



Cat Flap ... Redux

(It's mid-morning; Dave is sitting at the desk working on some back-logged email. He tends to let the mail 'bunch up' these days, as it is just too disruptive to the printmaking work to be constantly fiddling with the computer. Just to his right is the sliding glass door that opens out onto the thin strip of land facing the road. This door is closed today, as there is a chilly drizzle falling. He is interrupted by a sound from outside. The meowing of a cat. Boots the Cat.)

Dave *(speaks through the door)*: Boots! What's up? Don't just stand there meowing; go over to your cat flap and come in!

Boots *(looking in through the glass)*: Meow!

(Dave tries to ignore the sound. He doesn't wish to be unfriendly, but - as we have seen in a previous story - he doesn't want to be 'trained' by Boots to open all the doors.)

Boots: Meow! ... Meow!

(Dave looks down at Boots again. He begins to put two and two together ...)

Dave: Ah! I think I know what might be going on here today. Have you finally now become too fat for your cat flap?

(Dave leaves his seat, goes round to the entranceway, heads out through the door, and calls to Boots, who comes running over. Dave closes the door behind him so that Boots can't go in that way, and then crouches down to talk.)

Dave *(trying not to laugh)*: So I see. We've finally arrived at the day that I knew was coming soon. You've been gaining so much weight recently that I wondered when you would no longer fit through this flap. Is that it?

Boots: Please. Just open the door. I'd like to go in. It's raining.

Dave: OK, it can't be helped. Let's go in. *(He opens the door, and they enter together.)* You know, I've been chatting with your owner about this; we've both been a bit worried about your weight gain recently.

Boots: Yes, he took me over to the vet a few weeks back. They didn't find any particular medical reason for the weight gain. There's nothing to worry about, Dave.

Dave: Well, I'm not worried, just a bit sad to see that you seem to be slowing down a bit. I'm certainly not eager to return to the days when you used to pile up dead birds by my pillow at night, but it would be nice to see you being a bit more active. Aren't you going to do anything about the mice that have taken up residence down in the walls of my workshop?

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Boots: Well, I smelled them there a few weeks ago, but I don't know. All those stairs to get down to the workshop, and then all the way back up here ... Yawn ...

Dave: Well, the immediate problem is what to do about the cat flap. The structure of the front door doesn't let me cut your entrance any wider. Do you think you can start to do a bit more exercise, and lose some weight?

(Boots settles down on her chair cushion, and tries to ignore Dave.)

Dave: I see. Well; what else do you suggest?

(Boots doesn't reply. Perhaps she's pretending to be asleep ...)

Dave: OK, so it's up to me. Let's see ... perhaps if I prepared a new cat flap ... downstairs. Right near that little crack where I think the mice have been coming in.

(Boots' ears twitch slightly.)

Dave: Heh, heh ... Yes, there's more than one way to skin a ... Er, I mean skin a mouse!