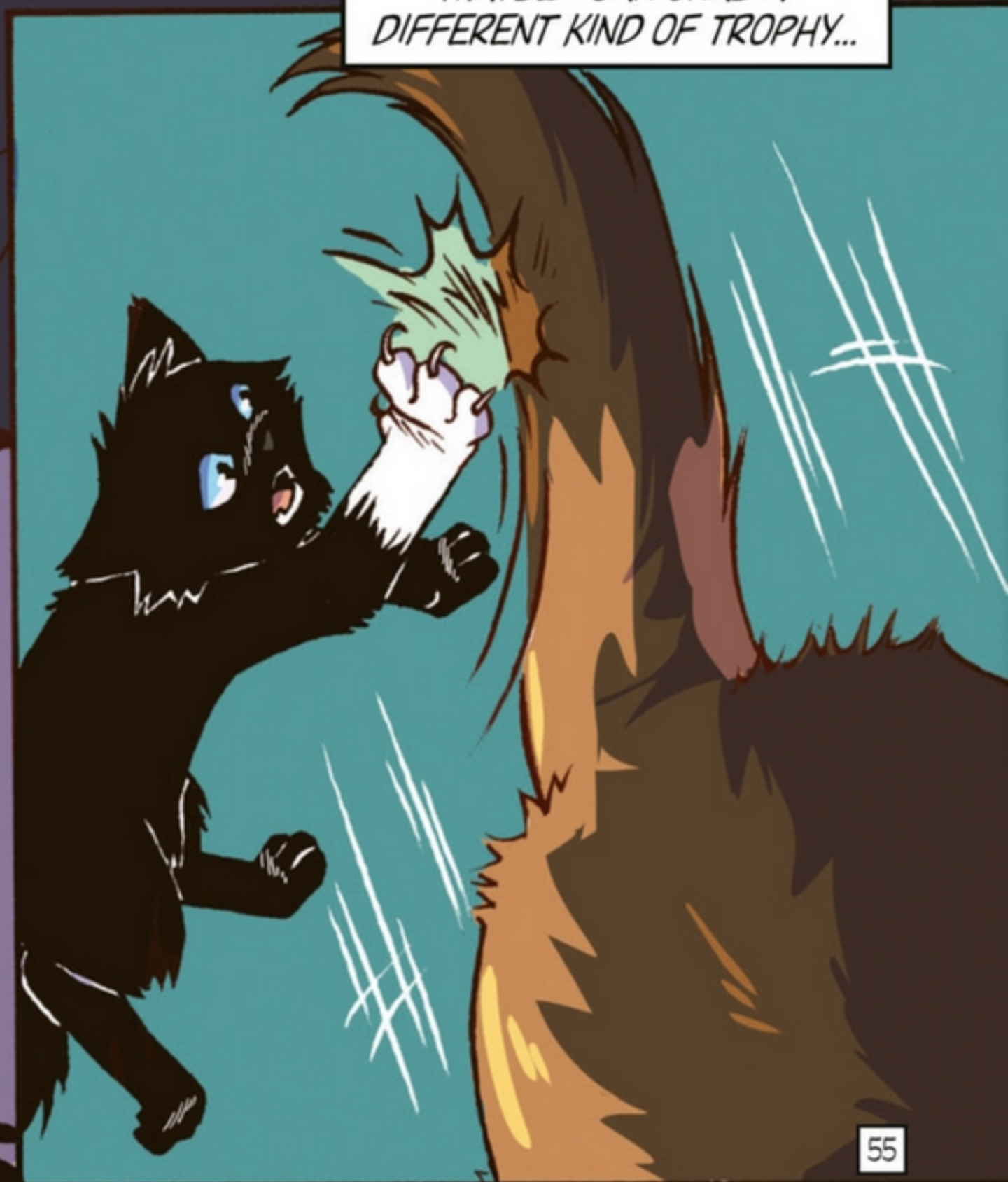


BUT—HOW DID—THAT'S
MY SHADOW! THE DOG'S
AFRAID OF MY SHADOW!

WOW. DOGS
ARE REALLY
STUPID.



MAYBE I CAN GRAB A
DIFFERENT KIND OF TROPHY...





I KNOW THIS ISN'T REAL. IT ISN'T TRUE. I DIDN'T BEAT THAT DOG.



BUT I'M NOT ABOUT
TO LET ANY OF THESE
CATS KNOW THAT.



THAT WAS
AMAZING!

HOW'D YOU
DO THAT--

OUR
HERO!

NEVER
WOULD'VE
BELIEVED...!

THANK YOU,
THANK YOU SO MUCH,
YOU'VE SAVED US,
YOU'VE SAVED OUR
LIVES!

...WHAT'S YOUR
NAME?

I TRY NOT TO LET IT SHOW,
BUT IT REALLY HITS ME:
NOBODY HERE HAS EVER
ASKED WHAT MY NAME IS.




AND YOU KNOW WHAT? IT
ISN'T "TINY." NOT ANYMORE.

THOSE SAVAGES
ARE A SCOURGE
ON THE NAME OF
ALL GOOD CATS.



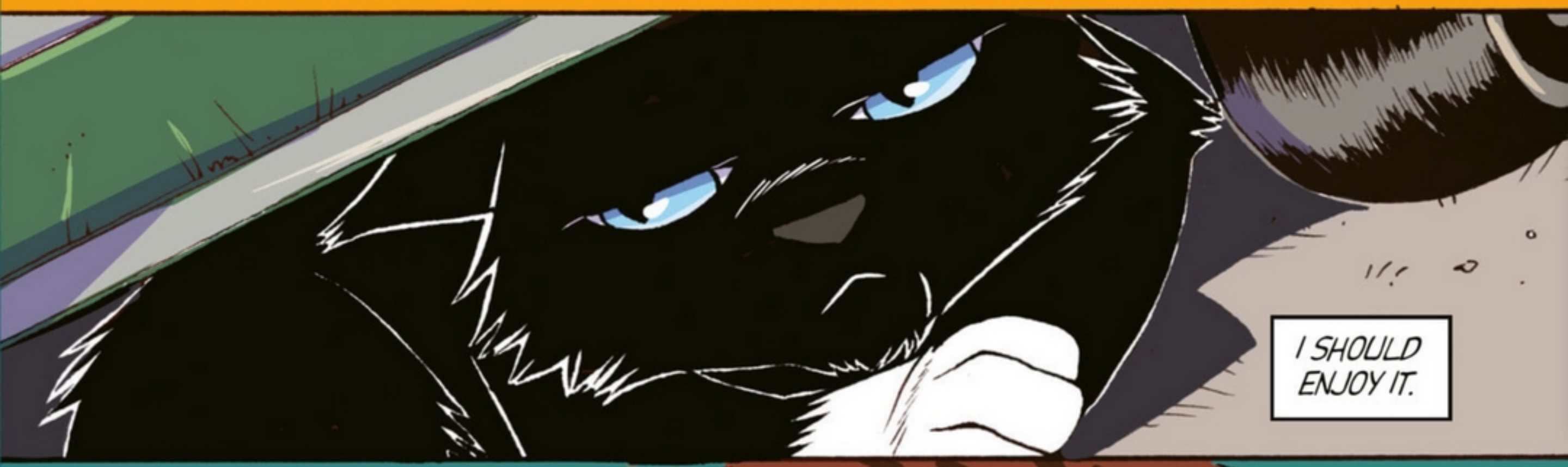
MY NAME IS
SCOURGE.






I SHOULD
BE HAPPY.


FOR THE FIRST TIME
EVER, THINGS ARE
GOING MY WAY.



I SHOULD
ENJOY IT.



BUT I CAN'T.



NOT YET.

I AWAKE AT DAYBREAK
THE FOLLOWING MORNING,
READY TO GO OUT SEARCHING
FOR FOOD AGAIN...



...ONLY TO FIND THAT THE CATS
I HELPED THE NIGHT BEFORE
HAVE DECIDED TO HELP ME.



I EAT EVERY BIT OF
THE CHICKEN AND
SAVOR EACH BITE.

I SEE THEM WATCHING ME.
THEY TRY TO BE SUBTLE,
BUT I SEE THEM.





THESE CATS
DON'T LIKE ME.

BUT THEY
FEAR ME.

AND THAT'S JUST AS
GOOD. ...MAYBE BETTER.

IF SOCKS AND RUBY
COULD SEE ME NOW...

...THEY'D KNOW JUST
HOW WRONG THEY
WERE ABOUT ME.

SOON ALL THESE SAVAGE
TWOLEGPLACE CATS START COMING
TO ME WITH THEIR PROBLEMS.



WELL, SIR, YOU
SEE, HE DIDN'T HAVE NO
CALL TO TAKE THAT RAT...
IT WAS MY RAT, Y'SEE, SIR,
AND IT JUST DON'T SEEM
RIGHT NOHOW...


ALL I HAVE TO DO IS USE COMMON
SENSE. THAT, OR JUST TELL THESE
POOR CREATURES TO STAND UP FOR
THEMSELVES.



AND IT WORKS. THEY
TREAT ME LIKE SOME
SORT OF WISE OLD CAT.




BRICK AND BONE TELL ME WORD
HAS STARTED GETTING AROUND
ABOUT THE NEW CAT IN CHARGE.



THE THING IS...WHEN YOU'RE
THE CAT IN CHARGE, YOU
GET THE BAD ALONG WITH
THE GOOD.

I FIND THAT OUT A COUPLE
OF WEEKS LATER.



SCOURGE?
SCOURGE, ARE
YOU AWAKE?


MRRRHH...
YES—I'LL BE OUT
IN A MOMENT.




WHAT'S
WRONG?

IT'S—THERE
ARE SOME ROGUE CATS,
BEHIND A TWOLEG FOOD
PLACE, AND...

...THEY'RE CAUSING A
LOT OF TROUBLE. WE'RE
AFRAID THEY'RE GOING
TO HURT OR EVEN KILL
SOMEONE.



WILL YOU
HELP US?




AT FIRST IT FEELS GOOD. REALLY GOOD. THESE CATS TRUST ME. THEY BELIEVE I CAN SOLVE THEIR PROBLEM.

AND FOR JUST A SECOND...

...WHEN I PICK UP THE SCENT OF FOREST...

sniff!
sniff!



...I THINK MAYBE THAT TABBY HAS COME BACK. MAYBE IT'S MY TURN NOW.

BURGER SLACK

BUT NO.

I'VE NEVER SEEN
THIS CAT BEFORE.

WHICH MAKES HIM NO
LESS AN INTRUDER, OF
COURSE.



GET OVER THERE
AND BRING ME SOME-
THING TO EAT!

MAYBE
THEN I'LL DECIDE
WHAT TO DO WITH
YOU.



LEAVE HER
ALONE AND GET OUT
OF HERE.



TROUBLE,
BOSS?

WANT US
TO TAKE CARE
OF IT?

NO, NO.
TROUBLE WOULD
BE BIGGER.

WE'RE
LOOKING AT A
NUISANCE.



YOU WANT TO
TALK, RUNT?

IF I SPEAK,
IT'LL ONLY BE WITH
THE LEADER OF THIS
RAMSHACKLE LOT.



THEN SPEAK
TO ME.



THEY'RE LAUGHING
AT ME. LAUGHING.

AND AS THEY DO
IT, I CAN TELL...

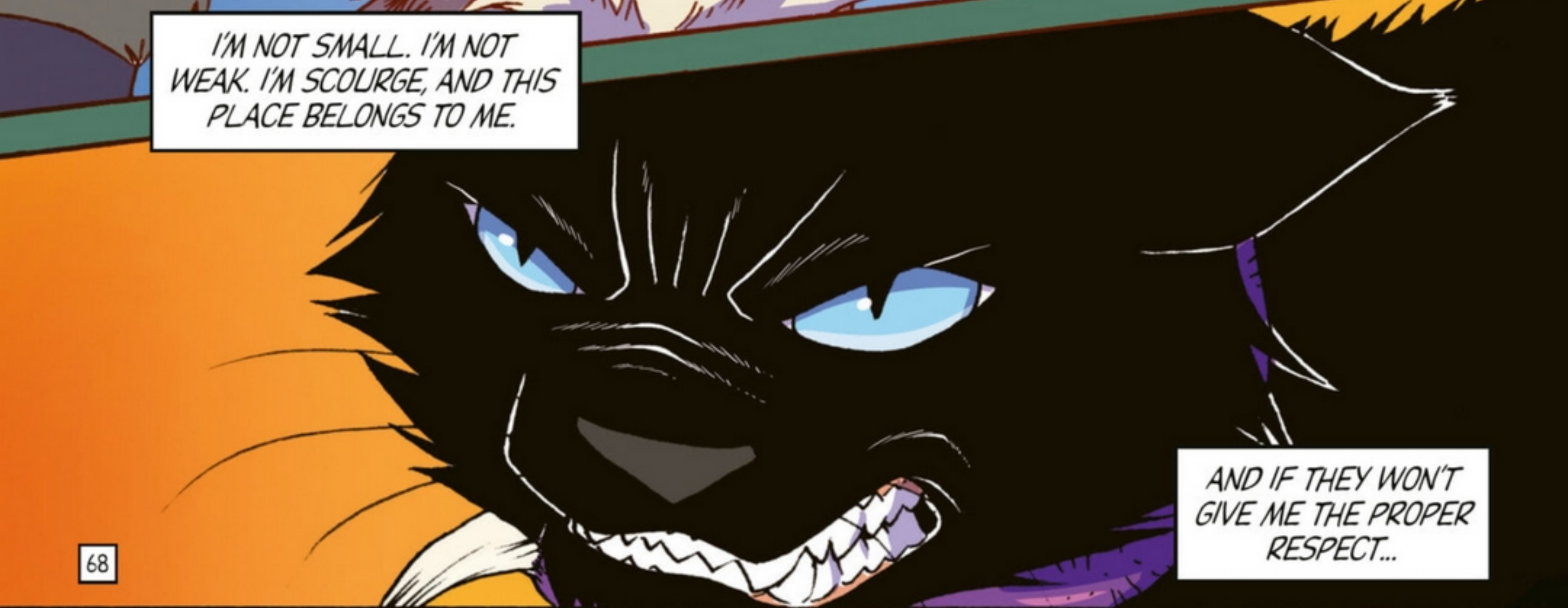


...MY OWN CATS ARE
STARTING TO DOUBT ME.

I CAN FEEL THE BLOOD
IN MY VEINS START TO
GROW COLD.

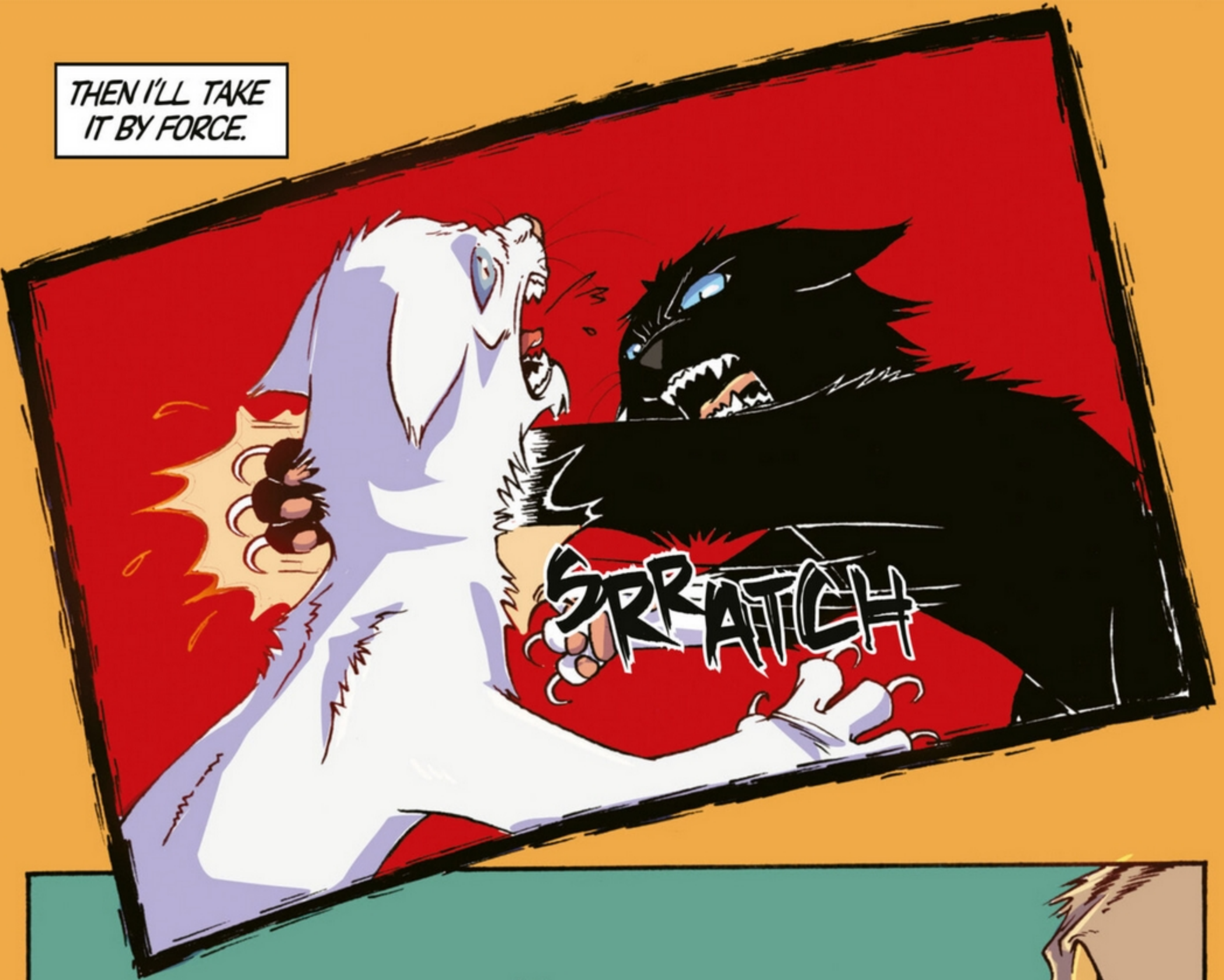


I'M NOT SMALL. I'M NOT
WEAK. I'M SCOURGE, AND THIS
PLACE BELONGS TO ME.



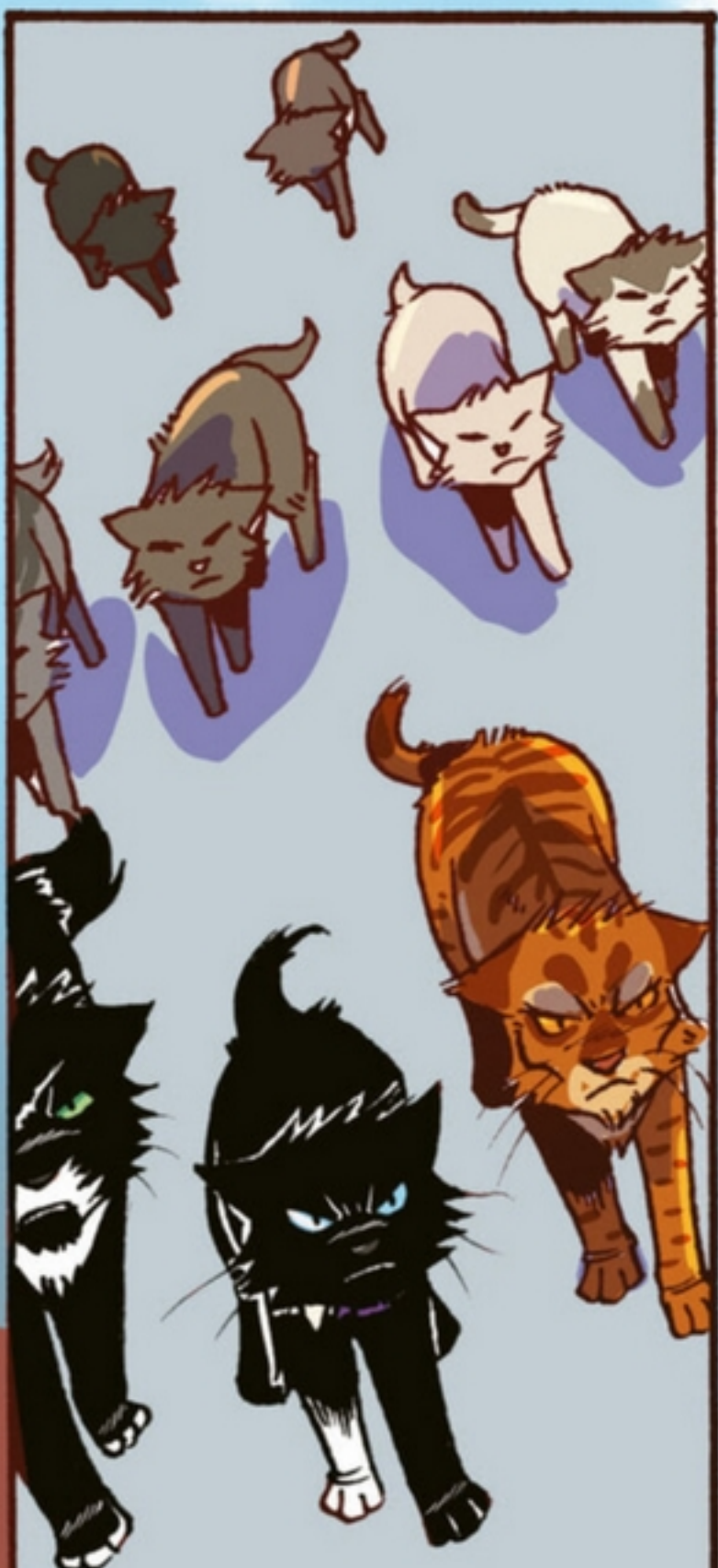
AND IF THEY WON'T
GIVE ME THE PROPER
RESPECT...

THEN I'LL TAKE
IT BY FORCE.



MY CATS NEED
TO BE SHOWN.

ONCE THEY
UNDERSTAND WHAT
CAN BE DONE...THEY'LL
TRUST IN ME TO SHOW
THEM HOW TO DO IT.



I CAN FEEL THEM.
BEHIND ME. MOVING IN.
CLOSING RANKS.



I'VE HAD MY
FILL OF THIS
PLACE.

IT IS TIME WE
RETURNED TO THE
FOREST...WHERE WE
BELONG.

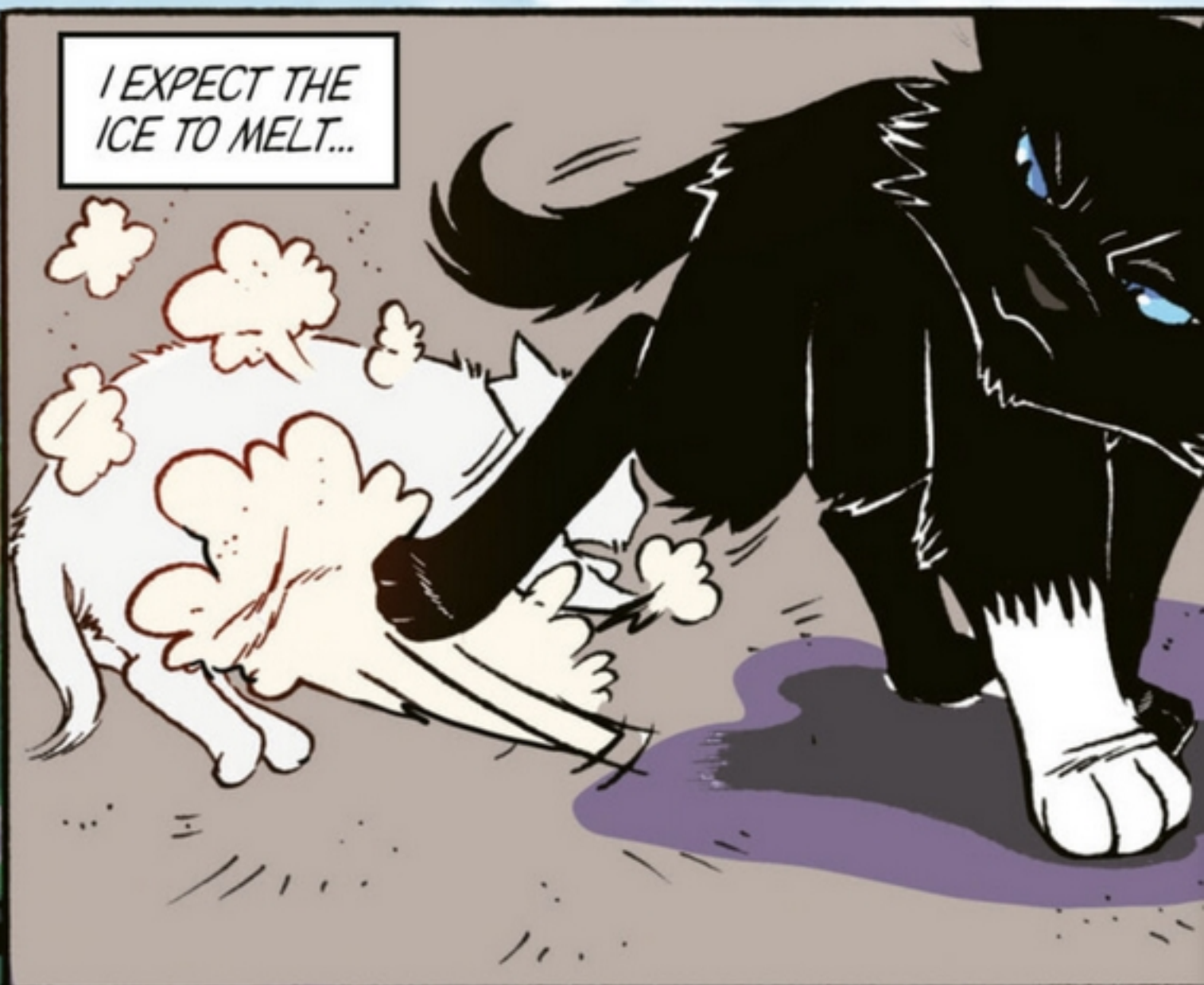
NOW ALL THEY
NEED IS A GESTURE.



I HAD TO HAVE ICE
IN MY VEINS TO DO
WHAT I JUST DID.



I EXPECT THE
ICE TO MELT...



FROM NOW ON, NO
ONE TAKES FOOD FROM
THIS PLACE WITHOUT
MY PERMISSION.



BUT IT DOESN'T. IT
JUST GETS COLDER
AND COLDER.



...AND I WELCOME IT.

THINGS CHANGE AFTER I KILL
THAT ROGUE. EVERYBODY STILL
COMES TO ME WITH THEIR
PROBLEMS, THAT'S FOR SURE...



...BUT NOW THEY
COME BEARING GIFTS.
TROPHIES.

I DON'T ASK WHERE THEY
GOT THESE THINGS, OR HOW. I
JUST ACCEPT THEM AS SIGNS
OF MY CATS' ALLEGIANCE.



I HAVE EVERYTHING
I EVER WANTED.



CONTROL OVER EVERY
STRAY CAT IN TWOLEGPLACE.
NO CAT COMES HERE WITH-
OUT MY SAY SO.

I KNOW OF EVERY KIT
THAT'S BORN, AND
THEY ALL FEAR ME.



AND YET I AM STILL
NOT CONTENT.



THAT NIGHT I GET A SERIOUS SHOCK, WHEN BRICK AND BONE TELL ME I HAVE VISITORS.

MORE CATS WITH PROBLEMS, I FIGURE. I TELL THEM TO SHOW THESE VISITORS TO ME...

...AND MY EYES ALMOST LEAP OUT OF MY HEAD! IT'S SOCKS AND RUBY!

SO IT'S TRUE!

TINY—I MEAN, SCOURGE—OUR HOUSEFOLK MOVED AWAY AND ABANDONED US.

WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET OUR OWN FOOD. WILL YOU HELP US? PLEASE?

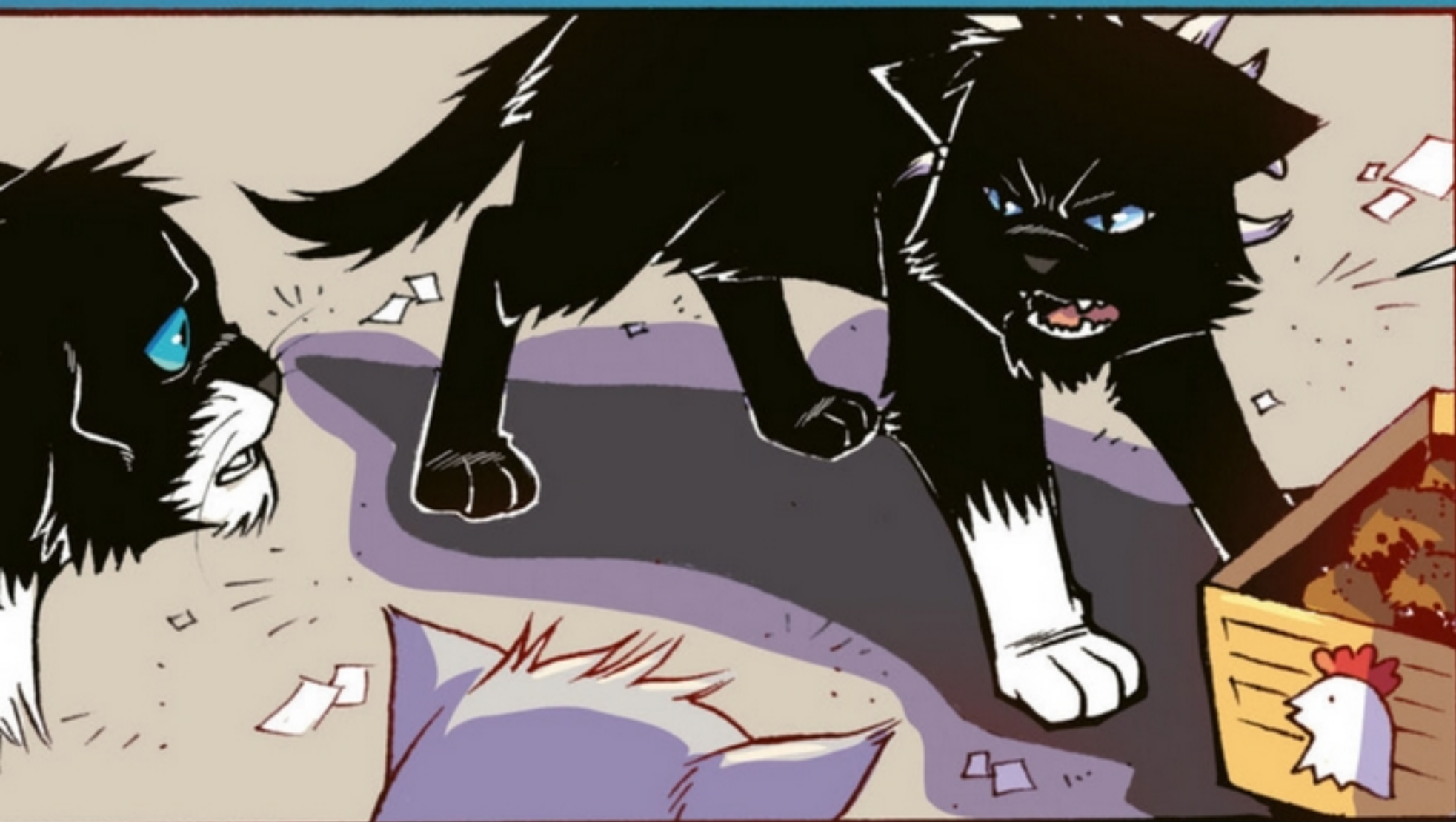
I LET THEM HANG FOR A LONG MOMENT. THEN:

WHY SHOULD I?

MY OWN CATS BARELY HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT. IT'S NOT MY PROBLEM IF YOU'RE TOO STUPID AND WEAK TO FEED YOURSELVES.

BUT...BUT SCOURGE...! WE'RE YOUR LITTERMATES!

DOESN'T BLOOD MEAN ANYTHING?



OH YES. BLOOD IS EVERYTHING. BUT THE ONLY BLOOD I'M INTERESTED IN FLOWS FROM MY ENEMIES. LOOK AROUND YOU!

THESE CATS ARE BATHED IN BLOOD. IT SOAKS THEIR FUR AND LAPS AT THEIR PAWS. THIS IS WHY WE SURVIVE!

WE ARE **BLOODCLAN!**

I CAN TELL MY WORDS ARE LOST ON THEM. I LET THEM EAT.



BUT AS SOON AS THEY FINISH...

GET THESE TWO OUT OF MY SIGHT. THEY ARE NOT WELCOME IN BLOODCLAN TERRITORY.

YES, SCOURGE.



OH YES. THE BLOOD OF MY ENEMIES WILL FLOW BEFORE I AM CONTENT.



AND THEN
ONE NIGHT...

...MANY MOONS
LATER...

...THE THING I HOPED
FOR, WAITED FOR...LONGED
FOR THE MOST...

...JUST PRESENTS ITSELF
TO ME. LIKE A GIFT.

IS THIS THE
PLACE?

THIS IS IT. NOW,
REMEMBER WHAT
I TOLD YOU.

THE CAT WE'RE
GOING TO MEET HOLDS
COMMAND OVER MANY CATS.
WE MUST TREAT HIM
WITH RESPECT.

IDENTIFY YOUR-
SELVES. WE DON'T LIKE
STRANGERS HERE.

GREETINGS, BONE.
REMEMBER ME?


...SO YOU'VE
COME BACK, HAVE
YOU, BOULDER?

I LISTEN TO THEM TALKING AND
DON'T MOVE A MUSCLE. IT'S
OBVIOUS THEY'VE COME TO SEE ME.

HOW PERFECT.

SCOURGE NEEDS TO
HEAR THIS. IT COULD BE
TO HIS ADVANTAGE.

...ALL RIGHT.
GO AHEAD.



I MEASURE THE CONTEMPT IN HIS EYES AS HE WALKS PAST MY CATS. THAT WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN EITHER.

THAT'S SCOURGE?
HE'S NO BIGGER THAN AN APPRENTICE!

THERE'S SCOURGE.

SHHH! THIS MAY NOT BE A CLAN AS WE KNOW IT, BUT THESE CATS WOULD *KILL* IF THEIR LEADER ORDERED THEM TO.

IT SEEMS I HAVE VISITORS. I WASN'T EXPECTING TO SEE YOU AGAIN, BOULDER. I HEARD YOU'D GONE TO LIVE IN THE FOREST.

YES, SCOURGE, I HAVE.

SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND AND COME CRAWLING BACK? DO YOU EXPECT ME TO WELCOME YOU?

NO, SCOURGE. IT'S A GOOD LIFE IN THE FOREST. THERE IS PLENTY OF FRESH-KILL, NO TWOLEGS—

SO WHAT DO YOU WANT?



I AM TIGERSTAR,
THE LEADER OF
SHADOWCLAN.

AND I HAVE
A PROPOSITION
FOR YOU.



"TIGERSTAR" EXPLAINS THAT HE
HAS ENEMIES IN THE FOREST. IN
EXCHANGE FOR MY HELP...

...HE WILL GIVE ME
A PORTION OF THE
TERRITORY THERE.



IT'S AN INTRIGUING SITUATION. I CAN
TELL THE TIME FOR TIGERSTAR AND
ME TO SETTLE OUR...DIFFERENCES...
HAS NOT ARRIVED.

NOT QUITE YET.



BUT I CAN BE PATIENT.



EVENTUALLY THE WORD
COMES TO ME: BLOODCLAN IS
NEEDED IN THE FOREST.

I GATHER MY FORCES AND MOVE, LEADING THEM
AWAY FROM TWOLEGPLACE AND INTO THE WOODS.

AND THERE...
AT LAST...

THE TIME...



...IS...



...RIGHT.





MY LITTERMATES SAID I WAS
TOO SMALL...TOO WEAK. BUT I'VE
PROVEN THEM WRONG.

I'VE LEARNED HOW TO BE STRONG...
HOW TO LIVE FOR BLOOD. BECAUSE
THAT'S THE KEY. THE ONLY ANSWER.

I AM LEADER OF BLOODCLAN.
I AM SCOURGE.



AND I HAVE WON!

ERIN HUNTER

is inspired by a love of cats and a fascination with the ferocity of the natural world. In addition to having great respect for nature in all its forms, Erin enjoys creating rich mythical explanations for animal behavior. She is the author of the Warriors, Seekers, Survivors, Brave-lands, and Bamboo Kingdom series. Erin lives in the UK.

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