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Opening Extract from...

The Ralph Steadman Book of Cats

Written by Ralph Steadman

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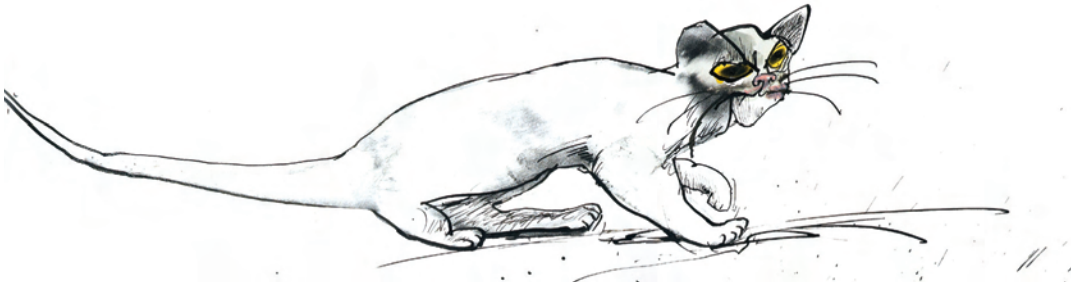
The Ralph Steadman Book of Cats



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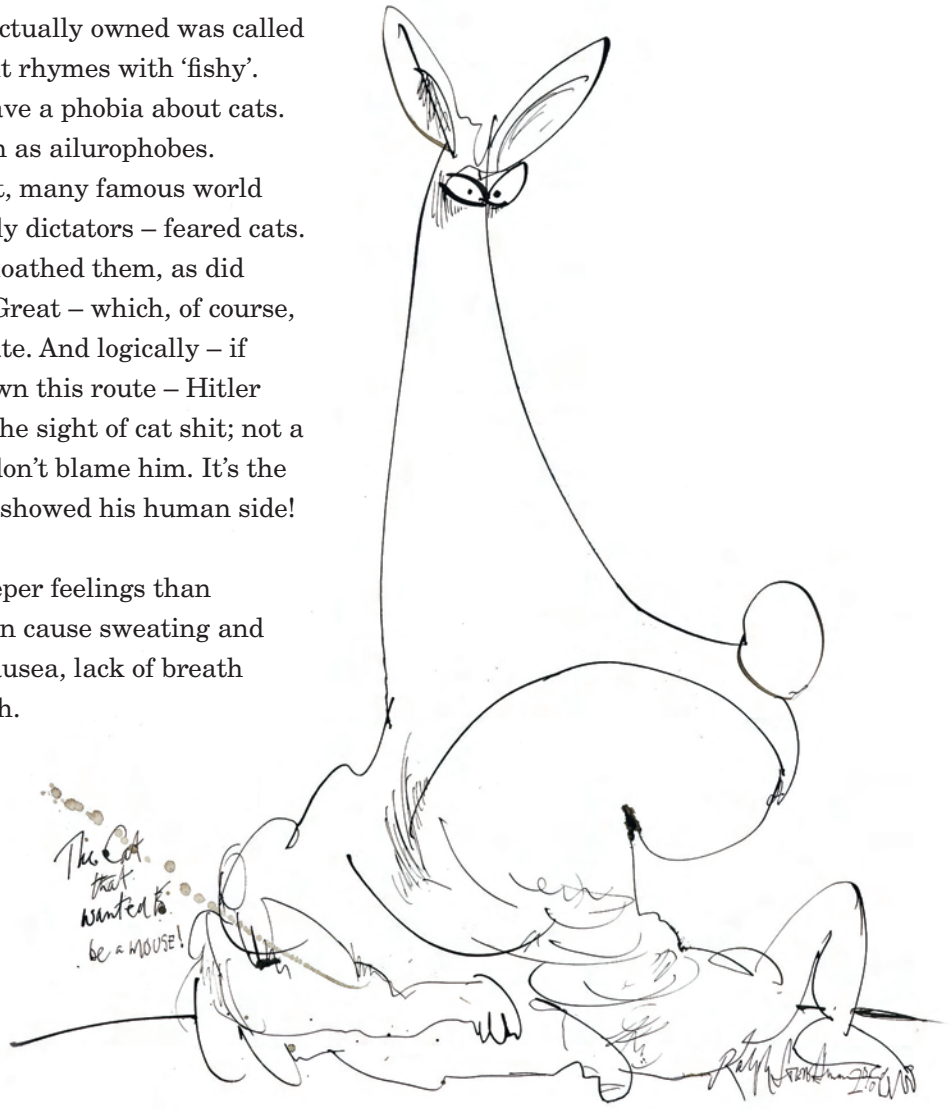
CATS



I am trying to figure out if I like cats, not whether I adore them, love them – even admire them – but whether I can tolerate them at all. But I don't want to appear even to dwell on the subject.

The first cat I actually owned was called Tishy, because it rhymes with ‘fishy’. Many people have a phobia about cats. They are known as ailurophobes. Believe it or not, many famous world leaders – usually dictators – feared cats. Ghengis Khan loathed them, as did Alexander the Great – which, of course, rhymes with hate. And logically – if we continue down this route – Hitler couldn’t stand the sight of cat shit; not a bit of it! And I don’t blame him. It’s the only thing that showed his human side!

Phobias are deeper feelings than ‘dislikes’ and can cause sweating and palpitations, nausea, lack of breath and a dry mouth.



That is a horrible condition to suffer simply because you happen not to like damn cats! They cannot help being cuddly things that wrap themselves around your ankles, because they want to be stroked and made a fuss of, but that is why people get the creeps and wonder what else they want. They don't want anything else. But they don't want to give you anything either! They are smug; they never contribute a goddamn thing to the world and they just want feeding for free. If a cat 'adopts' you, it is a kind of curse. You are supposed to feel grateful because, in a sort of way, they will clean you out of rodents. This they are good at, and they carry out that odious task like slaves, though they are fulfilling a deep craving of their own, so NEVER feel sorry for them; I don't! It is all for them. This soft, purring mammal is probably the single most self-centred beast in all of nature and that is probably why they give us the creeps!




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CAT LINES


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