

# OLIVER KITTEN'S DIARY



The journals  
of a mischievous  
cat's first year

## About the author

Gareth St John Thomas is the founder and CEO of Exisle Publishing, based in Australia and New Zealand. He has been involved in the book industry since he was 11 years old, when he started helping his dad at David & Charles. Now, his mission with Exisle is to bring books into the world from voices that otherwise wouldn't have been heard, and to give readers something with heart. Gareth has written other adult and children's books including *Finding True Connections*, *Grandpa's Noises* and *Cats Work Like This*. He divides his time between the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

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**EXISLE**  
PUBLISHING



## Introduction

### My name is Oliver.

Lucy and her mother and father took me away from my mother at the very old men's house. All my family had been living there since before I could remember. Mother told me that she preferred it to the fire engine where she'd lived before, and where I was born. The men had taken us to their home one wild night when we were all being bombed by ice as Mother was teaching us about exploring. Though the old men were always nice to us, they argued with each other all the time, but I never knew what that was all about. They decided to 'put us all up for adoption' and lots of people came along to stare at us. Mother was annoyed as she said she hadn't taught us all she needed to by the time the first of my brothers and sisters went, which was at just five weeks old. They were never taught how to hunt or hide properly, or even climb and fight. Mother told me that I was better at hiding than any other kitten she had ever had – there were dozens of them, but she couldn't tell me about any of the fathers.

When Lucy's family came to the old men's house they seemed friendlier and more genuine than the other people who had been around. Why humans who seem to talk sensibly among themselves get silly and rude among cats is beyond me. What's this 'kitty kitty wah wah' nonsense anyway?

Some of the potential adopters were horrible. 'I was only looking for a white cat,' one of them said. Another didn't think any of us were 'cute enough' and another wanted to know if we could be trained to not meow. A question I couldn't understand was, 'If he's so nice, how come he is still here?' That was asked by a man who waved his finger at me, so I pounced on it and only let go when I saw Lucy coming around the corner. There was a young couple there who also liked the look of me. He had picked me up and seemed to be gentle enough. He then put me down

and started talking to the woman with him about litter trays, vets and feeding and 'the importance of routines'. She looked as bored as I was horrified, so I undid his shoelace and had a quick pee well away from the litter box. She laughed and he walked off.

Richard, as I discovered he was called, looked like he wanted to be there and was interested in cats, and seemed to know about us. Unlike some of the other 'husbands' and dads who had been taken to 'just have a look' by their families, Richard didn't stare at his phone all the time and he even hissed at Lucy for doing that. Better still, Richard crouched down and waited for me to come over to him. I felt that I was in control, which made me feel safe. Sophia, Lucy's mother and Richard's wife, left Richard and me alone for a few moments when we first met. This was clever, as she spends a lot of time away at what Richard calls her 'high-powered job in the city'. She knew that when they took me home – which they did – Richard and I would spend much time together.

Richard and Sophia have a son, Lucy's brother Clint. He is only two years old and very unpredictable. Another family member living in the house is Sophia's mother, 'Nan'. Apparently, she 'knows about cats' and her jobs include looking after me as well as Clint and to keep an eye on Lucy. Nan does seem to know something about cats as she made a nice safe place for me hidden behind the lounge with lots of blankets in a basket. I like Nan and I am looking forward to helping her play with the ball of wool that's stuck on her lap.

We all live in a four-bedroom house on the fringe of the city with a promising hunting ground that Sophia calls 'my garden' and I am the only four-legged animal here. That's not counting 'Bubs'.



## Day 1

Now that I am six weeks old it's time that I started to keep a journal. Mother said I am a very important cat so I am sure everyone will want to know all about my life. Lucy keeps a journal as well, and as Lucy does almost nothing every day I am sure mine will be the more interesting one. Mother said she would like to know about my life too when we meet up again. I am not a baby kitten any more, I have been playing for half my life already – I can even pounce and I have got the best teeth and like finding my own food, and I've already fought with Richard's fingers.

There is a human baby in the house, and she is almost a year older than me and can't do anything for herself. I think they brought me into this house to guard her. She is called Bubs and as you should know my name is Oliver. Not to be confused with Ollie – a very nice name I am sure, but the naming of cats is a very serious business so please don't call me Ollie. Bubs doesn't know what to call me; she only says three things: 'dada', 'mamma' and 'puddy'.

## Day 2

I am still trying to remember everything Mother told me to do as well as not to do. I sometimes become a little muddled, but Mother told me to work hard at things and that they would all come right in the end. For the next few sleeps, I am working on the trouble thing. Mother told me to watch out for it and 'never ever, little one' get into trouble. Trouble should be avoided 'at all costs'. However, as I don't

know what trouble is and what it looks like, I am not sure that I can avoid it. Oh, what to do?

## Day 3

I spent today looking for trouble. I went into Lucy's room and looked under the bed. There was a big, extra-smelly fluffy thing there that she calls 'Wabbit'. Mother told me that they were good to eat, so I sniffed it and it fell over on top of me. It was big and dangerous, and I had to fight it with everything I had. Wabbit had me pinned right down, and even with all my paws fighting and my teeth biting, Wabbit was still winning. Wabbit must have been making a noise because Lucy got out of bed and that doesn't happen much before everyone else in the house gets back into theirs. She picked me up, told me how clever I was and made me sleep right next to her to protect her from Wabbit.

## Day 4

Mother would be proud of me as I can already see that some humans can do things well. It's only my fourth dark night here but I have learnt that Lucy is very smart. She is excellent at sleeping and only gets up to eat and then brings the food back into bed with her. Lucy's mother, Sophia, says that's because she is a 'teenager'. I hope there will be some more of them. I stayed with Lucy all day. It's lovely and warm next to her and she smells nice and knows just how to pat my fur down nicely. Lucy went off for a big, long wash so I came back to my pile of blankets. It still a bit scary around



here without Mother and my littermates so it's good having somewhere safe to go. One blanket tastes particularly nice when I am sucking it and I heard Nan saying that I purr particularly loudly when I have my favourite blanket. That's all very well but I sometimes prefer my own privacy. How would she like it if I commented on every noise she made (and she makes a lot of them – from all sides of her)?

Tomorrow I am going to be looking for some new hiding places.

### Day 5

Lucy came and found me after I had just a few hours in the blankets. I am glad she did as the blankets were being naughty. They wouldn't stay still. I had to jump onto one side of them, which is like crossing a huge colourful pond, then pat them down. But they would try to escape on the other side and tangle up into each other. I had to spend hours trying to get them to behave. Lucy rescued me, picked me up and straightened out the blankets and we went back into her bed. That was peaceful.

Lucy's toes tried to escape from the bottom of the bed so I attacked them as fiercely as I could. Lucy shouted her praise of my bravery by yelling my name as loud as she could, and Sophia ran into the room. 'Is everything

all right, darling?' she asked Lucy. 'Ummm,' said Lucy and picked up her phone. I went and rubbed against Sophia's leg and meowed at her and she picked me up and put me back on Lucy's bed. That was obviously where I was supposed to be. Sophia then went around the room and picked up lots of glasses, mugs and plates (including those I hadn't had a chance to lick yet) and left the room.

### Day 6

Far too much happened yesterday with the blanket wars and the great toe fight, so Lucy and I decided we should stay in bed all day. Everyone else had gone out 'for a drive' apart from Nan, who announced that she had put a tray of food outside Lucy's door and also opened the door a little so I could get out. I came back in after tasting Lucy's food (to check if it was good for her) and leapt back onto her bed. Slept for the day and woke up to find Lucy was gone!

### Day 7

Being left alone was frightening to begin with but there were such a lot of things I had to explore. First, I had to find trouble so as to avoid getting into it and I also still needed to find some new hiding places. Bubs has taken to crawling quite quickly, shouting 'Puddy puddy!' and trying to grab my tail. I need escape plans. Bubs can't crawl upstairs so while the blankets behind the sofa may not be safe anymore I can make bases upstairs. But these stairs are enormous. Lucy wasn't there to carry me and I



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Join Oliver as he recounts his first year of life. After all, in his own words, he is an 'all-round feline masterpiece' whose 'modesty knows no bounds' ...

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