

‘How dare you come here, threatening us. Can’t you see I’m a mother with a small child? It’s not MY debt, it’s HIS! I know nothing about it!’

I wormed my way into the hall and sat at Ellen’s feet, puffing myself up protectively. How I wished I was a dog. An Alsatian, or a rottweiler. It’s terrible having to purr when you want to bark.

The man kept coldly repeating the same words his voice was a monotonous chant against Ellen’s hysteria and John’s crying. Surprisingly it was John who calmed her down by putting his fat little arms around her neck.

‘Mummy talk nicely.’

Ellen’s legs were shivering. The bailiff’s gleaming shoes were squeaking across the doormat. My angel stood in the hall with a golden sword in her hand but no one except me could see her. And Jessica was bolting upstairs with yet another kitten swinging from her mouth.

‘Ellen doesn’t have to let him in Solomon,’ said the angel, and for a moment I feasted on the glorious sapphire light from the angel’s eyes, and basked in the energy streaming from the golden sword. I felt happy to see the angel here in our house, protecting Ellen, happy, and then sad again, devastated that Ellen couldn’t see the angel and wasn’t comforted by any small cat-like gesture from me. The limitation of being a mortal cat was more painful than I could bear. In the pain of my helplessness I did a dreadful thing. In front of the angel. I ran away.

In bitter shame I climbed as high as possible, up the garden wall, across the garage and onto the roof. With my tail dragging I crept up the tiles and sat against the chimney staring far away across the fields to the dark blue hills. I wanted to go home to the spirit world. Seeing the angel had unsettled me, made me homesick.

The sun warmed the brick chimney, and scorched my glistening black fur. My whiskers felt hypersensitive, and the tips of my ears burned. I, Solomon, was a failure. Being a cat was too difficult. Sometimes my sleek black body was enjoyable, when it belted up and down stairs or flopped blissfully in a chair, and when Ellen was stroking me. But inside I was a big shining lion of a soul, too big to fit inside a small black cat.

When I heard Joe's car squealing to a halt inside the house, I sat up anxiously. He got out with a slam that sent flakes of rust flying from his car. His brows glowered at the bailiff's shiny limo in passing, and his aura was purple.

After he'd gone inside, an ominous silence followed, with not even a murmur of voices audible.

'Look at that cat on the roof!'

'Perhaps he can't get down.'

The children were coming home from school, a group of them who often stroked me. Just now I really needed their love and it was tempting to go down. But the front door was opening and Joe appeared looking like an unexploded bomb. The bailiff was with him, and Ellen was there with her shoulders hunched. She still had John's towel in her hands, twisting it into a rope.

'We'll expect your settlement in seven days,' the bailiff said, handing Joe a white paper. Joe passed it roughly to Ellen.

'YOU had better have this.'

The YOU was filled with hateful energy. Joe was on the brink of a storm. Sure enough, as soon as the bailiff had gone, the shouting began.

'YOU get inside!'

'It's not my FAULT,' Ellen screamed as the door slammed shut.

I crept close against the chimney, moving around onto the cool shadow. Thunder always scared me. Now the thunder was inside the house. Even the roof trembled. People in the street paused to listen, turning frightened faces towards the house.

‘He’s at it again.’

‘Poor girl. I don’t know how she puts up with him, and she’s got that lovely baby.’

It was worrying to think of little John in there. Maybe I should have gone into his bedroom and given him some love. And poor Jessica. How wise she had been to have her kittens under the bed. Ellen had moved them twice, and Jessica had determinedly moved them back again one by one. What guts. I imagined her cowering under the bed, suckling my children and reassuring them, during my lonely vigil on the roof. Jessica needed extra food and support at this time. Maybe I should catch a mouse and take it up to her. The sun was turning amber, it must be round about teatime.

‘That cat’s still up there.’

‘If he’s not down before dark I’m going to knock their door.’

The two women marched past with a dog trailing complacently behind. Gazing at the blue hills brought me to dreaming instead of worrying. In my meditative state I remembered the heaven world, and suddenly in my mind was back there, sitting on iridescent cushions of grass and purring out millions of stars. Then I purred them in again. Power stars. Love that would be needed. And they were all for Ellen, every single one.

The sound of the front door opening jolted me back to earth. Joe was leaving – again. He was hurling books and clothes into the car, and pairs of boots and a kettle. There was no sign of Ellen. Not a sound. Not a cry from John or a meow from Jessica.

The car wouldn’t start.