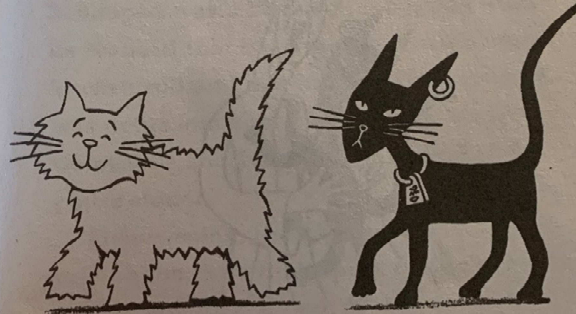


both tripped and fell in a sprawling, whining heap. Sennapod, who had armed himself with the blunderbuss, strode over and glared down at them. He was quickly joined by all the Lightspeeds, and they spoke as one. 'Worms!' they chorused.

12 Humans at Last?

Carrie and Ben threw off their masks and gave a whoop of triumph. They pulled the bandages from their parents, and there were hugs all round. In the middle of this, the forty cats moved silently to the sides of the room, forming a sort of guard of honour. Rustbucket trotted up between them, tail in the air, leading the most beautiful cat the Lightspeeds had ever set eyes on. His coat



was a deep blue-black and he wore a gold ear-ring in one ear. His face was slender, elegant and aristocratic. He regarded everything and everyone with two imperious green eyes.

'Tiddles!' cried a rapturous Pharaoh, and the four-thousand-year-old moggy leaped into his master's arms. A monstrous purr



filled the room. When, at length, the Lightspeeds were able to tear their eyes away from Crusher of Worms, they noticed that all the other cats had quietly disappeared – all except Rustbucket.

'I sent them home,' explained the Pharaoh. 'Their job was done, and now ours is too.'

That was not strictly correct. Mr Lightspeed had to call the police and it took a while to explain the whole story. Sergeant Wattle was not at all sure he believed Sennapod was a Pharaoh, especially when he realized that his crown was made from kitchen roll and a tennis-ball. However, he was polite and kept his doubts to himself. Grimstone and Jelly were carted off to the police station.

That evening, the Lightspeeds had a celebration. Mrs Lightspeed couldn't get hold of any roast hippo, so they made do



with sausages. They retold their adventures endlessly until Mr Lightspeed finally mentioned the treasure. 'I hope you have the map safe and sound,' he said to Sennapod.

The Pharaoh pulled the parchment from his robe and his old face creased with a large smile. 'You may see for yourself,' he said.

Mr Lightspeed carefully opened it up. It didn't look like a map at all. There were just a few hieroglyphs squiggled on it.

'This is the map?' he asked.

'No, of course not. It's the bill for all the bandages I was wrapped in. It must have got caught in them when I was being mummified.'

'Then where's the real map?' cried Ben.

Sennapod smiled at them all. It was obvious he wasn't going to say. Instead, he raised his glass of wine. 'A toast to my loyal friends!' he beamed.

'Friends?' repeated Carrie in surprise. 'Does that mean we're humans at last?'

The Pharaoh frowned slightly. 'Almost,' he admitted. He pushed back his chair and rose to his feet. 'Now, I have something very important to do.' Sennapod swept from the room and went upstairs. A few moments later, the Lightspeeds heard a familiar

bleeping and blooping coming from Ben's room, quickly followed by a cry of despair.

'Argh! I hate Magnificent Marvin! I've been zapped by the evil Mega-monster!'

Want to keep laughing?

Enjoy even more hysterically funny adventures

from
Jeremy Strong

