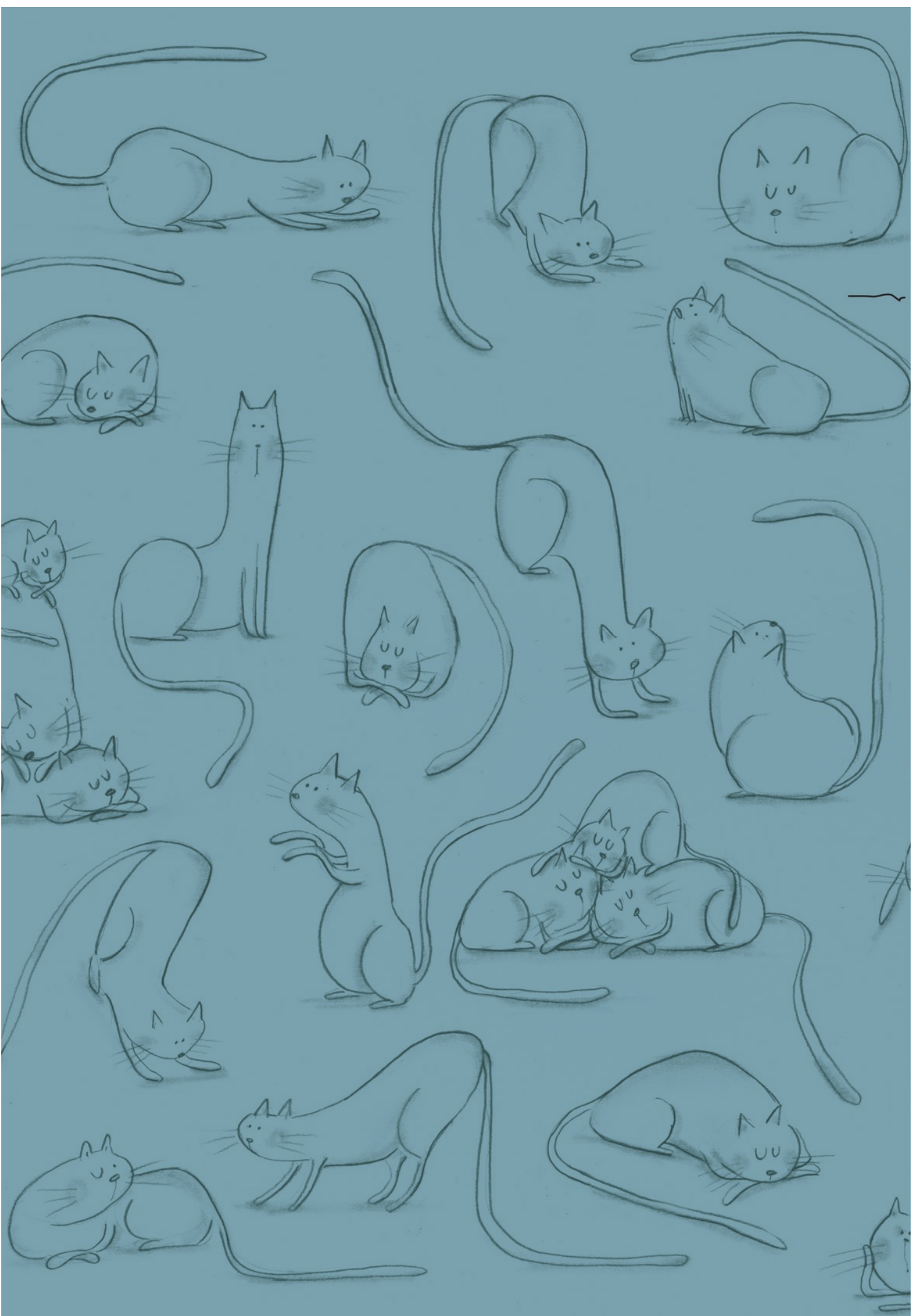


Miss Hazeltine's
Home for SHY
and Fearful CATS

by Alicia Potter • illustrated by Birgitta Sif





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Alfred A. Knopf • New York



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Summary: Miss Hazeltine opens her home to cats who need help learning how to be brave, and their new skills are put to use when she finds herself in a bind.

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v3.1

*To my feral foster kittens,
who inspired this story,
and to Yodel, who stayed*
—A.P.

*To my purr-fect little girls,
Sóley and Salka*
—B.S.





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First Page

About the Author and Illustrator



When Miss Hazeltine opened her Home for Shy and Fearful Cats, she didn't know if anyone would come.

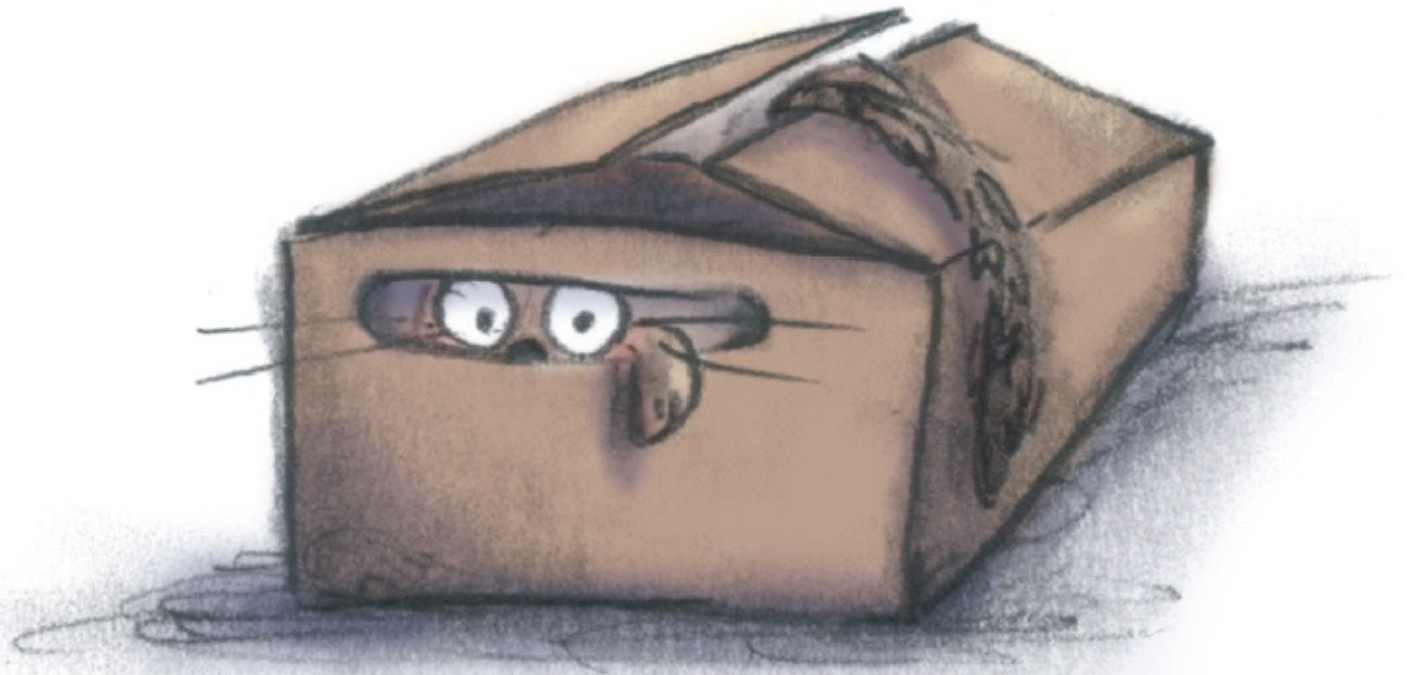
But come they did.



“He runs from mice!”



“She’s scared of birds!”



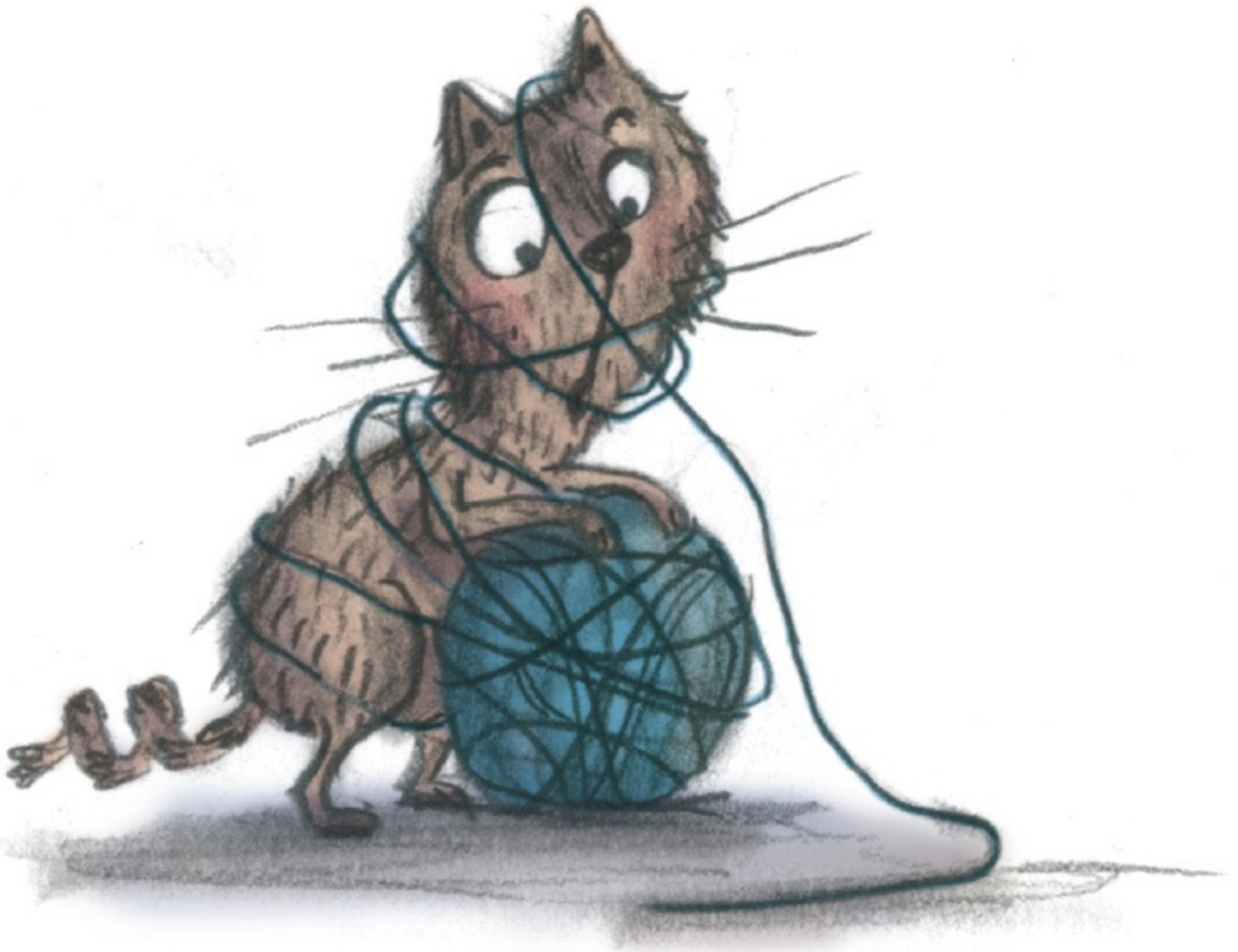
“Can’t pounce!”



“Won’t purr!”



“Hopeless!”



“Worthless!”



“Afraid of EVERYTHING!”



Strays who could read Miss Hazeltine's sign skittered in on their own.
Then there was Crumb, the most timid of all. He dashed through the door...



...and hid.



Miss Hazeltine began her lessons at once.
In the morning, she taught Bird Basics.



In the afternoon, Climbing Up, followed by Climbing Down.



At night was Scary Noises.



Many cats received extra help in Meeting New Friends.



Miss Hazeltine showed the cats how to hold their tails high. To arch their backs. To think good thoughts.



Every day, they practiced pouncing.



The hardest lesson? How Not to Fear the Broom.



Miss Hazeltine didn't mind if some cats only watched. She let them be.
Like Crumb.

Miss Hazeltine told him that, sometimes, she got scared.
"I'm afraid of mushrooms and owls," she confided. "And I've never liked the dark."
She praised Crumb's love of pitch-black places.



Crumb lapped up every word. One day he hoped to find the courage to thank her. Still, he worried. Would he ever be brave?



Soon more cats came to Miss Hazeltine's home. And more. And more.

So many arrived that on a Monday at five o'clock, when everyone but Crumb was fast asleep, Miss Hazeltine ran out of milk.

"I'm off to fetch a bucketful," she told Crumb, "and will be back before dark."

Crumb watched her go.



But by the time Miss Hazeltine rounded the road back home, the sun had set.



The heavy buckets sloshed and slowed her,



and her ankles were wibbly-wobbly from all the pouncing.
Miss Hazeltine tripped...



...and fell into a ditch.



With her ankle sore and throbbing, Miss Hazeltine was stuck. She shivered in the dark. The pitch-black dark. Was that an owl hooting? She peered around. Mushrooms!
Miss Hazeltine tried to think good thoughts.



Back home, the cats did the same.



But they were alone—and very, very afraid.



They didn't know where Miss Hazeltine had gone!



And they hadn't yet had the lesson on What to Do When the Lady You Love Goes Missing.



But Crumb knew where Miss Hazeltine had gone.



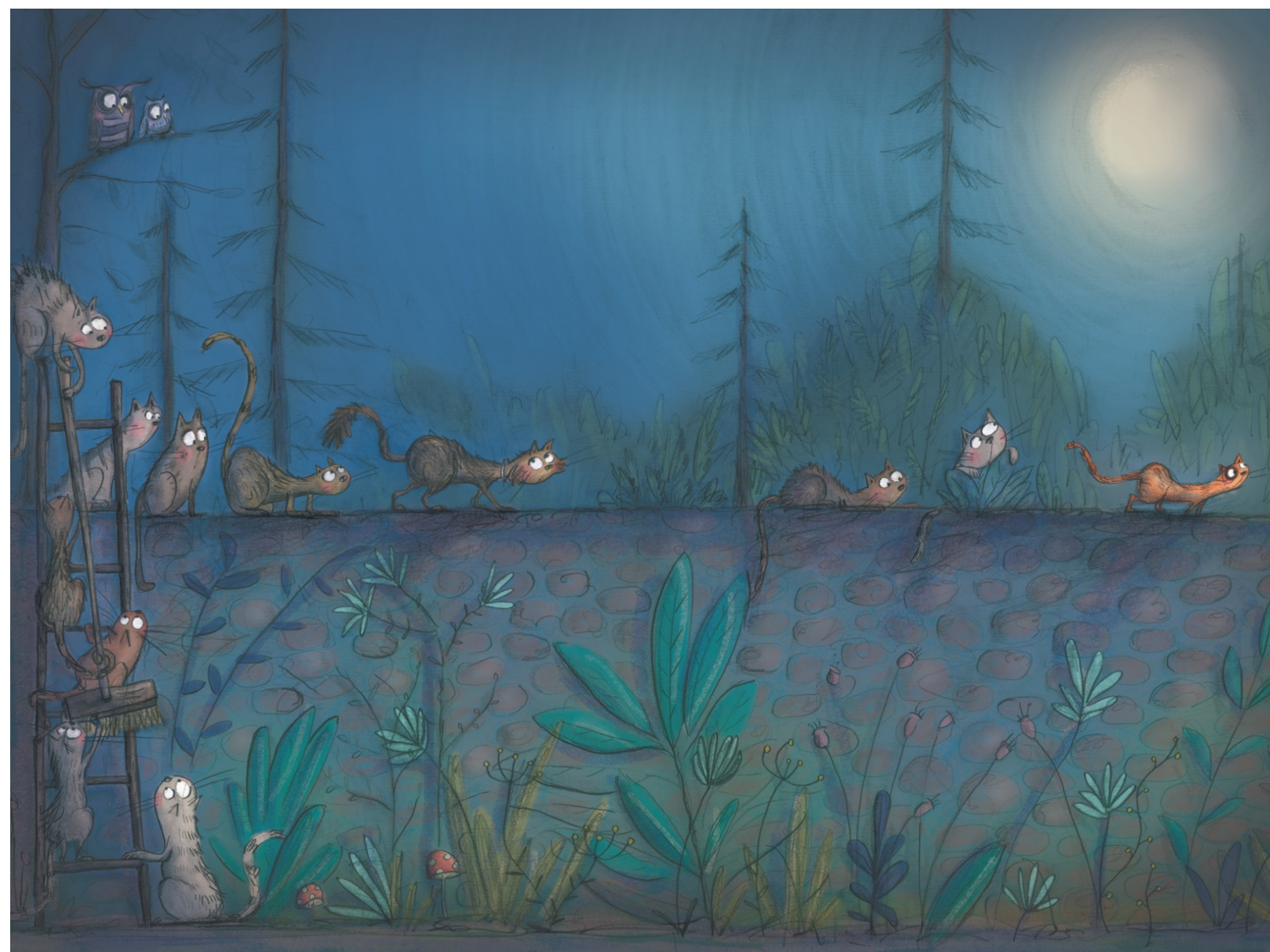
And maybe, just maybe, what to do.



Crumb stepped into the moonlight.



He arched his back. He held his tail high.



He gathered the others.

Armed with nothing but the old broom, the residents of Miss Hazeltine's Home for Shy and Fearful Cats streamed into the night.



Down in the ditch, Miss Hazeltine groaned.
“What will happen to the cats?” she whispered. “And dear, dear Crumb?”



Yet something was happening. The cats felt it in their chests. With Crumb at the fore, they followed the sweet smell of milk down the road...



...right to Miss Hazeltine!
At Crumb's meow, the cats stared down the mushrooms.



They purred to drown out the owl's hoots.



And they pounced to be sure nothing lurked in the dark.



Then they formed a chain of cats to rescue Miss Hazeltine from the ditch.
The broom made an excellent crutch.

Miss Hazeltine was escorted back to the Home for Shy and Pretty Brave If You Ask Us Cats (as the strays amended the sign).



“You’re as bold as lions!” Miss Hazeltine told her rescuers. “And whether you stay forever or head out into the world, I will never forget your courage.”

The cats were so happy that they didn’t even miss their milk. Especially Crumb...



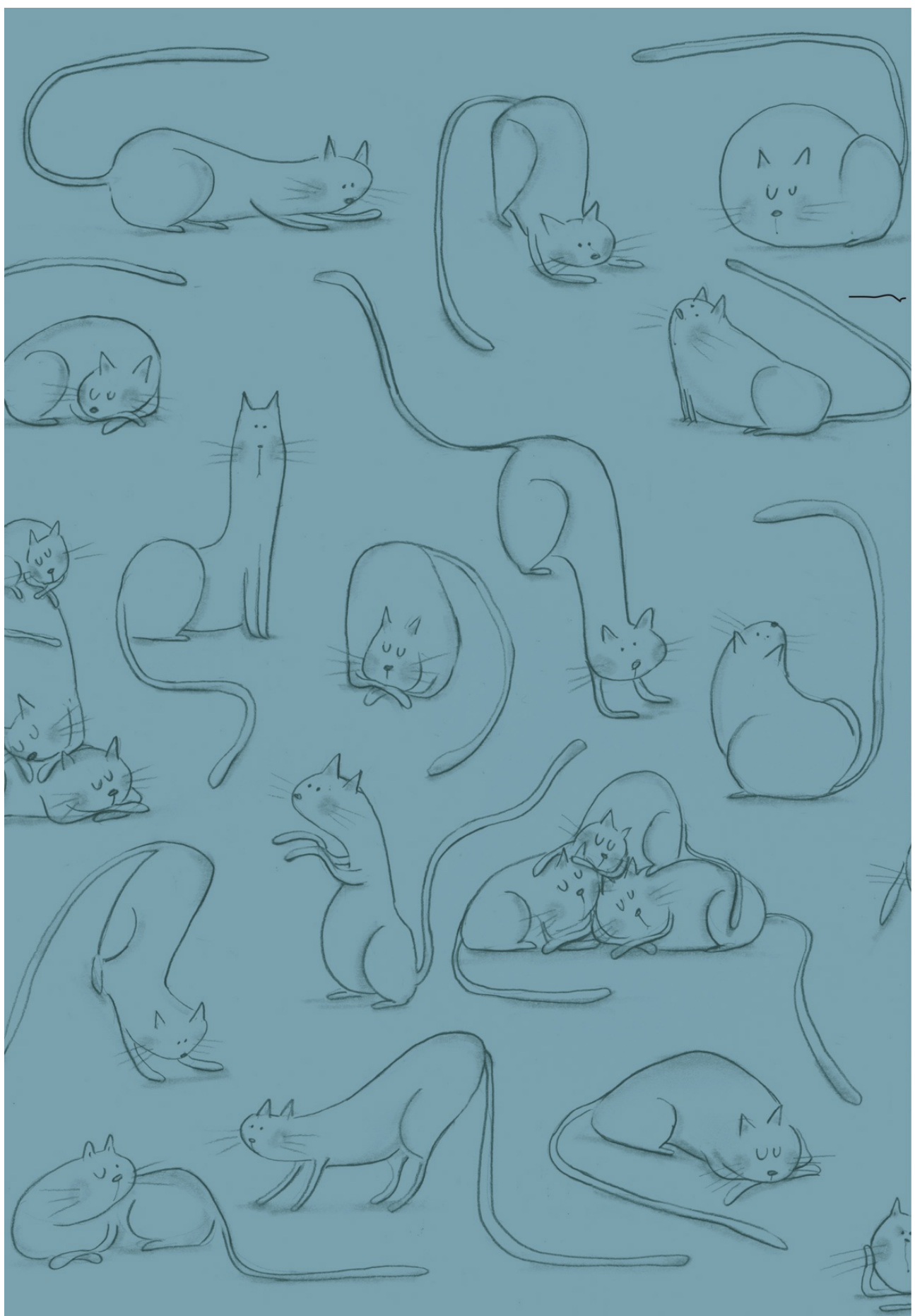
...who had found a new favorite spot.



Alicia Potter is the author of several picture books, including *Mrs. Harkness and the Panda*, which was a Cybils Award winner and was named an NCSS-CBC Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People. *School Library Journal* called it “simply stunning” in a starred review, and in another starred review, *Booklist* described it as “an engaging, graceful narrative.”

Alicia lives in Boston, where she is a freelance writer and children’s book reviewer. As a former animal shelter “foster mom,” she has coaxed many a kitten out from under the bed.

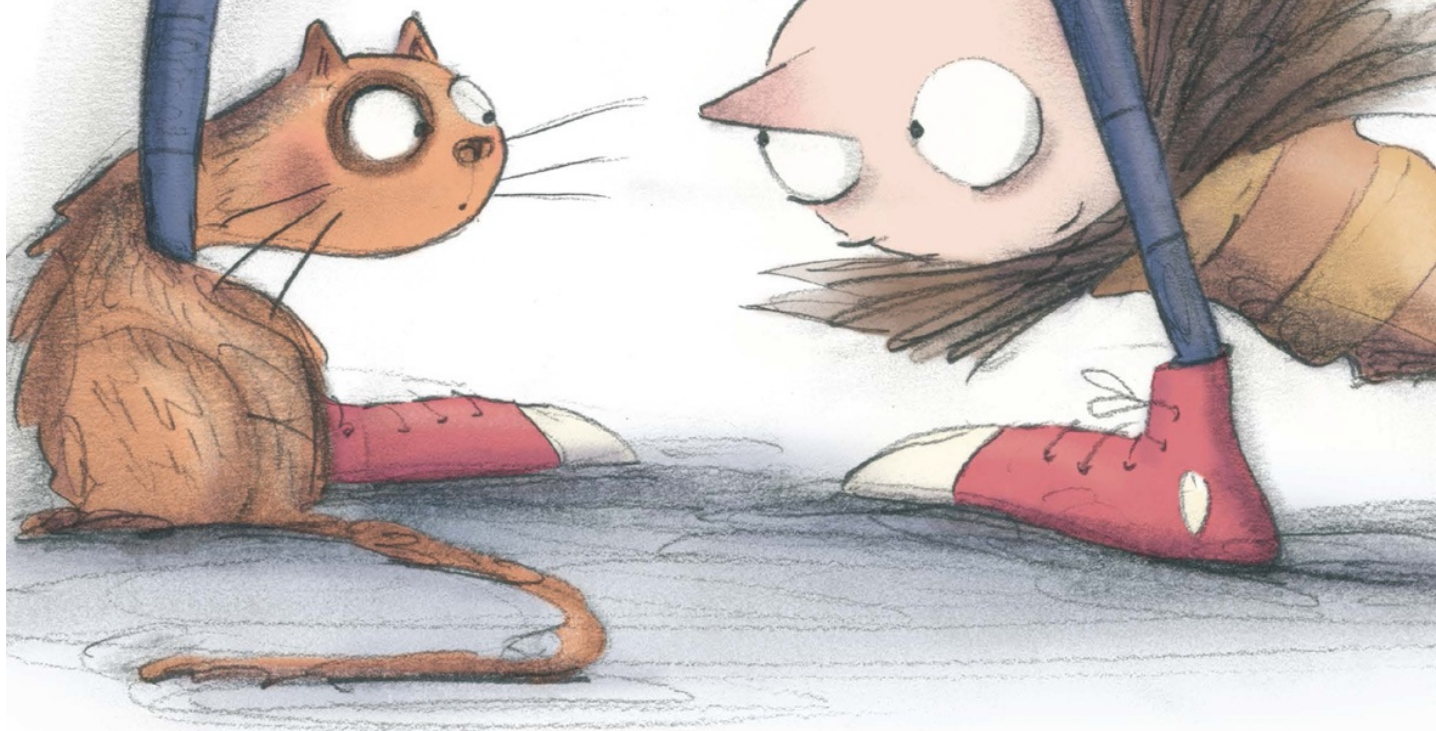
Birgitta Sif was born in Reykjavík, Iceland, and lived in and around Scandinavia and the United States while growing up. She received her BFA from Cornell University and her master’s in children’s book illustration from the Cambridge School of Art. She is the author and illustrator of *Oliver*, a finalist for the prestigious Kate Greenaway Medal for picture books in the United Kingdom, and *Frances Dean, Who Loved to Dance and Dance*. She currently lives in Sweden with her family.





What's a shy cat to do?
Visit Miss Hazeltine, of course!

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