

# Chapter One

## Typhoon

The Wreckless heaves and rolls as the typhoon tears at her rigging. With a crack, loud as cannon, the top of the mainmast snaps, crashing through the deck into the hold below. Cutlass Kate and Emmy are there, on sentry duty, and now have to hold on for dear life as the wind sucks at them through the hole in the broken deck.

The wind tugs at Emmy's body as he clings to a rope fixing a stack of barrels. He tries to wrap his tail round the rope, but the wind is too strong and pulls him upside down.

"I can't hold on much longer!" he screams, but Cutlass Kate can't hear him over the howling wind. Oh, my goodness, he thinks, my time has come.

The Wreckless heaves, lifted by a huge wave, only to crash down, shuddering and creaking; the barrels wriggle free from their restraining ropes and disappear up through the hole in the deck; Emmy shrieks as he loses his grip.

The wind is so strong he can't fill his lungs with air, and in fear of suffocating he thinks he is sure to die. In his mind's eye, he sees the faces of his family and friends, and as everything begins to go black, he sees Flimsy's face just for a moment before he passes out.

When Emmy comes to his senses, he is able to breathe again; the wind has eased, and when he looks about him he sees that he has been carried high into the sky. Looking down, he sees the spiralling clouds of the storm below covering much of the ocean world. He had been sucked up by the spiral wind and spewed out at the top, along with the barrels and broken bits of wood. These things are tumbling all around him, but slowing down now, and Emmy realises with alarm that he will soon begin to fall all the way back to the sea, along with everything else.

He inspects his tail, his limbs and body, amazed to find no wounds or damage except a bit of fur missing here and there. He has some aches and bruises, but nothing too bad considering what has just happened. While he is examining his tail for a second time, a scrap of seaweed floats towards him, wrapping itself gently around his body. Emmy watches in surprise as more seaweed strands come to him, wrapping him more and more thickly.



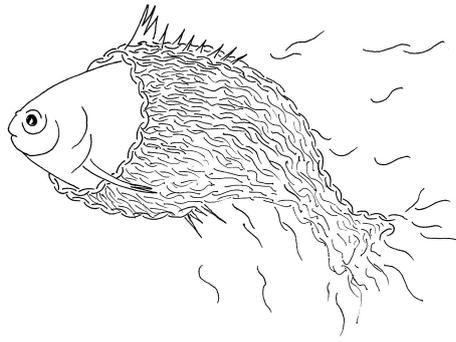
"Hallo, seaweed, what are you up to?" asks Emmy, curious, but also worried in case the seaweed should cover him up completely and then digest him, as some plants do. To Emmy's delight, he realises that it is not smothering him; it is making a kind of bag that comes up to his armpits.

"You're making a pouch! Why are you doing that? It does feel very nice... and look! I'm not falling — I'm floating!"

Emmy looks around to see what's happening to the barrels and bits of wood. Most of these things are falling away from him, but some are not. He looks at the nearest thing that isn't falling and has to rub his eyes and look again. He sees a fish that is also being wrapped in seaweed.

"Hallo! You look like a fish out of water!" he calls. "I see you're growing a seaweed pouch like mine!"

"Yes, you're quite right, I am a fish out of water," says the fish out of water. "My name is Baloop. Look at my seaweed bubble!"



“Hallo, Baloop, my name is Emmy and I’m a mouse. What is this seaweed doing, do you think?”

“I don’t know, Emmy, but I have been feeling so much better since the seaweed wrapped me up. A fish out of water doesn’t live very long, and I was sure I would die before falling back to the sea; it’s so far away down there. Now I feel peaceful, and seem to be able to breathe, even though there’s no water for my gills.”

“Yes!” agrees Emmy. “I’m feeling good too now that my seaweed pouch has finished growing. Do you think we are dead already and that’s why we are floating and feeling good?”

“Emmy, you don’t have to be dead to feel good.”

“I know, it’s just all so strange.”

“Hmm. Dead! Maybe we are,” muses Baloop wistfully.

“Why aren’t we falling, like those bits of wood over there?” says Emmy, perplexed.

“It’s the seaweed. It’s magic.”

“How do you know? You’re just saying it aren’t you?”

“Why don’t you ask it?” suggests Baloop.

“Ask the seaweed?”

“Yes, ask the seaweed.”

“Alright.” Emmy clears his throat. “Hurrumm. Hallo, seaweed, my name is Emmy and I am a mouse. What’s your name?” But the seaweed doesn’t say anything or give any sign that Emmy notices.

“No answer, Baloop, but never mind, I’m feeling happy now! This seaweed bubble is really snug. It’s more of a pouch than a bubble, so I’m calling mine a pouch. Ha! Hallo, Pouch! No, you are special and need a special name; I’m going to call you Snug... erm... Snugweed! Hallo, Snugweed!”

There is still no reply.

“Did you hear anything, Emmy?”

“No, Baloop, but I think Snugweed squeezed me a bit.”

“Squeezed you! How nice. Try again,” cries Baloop excitedly.

“Hallo, Snugweed, thank you for saving me and Baloop.”

Emmy definitely feels the pouch give him a little squeeze.

“Yes, Baloop! Another little squeeze! Ha!”

“A day full of surprises, I wonder what will happen next?”

A strange voice calls out at that very moment, and Emmy and Baloop look all around, but see nothing nearby. The voice continues in a very slow and drifty sort of way.

“Hallo, please could you tell me the way to some land?”

Emmy sees the bird first.

“Over there, Baloop, and up a bit, look!”

Already wrapped in seaweed, the bird drifts towards them, its face bearing a sad expression, and its long, narrow wings hanging down like broken things, dangling.

“Hallo,” calls Emmy, in greeting. “My name is Emmy and I’m a mouse, and this is Baloop. There’s no land in the Ocean world except the Island of Mist. What sort of bird are you?”

“I am Wandering Wings. Sadly, I don’t know what sort of bird I am. I have been flying for as long as I can remember searching for another bird of my own kind and now I am tired, and the storm was too much for me; I need to rest.”

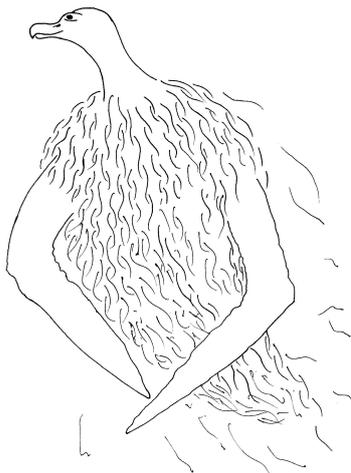
“I hope your seaweed bubble is holding you well,” says Baloop.

“Hmmm, strange sort of nest, don’t you think? I would have preferred something in white.”

“Not a time to be choosy, p’raps.”

“True enough, Baloop. Hmmm. Are you a flying fish?”

“No, no, just a fish sucked out of the sea by the monster wind and spat out into the sky. Without the seaweed bubble I would die because I cannot breathe air without water for my gills.



“Hmmm. Very strange. Emmy Mouse, please speak more of the Island of Mist.”

“Wandering Wings,” replies Emmy. “If you have been flying for a long time over the ocean, you will have seen many strange things. You will have seen the blue ocean covering the whole Earth, from west to east and south to north.”

“Yes,” says Wandering Wings, in his slow way. “I have seen strange and marvellous things. I remember seeing a ship with human sailors who tried to catch me, but I kept out of reach. I followed that ship for a long time, until I decided that they didn’t know where to find land.”

“I know that ship!” cries Emmy. “It’s called the ‘Wreckless’ and it’s always looking for the fog. Have you ever seen the fog?”

“Fog? Oh yes, I remember seeing fog.”

“Well,” Emmy explains. “If you want to find the Island of Mist, you must first find the fog and then go inside it; then, and only then, the Island of Mist will be revealed. Well, so I am told. I have never been there myself.”

“How do you know all this, Emmy?” asks Baloop.

“I was on board that human ship, before the great wind, and my friends on the ship told me about the fog and the Island of Mist. We were planning to go there. The humans go to the Island of Mist to hunt for food and collect fresh water, and they go there to look for treasure, but they never find any.”

“What use is treasure they never find?” cries Baloop.

“Maybe they believe they’ll find it one day,” says Emmy. “The great wind broke open the ship and I was sucked up into the sky. My friends are on that ship and I want to find them. I hope they are alright, and not sunk to the bottom of the sea.”

“Let’s go and find them — and the Island of Mist!” cries Baloop cheerfully.

“Hmmm, we could. Yes, we could,” agrees Wandering Wings, uncertainly. “But how do we move?”

“Oh! I seem to be moving already,” cries Baloop. “Look!”

Wandering Wings and Emmy watch as Baloop drifts away.

“He’s going down!” cries Emmy. “Let’s go too — but how?”

“It seems to just happen to Baloop,” says Wandering Wings.

“Maybe we have to ask. Snugweed? Can you help? May we please follow Baloop and look for the Wreckless?” Emmy feels a slight squeeze from the pouch as he begins to move.

“I’m moving! Wandering Wings, are you moving as well?”

“Hmm, yes, I seem to be moving. Who is Snugweed? You spoke to Snugweed.”

“Snugweed is my seaweed pouch, and I think it’s alive. Are you alive, Snugweed?”

Emmy doesn’t feel a squeeze from the pouch, but he does have the strangest feeling, a feeling that someone has just said something to him, but he hasn’t quite heard — except inside, a voice outside.

“I’m sure Snugweed is alive, but I don’t know how.”

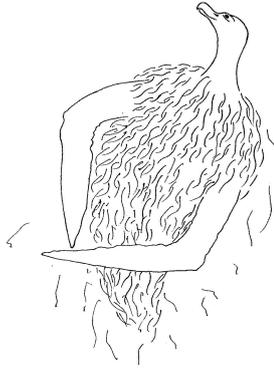
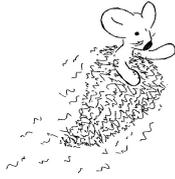
“Hmm!” says Wandering Wings. “Very strange indeed.”

They move downwards, slowly, following Baloop.

“Let’s try and catch up with Baloop!” cries Emmy.

They get faster, little by little, as they learn to relax, letting their pouches do the moving.

“There’s Baloop! Look, down there,” says Wandering Wings, pointing with one of his long, skinny wings.



They shout out to Baloop, who waves a fin.

“Ha! Ha! This is fun!” he cries.

They get closer to the sea and soon can see the waves moving, but there is nothing else to be seen in any direction. Their pouches carry them fast now, lower and lower until they are skimming just above the waves, close enough to taste the salty spray. All day they fly like this, and when night falls the sky is bright with stars. Emmy recognises the Southern Cross constellation that Whip-Tail Jack had told him about during his days on board the Wreckless.

“We are going Eastwards,” Emmy declares.

“Ha! It’s all water to me!” laughs Baloop.

“Don’t you want to get back to the sea, Baloop?” asks Emmy.

“Not yet! I’m loving this.”

Wandering Wings has very good eyesight, and when the first sign of dawn appears over the eastern horizon, he sees something far away.

“That might be fog,” he calls.

“Where?” asks Emmy.

“Far, far away...” replies Wandering Wings. He turns towards what he has seen, and Baloop and Emmy follow. They move faster and faster now, the sea becoming a blur; they see the cloud of fog getting closer, looming ever larger.

Anxious about his friends, Emmy has been looking out for the Wreckless, but has seen no sign of it at all. He will just have to follow the others into the fog and hope for the best.

The three pouches slow down, moving gently into the fog. The further they go into the fog, the darker it gets, until it’s black as pitch and they can’t see anything at all.

“Hallo, are you there? Emmy? Wandering Wings?” cries out Baloop, anxiously.

“Hmmm, here I am,” calls Wandering Wings. “No need to worry, Baloop, we just go where the seaweed nests take us.”

“You sound far away,” shouts Emmy. “Where are you, Baloop? Wandering Wings?”

“Over here!” they call back, their voices fading.

“Oh no! You sound further away than ever! My pouch is taking me somewhere else! Goodbye, Baloop, goodbye, Wandering Wings! I’m very glad we met!”

“Goodbye, Emmy!” they call back, but they are already far away, and the fog deadens the sound of their voices, Emmy can only just hear them.

“Oh dear, that was so sudden, I feel really sad. What’s happening, Snugweed? Do I have to go somewhere else?”

“Yes. Somewhere else.”

“Snugweed! You can talk!” cries Emmy.

“You feel the unwords inside.”

“Snugweed, I don’t get it. Why can I understand you now when I couldn’t before?”

“Feeling unwords is slow to happen. When you are with other creatures you are not feeling unwords, but you will learn how to.”

“So, when I was with Baloop and Wandering Wings I couldn’t feel what you were telling me — because I was listening to them?”

“Different listen, yes.”

“I hope I can learn, Snugweed. Where do we go now? Do we go to where Uncle One-Eye found the light?”

“YesNo.”

“That’s not very helpful, Snugweed. Oh look! The fog’s thinning, I can see a bit of sky showing through. Where’s the Island of Mist?”

“Purling first, much purling.”

“What’s purling?”

“Flying like this.”

“Why is it called purling?”

“Because one day you will name it so,” explains Snugweed.

“What? One day? Me?”

“We go...” declares Snugweed.

Suddenly Emmy is purling at great speed high into the sky, and then yet higher, beyond the atmosphere and into space. Slowing down at last, Snugweed turns so that Emmy is facing towards the Earth. It is very beautiful, and Emmy gazes in wonderment for a long time; he becomes aware of the Earth’s slow turning and of the other planets moving in their orbits around the sun. It is exquisite.

It must be Snugweed telling me all this without any words. This must be the unwords, he thinks. He notices that the Earth has a strange shadow, or reflection, as though there is an invisible mirror hidden in space behind the Earth; this shadow-earth has a shadow-earth of its own, and that shadow-earth has a shadow, and then another, and another... Emmy is seeing the many worlds revealed, like a rainbow reveals the many colours of light.

He notices that he feels these worlds; some feel familiar, some do not, some have life happening and others have none. With the unwords, Snugweed tells Emmy about the isness of each of these worlds. He explains to Emmy that only the invisible ones can see the many worlds happening. Emmy has to interrupt when he hears that!

“How come I can see them happening then? I’m not an invisible one!”

“The invisible ones are revealing to you the isness of the many worlds. The isness you are feeling at this moment is the Ocean world.”

“Did we just come from there?”

“Yes.”

“Are you an invisible one, Snugweed? And why are you, I mean they, showing me these things? I don’t understand.”

“It is not the time for you to understand, but to see, and feel, the isness of the many worlds.”

“Hmmp,” says Emmy, feeling a bit of a headache coming on. He wonders why Snugweed hasn’t answered his question about being an invisible one.

“This is the human world,” announces Snugweed.

The human world feels familiar to Emmy, but it’s not quite like his own world. There’s something about it that makes him feel uncomfortable. Very uncomfortable.

“And this is your home world, Mowzl Emmy.”

Emmy feels proud when he hears Snugweed use his name, and he feels reassured. For a moment, he is curious about how Snugweed could possibly know his Mowzl name, but with all the excitement, and feeling his home world close by, he is distracted. Looking upon his home world he feels its isness; he is thrilled to feel this, so familiar and loved is it to him, and he longs to see his loved ones and the loved places where his heart belongs.

“Listen to the colours, Mowzl Emmy,” instructs Snugweed.

“Listen to colours? How do —,” Emmy’s ears suddenly pop, and he hears singing that tells him of the isness of the colours, and because each world has its own colours, the singing tells of the isness of each world. Emmy is listening to a rainbow of sound.

“Snugweed, this is so beautiful I could stay here forever, listening, but when I hear the singing of my home world I want to go there and my heart leaps towards it.”

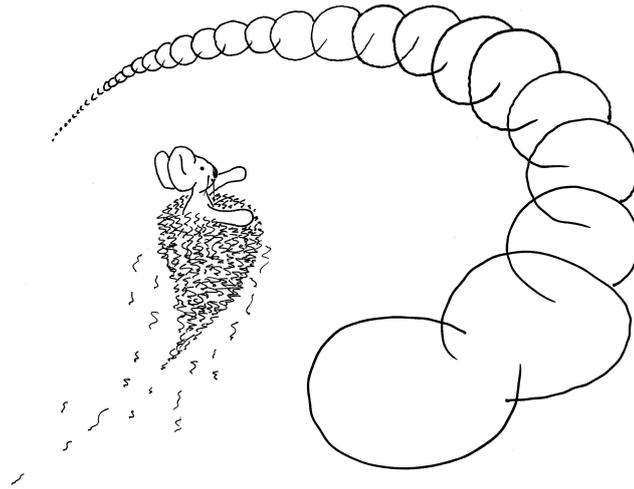
“It is not yet time for you to return to your home world, Mowzl Emmy.”

“Oh, no, what is it time for, Snugweed?” Emmy asks anxiously.

“It is time to go back to the fog.”

“And to the Island of Mist! Hooray!” cries Emmy. “Will I find Scraggy?”

“Maybe, one day.”



Snugweed carries Emmy back towards the world of ocean and fog, where the Wreckless is and maybe the Island of Mist, and as he gets closer, the other worlds disappear one by one until there is only the world of ocean left. He is purling fast through the sky and over the sea, and around the world until, suddenly, there is the fog.

Snugweed slows down, entering the wispy, swirling fog. Little by little the fog thickens and the light fades.

“Are we going to find the Island of Mist, Snugweed? I want to find my friends from the Wreckless, and I want to see Baloop and Wandering Wings again, but most of all I want to find Scraggy!”

A few moments pass before Emmy feels Snugweed's reply.

“Know this, Mowzl Emmy; the Ocean world is where the many Worlds meet. There are great mysteries here, which we have glimpsed when seeing the many worlds happening. There will be much more for you to learn. Now, tell me, what is in your heart?”

“I'm feeling sad for my friends and my heart is heavy. I'm not going to see them yet am I, Snugweed?”

“Not now, Mowzl Emmy. What else are you feeling?”

“I'm being pulled, like a string is tied to my tummy button; I'm being pulled, but I don't know why, or where to. It's getting quite strong now, Snugweed, we'll have to go along with it.”

“Snugweed cannot come with you, Mowzl Emmy. Snugweed cannot leave this world.”

“You mean I'm leaving this world? Where to? Snugweed? Oh, no! Not again!” cries Emmy, alarmed.

“It is your journey, Mowzl, Snugweed cannot be with you. Listen carefully now; remember all that you have seen here, remember the isness of the many worlds that you have seen, remember Baloop and Wandering Wings, remember all your friends from the Wreckless and remember your home world; and remember, Horatio Mowzl, this is now your name. But you will forget all that you remember, and you will remember all that you forget.”

“Snugweed, you are talking in riddles, you remind me of Uncle One-Eye. I'm not going home, am I?”

“No, Horatio Mowzl, you are not.”

Snugweed begins to unravel; separate strands of seaweed detach from Mowzl's pouch, floating off into the fog and drifting down to the sea. Mowzl is pulled steadily faster through the fog by an invisible thread.

“Am I going through another porthole?” Mowzl cries out, anxiously. “How can I remember if I forget? Snugweed?”

“All that you have seen will make your heart wise, even when you forget. The invisible ones will always be with you, and you will find your way.”

“I'm being pulled, Snugweed! Oh dear, I'm being pulled, and not to my home world. Is it the invisible ones pulling me?”

“You are pulled by a human.”

“A human? Why? What?”

“Be trusting, Horatio Mowzl! Goodbye! Snugweed can go no further.”

“Goodbye, Snugweed, thank you for saving me in the sky, and for everything!”

Mowzl is pulled faster and faster, frightened now that Snugweed has gone. The thick, foggy air rushes by, wetting his fur and making his eyes sting.

Suddenly, with a flash of light, the fog and the Ocean world disappear.

Mowzl is no longer wet and bedraggled. There is no fog, no ocean, nothing that he recognises. He examines his body only to find that it isn't the body he is used to at all. Now it is made of soft stuff that's woolly and squashy; he has no bones, but even so he

can still move a bit, and he can see and hear and smell, but most of all, he has a heart is full of fright. He can definitely smell things, all sorts of new smells he's never smelt before, and some are not very nice new smells.

Looking around he sees that he's in a pile of soft creatures a bit like him, but different shapes. There's a rabbit and a badger, a blue tit and a dog, all quite the wrong sizes, because the dog is the same size as the blue tit.

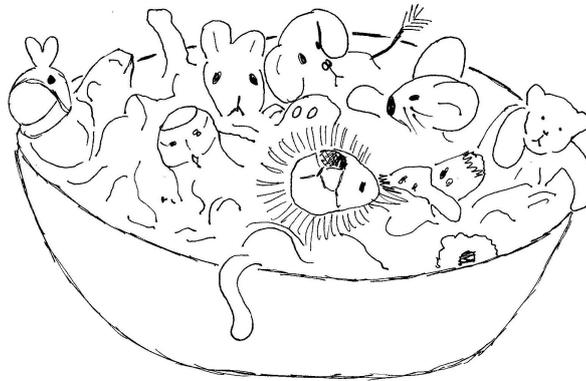
"Hallo, blue tit, have you been purling too?" Mowzl asks, but the blue tit doesn't answer, and none of the other soft creatures say anything, or move, or do anything at all. "Oh dear, are you all dead? Maybe you haven't been alive yet, poor things. I hope you are all alive soon."

Mowzl looks around a bit more, seeing all sorts of creatures that he's never seen before.

"Can any of you talk?" he calls out. His voice doesn't go very far because there are so many soft things soaking it up. There's no reply. Nothing moves.

He pulls himself up through the other soft creatures, so that he can see around better. He sees that he and the other soft creatures are jumbled up in a big bowl. Now he hears noises: rattling and banging, and then voices, and then a rhythmical thump, thump, thump. Suddenly a human appears, just two hops away. Mowzl is terrified. He keeps very still and quiet.

The human switches on a machine and presses a button, a drawer slides open and she fiddles about for a bit before pushing the drawer closed again. She walks around rearranging things on the shelves and, to Mowzl's alarm, she comes to the bowl of soft toys that he's in and rummages about, rearranging them. She picks Mowzl up to have a good look at him.



"Hallo! You must be a new line, I've not seen you before. You're really cute." She kisses him on the nose and puts him down again on top of the pile in the bowl. Then she goes away. Mowzl hears the rhythmical thumping as she goes back down the stairs. He hasn't understood a word that she said.

He's wondering what to do next, when he hears more noise coming from wherever the human went. He can hear more voices, and a bell that rings every once in a while, and soon he hears the sound of humans thumping up the stairs. They come very close, huge and looming, so big that Mowzl can't understand how they can be strong enough to move their enormous bodies about. The humans wander about looking at things, sometimes picking something up, turning it over and putting it down again, then picking something else up, examining its bottom, and putting it down again.

The she-human that had said Mowzl must be a new line, comes back to stand by the till machine. A shopper chooses a paint box, goes to the till to pay, and with the purchase safe in a bag, goes back down the stairs and out of the shop.

Oh-oh, Mowzl thinks, I'll have to catch one of these humans and get out of here, but which one? I don't like the look of any of these ones.

He waits and watches, learning what he can about humans. It's all very puzzling. A little later there's a quiet time and no humans come, so the she-human by the till machine goes downstairs to have a chat with her friends and make a coffee. While she is doing that, another human comes into the shop and up the stairs to the toys section. Mowzl sees straight away that this he-human is different. He looks different, yes, but most importantly he feels different. He's a bit scruffy, he's wearing a woollen hat, he's got glass things in front of his eyes, and he has a hairy face; Mowzl quite likes the feel of him and thinks that he wouldn't mind if this human comes over and picks him up and takes him out of the smelly shop. But he doesn't come over.

The human rummages about for ages and doesn't even look at the bowl of soft creatures. Mowzl realises that the human doesn't know what he's looking for and is just turning things over in his hands without feeling anything in particular. Mowzl decides there and then that this is the one he must catch, so he calls him with his heart. The human moves about some more and then stops, turns slowly, and comes towards Mowzl's bowl of soft creatures. The human's eyes have a sad, faraway look, and Mowzl calls with his heart again; the human's eyes are not seeing Mowzl, but he holds out his hand as he passes by the bowl of

soft creatures. Mowzl leaps into his open hand, and the human's sad eyes light up. He smiles, and straight away goes downstairs to pay.

The human doesn't want a bag to put his purchase in, so when he has given the money and got his change, he puts Mowzl in his coat pocket. Mowzl scrambles up to poke his head out, and as the human walks out of the shop into the street, Mowzl feels the cold air, and can breathe again. He feels a surge of excitement.

"I've just caught a human!" he says out loud, in Mouseze of course. "Oh, my goodness gracious me!"

"What was that?" says the human, reaching into his pocket and lifting Mowzl out. "I thought I heard you squeaking, but that's just silly of me. You look as though you might be alive, little mouse, but you're a soft toy, aren't you? I'm glad I found you; I have a strange feeling we were meant to meet. I wonder if you have a name? I'm sure you'll tell me when you're ready. My name is Pip and I'm a human, more's the pity."

He puts Mowzl back into his pocket and walks on through the light rain. Mowzl pokes his face out of the pocket and breathes the fresh air. I wonder what he said, he thinks to himself. I shall have to learn human speak. Hmm, I'm a bit peckish. I wonder what I can eat in the human world, and he snuggles down for a well-earned rest.