



by THE ETWINNING  TEAMS

EVEN THE CAT WITH ANGER ISSUES CAN HEAL

Once upon a time, there was a magical cat named Ernest.

Ernest was a black super lazy cat with anger issues. He had soft fur and small paws. He was a small cat his whole life.

Once Ernest fell asleep and had a dream about a magical place. In the dream there was a married couple trapped in a golden bird cage with no way out. The woman in the couple had a white dress with a white scarf. The man had a black hat and a suit. They were dressed like they came from the 70s. The couple was holding hands and were happy because they were together.

The magical place had a space-like background with stars and a shining moon. Ernest was very interested about how they got into his dreams. He asked them their names and they answered, 'I am Milan and this is my wife Marta .' Why are you flying ?' Ernest asked. And they told, 'A dark monster came and trapped us in here.'

The cage shone in the moonlight, and the couple's eyes looked quietly sad. Ernest had never seen people inside a dream before — especially not people dressed like they were from the 1970s. He walked slowly toward the golden cage where Milan and Marta sat. Their faces looked tired, but they were still holding hands. It was a small sign of hope. The dream around them was strange and beautiful. Stars floated in the dark sky, and the moon gave a soft, silver light. But the air felt heavy. Something cold and quiet, like fear, was hiding in the dream.

Then Ernest saw it. In the distance, standing in the fog, was the monster. It was tall, dark, and hard to understand — like smoke or a shadow that had learned how to move. It didn't have a face, but Ernest could feel its eyes watching. It didn't make a sound, but its silence was stronger than a scream. Milan and Marta were clearly afraid. Marta held onto Milan's hand tighter. The monster had trapped them in the cage, and it was still close by — waiting. Ernest wasn't sure what to do. His heart beat faster, and his small paws shook. He didn't have any magic. He was just a cat in a strange dream. But something inside him felt different.



It wasn't power. It wasn't magic. It was something else. Maybe it was courage. Maybe it was kindness. Or maybe it was just the feeling that someone had to help. Even though he was scared, Ernest took a step forward. Then another. The air around him felt colder and heavier with every step, but he didn't stop. The monster didn't move. It didn't need to. Its silence filled the dream like a thick fog. But Ernest kept walking.

Now he could see Marta more clearly. Her eyes were tired, but still full of something bright — maybe hope. Milan didn't speak, but he held her hand tightly, as if to say, "I'm still here." As Ernest got closer, the dream began to change. The fog moved like slow fingers, and the stars above started to flicker. But at the same time, something warm grew inside him.

It wasn't magic. It was memory. It was love. It was life. The monster stood still. It didn't understand. No one had ever walked toward it before. Its shape started to shift. The smoke around it moved in a strange way. For the first time, the monster looked unsure...

Ernest took another step forward, his small paws barely making a sound on the glowy ground of the dream. The monster hesitated, its smoky form flickering like a candle about to go out. Ernest's heart kept beating louder, but he kept his eyes fixed on the cage, on Milan and Marta.

Suddenly, a soft glow began to spread from Ernest's chest- it wrapped around the golden bars of the cage, making them shimmer and hum softly- giving Milan and Marta hope. The cage's lock, once unbreakable, began to loosen, golden threads slowly splitting apart. The monster hissed—a sound like wind through dead leaves—but it was losing strength. Ernest's light grew stronger, pushing the darkness back, turning the shadowy edges of the dream into something softer, less frightening. Ernest reached the cage and brushed his small paw against the bars. The golden metal melted away like morning frost under sunlight. Milan and Marta slowly stepped out, their smiles quiet but filled with relief and gratitude. "We're free," Marta whispered, her voice trembling. Milan nodded, squeezing her hand gently. The monster shrank back into the fog- just smaller this time. No one would have thought just the simple courage and kindness of a little cat could break a monster's power.

"Thank you Ernest." Milan whispered, "You saved us" Marta added softly

The dream slowly began to fade, moon slipping behind the horizon. Ernest felt his body falling, softly drifting back into his own cozy world.

THE MIRROR HOUSE MYSTERY

It was a gloomy Friday evening. A storm was approaching, the sky was dark and the clouds were even darker.

Fabiana decided to explore a shabby, old, abandoned house at the end of a dead end street near the forest with her friends after school. They met at her house and immediately after dinner they went to the abandoned house down the street. The closer they got to the abandoned house, the more uneasy Fabiana felt. They had heard scary stories about this house before. Most of these stories happened in October when teens disappeared after visiting the house. Afterwards they found themselves in front of the rusty, iron gates of the house. Fabiana felt chills running down her spine.

They stopped in front of the main door when they heard screams. At first they were afraid to enter, but they dared to step over the threshold of this house. But as soon as they entered, the door slammed behind them and locked them inside.

Now they were trapped in a house full of mirrors.

When they realized Erik was gone, everyone froze. “Erik?!” Fabiana shouted, looking around in panic. “He was right behind me!”

The three friends huddled together, their eyes darting from mirror to mirror. Suddenly, the glass started to shake—like it could feel their fear. Then, from one of the tall, cracked mirrors came a faint voice. “Help me...”

It was Erik. His image was inside the mirror, but it wasn’t a reflection. He was really in there—standing in a dark, creepy room that didn’t look like any part of the house they’d seen before. Behind him was some kind of shadowy world, where everything looked twisted and wrong.

“We have to get him out!” Leo said and reached toward the mirror. His fingers didn’t stop at the glass—they went right through, like he was touching water.

He paused for a second, then stepped into the mirror.

“Leo, don’t!” Marisol cried out, but it was too late.

Now only Fabiana and Marisol were left, standing in front of the mirror that now just showed their own scared faces. Fabiana’s heart was pounding, and she felt a weird mix of fear and determination. She had to get her friends back. But how?

As she turned to look for another way, something caught her eye. On the wall across from them was a strange mirror—it had no reflection at all. Just blackness. And right below it, on the dusty floor, lay an old, leather-bound book...

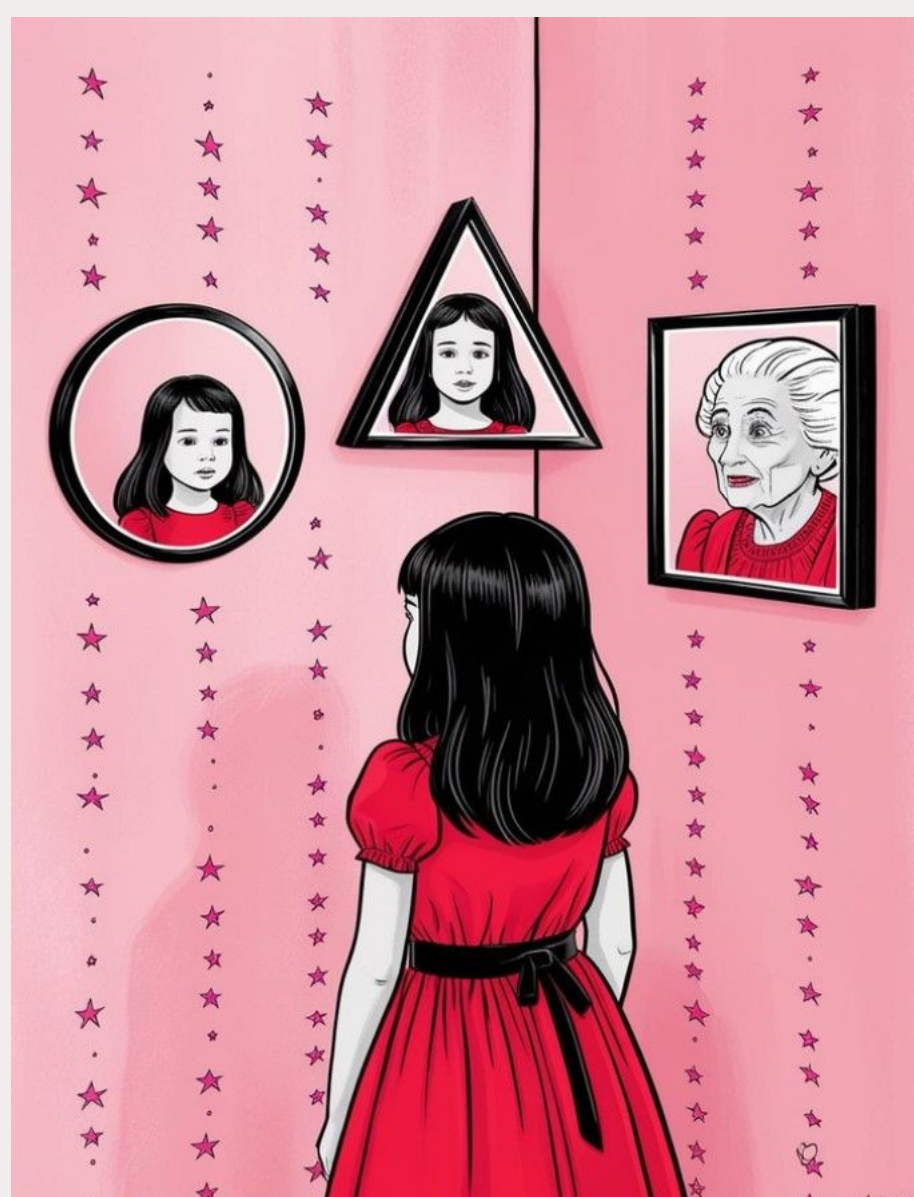
It looked like the book had been there for many years. Fabiana dared to pick it up and blew off the dust. Marisol was still staring at the strange, non-reflective mirror. Fabiana opened the book and read aloud the first words she saw: “Unicorn glitter one two three.”

Suddenly, the mirror Marisol was looking at started to shimmer and it became a pink glittery portal. A glowing unicorn horn slowly poked through. Fabiana and Marisol were in shock. The unicorn stepped halfway out of the mirror. “Follow me if you want to save your friends.” Marisol and Fabiana hesitated, but they knew they had to try. For the sake of Erik and Leo, they stepped into the mirror.

On the other side, they found themselves in a sparkling pink forest. They followed the unicorn down a path until they reached a river. Across the river, everything looked dark and scary — and there, trapped inside a cage, were Erik and Leo! The unicorn said, “Be quick and careful. The witch who caught them is nearby.” Fabiana asked, “How can we rescue them?” The unicorn didn’t answer. It gave them a small glowing potion, then flew away. Without wasting time, Fabiana and Marisol drank the potion. Suddenly, sparkly wings grew from their backs!

They flew over the river and landed near the cage, but just as they tried to open it, they saw the evil witch making her way to the cage. Just then, the unicorn returned. With a flash, it threw a huge glitter bomb at the witch. She got knocked into the river, and disappeared beneath the dark water. Fabiana and Marisol quickly opened the cage and saved their friends. Everyone hugged happily. “Let me take you home,” the unicorn said.

A moment later, they were all standing in front of the abandoned house again. But they weren’t alone—the other kids who had disappeared before were there too. Somehow, they had been saved as well. Together, they left the house behind. Later, they made sure the house was closed down forever, so no one else would disappear again.



UNCLE NELSON'S LAST CHANCE

I am Uncle Nelson. I am in a wheelchair. I am about 60 years old, but I don't really know. I have long gray hair and a stylish beard. Really cool beard. I am here for dealing “flour”. But I didn't do anything bad, I was just helping people out. I am from a small town where only depression lives.

Life in prison isn't that bad as you might think. In fact I am grateful for being here - at least they feed me every day.

But one day, when I was chilling in my cell this guy came to me. He knew that I was selling things out there and he wanted to know if I had something left. So I sold him what he wanted.

And now the problem. He died. I think he had too much and couldn't stand it. “If they find out I sold it to him I will be staying here for much longer. It's not bad here, but I don't wanna die here. I have a nephew, no one else. I got to call him. I can't do this alone. I'm way too old for this”, he thought.

As he sat there in the dark, cold cell, his conscience began to torment him.. “The young man died. Why?” he whispered to the silence, gripping his scarred hands. His gaze was at the dirty floor. His life before was once full of colors. He had a lovely wife, a small workshop where he repaired old clocks - the ticking sound of time was his melody. Then the illness came slowly and cruelly, it took the only love of his life. With her, the colors of his world faded. The workshop fell quiet, the ticking turning into a deafening silence. He was left alone in the city, where sadness hung in the air like a thick fog.

He was looking for a relive, somewhere, where he wouldn't feel the emptiness. Alcohol, pills, and then the “flour”. First only for him, then for others who had the same pain in their eyes. He lied to himself that he was helping them, that he was giving them a moment to forget their own suffering. In reality, he was only extending their downfall, as well as his own. He was earning enough to live but his soul was weak. His once skillful hands trembled, his bright eyes went out.

Now he will pay the biggest prize. Fear clutched his throat at the thought of the long years behind bars. He will never see the sun differently than through this window ! The walls of his cell will not be enough to record the days he will spend behind bars.

He was pulled from his thoughts by the sound of iron keys in the lock of the rusty cell door. A sound that was frightening, but also brought a breath of hope. He had no idea what the sound would bring him. He slowly raised his head and the first thing he saw were his nephew's eyes full of sadness. “Uncle...” Xavier began quietly.

“We have ruined another young life,” Uncle Nelson said in a hoarse, ashamed voice. “We both deserve punishment,” the old man blurted out. “What we are doing... is very, very wrong.”

Suddenly, the dark cell was flooded with golden light, and in its center appeared a woman with long, dark hair. She was wearing a long white dress and on her back were angel wings. Her blue eyes were full of tears, but she seemed calm. Nelson's wife was there, the love of his life. They stared in shock, their breaths stopped in the throat, fear in the eyes, mouths wide open when she spoke. ‘Nelson, I know that my loss hurts you very much. The disease destroyed my body and my soul more and more every day. I am much better now. However, I cannot be completely free. I suffer because of your guilt when I see what you do. Remember, Xavier, how you were taught to repair clocks, how patient and kind he was...

He said, „Please, take me with you.“ But she gently shook her head. „It’s not your time, Nelson,” she said with a soft voice. „There is still something you must do. You still have someone who believes in you,” she said looking at Xavier. The golden light around her began to fade. She stepped back slowly. “Wait... please,” Nelson whispered. But she was already gone.

Tears rolled down his face and he felt the pain in his chest. He looked down and found a piece of broken glass on the floor. Slowly, he picked it up. Xavier rushed to Nelson’s side. “Uncle... it’s not too late,” he said. “We can fix this. We can try.” But Nelson didn’t answer. He looked at the sharp glass. „Don’t,” Xavier begged. Nelson gave him a small, tired smile. „I’m sorry.“ Before Xavier could stop him, Nelson pressed the glass to his neck. He fell to the ground in silence, his blood streaming on the concrete.

He closed his eyes and a familiar looking shadow stepped forward – it was his wife again. Uncle Nelson stood up and started walking towards her. As he came closer, he opened his arms and embraced her. After they hugged, Uncle Nelson kissed the woman’s face. They held each other for a long moment. Then he gently kissed her face. This time, she didn’t disappear.

Back in the cell, Xavier knelt beside his uncle’s body, tears falling from his eyes. Uncle Nelson was gone. But maybe, at last, he had found peace.



FIRE, BLOOD AND STARS

It was a still night under the dark blue sky. Countless stars were shining above. In the middle of a field, two little children named Damon and Stefen were making a plan to run away from home. They sat together in a tent in front of a glowing bonfire. Every day, they wore feathers on their heads, and from the outside, the shadows cast by their headdress looked dangerous. Sometimes, they imagined themselves as free and fearless warriors who were always ready for great adventures. Their escape was supposed to happen soon—until one day, Damon didn't show up at their usual meeting spot.

Stefen waited for a long time. The stars were already high in the sky, and the flickering fire cast dancing shadows on the walls of the tent. But Damon never came. At first, Stefen thought Damon was just running late—maybe someone had stopped him. But with every passing minute, a strange feeling began to grow in his stomach. Eventually, he put out the fire and quietly slipped out of the tent. The forest at the edge of the field looked darker than usual. The shadows seemed to move, as if they were watching him. The wind whispered through the trees and made him shiver.

The next morning, Stefen searched the entire village for Damon, but no one had seen him. Even his house was empty. Only a single feathered headband lay on the doorstep. Stefen picked it up—and knew something was wrong.

After touching the headband, the sun began moving towards the horizon. The moon started rising from the west and continued as it sped up. With the sun rising again, it sped up further. The sun and moon were moving so quickly they blurred into each other. Stefen fainted and woke up in the wild west near a native American village. Many teepees surrounded a ritual campfire where some people were chanting in a language Stefen didn't understand. The people were wearing leather clothes, headbands with colorful feathers, some even had painted over faces with different patterns and colors. Then it clicked, 'they're Indians,' Stefen mumbled to himself. As he was watching the ritual from a hill he was so captivated by it that he couldn't look away.

Suddenly, he heard something in a nearby bush and before he knew it, he had a bag over his head, obscuring his vision. The next thing he saw, after the bag was removed from his head, were Indians dancing around a campfire, celebrating his capture. Stefen tried to look for something to help him escape but he only found where Damond was being kept, he was tied to a pole to the side of the ritual campfire. But Stefen couldn't find an escape.



Before sunset, the village chief, a burly tall man, clad in bison leather, a cape made of bison fur and a bison skull on his head, approached the campfire and exclaimed, ‘Quiet! Young boy, you have been brought here to pay for your crimes of disrespect to our culture and ancestors. You will have to pass a test for you and your friend to be released. Now, begin the ceremony.’ The other Indians brought food to the tables and a massive feast started. The Indians were eating and drinking so much, they all fell asleep from how much they ate.

It gives Stefen the opportunity to look for an escape. He got out of the cage through the opening and cautiously began to approach Damon. He untied Damon and woke him up. 'Damon, I found you. We need to get out of here quickly.' Exhausted, they couldn't believe their eyes when they saw three doors in front of them. Stefen opened the first of them. He found an endless, desolate desert with a bright yellow hue and unbearable heat seeping through the doors. Stefen quickly closed them...

Behind the second door they opened, a raging avalanche thundered, ready to bury them alive. In the last second, they slammed it shut.

“That was close,” Damon exhaled and turned to the final door. He reached out — and with a terrifying crack, the door blew off its hinges. From its depths, an arrow wrapped in black fire shot forth like lightning and pierced Stefen straight through the chest. His body jolted... and collapsed.

“NOOOOOO...!” Damon screamed, dropping to his knees and clutching Stefen’s lifeless body. “YOU CAN’T DIE ON ME!”

Crimson blood soaked his hands and chest. He held him close — more than a friend, a brother.

Something inside him broke. He stood, grabbed Stefen by the ankle, and began to drag him behind. At the threshold between two worlds, he paused and looked up at the night sky one last time. The stars blinked in the cold darkness, blind to the pain below.

Then he saw them — the murderers. The Dark Ones. Tall, twisted figures with glowing eyes and skin like smoke. They were silent. But Damon could feel their hatred burning like fire.

Slowly, he pulled a bloodstained amulet from his pocket — a silver pendant he and Stefen had worn since childhood.

“For the friend you took from me...” he whispered.

The amulet burst into a blinding light. A wave of power surged through him. He felt Stefen’s spirit — not lost, but near.

His sorrow became fire.

The Dark Ones hissed and shrank back.

“May you suffer,” Damon growled. “But I’ll end you now. GO TO HELL!”

And then the door quietly shut behind him. Darkness swallowed the valley as dozens of corpses vanished into the shadows.

WHISPERS OF SWEET DARKNESS

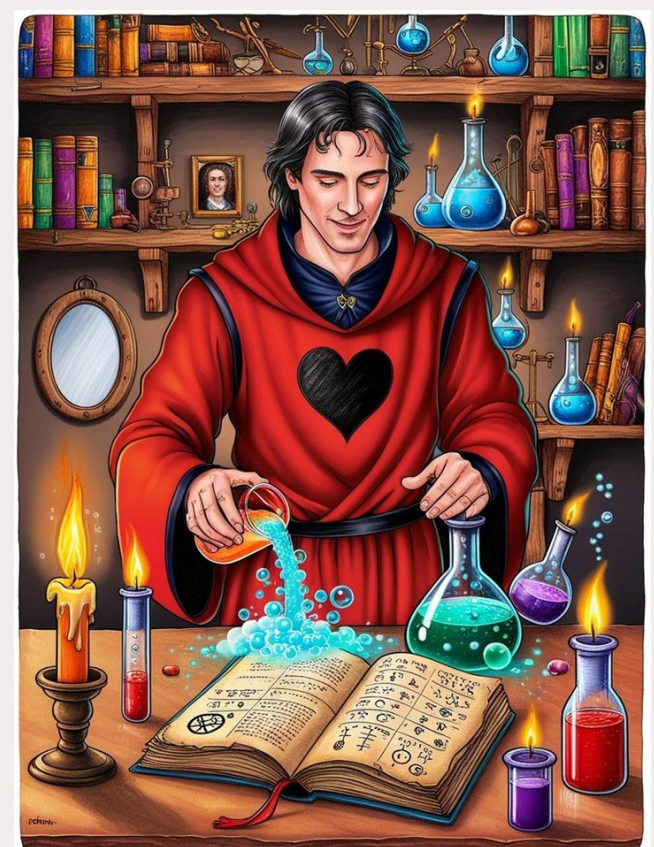
In a dusty laboratory, where the scent of old books mingled with the pungent odor of unknown herbs, stood the old alchemist Elias. His wrinkled face, framed by silver hair, leaned intently over a retort from which emerald green vapor rose. Around him, glass flasks filled with colorful liquids, strange crystals, and dried plants crowded the shelves. Sunlight, piercing through the smoky window, illuminated dust motes dancing in the air and reflected off the brass instruments scattered on the wooden table.

Today, Elias did not feel the usual excitement of discovering new secrets. A restless premonition weighed on his mind, a shadow of uncertainty creeping into his otherwise orderly world. Suddenly, a quiet scratching sound echoed from one corner of the laboratory, a sound Elias had never heard before. He held his breath and slowly turned his head towards the dark recess from where the sound originated. His heart quickened its pace.

Something moved in that shadow. It wasn't a rat, nor any other animal that occasionally strayed into his study. It was a small, wooden chest that definitely hadn't been there before. Its surface was adorned with carved ornaments, intertwined symbols that Elias found strangely familiar, yet he couldn't place them. The small chest slowly opened, as if an invisible hand were lifting the lid. A muffled, pulsating light emanated from within, filling the dark corner with a peculiar aura. Elias watched in astonishment as a small, glowing orb emerged from the chest. It floated in the air, slowly rotating, radiating a soft, calming light that contrasted with the dim atmosphere of the laboratory. What could it be? How did that chest get into his study? And why did it emit such a strange light? Questions swirled in Elias's mind, but at the same time, he felt a strange urge to reach out and touch the glowing sphere. Was it magic? A new kind of energy? Or perhaps something entirely different, something his science had not yet been able to explain? His fingers slowly approached the pulsating light, and at that moment...

...the orb grew brighter and pulled Elias in. Suddenly, the world started to spin around him. He felt wind, light and something sweet in the air – like sugar. Then he landed gently on the ground. It was soft and pink, like a giant marshmallow. Elias stood up and looked around. The sky was blue and pink. The trees looked like cotton candy, and the houses were made of gingerbread. The air smelled sweet, like caramel and chocolate. “Where am I?” Elias whispered.

“Welcome to Candyland!”, said a small marshmallow with a big smile. The magician looked confused. “Candyland? That must be a dream,” he said. “No, you are not dreaming,” said the marshmallow. “You are the chosen one. You must save us from Burger Grease and his fast food army!” “Who?” Elias wondered.



Before the marshmallow could answer, the sky suddenly turned dark. The ground began to shake. Loud noises came from far away. Elias looked up and saw flying soda cans in the sky. They dropped cola bombs that exploded when they hit the ground. Then a huge army appeared. The ground shook with every step. It was not candy – it was fast food! Angry hot dogs, pizza slices with faces, and fried chicken legs marched toward Elias. In the middle of them was a giant burger. His name was Burger Grease. He was the leader of the fast food army. Everywhere they went, they destroyed candy houses. The candy people ran and tried to hide. They could not stop the fast food army because their sweet magic was too weak. Elias wanted to help. He tried using a cold spell to freeze the enemies, but it didn't work. The fast food army laughed and threw a cola bomb at him.

Elias knew he needed a new idea. He remembered a magic potion he had made in his lab. He kept it in his coat pocket. Elias drank it and felt power grow inside him. He turned to the marshmallows and said that they must say a spell together. The candy people and him all stood in a big circle, held hands and spoke the words: "Sweet hearts, sweet treats, candy magic can't be beat! Shine so bright, end this night – bring back joy and stop the fight!" They looked up and suddenly...

...the sky turned a strange, swirling color, like melted chocolate mixed with dark clouds. The flying soda cans started to move faster, and they looked like they had sharp teeth now. Burger Grease grew even bigger, and his eyes glowed red. He let out a loud, rumbling laugh that shook the candy ground. "You think your sweet words can stop me?" he boomed.

Elias felt his legs shaking. The power from his potion was fading quickly. The candy people held hands tighter, their faces full of fear. Just when it seemed like Burger Grease would win, the small marshmallow who first greeted Elias stepped forward. He wasn't smiling anymore. In his tiny hand, he held a single, sparkling candy. "This is the Heart of Sweetness," he said in a brave little voice. "It can only be used in true danger."

He threw the candy towards Burger Grease. It hit the giant burger right in his greasy middle. For a moment, nothing happened. Then, Burger Grease started to wobble. His hard edges softened, and he began to shrink. But instead of turning into something sweet, he turned into something else entirely... something dark and sticky. "Would the Heart of Sweetness be enough?" One of the candy people was in the middle of speaking before he got cut off by a blinding light - Burger Grease was changing shapes rapidly—until, with a final shudder, he collapsed into a harmless pile of soggy fries and lukewarm cola, his power finally undone. A gentle breeze carried the scent of cinnamon through the air, and Candyland began to heal.

Moral Lesson: True courage can come in small packages, and sometimes the most precious things are saved for the most desperate times. Don't underestimate the power of bravery, no matter how small you are.

PABLO’S HIDDEN TRUTH

It was a quiet night when Matilda was sitting in her garden. The garden was peaceful that day, and the only light came from the stars. The air was cool and still. A light wind blew Matilda’s hair away from her face. The smell of roses floated in the air and loneliness filled the atmosphere.

On her lap was a mysterious cat she had found on the street one month ago. She decided to name the strange cat Pablo. He was a very unusual cat, but they quickly became close friends. Even though Pablo had the head of an owl and a cat’s body covered in a strange swirling pattern, he was loved in the whole neighbourhood. But nobody knew where he came from.

That night, as Matilda sat on the bench next to her rose garden, Pablo began to act strangely. He looked up at the sky and made a soft, low sound. He jumped off her lap. Suddenly, a bright light appeared in the night sky. It was glowing, moving slowly above them and it got bigger every second. Matilda stood up. She got scared. She hugged Pablo tighter.

As it got closer, she noticed that it was a big spaceship. Matilda started shivering. She couldn’t move any part of her body. Then a strange creature came out of the spaceship. It walked up to her and spoke in her language. It explained that Pablo belonged to another planet. Matilda was shocked.

The strange creature’s voice was soft but firm as he revealed a secret that shook Matilda to her core. “Pablo isn’t a cat,” he said, eyes gleaming with an otherworldly light. “He’s an alien—one who can reshape his body at will. He got lost somewhere in the vastness of space while searching for his wife. His form spiraled out of control, and that’s how he ended up like the cat you held.” Matilda’s breath caught. She couldn’t find words. Pablo—her curious little feline—was something far beyond her wildest imagination.

Slowly, Pablo stepped closer. His fur shimmered and melted away, limbs stretching and reshaping, until standing before her was a tall, strikingly human figure. Matilda’s legs gave way beneath her, and she collapsed, the world spinning until darkness claimed her.



When she awoke, panic gripped her heart. She wasn't in her room—nor anywhere she recognized on Earth. The walls around her were strange, alien.

Before she could gather her thoughts, a gentle knock echoed through the room. The door creaked open, revealing a tall, handsome boy with a mysterious smile. Matilda's voice broke into a scream—until the boy's eyes softened and he said, "It's me, Pablo. The cat you held in your hands." Her fear melted into confusion, and she sank onto the floor. Pablo knelt beside her, concern evident. "Are you okay?" he asked gently.

Matilda blinked, swallowing hard. "Why am I here? Did I do something wrong?" Pablo's lips curled into a mischievous smirk. "No," he said, "I chose you. To be my wife."

Matilda's heart pounded as she stared into Pablo's human eyes—so familiar, yet so otherworldly. The weight of his words settled over her like a warm blanket in the cold alien room.

"But... my life is here. On Earth. My family, my friends," she whispered, her voice trembling.

Pablo reached out, gently taking her hand in his. "I know. And I don't expect you to forget that. But together, we can create a new life—one that bridges the stars and your world."

Suddenly, the room around them began to shimmer. Walls faded away, replaced by the vastness of space, twinkling with distant galaxies. Matilda gasped, clutching Pablo's hand tighter.

"You saved me once when you found me on that street," Pablo said softly. "Now, I'm here to save you—from a life lived in loneliness. You are stronger than you know, and together, we can face anything."

Tears welled in Matilda's eyes—not from fear, but hope. She smiled, a new courage blooming within her. "Then take me with you." Pablo's smile grew radiant, and as he pulled her close, a gentle light enveloped them both. In an instant, they were soaring through the stars—bound not by planets or species, but by the unbreakable thread of love.

Matilda's adventure was just beginning.