

Kitten and Sloppy

By Tuula Korolainen

Illustrated by Christel Rönns

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For rights inquiries, please contact:

Elina Ahlbäck

Literary Agent , CEO

Tel. + 358 400 548 402 | elina@ahlbackagency.com

Elina Ahlbäck Literary Agency Ltd.

Korkeavuorenkatu 37

FI-00130 HELSINKI

FINLAND

Website <http://www.ahlbackagency.com/>

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Kissa Killi ja Sottapytty

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Creature on train: *Run away before you drown!*

That morning it felt like everything was missing.

Kitten wanted to wear his tiger shirt, but it wasn't anywhere. Then he was looking for his socks, but none of them matched. And his fur comb and toothbrush were also missing.

But that was nothing yet.

Pig: *Did something explode here?*

Mechanical rat: *He's the Energizer kitten.*¹

¹ "Duracel Kitten" in UK.

When Kitten wanted to build his Rat Castle, he could only find half of the blocks. So he ran to his mother, who was cleaning in the living room. But suddenly the drone of the vacuum stopped—from the end of the nozzle hung a dusty sock.

“I was just looking for those socks!” Kitty said joyfully.

Pig: *Superpig!*

When Mother continued vacuuming, the hose started to rattle and clatter. It continued until the hose clogged and something fell back out onto the floor. It was a building block.

“You found them,” Kitten exclaimed. “Take the blocks out of the vacuum!”

Mother sighed, turning off the vacuum and beginning to dig the pieces of the Rat Castle out with dusty paws.

But that was nothing yet.

“Has anyone seen my gym towel?” Kitten’s father asked, padding in. His soccer cleats left muddy tracks on the floor.

“Enough is enough!” Mother hissed, pushing the vacuum into a corner. Then she stormed out of the room, but came back almost immediately. A towel flew to the floor, and she shouted, “How about someone in this house does some work for a change! You slobs should look in the mirror!”

Then she snatched her jacket from a hook in the entryway and said she was going out to the yard to rake leaves.

But that was nothing yet.

Pig: *This little piggy stayed home...*

When Kitten had finished building his Rat Castle, he remembered what Mother had said. He padded into the entryway and looked at himself in the mirror. He turned and twisted every which way, but didn't notice anything in particular. Finally Kitten pulled a face and put his paws on his head as rabbit ears.

But what on earth! His reflection didn't pull a face—it laughed! Kitten touched the mirror, and the cat in the mirror did the same...

Suddenly in the entryway another cat was standing that looked just like Kitten. Although it was a little lighter in color and the letter on its shirt was the wrong way 'round.

“Howdy, pal!” the new cat said, grinning.

“Hel-lo, who are you?” Kitten said gingerly.

Pig: *Look out, it's a ghost!*

“I’m Sloppy. But you can just call me Slops like everyone else,” the visitor replied. Then he hopped on top of the coat shelf, slung the hats and mittens onto the floor, and darted into the kitchen.

But that was nothing yet.

Pig: *Is that cat’s hat too tight?*

When Kitten caught up, Slops was whirling around with a box of cereal, showering flakes everywhere. Then he shoved his paw into the jam jar and started slapping it on the wall. As Kitten just stared, Slops dipped his tail in the jam and yelled, “You don’t LIKE cleanliness, do you!? Do you remember what it’s like for Max and Mandy—or at Mrs. Else’s!”

Kitten did remember, and it made him shudder. At Max and Mandy’s house it was so strict they couldn’t play indoors at all. And at Mrs. Else’s house you had to always be careful of all the glass things and the cream-colored rugs. And you had to listen to endless pearls of wisdom, like “To err is human, to clean feline.”

No, thought Kitten, making messes was more fun. And so he started to smear with his tail, and soon there were jam splotches everywhere but on the roof.

But that was nothing yet.

Cow: *Cleanliness is half the meal.*

Pig: *This is the sweet life.*

Slops and Kitten charged into the bedroom, crumpling up the rugs, emptying the boxes, and bashing each other with pillows. Feathers cascaded into the air and floated down like a dense snowstorm. Kitten jumped on the bed and shrieked with delight.

However, Slops quickly got bored and sped into the living room. Kitten couldn't do anything but follow.

Pig: *Yippie!*

Slops had found the vacuum cleaner and grabbed the hose handle.

“What do you need the vacuum for?” Kitten asked in amazement.

“This isn’t a vacuum, this is a blower,” Slops said, pressing the red button.

The machine began to blow with gale force, and in a moment trash was soaring around, the curtains jerking about on their rods and the magazines, photographs, and birthday cards flying to the floor.

But that was nothing yet.

Pig: *I want to go back to bed.*

Mechanical rat: *It's drafty in here.*

Slops pulled the blower into Kitten's room and directed the windstorm at the Rat Castle. In a second the castle fell, collapsing in pieces all over the floor.

Kitten stopped like he'd run into a brick wall.

"Stop!" he yelled, but Slops just laughed and ran away. Kitten began to panic, thinking desperately what to do. Then he remembered the ironing closet and the house gnome who had helped him before.

Mechanical rat: *That just ain't right.*

Pig: *Superpig to the rescue!*

“Brownie! Brownie!” Kitten shouted, banging on the cleaning closet door. After a moment, a sleepy gnome peeked out.

When Kitten related what had happened, the gnome muttered, “If you put your faith in a slob, you’re just creating a bigger job.”

“But what can I do?” Kitten demanded.

Pig: *Hey, conehead!*

Pig: *Is that a gun?*

The gnome explained that if the blower's button was pushed three times, it would suck the trash back into the bin. When Kitten asked if it would also clean the kitchen and bedroom, the gnome shook his head.

“The blower will only clean what it messed up; the rest you'll have to work out for yourself. But these might help,” the gnome said, giving Kitten a damp cloth and a device reminiscent of a dust vacuum.

Kitten thanked the gnome, who slipped back into his closet.

From behind the door he yelled, “Remember the magic words: clean sweep!”

Pig: *Look, I'm dry-cured ham!*

When Kitten ran through the messy rooms, there was no sign of Sloppy.
And in the entryway mirror Kitten only saw his own reflection.

Pig: *Eek! My tail is going straight!*

Mechanical rat: *Nice pull!*

Thankfully the gnome's instructions worked—when Kitten pressed the red button three times, the blower gobbled up the trash. Kitten still had to put the cards, magazines, and photographs back himself, and then finally he had to find all the pieces of the Rat Castle and take them to their box.

But that was nothing yet.

Pig: *We Superpigs make great foremen.*

Pig: *Will Superpig survive?*

Next he had to clean the entryway, and then when Kitten went into the kitchen, he was horrified—there were sticky smears everywhere. And he had to clean up the whole mess himself!

Luckily he had the rag the gnome had given him; it must have been meant for the kitchen. Kitten whispered the magic words “clean sweep” and wiped a chair—and in an instant the chair was spotless; and, even more miraculous, there was no jam on the rag. Cheerfully Kitten ran around cleaning the walls, floors, and cabinet doors. In a moment the kitchen was shining just like new.

In the bedroom he got to try out the gnome's miracle gadget. Kitten pressed the switch and said "clean sweep," and immediate the little contraption began to vacuum up feathers. When not a bit of downy fuzz remained, Kitten turned off the machine and put it in the chest of drawers. Then he organized all his things and folded the ripped pieces of the pillows on a chair.

Pig: *Pigalicious... ZZZ*

When everything was clean again, Kitten was totally worn out. No wonder Mother got upset about all the mess sometimes! Kitten climbed onto the bed, curled up, and fell asleep. He didn't wake up for a long time until he heard a familiar voice.

“Kitten! Come outside, the weather is perfect!” Mother yelled from outside the window. Kitten yawned, jumping down and going to put on his coat. Then he ran out into the yard.

Outside it was a sunny fall day. The grass was still green, and the wind stirred the few remaining maple leaves. In the middle of the yard was a fluffy pile of leaves, like a magnificent yellow mattress.

Mother stopped raking and said to Kitten, “When your uncle Karl and I were little, Gram would let us romp in the leaves before they were carted away.”

“That must have been nice,” Kitten said wistfully.

“Perhaps it still would be,” Mother said, nodding at the pile.

Kitten stared at his mother, and then suddenly he understood. He jumped into the pile, making the leaves fly every which way, and Mother dove in after him. Kitten and Mother rolled and laughed and inhaled the fresh scent of the leaves.

Small bug: *I hope you land in dog poop!*

“Hey, wait for me!” they suddenly heard Dad say, and soon there were two large cats and one kitten rolling about joyfully in the heap. Even after the adults were tired out, Kitten still had energy to throw leaves on his mother and father. It was just as fun as a trip to the beach and getting to bury someone in the sand.

“Hey, guess what?” Mother suddenly asked, sitting up.

“I can guess,” said Kitten. “Time to rake the leaves up again.”

Mother laughed and splashed leaves into Kitten’s face.

“No worries, Kitten and I are as quick as a raking machine,” Dad said. “You go get the wheel barrow.”

Small bug walking away: *The leaf industry is for the cats.*

Other small bug: *It might be nice to join in.*

Bird on branch: *Wait! I have to see this!*

Bird flying away: *Who can stand to watch something like that?*

Pig: *Pigalicious!!!*

The Mess-maker's Law

Let's turn everything upside down
and inside-out, hurray hurrah:
my jacket's a mess
and there's mud on your dress
and teddy's soaked from nose to paw.
Let's turn everything topsy-turvy
and pell-mell, hurray hurrah:
just clean up the trash
it's done in a flash
if no one shirks and we follow this law!