

## ARTHUR

It wasn't like Arthur to get upset. He had reigned over the household for years and the family pandered to his every whim. He would purr contentedly when scratched behind the ears, revelling in the attention he justly deserved. Thomasina had turned up one day, a half-starved stray, but after some initial concerns she had caused him no trouble, taking a subservient stance before whom she obviously perceived as royalty. Arthur had even enjoyed curling up with her in front of the fire on cold nights.

But then the kittens arrived. Arthur couldn't conceive where they had come from. He had walked into the kitchen one morning to see all the family cooing over a basket in the corner. He advanced warily and ventured a peep over the edge of the basket, but received a vicious swipe on the nose from Thomasina. The family was pushing him away, scolding him as they crowded round the mewling kittens.

Arthur was upset. This was his kingdom surely. He tried sulking and sat facing the wall with shoulders hunched, but no-one took any notice. These intruders had taken over.

The excitement gradually died down but just as Arthur was thinking that all might be well with his world the kittens were on their feet, scampering all over the place. His peaceful existence was once again shattered. He would no sooner settle down for a nice snooze than a kitten would land on top of him, oblivious to the fact that he did not want to play. They teased him unmercifully, so much so that he retreated under the hedge in the front garden and would only come out to snatch a hurried meal.

One morning he ventured out for his breakfast. All was quiet. Where had those pesky kittens gone? It took him some time to realise that they had gone to new homes but at last he heaved a sigh of relief and settled down for a nap in front of the fire. Thomasina sidled in to snuggle up beside him. All was once again well with his world and he settled back into his position as head of the household, but sometimes in his dreams those pesky kittens would once again land on top of him and he would jerk awake, determined this time to defend his territory to the death.