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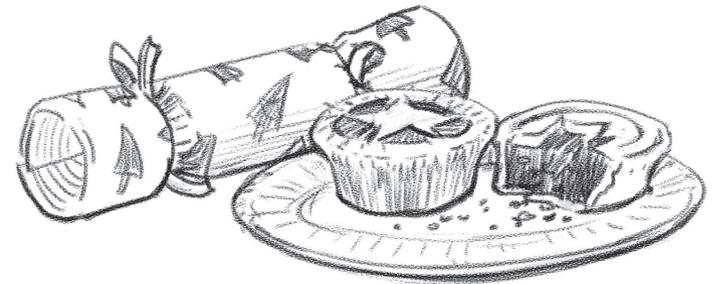
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HOLIDAYS



Do you like the
Christmas
holidays? They
aren't as long



as other holidays. There is often snow on the ground and it is colder, and the days are shorter. But there is all the fun of Christmas presents, carols, mince pies, and family coming to visit.

Our Siamese kittens – do you remember their names? Java, Siam, and Ko-ko – well, they *loved* the Christmas holidays. They especially loved the Christmas tree with all its twinkly lights. There were green lights and red ones, blue lights, yellow ones and even a few purple ones. And of course, there were plenty of white lights.

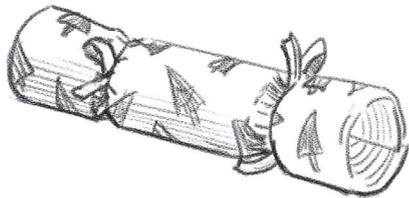
The kittens would sit – it seemed for hours – simply watching the lights sparkling and twinkling, all of the colours reflecting on the wall – a bit like a rainbow.



The Quinns would put their presents out under the Christmas tree a few days before Christmas. And when they went to bed, the kittens had great fun pulling at the paper wrapping, even biting and eating the bows and ribbons. They weren't interested in seeing what was inside. They could smell it wasn't food and therefore it was of no real interest to them. They were just being kittens.

When the Quinns would come down in the morning, they would have to re-wrap some of the presents.

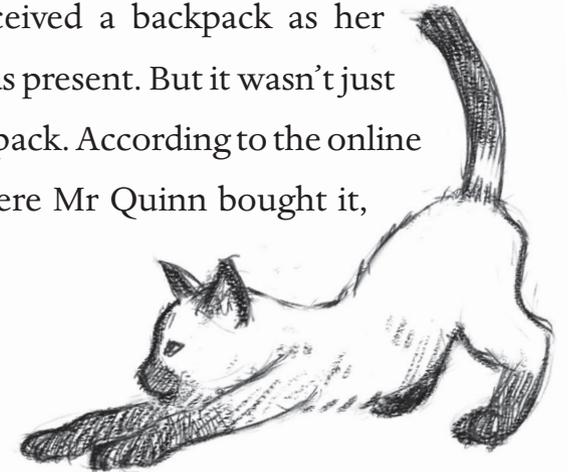
"Which one of you did this?" they would ask the kittens.



They usually figured it was either Ko-ko or Siam, both of whom could be quite naughty at times. Ko-ko was a great climber and Siam loved nothing better than an adventure. But the kittens pretended as if they had not heard the question and simply refused to admit to being naughty.

(Of course, if you or I are naughty, we should always admit it and say we're sorry.)

This year, one of the Quinn children, Lucy, received a backpack as her Christmas present. But it wasn't just any backpack. According to the online store where Mr Quinn bought it,





this backpack was designed for the *felis catus*, which is a Latin term for our word “cat.”

Lucy couldn't contain her joy. She loved the Siamese kittens and now she could take them out with her whenever she went to visit her friends or her granny.

The backpack was a lovely turquoise colour with side pockets for treats and mesh windows so that the kitten inside could breathe easily. It also had a small opening at the top so the kitten could poke his or her head out and see what was happening.

“There’s more,” Mr Quinn said with a smile. He explained how they had decided to take the Quinn children – the Quinnlings, their parents sometimes called them – to the Dublin zoo as a Christmas treat to see the snow leopard Ciara and her two new little cubs.

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THE CAT CARRIER

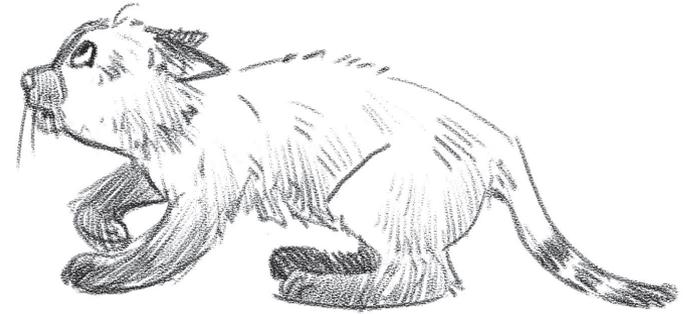


So, the Quinns were going to take one of the Siamese kittens to the zoo in the cat carrier.

But who to take?

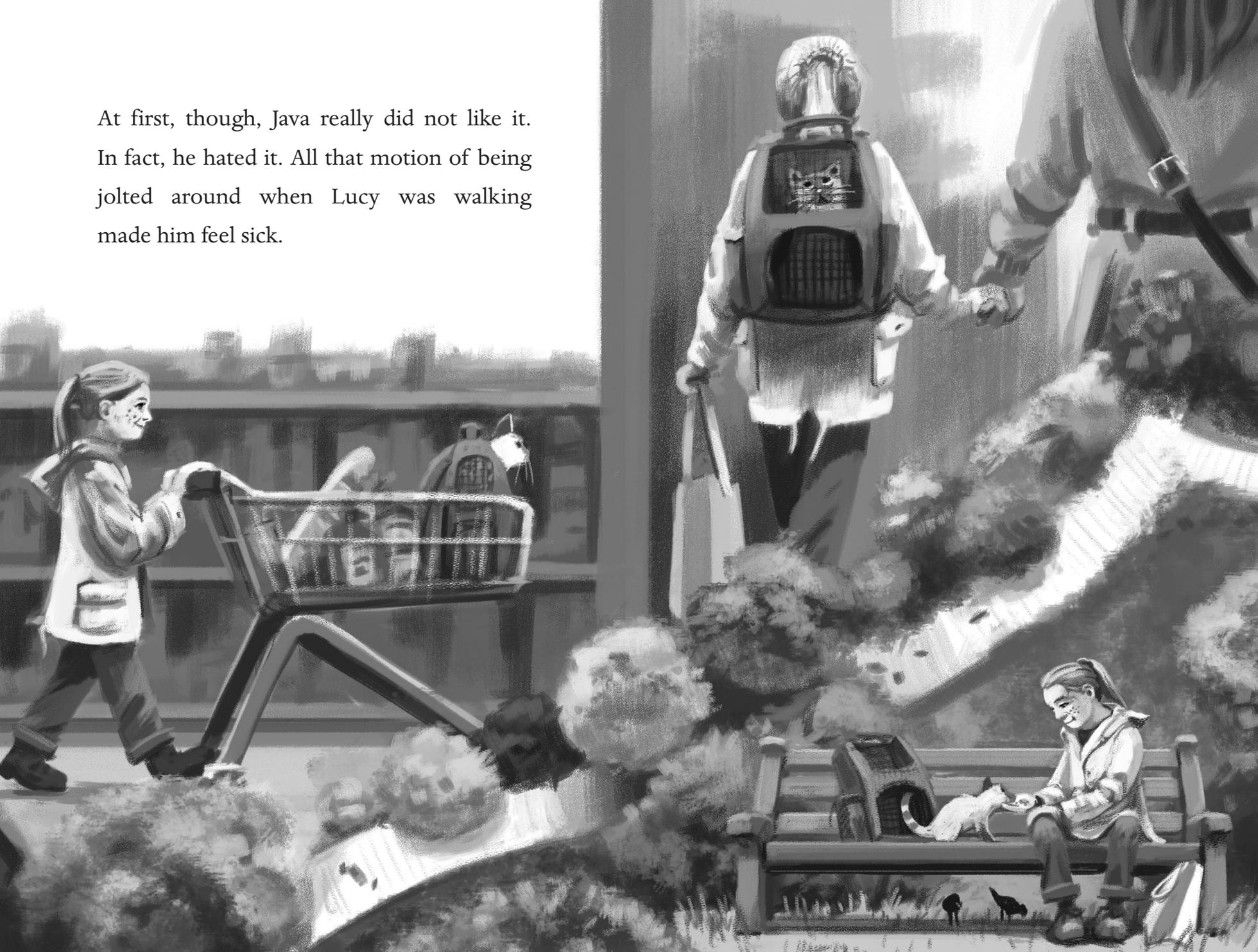
Since it was Lucy's backpack, they let her decide.

Well, said Lucy, Ko-ko loved to climb so she was afraid that Ko-ko would manage to climb out of the backpack and run off. Her mother agreed. Then, Siam could be equally naughty and there was nothing that she loved more than an adventure. So, she too might try to escape. So, in the end, Lucy settled on Java. Her mother agreed.



But to make sure that Java was comfortable in the cat carrier, Lucy decided to test it out. She began to take Java everywhere: to the store, the park, the town, even to the Quinnings' granny's house.

At first, though, Java really did not like it. In fact, he hated it. All that motion of being jolted around when Lucy was walking made him feel sick.





He was also really scared of where they might be going. When he was a very young kitten, only eight weeks old or so, the Quinns had taken him and his sisters to the vet to have their vaccinations against cat diseases. And they had carried the Siamese kittens in a pet carrier. He didn't like going to the vet, even though it was good for him.

But the space inside the cat backpack was quite small and cosy, and that made him feel good. And when he realised that he could smell fish treats in one of the outside pockets of the carrier, he liked it even more.

What a great way to travel, Java thought!

