

LEVELED BOOK • R

Raining Cats, Dogs, and Other Animals



Part Four of a Five-Part Story
Written by J.F. Blane • Illustrated by Joel Snyder

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In Part Three, Charly put an end to the town's drought. She made it rain on her garden—but also on the Swing Into Spring Parade, which put a smile on no one's face but Charly's.

"I did it! I really did it!" I sang out. "I made it rain."

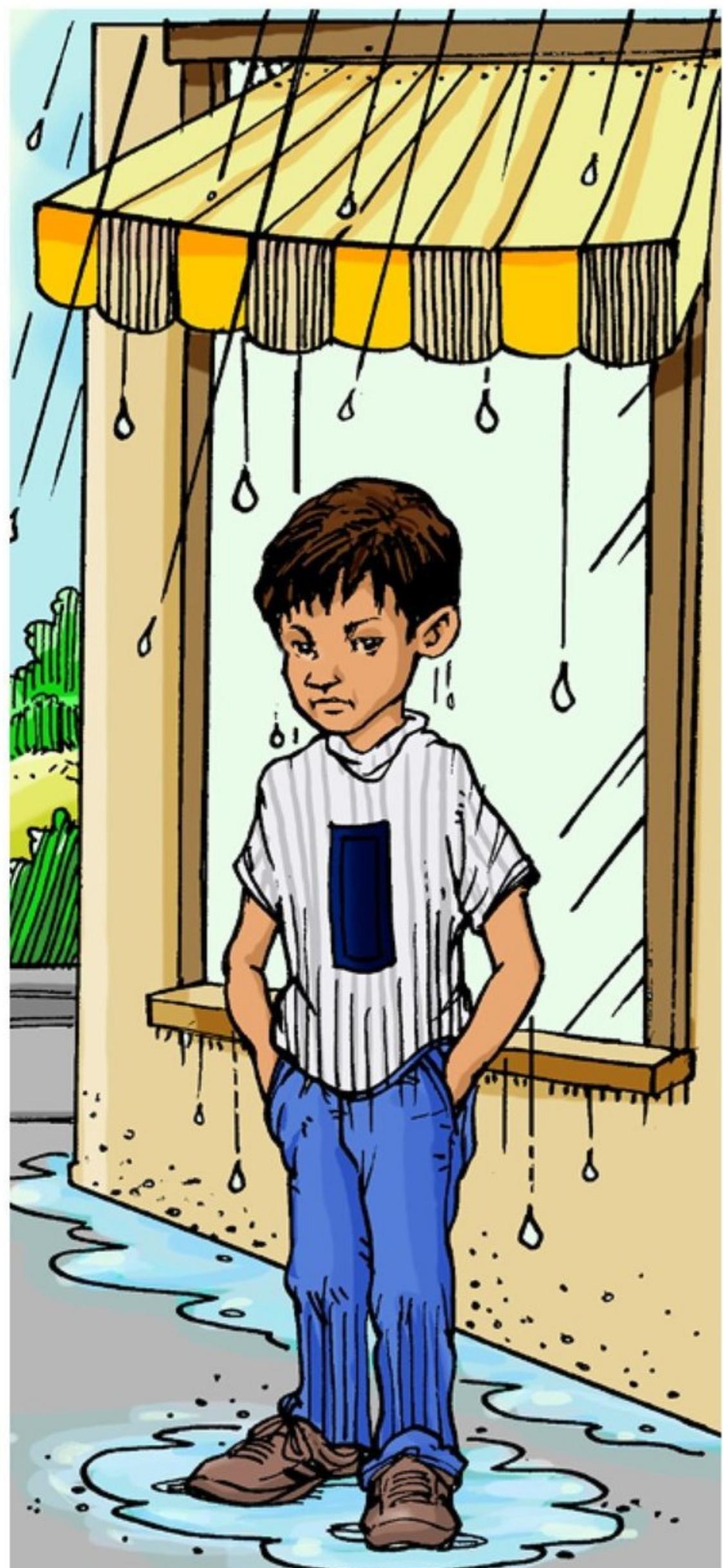
"About that . . ." said Dad.

"I know you helped with the rain stick, and Aunt Dee helped with the rain dance. But I wrote the rain song. And it was my rain-cloud **experiment** with the fan and ice cubes that really did it. Isn't the rain **glorious**?"



Well, if you are a garden of wild oats, watermelon seeds, and apple pits struggling to grow in **parched** ground, rain is glorious. But if you are a town full of people in the middle of an outdoor festival, rain is not so glorious.

"You are always ruining everything!" cried Ethan Jordan, a boy in my class who is also my number one enemy. His wet, New York Yankees T-shirt clung to his chest so tightly it looked like he had pinstriped skin. Then a mob of **sopping** wet fourth-graders yelled out, "Charly did it, Charly did it! Get her."



"Hold on now, kids," said Dad. "Charly didn't make it rain. Her Aunt Delilah had some of her pilot friends do a **cloud-seeding** experiment with special chemicals. They made it rain. Isn't that right, Dee?"

Aunt Dee looked at me, my rain hat dripping, my spirits dampened. "I tried to tell you before that I wasn't able to get my friends to come through."

"But if they didn't make it rain, then . . .," I started, "I really did it? I made it rain on everyone's parade?" I looked at Ethan and the other kids.

Now they looked like they really wanted to throttle me. Before they got the chance, I grabbed Murray, my big old chocolate Labrador, and took off.



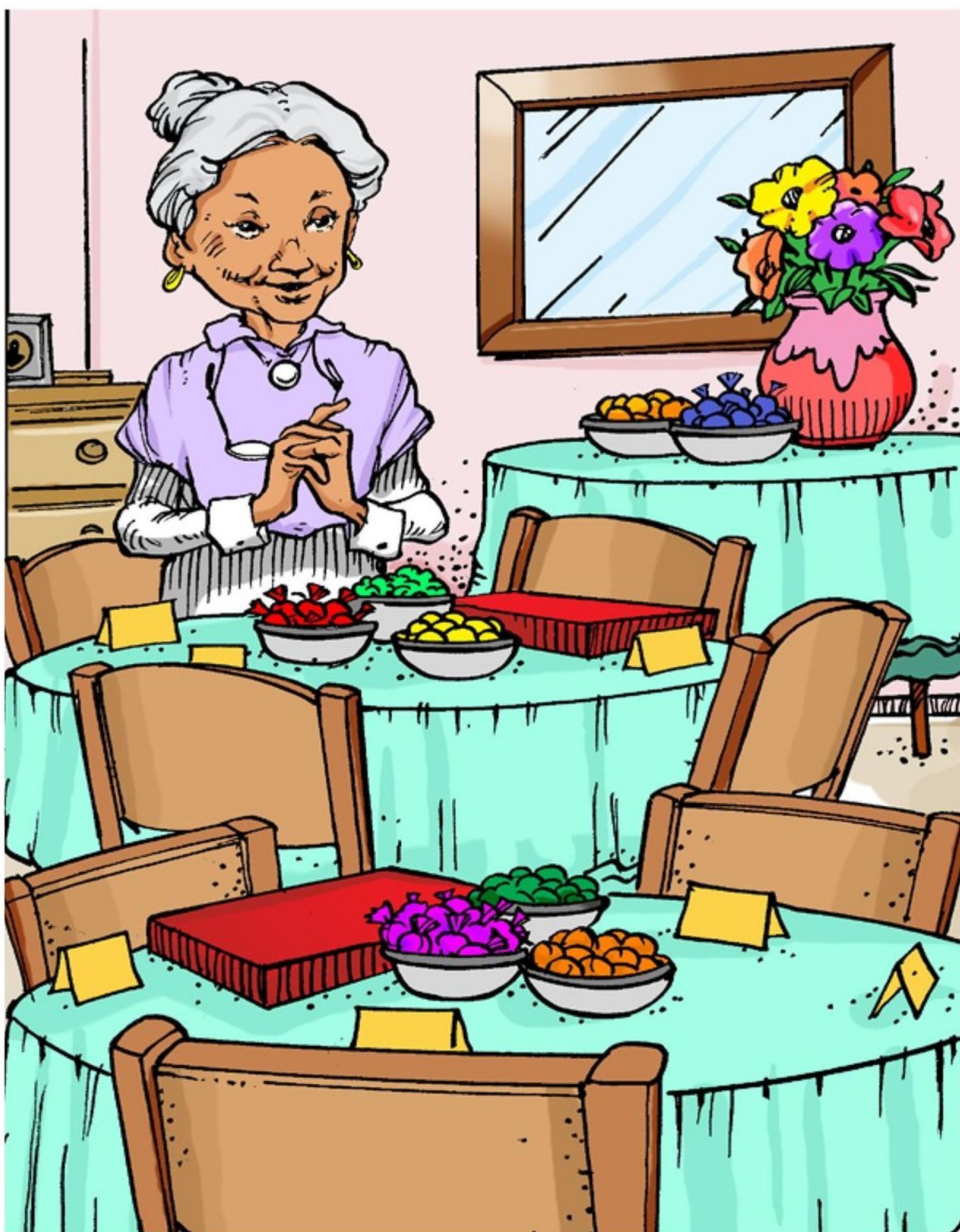
“See you at home, Dad!”

I took a shortcut through the hole in the fence behind Mr. MacGruder’s yard, just to make sure Ethan and the other kids didn’t follow me. I made it home just as the rain let up. I couldn’t keep the grin off my face.



“That was quite a storm we just had,” said Great Aunt Tess as I banged through the door. Her friends from the Scrabble society were coming over that evening for a **tournament**. Gattie’s apartment wasn’t big enough for tournament night, so Dad let her use our house.

Folding tables and chairs filled the living room. Little glass bowls with little balls of hard candies in flavors like toffee and butter rum that don't taste good until you are at least 60 years old sat on side tables. "It was raining cats and dogs," she added.





That's my family for you, always saying these sayings that I don't always understand. Gattie explained that "raining cats and dogs" meant a really hard rain. She said that back in the old days, cats and dogs would sleep on roof tops. When a really hard rain came, they'd all jump down from the roof, so it seemed like it was raining cats and dogs.

Gattie also said that I looked like something the cat dragged in and made me bathe and put on clean clothes. When I came downstairs afterward, Gattie had on her coat.

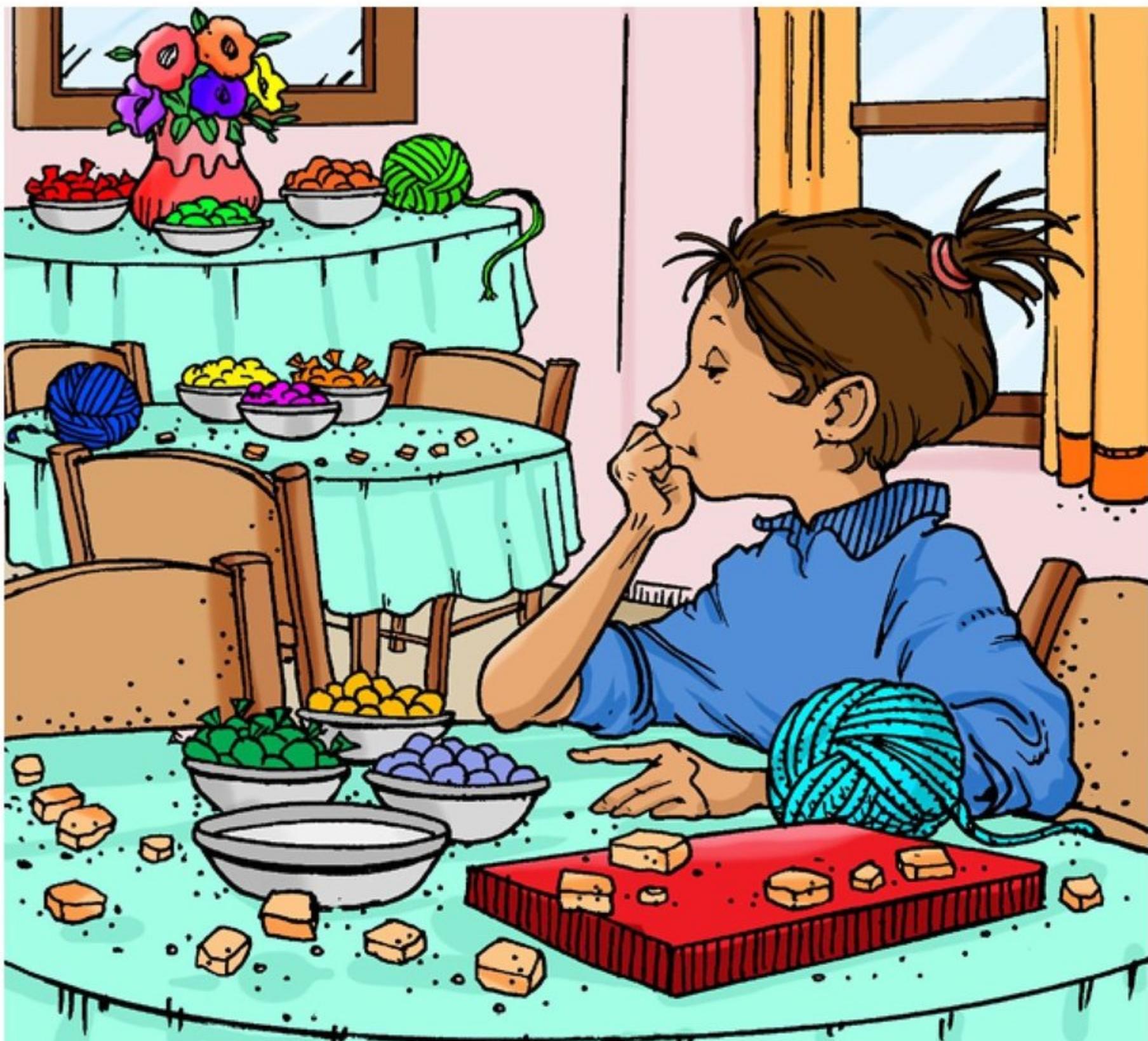
"I'm going to the bakery across town to get some pastries for the party. I'll be back in an hour. Try to keep yourself from looking like something the cat dragged in again."

First off, we don't have a cat. Secondly, I don't know why you would let a cat drag you inside. The third thing is, now I really wanted to find out what something a cat dragged in really looked like.



It was time for another experiment. I opened all the doors and windows. But how would I get cats inside? I cried, "Here kitty, kitty." But no cats came. Then I remembered that cats like to play with string. I scattered some balls of yarn Gattie was using to make a sweater that hadn't even gotten its first sleeve yet. Then I placed saucers of milk in corners of the room. I made trails to the milk with pieces of cheese and Murray's food. Since Murray was sleeping (on the sofa, which he only did when the adults were out), I figured he wouldn't mind my using his food for the experiment. Then I tried again.





“Here kitty, kitty,” I called out. “Come inside. I have toys and snacks for you.” Nothing. Maybe all the cats were sleeping? Maybe I needed to put up a sign, *Cat Party*. But, no, cats can’t read. Maybe I needed to go to where cats hang out and invite them personally. I was about to hop on my bike and head over to the garbage cans behind the restaurant on Main Street when a little gray cat with white paws leaped onto the kitchen windowsill.

"Meow," she purred. It seemed like she was saying "Hello."

"Meow," I said back. I hoped she understood that I meant, "Welcome, little kitty."

She did! In came the kitty, slowly. She nibbled a piece of cheese. Then I picked up a ball of yarn and **dangled** an end above her. She tried to grab it, and I pulled it away. She tried again and again. Up, down, up, down.



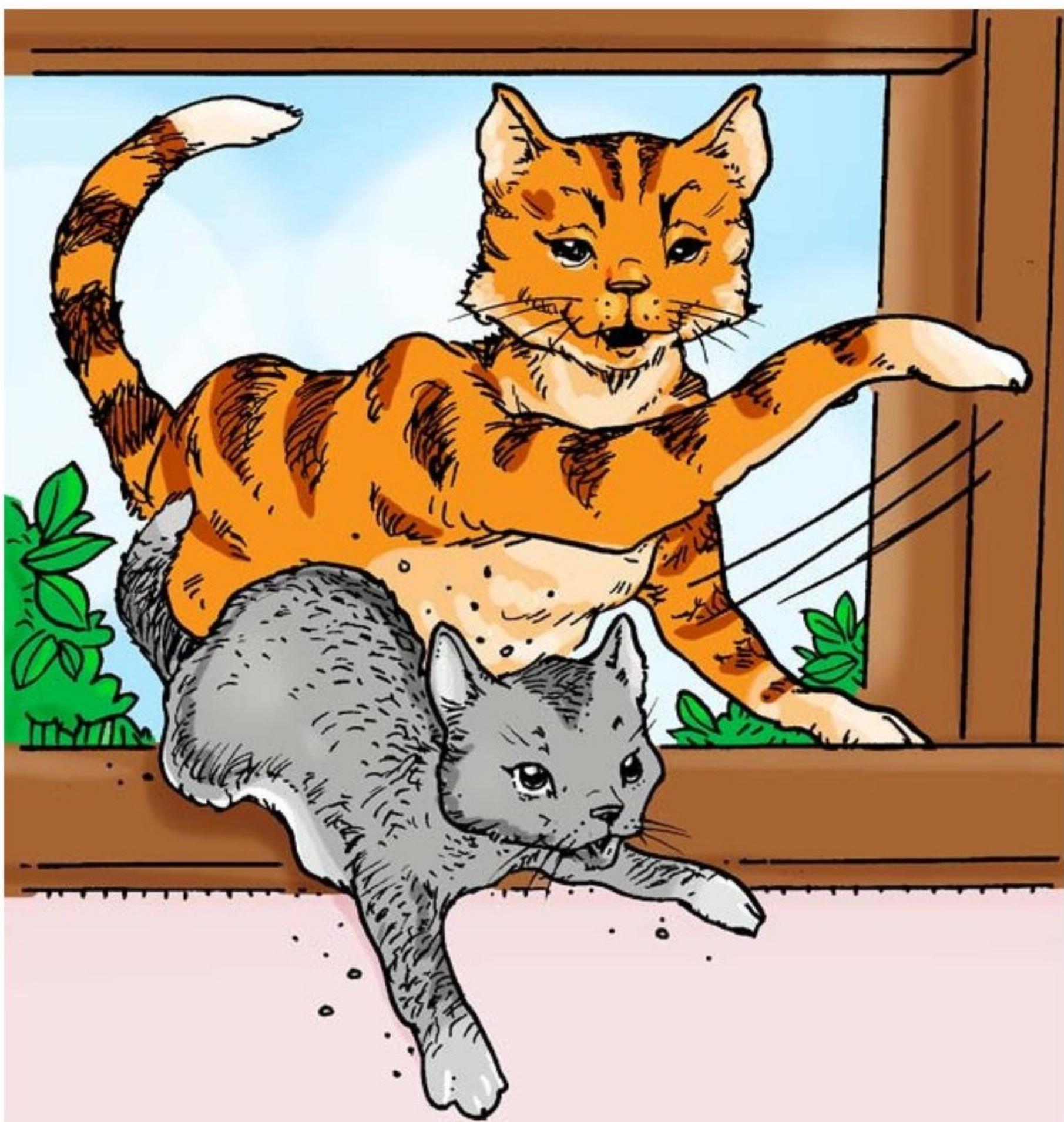
We played at this game for so long I almost forgot that I was doing an experiment. That's when I realized the kitty hadn't dragged anything in with her. I wondered how I would get her to go out and come back in dragging something.

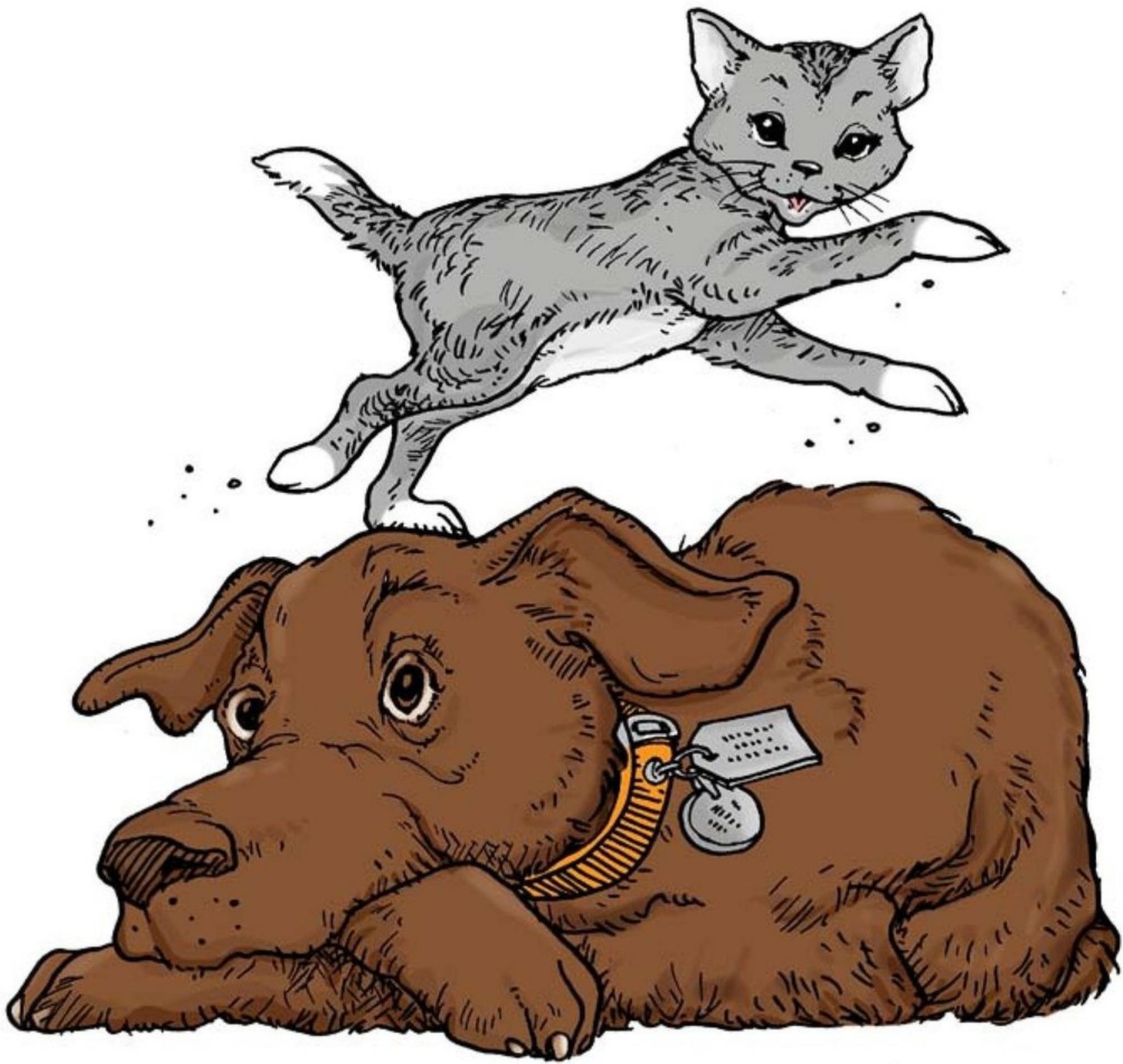
Then, the kitty yowled and hissed. I looked around the room. Cats! They appeared everywhere!



"Okay, time to find out what cats dragged in," I said. (I had no idea how to say that in purr-sian, which is the name I made up for cat language.)

The little kitty ran off. I looked around the room. That's when I saw him—a giant tiger-striped tomcat. The little kitty tried to dive past him out the window, but his paw swatted her back inside.





The little kitty let out a sound that would have made a tiger proud. The tomcat dove at her like a jaguar, and they ran around the room in circles. The little kitty leapt straight up to the ceiling. Now, if she had stayed up there I might have avoided what happened next. But that crazy cat landed right on sleeping Murray's head! The dog woke up and growled, the cats yowled, and I howled, "Stop!"



Now, up-ended tables and a floor littered with hard candies that nobody eats anyway wouldn't have been a terrible result for a science experiment gone **haywire**. But during the cat and dog chase, a bunch of squirrels and a family of **freeloading** raccoons chowed down on the trails of Murray's food! Murray, doing his duty as a watchdog, stopped chasing the cats and went after the squirrels and raccoons. What a mess they made! No wonder they're considered wild animals.



Fortunately, (well, maybe not) another uninvited guest arrived at the party—a skunk. The skunk let loose a spray of skunk juice that set off another round of yowling, growling, and howling, plus some screeching and shrieking. The cats and dogs and squirrels and raccoons and skunks and who knows what other wildlife thankfully took the chase outside.



I know I should have left a note for Dad and Gattie saying where I was going, but I didn't have time. Besides, I had no idea where I was going. I hopped on my bike and chased after the chase.



Where will the chase end? What about Charly's garden? Find out in, "Let a Smiley Face Be Your Umbrella."

Glossary

cloud-seeding (adj.)	relating to the use of chemicals to cause rain clouds to form (p. 5)
dangled (v.)	hung loosely (p. 12)
experiment (n.)	a scientific test (p. 3)
freeloading (v.)	living off someone else's things without sharing the responsibility of getting them or paying for them (p. 17)
glorious (adj.)	very enjoyable or so beautiful as to make someone feel joy (p. 3)
haywire (adj.)	out of control (p. 17)
parched (adj.)	lacking moisture because of hot weather or no rainfall (p. 4)
scattered (v.)	spread in different directions over an area (p. 10)
sopping (adj.)	really wet (p. 4)
tournament (n.)	a series of games or competitions that determine a final champion (p. 6)

Editor's note:

Charly's adventures span five parts in a leveled book format. Each part of the series can be read on its own, but Reading A-Z encourages using the across-text connections in the five-part series. This is part four.

CHARLY SERIES

1. Charly Did It
2. Charly's New Year's Revolution
3. Charly Dances 'til It Drops
4. Raining Cats, Dogs, and Other Animals
5. Let a Smiley Face Be Your Umbrella

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Part Four of a Five-Part Story

Level R Leveled Book

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