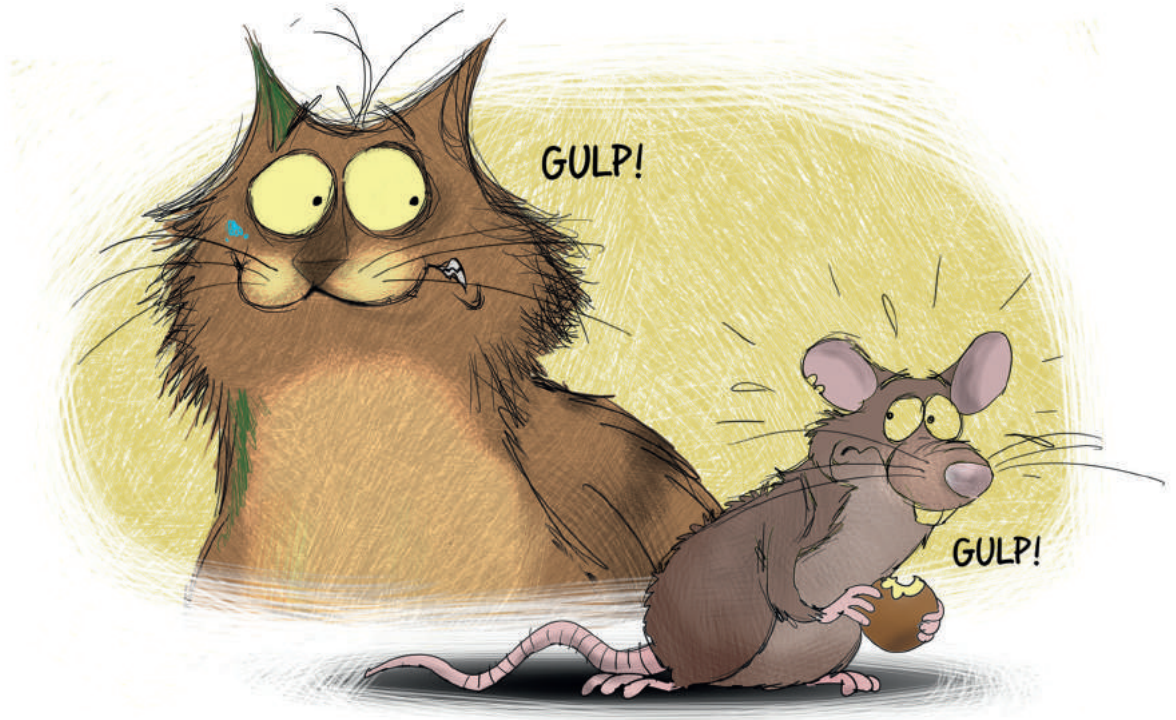


Not a Cat speaking

Álvaro Magalhães
Ilustração de Carlos J. Campos



Troubles at home



Picasso woke up in the morning and stretched. He was starving, of course. He had been on a diet ever since the time he tried to jump onto the kitchen counter and couldn't make it. Such a young cat should nail a jump like that.

The day before, he had eaten more or less half of what he was used to eating. Therefore he should have lost half of something.



Van Gogh showed his head at the window.
“Good morning! What’s new?”

“The only thing that’s new is that I must be slimmer. I didn’t eat almost anything yesterday. Can you see the difference?”



“I’ve never seen you thinner or fatter” Van Gogh said after observing carefully. “I think you look exactly the same. What if you weigh yourself?”

“There’s no need. I just have to jump onto the kitchen counter. If I can, it means I’m thin, if not, I’m fat.”

Picasso jumped towards the kitchen counter and couldn't reach the top. He was fat.

"I'm doomed" he said. "If I can't reach the kitchen counter, I won't get to the leftovers on the plates or the food that's defrosting. I'll have to stay down here, just smelling it."

"So, aren't you on a diet?"

"But if I don't eat, I may get ill. One thing is to eat less, another is to starve to death. What is Sofia doing? By now, I should have some biscuit in my bowl."

Sofia was in her workshop listening to music and doing yoga.



"She's doing those movements with her head down and twisted body." Van Gogh said "She doesn't like being disturbed when she is doing that."

"Oh, that! I know. She has been doing that for so long and she still cleans herself."

"That's true. Two-paws are really dumb!" Van Gogh agreed.

Picasso went to Sofia's workshop, who was in the lotus position, and started rubbing his head gently against her. She got a fright, fell to the side and knocked over a painting, which knocked down another, which knocked down another, which knocked down a table with lots of small items on it.



Sofia was about to explode. Picasso miaowed, trying to explain but she didn't get it. Worse than that, she decided to punish him.



“You’ll stay outside until I finish work. You won’t ruin anything else” she said.

But still he went on, miaowing in his own defense. She opened the door and shoved him out into the garden.

Van Gogh came out of his doghouse and met him outside.

“Grounded again? And colourful...”

“Shut up. It’s so cold. And I had nothing to eat.”

“You made her fall. She spilled paint and damaged a painting...” Van Gogh said.

“And?” Picasso said. “They are always falling over. Can’t you see? They are missing two paws, they don’t have stability. How many legs do chairs have?”

“Four like us.”

“And tables, sofas, beds, cupboards. How many legs do they have?”

“Four, four, four. Four.”

“And how many legs does a centipede have?” Picasso continued. “It’s a good idea to have many legs. And how lots legs do spiders, caterpillars and all those guys who never fall over have? The more the merrier. And they only have two, poor things. They can’t even stand up right.”



The weather was good and Picasso lay on the grass.

A spotted-cat appeared on the top of the wall.



“Hey mate. Aren’t you related to the cat who lived in this house? What was his name?” he said.

“Matisse.”

“Yes. You have a spot just like his on your tail.”

It isn’t a spot, it’s paint.

But he was my father”

Picasso said.

“I know” said the spotted-cat. “I came here once when I was little. My father was your father’s brother and I’m your cousin. Your father was a stay-at-home kind of cat, like yourself, and my father was...”

“A kind of tramp-cat?”

“Free, mate. Free as the wind that blows everywhere. So am I.”

“OK!”

“I’m taking care of something down the street and I’ll be right back to say goodbye.” The spotted-cat said. “See you, cousin.”

“Bye, bye.” Picasso answered, turning up his nose, suspiciously, Cousin! He had never seen him thinner or fatter.