

#WEAREWOKING

TOGETHER

SHORT STORY CONTEST

Thank you to all of the local young people who took part, and congratulations to Emma, on being one of our highly commended entries!

PECULIAR HAPPENINGS

EMMA, Age 15
Home Educated

Things had been most peculiar recently. Misty didn't know what to make of it all. It had begun when spring was in the air, the days growing warmer and longer, flowers beginning to bloom. She'd found a ducks' nest on the canal, in amongst the reeds, and delighted in sneaking up on it and hearing the ducks' panicking quacking and the rapid beating of their wings.

The humans had been acting oddly for a little while before: washing their bare orange paws constantly with running water and one of those foul-tasting bars that made bubbles when you rubbed it under water. She couldn't understand why they didn't just lick themselves clean instead.

Then one day things became even odder. The adults didn't go out all day, as they usually did, but stayed at home and talked anxiously in low voices. The woman picked up Misty and hugged her far too tightly, not letting her wriggle away to do something more interesting.

Every evening from then on, the humans watched something new on their funny light-box: another

human with a mop of yellow fur on his head, standing on a tree stump and talking. Usually there were a couple of others with him, who would talk for a little while afterwards. One of them showed little pictures with lines on – to keep the humans entertained, Misty decided.

When Misty went outside, she saw other humans acting weirdly: flinching away and keeping their distance as if they were suddenly afraid of each other. She didn't waste her time on wondering why: if the humans wanted to do these weird things, that was their business. There were still mice to terrorise, birds to stalk, sunbeams to curl up and doze in.

It wasn't long after that first day that the human kittens stopped going out. That was most annoying for Misty. They were always wanting to play with her, which meant badgering her to chase silly plastic balls or, worse still, rubbing her fur the wrong way and pulling her tail.

She found it hard to resist the temptation to give them a good scratch. It would teach them a



lesson they wouldn't forget in a hurry. But they were only young. They'd learn in time, if any humans did.

People weren't crossing the newly-coloured yellow bridge to those tall buildings that glittered in the sun any more, but the canal seemed busier than ever with so many people riding on those funny two-wheeled contraptions of theirs (what even was the point in them? Couldn't they just use their own paws instead?) and others walking and running back and forth. Some wore little furs over their faces, for some reason.

Misty was glad not to be human. They were utterly mad, all of them.

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