

I shall use a childlike metaphor, for which, as my father's eternal 'little girl', I need make no apologies (except perhaps to the late, children's author Oliver Postgate, whose creation I am about to borrow).

Bagpuss was a toy cat who belonged to a little girl called Emily. When Emily and her family were not there, Bagpuss had a different life: - Bagpuss was a great cat, a magical cat who, despite his humble toy cat origins, did great things. For Bagpuss believed in justice, and he worked hard to mend lost and broken things and restore them to their rightful owners. He did this with nothing more than the magical stories he spun using his eloquent words and his remarkable imagination. He also had the help of his many, good friends – for as the story tells us, “when Bagpuss woke up, all his friends woke up”. Together they did great things.

But the story also tells us that “when Bagpuss went to sleep, all his friends went to sleep” and Bagpuss became his true self – just an ordinary toy cat, with all the ordinary faults that any toy cat might have. And despite all his fabulous adventures, the story always leaves Bagpuss there, in his ordinary world, in his ordinary state, at home with his family, as he was. The truth of the story always comes at the end, which is always the same. It tells us that Bagpuss was:

“A saggy, old, cloth cat, baggy and a bit loose at the seams.....but Emily loved him”.