

ATTICUS CLAW



Breaks
the Law

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Atticus Grammaticus Cattypuss Claw – the world’s greatest cat burglar – was lying on a comfy bed in Monte Carlo when a messenger pigeon landed on the window ledge. Atticus opened one eye, then the other. Finally, with a yawn, he stretched lazily, jumped off the bed and padded over towards the window.

‘Are you Claw?’ The messenger pigeon said cautiously.

‘Who’s asking?’ Atticus replied, examining his sharp talons.

‘Never you mind.’ The pigeon shivered. He blinked at Atticus. He had been told to deliver the note to a brown-and-black-striped tabby with a chewed ear, four white socks and a red handkerchief with its name embroidered on it tied round its neck. He was sure he’d got the right cat. It looked a nasty

piece of work; but then most cats did as far as he was concerned. 'I've got a message for you.'

'Hand it over then,' Atticus purred, jumping on to a table and holding out a paw.

'No chance!' the pigeon sidled away from him along the ledge. Carefully, watching Atticus all the time with his beady eyes, he unclipped the tube containing the message from his leg and threw it on the table.

Atticus flipped off the lid, reached in with a claw and uncurled a tiny piece of paper. He stared at the message. It was in a strange scratchy writing he didn't recognise.

*To: Atticus Grammaticus
Cattypuss Claw*

*We have a job for you. Meet
us on Tuesday. Littleton-on-Sea.
11.15. At the pier. Don't be
late.*

Come alone. Or else.

P.S: It will be worth your while.

‘Who gave you this?’ Atticus demanded.

The pigeon looked frightened. ‘I can’t remember,’ he cooed.

Suddenly Atticus pounced. His left paw pinned the pigeon’s tail. ‘Don’t waste my time,’ he hissed. ‘I want to know who gave you this.’

The pigeon looked more frightened than ever. ‘I can’t say,’ he squawked. ‘They’ll kill me if I do. And worse! You’re not supposed to find out until you get there. Help! I’m in a tizzy!’ The pigeon fainted.

Atticus let go. ‘Hmmm,’ he said, reading the message again. ‘Interesting . . .’ He glanced at the dazed bird. Pigeons always talked. Yet this one had kept its beak shut. Whoever had sent the message, Atticus decided, had certainly scared the poo out of the pigeon.

For a moment he hesitated, wondering what to do. Then he grinned. All cats like mysteries – that’s why they’re called ‘curious’. And Atticus was no exception. In fact Atticus *loved* a mystery. Especially when he was at the centre of it.

The pigeon came to with a start. ‘Well?’ he trembled. ‘What shall I tell them?’

‘I’ll be there,’ Atticus said.

The pigeon looked relieved.

‘Off you go, then.’ With a sweep of his paw, Atticus pushed the startled bird off the ledge.

He watched it flap away. Then he padded down the stairs and went into the study. The computer was on. He tapped out the words *Littleton-on-Sea* expertly with his claws. A picture of a sleepy cobbled town next to a flat grey sea popped up on the screen. It didn’t look much, Atticus thought. Not exactly the sort of place you’d expect a summer crime wave. But he could soon change that! Tapping away at the keyboard, it didn’t take him long to work out exactly how he was going to get there. Then, without a backward glance, he slipped out of the cat flap, jumped on a train to the nearest port and boarded the next cruise ship to England.