

Greedy Cat at the Market



by Joy Cowley

illustrated by
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Ready
to Read

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kia ora (kee-a orah): a greeting

For more support with pronunciation, go to www.readytoread.tki.org.nz
to hear an audio version of the text.

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“Nan will be here soon to get Poppy,” said Mum.

“Oh, no,” said Katie. “Greedy Cat won’t like that. He’s good friends with Poppy now.”

Poppy had been staying at Katie’s house while Nan was on holiday.

“Can we have a goodbye lunch?” Katie asked Mum. “Dog biscuits for Poppy, cat biscuits for Greedy Cat, and sandwiches and a cake for us. Nan loves cream cakes.”

“That’s a good idea,” Mum replied. “We’ll buy a cake at the market. We can take Poppy with us. She could do with a walk. I’ll tell Dad.”



Katie got Poppy’s lead. Greedy Cat rubbed his head against Mum’s legs. “Meow. Meow.”

“No! You’re not coming. You can stay here with Dad. The market is not a good place for you,” said Mum, closing the door and shutting Greedy Cat inside.

Mum and Katie walked with Poppy to the market. Katie could smell sausages.



“Kia ora!” called the hot dog man.

“Nice morning!” said the woman at the vegetable stall.



They came to the stall that had Nan’s favourite cakes. While Mum chatted with the stallholder, Katie looked at all the different cakes. There were so many shapes, sizes, and flavours – some had icing, some had decorations on top, and some were filled with cream and strawberry jam. Katie couldn’t decide which cake was her favourite.



Meanwhile, back at home, Greedy Cat could also smell sausages ... His tail twitched, his whiskers wobbled, and his mouth dribbled. It was too much for him. He plopped out of the window and stomped down the street. "Meow! Meow! Meow!"



Poppy's ears went up. She knew that sound. Katie knew that sound, too. Sure enough, through the crowd, she caught a glimpse of ... a large orange cat.

With a happy bark, Poppy pulled away from Katie and ran back through the market.



"Poppy! Come back!" Katie cried, but the little dog ran on.

Barking loudly, Poppy ran through the stalls with her lead dragging behind her. The vegetable woman tripped on the lead and fell on a box of cabbages. The man selling bread and buns tried to help her, but his stall tumbled over. Bread and buns went everywhere. People shouted. A baby cried. What a mess!

Mum turned round. "What is going on? Where's Poppy?"

Katie blinked away tears. "Poppy ran away. I think she saw Greedy Cat. We have to find her," she cried.



They searched and searched, but the market was crowded and there was no sign of the little white dog. Mum put her arm round Katie. "Don't worry," she said. "People will have seen her. Let's walk around and ask."

But no one seemed to have seen Poppy. The people with the T-shirt stall had not seen her. The man who sold coffee mugs had not seen Poppy, either.

"She's gone!" sobbed Katie. "What will we tell Nan?"

"Shh!" Mum smoothed Katie's hair with her hand. "You and I will have to be detectives. Let's look at the facts. We know that Poppy has learnt a lot from Greedy Cat."

Katie nodded.

"And where would Greedy Cat go?"

"Where there is food," said Katie.

Mum nodded. "That's right. Now, we've been to the market many times. What food stalls are there?"

Katie counted on her fingers. "Cakes, cheese, fruit, vegetables, bread." She went to the other hand. "Sausages and hot dogs – " She stopped and looked at Mum. "The sausage and hot dog stand!"

"You clever detective!" cried Mum. "Come on, let's go!"

Katie was right. There was Poppy at the hot dog stand. Her lead was tied to the leg of the stand. Behind the little white dog was a large orange cat.

Poppy was very pleased to see them. She barked and wagged her tail.

The hot dog man waved his fork. "I guess these animals are yours," he said.



"Greedy Cat! You are so naughty," shouted Katie. "How did you get here?"

"I might have known!" cried Mum. "He must have jumped out the window!" She turned to the hot dog man. "I'm so sorry!"

The man laughed. "They look as though they belong here. The dog's a 'hot dog' after all that running about, and the cat's like a big sausage with legs!"

Katie didn't think the man was funny. She picked up Greedy Cat while Mum bent over to untie Poppy.

Mum asked the man, "Do we owe you anything?"

"They're a greedy pair," he said. "They ate five sausages. The cat ate three. The dog ate two."





Mum paid for the sausages, and they walked back home. Katie carried Greedy Cat, whose whiskers smelled of sausages. Mum had Poppy's lead in one hand and the bag with the cream cake in the other.

Sure enough, when they got home, they could see that the window by the front door was open. Mum shook her head. "It's just as well Poppy is going back to Nan's place. Greedy Cat has been teaching her naughty tricks."

Katie hugged Greedy Cat. "That wasn't a naughty trick. He just wanted some food."

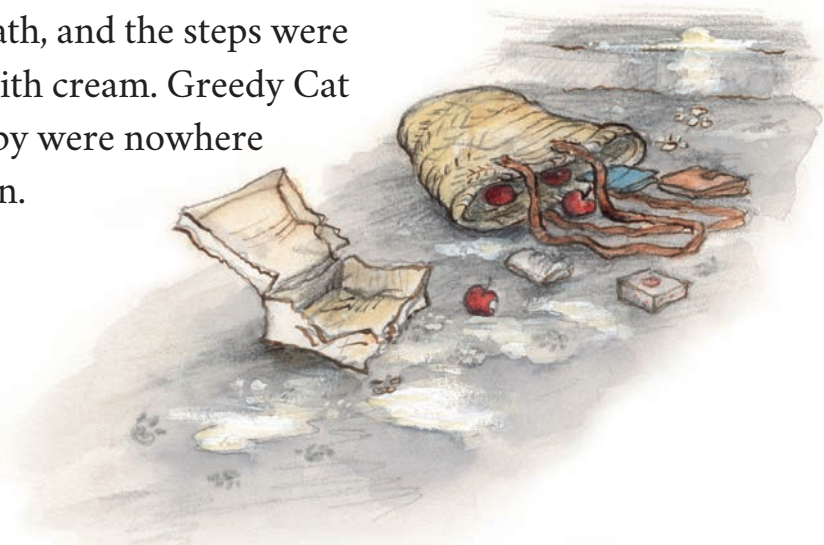


Mum laughed as she unlocked the door. "He's a rascal," she said. "Now, come and help me make the sandwiches."

When it was time to set the table for lunch, Mum frowned. "I think I've forgotten something ...," she said. "Katie, dear, what did I do with that cream cake?" For a while, they were silent ... then Mum's eyes opened wide. "Oh, no! I put my bag down on the step when I unlocked the front door!"

Katie ran out, with Mum close behind.

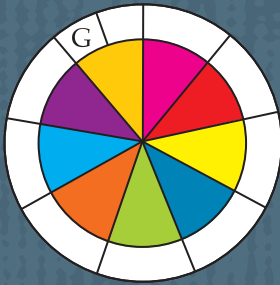
There was Mum's bag. The cake box, empty and squashed, was lying on the path, and the steps were greasy with cream. Greedy Cat and Poppy were nowhere to be seen.



“Oh! Those animals!” cried Mum. “What am I going to give Nan for lunch?”

Katie giggled. “Nan can choose –” she said, “cat biscuits or dog biscuits!”





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