

George's First Christmas

By Dante Harker

George now owned the house.

He was six months old and, once he'd mastered climbing the stairs, retracting his claws when he walked across the fluffy rug and avoiding the smallest of the entertainment – Cry Baby as he liked to call him – there was no stopping him.

Avoiding Cry Baby was perhaps the hardest of his daily challenges; he knew that if he got caught by it he was in for a hug so strong it stole his breath.

It seemed he was meant to just take that, along with the heavy-handed stroking and the creepy aww noises, as the big ones got upset when he slashed out at Cry Baby's face.

George had his routine worked out; he wasn't allowed to sleep on any of the beds, which was rather annoying as he hated missing out.

Still, whenever he did get into a bedroom he made his protest known in as smelly a way as he could.

Instead he had been given his own bed next to the radiator on the landing.

He didn't sleep on it, why would he?

That wasn't the best use of his time.

The better use was pushing the bed around the house trying to find the ideal position where it would cause the most amount of fuss.

His favourite place so far was the, always amusing, middle step of the stairs; he'd had lots of fun with that one, especially from the largest of them, Grumpy, who had taken a good ten minutes to get back to his feet the last time.

The other spot he would have liked to use again but which was now denied to him, thanks to some angrily-placed boxes, was behind the washing machine.

He'd found a hole where hot air came out and decided it would be fun to force his bed into there.

The smoke that came out the next day was less amusing and made him cough a little, but all the running around and noise gave him loads of things to tap, claw and leap at.

He even managed to trip one of the small ones up and set it off crying – job done.

Today was different.

He had been stood by his food bowl for what seemed like an eternity and no one was doing their job.

He needed food and a stroke.

It wasn't difficult.

Normally if it took too long he just rubbed himself around their feet and got in the way of them walking and they eventually someone managed to sort out this simple task.

Today, nothing.

George yelled.

Nothing.

He yelled again and this time it was his, 'if you don't come and do your job I'm taking it out on the small one' scream.

Eventually, Food-Giver, or from today as she would be known, Slow Food-Giver (George wouldn't forget his mistreatment), blustered passed him, no stroking, just food slopped into his bowl and some random noises that didn't sound encouraging.

But then the boxes started arriving, one after another from upstairs.

George didn't want his food now, he wanted boxes.

Every cat knew that if they saw a box they were meant to get inside it as soon as possible.

It was a kitty-cat rule.

George leapt onto the sofa to get a better view and then watched as the Food-Giver sat down and put Cry Baby on her knee.

She then proceeded to open the first of the boxes.

Soooooooo shiny.

What the heck is going on?

Soooooooo shiny.

George didn't know what to do.

He'd never seen anything like it.

One pretty thing after another came out of the magical box; he had to have them.

They were his!

Or, they were in his home, which to him was the same thing.

Must get closer, need to bash them, they need bashing.

The pretty things must be bashed.

Pretty things, pretty things, pretty things!

George crept off the sofa and with the cunning only a cat can muster, he crept nearer.

The whole time he held a watchful eye on Cry Baby to make sure he kept well away from the fat grabby hands; though at the minute the baby seemed to have the same idea as George, that the pretty things needed to be bashed.

I'll just tap it, not jump on it, not yet, just a little tap, don't want to go overboard.

Oh, my god, they've opened another box.

George could barely contain himself, though his excitement had stunned him into freezing like a statue; which was convenient timing as he managed to trip Grumpy as he came into the room with another box.

The box tumbled from Grumpy's hands as he reached out to regain his balance.

The box opened as it fell, showering bright red baubles onto the floor.

I'll tap that one, and then that one and that one, and I'll bash that one.

George ignored the first round of discord coming from the Food-Giver.

He could hear that she wasn't happy but

Must bash, must, look at that, must leap on that, it's mine, I want that one and that one, and I'll

Noooo , George meowed as he was picked up off the floor.

He knew what was coming next.

Whenever things got too exciting he was put out into the hall until all the fun had been taken away.

This wasn't fair, normally he would just sit out there and sulk, well, sulk and make mental notes about how he was going to take revenge.

George sat there and cried.

He wanted to play with the pretty things.

What was the point of there being pretty things if he couldn't jump on them?

He cried some more as he pawed the carpet at the base of the door.

The fibres tore easily, normally this kind of fuss caused someone to open the door.

If he was lucky they would let him back in but, if not, he was moved to the bathroom upstairs where he didn't even have

carpet to ruin.

Today neither of these things happened.

Instead he could just hear boxes opening and the entertainment-making busy noises.

He cried some more, made a note to poo on all their beds, steal the sponges from the kitchen sink and sit on any newspapers or books that were put anywhere near him.

Tired of meowing and the carpet in such a state that there was little left to claw, George's eyes closed and he drifted off to sleep.

When he woke, Food-Giver was stroking his back and encouraging him to go into the room.

The boxes had gone and she was holding something in her hands.

It was a string bag of something, or several things, some smelled of food, the others were shiny.

George tapped at the bag and heard the sound of a bell rattle inside.

Normally, he would've been excited by the thought of food and rattling things but no matter how much Food-Giver shook the bag he could not take his eyes off the wondrous sight that stood before him.

A huge tree, covered in the most amazing lights and baubles and bells.

He could barely move he was so excited.

He wanted to run at it, but he knew that would just get him sent to the bathroom.

So, for now, he tapped the Food-Giver's bag of goodies and feigned interest.

Then he slept to build his strength, for tonight, he had a tree to climb.
