

THE CAT AND THE HAT

The wind blew hard, carrying the hat in its wings.

Smoke curled from chimneys, wispy trails of grey that smelt of paper and wood.

The street was deserted, save for the cat under the oak tree, shivering in the biting wind.

It was a cold morning; the sun had disappeared, and all the townsfolk seemed to have done the same.

The first fallen leaves of the season swirled around the cat, which looked uninterested.

The wind grew in strength and the hat flew higher, its black brim dancing to the portentous music of the howling wind.

Still the cat did not seem to care; it watched listlessly as the hat floated, slowly weaving its way towards it.

Then the wind changed, and the hat started to drop. It twirled briefly before coming to rest on its side next to the cat.

The wind had almost died down; gone but for a few last gasps.

A small noise arose from the hat- an almost imperceptible squeak. The tabby looked on curiously.

Then it came again.



The cat arched its neck towards the hat, sensing something that stirred deep within the crown. It inched closer.

From the depths of the wads of paper stuffed into the crown of the hat came another sound. A mewl.

The cat inched even closer.

More mewling emanated from the bowels of the hat; louder each time.

The cat suddenly seemed to come alive, as though taken over by a primeval force. It batted at the paper, and what was buried within.

The clump of tissue paper was wedged deep, but the cat clawed frantically at it. Eventually a tiny furry head, and then a body emerged.

It looked barely alive.

The creature mewled again, its eyes slowly opening to reveal a pair of baby blues.

The cat picked it up by the scruff of the neck, and ran across the street.

Then the sun came out, cloaking the street with warmth and light.

All was well.



Asha Praseedam

Dr Asha Praseedam is a Psychiatrist based in Cambridge, UK. She is a Trivandrum Medical College graduate and has lived and worked in Cambridge since 1998. In addition to writing poetry and fiction in her spare time, she also enjoys Indian classical dance

