
THROUGH
THE
BLUE

THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT
WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

Parameters Form

Team Details

STATE:	QLD
DIVISION:	Middle School (Required word count 3500 to 5000 words)
SCHOOL/GROUP:	King's Christian College - Pimpama
TEAM NAME:	Cat Mafia
TEAM ID:	1179

Parameters and random words

Parameters		Random words
Primary character 1	Cook	novel
Primary character 2	Robot builder	gooey
Non-human character	Pelican	yarn
Setting	Quarry	plunge
Issue	Laboratory experiment goes wrong	homework

Instructions

- Start no earlier than **8am**
- Write an original story:
  - based on all **five parameters** (above)
  - including all **five random words** (above) as written, and in bold type
  - with some identifiable **Australian content** (in theme or setting or characters, etc)
  - keeping within the allowed word count (remember every word on every page counts)!
  - include this parameters form in your book **immediately after the front cover**
- Remember: **Every** word on **every** page counts. This includes your front cover, back cover, blurb, acknowledgements and copyright form.
- **Be sure to give yourself enough time to submit your book and complete the following checklist before 9pm**

Log on to the Team Coordinator Portal to:

- ☐ Check the spelling of your team name and team members' names (how these are spelt on submission will be how they are displayed on certificates)
- ☐ Complete the Declaration
- ☐ Submit your finished book in **both** PDF and plain text format by 9pm

Cat Mafia

Writers & Illustrators

Livi Duckworth, Nathan Samuel, Abiel Sijin, Niamh Taylor-Gowton, Malachi Francis, Semal Jayalath, Bianca Berboso, Evelyn Terhorst, Spencer Argo, Ara Jung.

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Chapter 1

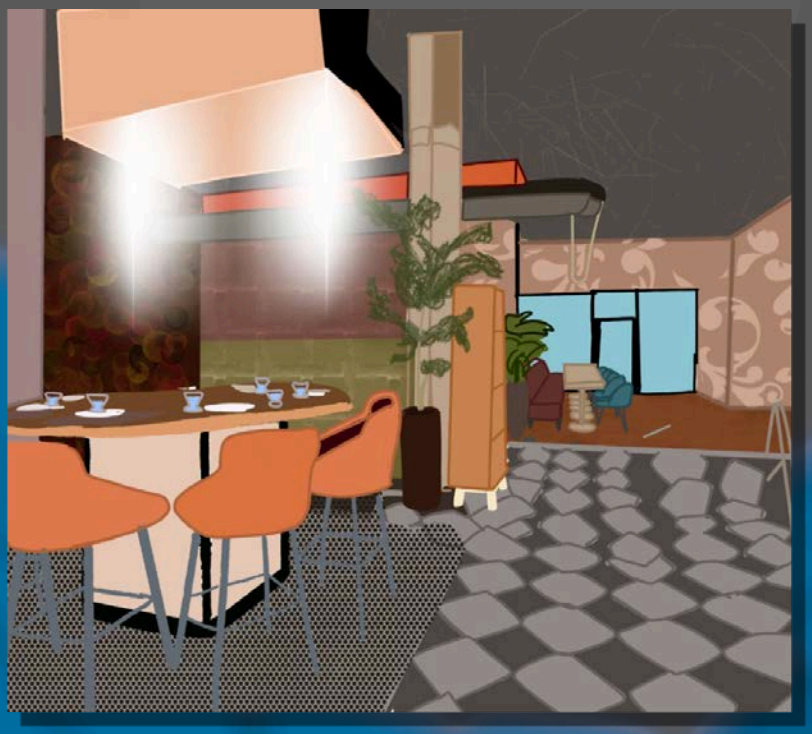
Fitzgerald

Fitzgerald slowly stumbled down the street, each stride furthering his pain. He staggered over every step, struggling to maintain a constant pace. After another 6 hours spent sifting through the abandoned quarry, his legs were plagued by an army of small cuts and nicks. He finally crawled into the tiny hole on the side of 'Giuseppe's Italian Barbecue that he called his home.

The drone of almost a hundred people filled his ears, almost drowning out his thoughts, although he had become accustomed to this. Giuseppe's was regarded as the hottest new place on the block, always flooded and populated like a busy city. As Fitzgerald lay himself on the floor, washing out his wounds, he found himself dragging his tongue across the matted grey fur. As the sweet lull of his tongue numbed the external pain, his mind transferred to the internal struggle he found himself dealing with.

He mourned how suddenly he lost his past life, how quickly the norm was twisted and shaped into something he could barely remember. It was only three weeks ago, if he recalled correctly, that Fitzgerald was spending almost every hour of his life with his best friends. The best friend he had found in his long journey of searching for people to befriend, problems to solve, and trials to complete. He had been playing in the fields, gallivanting at the beach, smiling and purring at the memories of his good deeds.

The small, almost malnourished cat felt a tiny smile creep on his face as he recalled the time that Mortis the pelican screamed as he realised that she was carrying a small frog in her mouth. This was the first time he had smiled in over a week. But now Fitzgerald wasn't sure if he would ever see Mortis again.

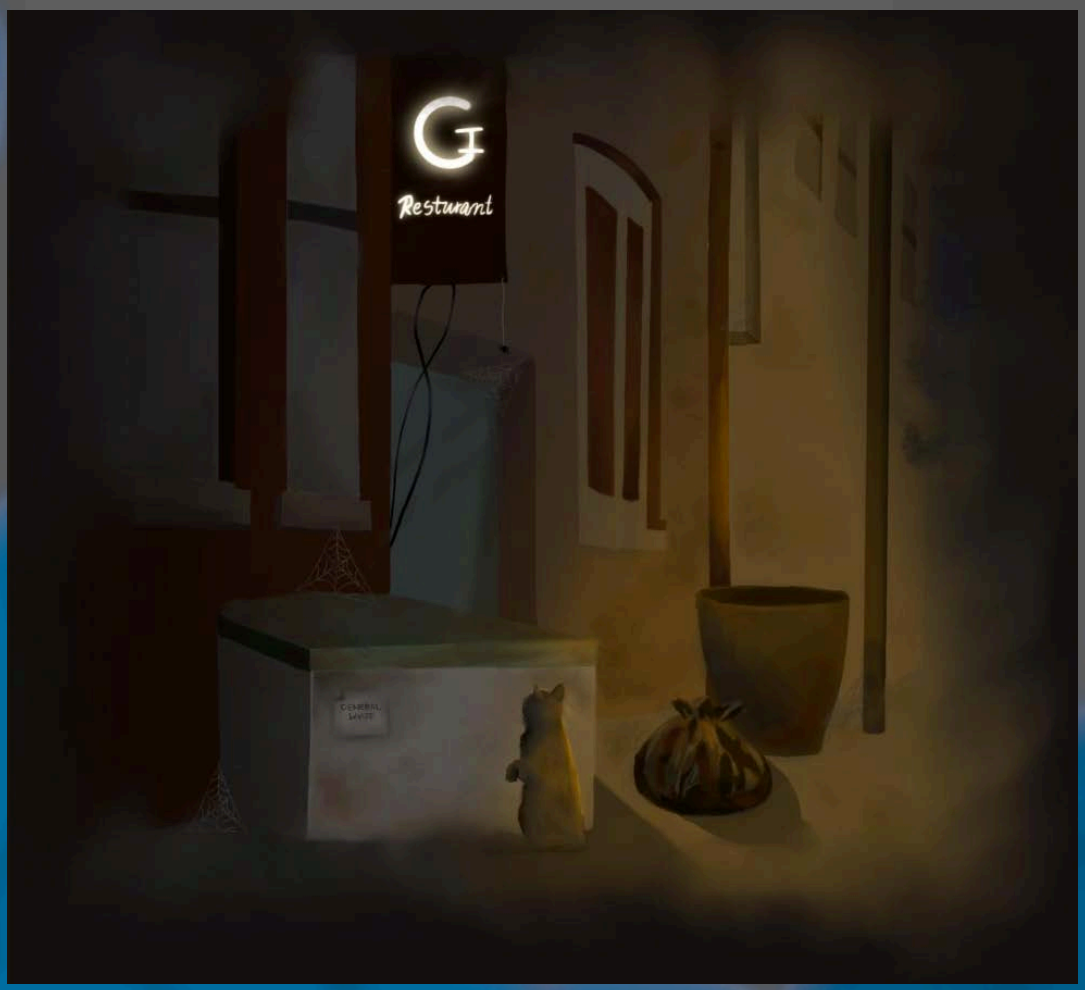


The realisation of his situation settled in like a harsh weight once more and just as suddenly as it came, his smile faded. His friends had slowly been disappearing, one by one, day by day, and Fitzgerald didn't have any idea what had been happening, wondering if he had done something wrong, wondering if he bored them. Yet he knew that wasn't like them—they'd never. It was them against the world. He hoped.

All he knew was that they did not stay with him anymore. They weren't in his life at the moment and it was horrendous. He had been looking for a day now, ever since Mortis had left, vanished. He had always been special, it wasn't hard to tell. He was hardly a proper cat, and most proper cats didn't have a special sense to tell danger, or know how to fix that exact danger.

But for now, he let himself drift off, allowing the distant thought of returning to the quarry to lull himself into sleep. He knew something was off about that place yet he could never place his paw in the right path to reach that proper conclusion. The pop music and endless chatter provided white noise to his foggy, drained mental state. He hoped he'd find them soon. He would...

He promised himself that.



Chapter 2

Going Home

When Fitzgerald woke up, the food rush had calmed down yet voices still babbled on and on. That's what having an almost endless supply of meat gave a restaurant. 24/7 service. After stretching, waking himself up, and trying not to dwell too much on the past and focus on the goal, he began his daily walk back into the quarry.

His paws were harder now, more refined. The pads of his feet were callused, more accustomed to the tough pavement of the concrete and dirt of the open terrain that led down to the quarry. It made the journey better, comfortable, even if it gave him one less thing to distract himself from the fact that he was as close to losing himself as he was to losing his friends.

It didn't take long nowadays. He knew the path like his own tail, every turn, bend, and shortcut to find this quarry. He arrived quicker than he predicted, a new record. The sun had barely moved from where it had sat when he left the diner and he easily squeezed in between two boards being used to help keep intruders, like Fitzgerald, out.

His paws hit the now-familiar ground. His eyes scanned the area, latching onto a new entrance; maybe freshly opened up, and he was off. He ran across the mine, muscles straining against him as they pleaded with him to take a break. Even if he wanted to take a break he couldn't. People relied on him. His body was buzzing with adrenaline though nothing had happened to give him that feeling yet.

Maybe it was just the mere possibility of finding his friends that kept him running, heading into the darkness of a covered-over shaft of a cave.

Chapter 3

4 Hours Ago

"Your majesty—or something. I've retrieved your Lego blocks for you."

"DAVE! Take this seriously! These are really powerful crystals, you could short circuit from those, y'know? Bring them back to the chef."

A peculiar die die-headed robot started walking towards a very large building, carrying a crate full of multifaceted, beautiful stones. It shone very brightly, almost blindingly.
"These would've looked fabulous in my repair room, but I've gotta bring it to the old geezer and four eyes. It feels like doing **homework**..." groaned Dave.

He wasn't the type of robot to have **novel** ideas. He did as many jobs today as he could count dots on his head. As he entered the building, he noticed something was off quickly. Most of the test subjects were missing. Along with this, there was a mysterious red splatter across the floor. Ketchup? The cook might have been hungry, he mused. The slightest thought of food made his robotic senses tingle. Oh, how he longed for food... It had been around 20—no, 30 months since his last meal. He quickly dumped them on a table and turned away.

Meanwhile, a tiny cockroach walked towards the stones in awe. The moment the cockroach touched one of them, it burned to a crisp. This was the true power of the 'Crystallised Pluto', as Arbie, the robot builder had called it. All the while, 'Double Die' Dave was reading a book, more specifically, a *cookbook*.

Chapter 4

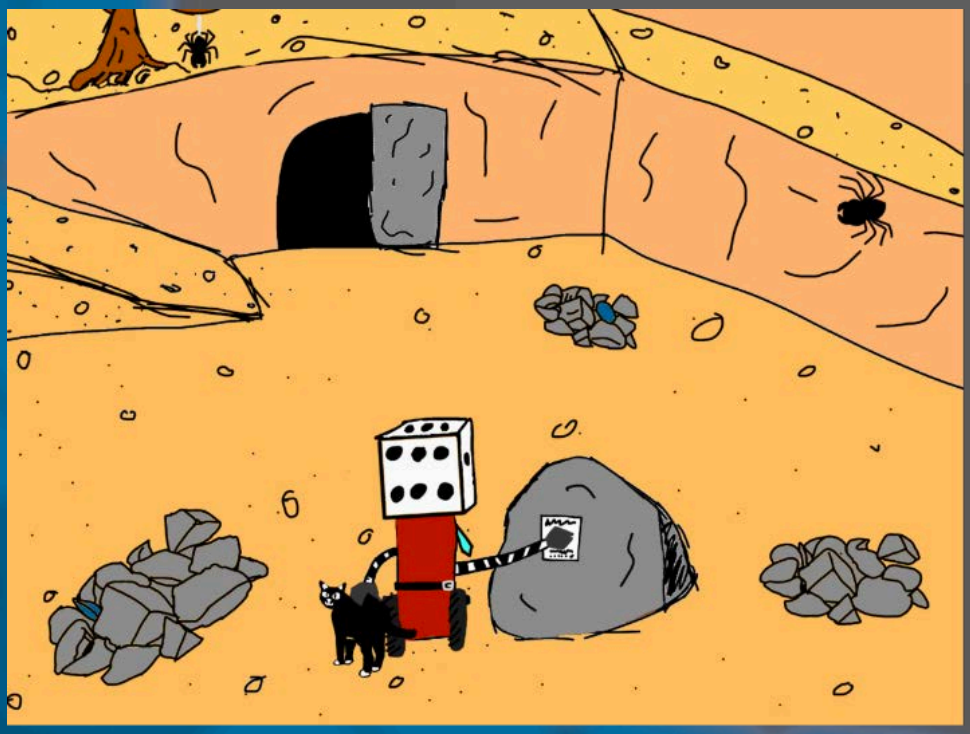
The Little Robot

Fitzgerald found himself padding mindlessly, trying to latch onto anything as a clue to his friend's whereabouts. Dark blue littered the walls, becoming more frequent as he ventured further in. Small holes in the roof provided lighting, allowing Fitzgerald to spy a more beautiful colour—a gradient of light blue to a gentle pink.
The feline wondered what the stones could be, he'd surely never seen them in his own life. They made him feel weird, uncomfortable and sticky, but in such a comfortable way. He found himself staring at a small robot darting around frantically, bumping into a box full of the little blue crystals labelled 'Crystallised Pluto'.

As Fitzgerald tried to get a closer look, his senses going haywire, his paw knocked at a piece of 'Pluto' and it hit the floor surprisingly loudly. Suddenly the little robot's head swivelled 180° and locked eyes directly with Fitzgerald, the once soft green eyes now glowing a bright shade of red.

Fitzgerald felt a cold, metallic claw clasp around his torso, and he struggled. But the robot was so strong that he could not escape and he was lifted off the ground. Fitzgerald watched silently as the thing placed its claw on a large stone. The ground trembled as a loud scraping sound filled the air. A large stone shifted across the rocky floor. The robot revved up its wheels and cruised straight through the door and down the small tunnel beyond. Fitzgerald noted that the robot was extremely slow.

There was another door behind the one they had passed through, the only light being the faint hum of pink from the Pluto which opened with a lever and swung silently inwards. Fitzgerald saw many strange inventions, some bulky, others tall and lean. Some were whirring and spinning, while others stood motionless, with dust and rust coating them.



The robot took him straight through the mess of parts and machines to a large, open area where only one machine stood. It had been used many times, and recently too, because Fitzgerald could see smoke rising steadily from the battery. The robot placed him down, as the speaker in place of its mouth buzzed,

"Hold your position." Afterwards, he watched it spin around and roll away. Fitzgerald, who had no intention whatsoever of staying put, started making his way around, looking at the broken objects. He was just admiring a broken robot that could still sing the lyrics of "Happy Birthday" when his nose picked up the most horrible thing in the entire universe.

He looked around to find the source of the odour, when he noticed a peculiar bin. Not one that would immediately catch his attention. It was an ordinary-looking bin. What WAS unusual was the unfathomable stench emitting from it. It smelled horrid, something rotten. Something, dead... Fitzgerald quickly trotted towards it to investigate. What he saw was... disturbing to say the least. Mangled, deformed bodies of animals lay there with different parts attached. Each of the bodies was branded with a combination of letters and numbers. The bin was filled to the brim with them; he couldn't help but wonder who the culprit was. He was so disgusted, that he almost threw up.

Fitzgerald held his breath and stepped closer. The symbols slashed into their flesh were unfamiliar, what did it mean?

He pawed at the mass of flesh and took a closer look. Some parts of them were familiar, but the rest were unidentifiable. They almost seemed... mutated?

He climbed on top of the heap and pressed his claws inside by accident. As he pulled them out, he noticed they were coloured an unnatural blue. Fitzgerald gagged at the sight and scraped them against the bin's walls. A blue **gooey** liquid gushed forth from the mutations, as Fitzgerald tilted his head it shimmered pink; it reminded him of the crystals he'd seen many times before in the quarry.

As he leapt off the mound of animals, he thought about the mess he'd just found and shuddered. What were those things doing here? Or better yet, what were they? He thought of his lost friends. Thankfully, he thought he hadn't seen any of them in the bin, but if they were anywhere nearby, they were in terrible danger. Even though he was afraid, he decided to be brave and venture into the laboratory.

Chapter 5

Inside the Lab

It had now been an hour since Fitzgerald arrived in this place, still searching, still hopeful. While walking through one of the many hallways in the laboratory, he noticed one of the smaller robots scuttles past him. He tried to focus on finding clues to his friends' whereabouts, but his instincts overcame him, and he gave chase. The robot soon realised it was being pursued and tried to lose him, but Fitzgerald was gaining on it. They ran past whirring machines, and fizzling experiments, avoided shattered glass and blue goo. The robot eyed a stack of crates and knocked them over, attempting to stop the cat in his tracks, but without skipping a beat he hopped over them, and continued his chase. They ran up and down stairs and hallways, and at last, Fitzgerald was at the perfect distance to pounce. He leaped into the air with incredible form, adopting a perfectly calculated arc. However, the robot slipped into a tiny door and closed it shut, causing Fitzgerald to slam his head into the wall. After regaining his bearings, he looked up and realised that what he flew into wasn't a wall at all but a large door, marked with the symbol of a die. He had a feeling that by going in he would be one step closer to finding his friends.

He looked around more, examining the strange area. However, he could sense danger nearby, like something was about to **plunge** onto him. Out of nowhere, something—or rather, someone—grabbed by his neck. His vision darkened as the surrounding environment slowly disappeared from his sight.

Chapter 6

Strapped on the Table

Illuminated lights shone into Fitzgerald's eyes. As he regained consciousness, he could hear footsteps getting louder and louder. He tried to stand up, but thick, dark straps dug into his body, grasping him tightly. Fitzgerald yowled and tried to wriggle himself free. A tall figure stood in front of him, but it was all a blur, since the lights were so bright.

"Well, well, well, look what we have here?" the unknown voice said in a menacing tone, "Trying to scavenge around my experiments, huh?"

Fitzgerald hissed as he tried to bare his claws. He stared at the figure, where his features became more visible as his vision came in focus. In the figure's hands, there seemed to be a flask with an unknown substance inside that inched closer to his starved stomach.

Fitzgerald, pinned down on the cold table, trembled. Was this the fate of those disfigured animals he'd discovered inside the rotting bin? Could he be the next one? To cope, he imagined himself inside a cozy shelter, playing with a piece of **yarn** happily.

Out of the corner of his eyes, Fitzgerald could see dark shapes moving around the table. He huddled to himself until his hips hurt. Then the voice spoke again, “Now, look into the light, and say, ‘mutant cat!’” There was a flash of light, and everything went black.

At least an hour passed until Fitzgerald opened his eyes again, he at once realised that something was wrong. He was still alive, breathing and thinking, but his mind had seemed to have numbed. He looked down at his body, then gasped. Almost attached to his back, sitting in-between the space his haunches and his shoulders lay, were two large, leathery wings. They felt uncomfortable, as if he was wearing a backpack with the straps tightened too tight against his skin. He despised them already. He tried to move them, but his muscles groaned and huffed in protest from both the reaction to the crystal and his overall exhaustion.

He licked his lips next and found that he had also grown a second set of fangs. He coughed; he could still smell the rotting animals. Then a croaky voice next to him said, “Fitzgerald, is that you?”

Fitzgerald was startled. He looked around and saw a familiar face, whose wings were stuck tight with mucky slime.

“Mortis!” Fitzgerald shouted, bounding up and turning to face the bird. “—how are you? Why are you here?”

“The cook has been taking animals and mutating them using the quarry’s crystals, trying to find a way to make them taste better for his restaurant.” He looked solemn. “But I believe that you can stop him Fitzgerald. If you defeat the cook and reverse his machine, you can save everyone.”

He thought over it. His mind was fuzzy, yet he still managed to think over this decision. This is what he was here for — to save people. To find friends, just like he always would. It was second nature, even when he so, so badly wanted to give up. Especially with his newfound mutations.

But even if he looked different, he was still the same cat underneath the new limbs, still bore the same soft purr even with the duo set of fangs.

“I will,” Fitzgerald spoke after a while, his mind setting strong on freeing his new found friend. Finding his footing was hard yet he bared through it and slowly made his way through the open door, delirious from the mutation, but still piped full of determination from the brief interaction with Mortis.

Chapter 7

The Labyrinth

Fitzgerald ran from room to room, intent on finding the cook. He passed door after door, room full of mechanics, after room full of mechanics. At one point he saw the robot builder ordering the robot who had grabbed him earlier, 'Double Die' Dave to find more crystallised Pluto. But he passed the door quietly and was unnoticed by either of them.

He continued through the labyrinth of doors and passages, taking random turns.

Left, right, right, left, left again.
right, right, left,
right.

Then, as though from a distance, he heard the unmistakable cackle of the man that had pointed the blue syringe at him not even an hour ago.

"I shall soon see the fruits of my work," the cook chuckled. He paced in front of a large device. Blue to pink swirling in a long, cylinder compartment.

"Soon, I will have enough Pluto—enough of this beautiful, beautiful material to finally... finally get out of my cursed debt. I'd be free—!"

Fitzgerald sprang around the corner before he could finish his sentence and dashed straight for him, the cook turned— but too late. Fitzgerald had pounced and landed, feet first, on something cold and very solid.

The robot that had sat to the side while the man had monologuing had dived in front of his master, and he was now lying on the floor, Fitzgerald on top of him, oil and a pale blue seeping out from where the robot's torso had cracked under the force of the pounce.

The cook wailed loud and fierce, and Fitzgerald jumped off the robot as the cook lay across the broken wreckage, his eyes blown wide, his pupils reduced to mere slits in his eyes.

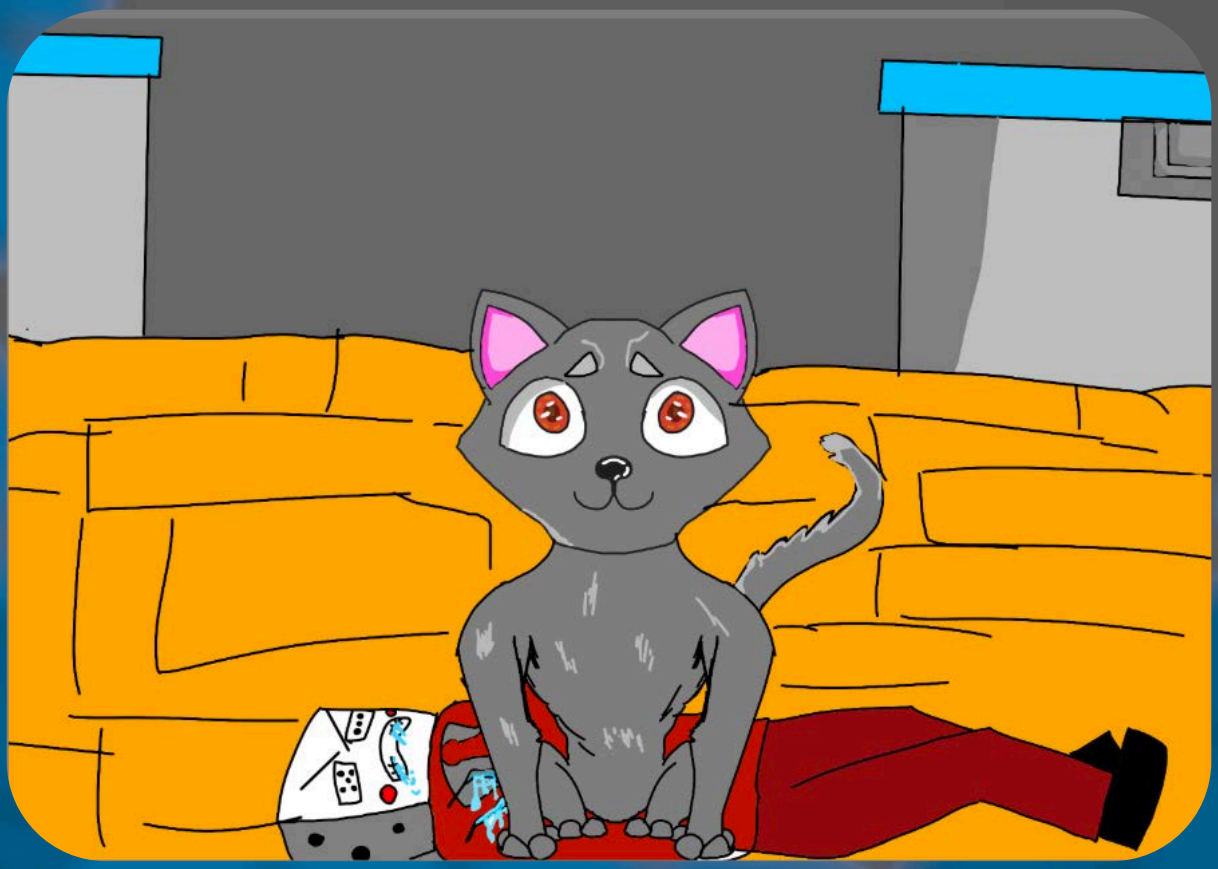
“No, no, no, you were my only way out!”

The cook yelled, now furious, “I needed you! I can’t get any more Pluto without you what am I going to do? I’m finished!”

His voice cracked at this point, and he glared at Fitzgerald. Before he could even move, the cook had leapt to his feet and shouted, “You’ve destroyed my only source of Pluto, I'll end you where you stand, cat!” Fitzgerald turned and ran as fast as he could, the cook hot on his tail. They ran down hall after hall, up some stairs and then he ran onto a metal beam that was hanging over a giant pot of what looked like boiling water. The cook followed him onto the beam, still crying his eyes out, and making the beam swing dangerously. His anger seemed to be beyond words.

The cook was shaking from head to foot and glaring at him as though he wanted to impale Fitzgerald on a spike and throw him into a fire. They swung over the boiling water, Fitzgerald wondering how to not die. The steam was so hot that he was fighting the heat as well as the cook. The cook advanced. Then, he ran between the cook’s legs, making him stumble and fall. He barely held on to the beam as he swung over the boiling water. The cook climbed back onto the beam and tried again. And again, Fitzgerald dodged. Again, and again. Then he tried to attack the cook. He lunged, flashing claws and fangs.

The cook fell backwards in alarm and fell onto the rope holding the beam up. He slashed again, but the cook dodged, and instead of flesh, Fitzgerald slashed the rope. He had almost severed the whole thing. Then the cook pulled a frying pan out of the air and swung it hard at Fitzgerald. He dodged the pan and, full of rage, and not wanting a huge metal beam to fall on his head when the rope broke, ran straight past the cook, skidding to a stop against a wall.



Chapter 8

Removing One Life or Saving Hundreds More?

It didn't take long to assess the situation. The cook was in the perfect place to finally take him down, but he was also close enough to the exit to quickly escape and make Fitzgerald's plan backfire on him. He was struggling to figure out what to do.
His mind flickered to the desperate please of Mortis, begging him to save him—and the rest of them. He wanted to complete his request, desperately, but it could be too risky. He could fail, potentially hurt himself to the point of no return.
But then what would be the point of all of this?

The cook had his teeth bared, clearly ready for his own mutant to backfire and attack him. Yet, Fitzgerald noticed how the cook's expression faltered, a mixture of surprise and confusion gracing his features.

He had made his decision. instead of wasting his time with the cook, he was going to destroy the machine he used to do his twisted experiments in the first place. He didn't quite know how he would do it at this point but the way his paws moved, clambering against the floor as the added weight on his back slowed down his movements ever so slightly. He pushed through, adrenaline pushing him forward when his body yelled at him to turn around and finish the cook off. It took a while, the maze of a laboratory making him get lost more than he'd really appreciate now, but he arrived at the area he found the mutation machine, even if he couldn't save the lives of those already gone, he could save the pelican and stop the cook's experiments. The poor pelican was still strapped down, wings sticky and gross. It made the feline sick to his stomach. Pointing the machine at him he pressed reverse.

"Fitzgerald, you're okay!" Mortis cried, "You stopped the cook, right?"
Fitzgerald shook his head slowly as his friend's expression changed. "There was no time, I had to reverse his machine and save you first"

It.
Was.
Working.

He felt himself start to purr, tail flicking in concentration. Sure, it was slow, but it was still working. He knew the cook would be long gone at this point, but this was the more important.
The same feeling of pride washed over his body; he was helping someone, and his actions would save hundreds more. Just like he always aimed to.

He used the machine on himself before throwing it to the floor while it sizzled and sparked off. He might not have been able to save everyone, but he was able to stop someone bad from hurting more people.

Seeing mortis sit up and spread his wings after who knows how long made the purr grow deeper in his throat. As they flew together away from the quarry, Fitzgerald could be glad about one thing.

After everything, he was still himself.

When Fitzgerald is caught by a robot, he must face more than nuts and bolts to escape.

“And after everything, he was still himself.”