

To Be A Cat - Extract 1

That was very odd, you falling asleep like that,' his mum commented. 'I think we might need to take you to hospital to get you checked out.'

'I'm all right now. I think I'm feeling better.'

But then, while he sat on the sofa watching TV with his mum, his arms started itching and he began to rub them.

'Barney, don't do that. You'll make them sore,' Mum said, switching from polar bears to a quiz show.

'I can't help it.' He unbuttoned one of his cuffs, rolled up the sleeve and started to scratch the skin directly. 'They're so itchy.'

As he scratched he saw one, then two, then three thick black hairs on his right arm. They were pure jet-black, way darker than his normal mousy mid-brown hair colour, and were arranged like points in a neat line just below his wrist.

'Mum, look – these hairs.'

'Oh yes, you're turning into a man. Well, now that you're nearly a teenager you'll be starting to get hairy all over the place.'

'But they're weird. They're black. I don't have black hair. And they weren't there yesterday. They weren't even there this afternoon. I don't want to turn into a man that quickly.'

She wasn't listening. She was too busy looking at his forehead. 'What is it?' Barney asked her. 'Oh dear, I'll just get the tweezers,' she said, before disappearing up to her bedroom. Meanwhile, Barney went to look in the hallway mirror to see what the matter was. There, right in the middle of his forehead, was another thick black hair.