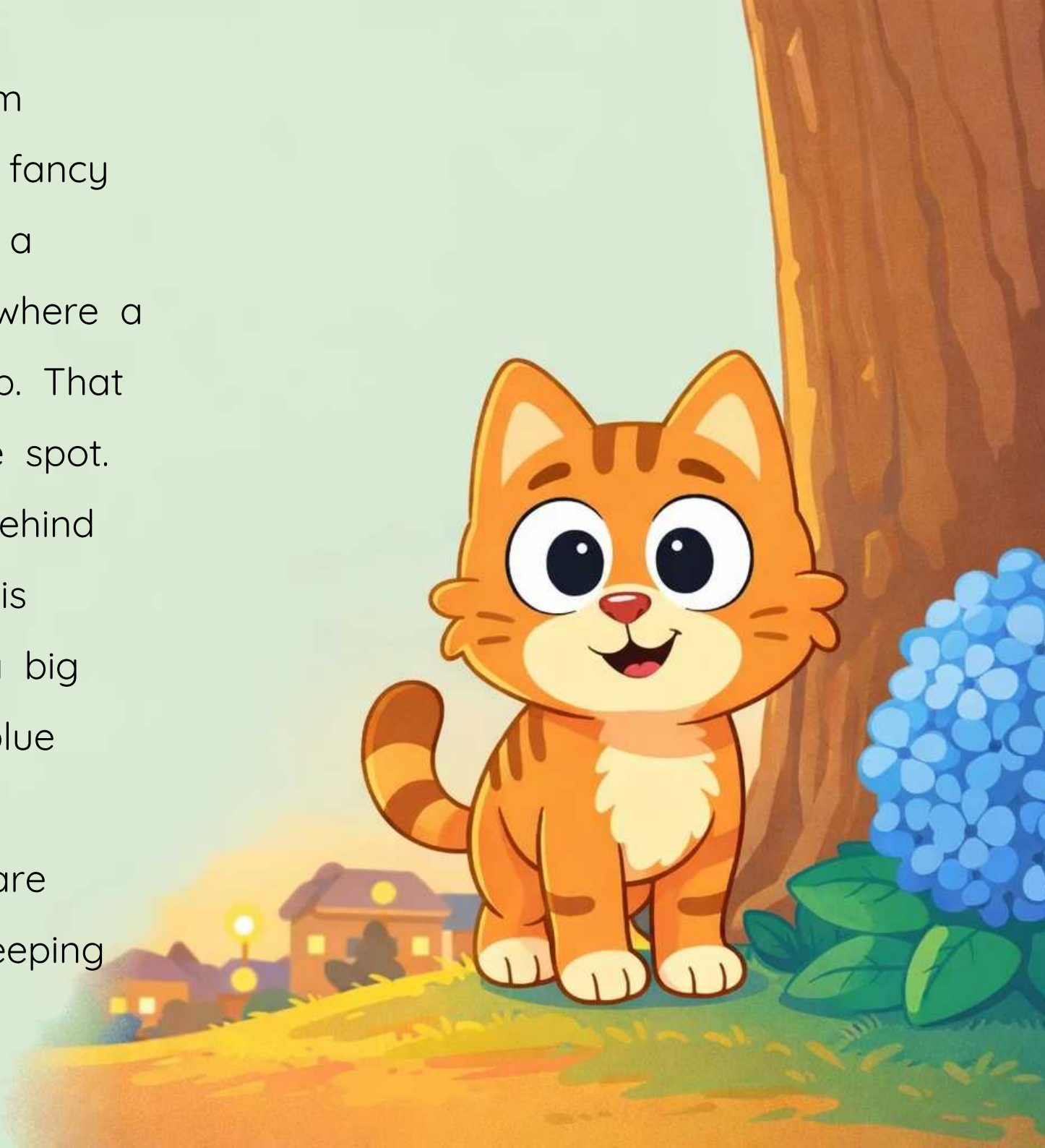
A Snug Hut
for Us!

My name is Pip, and I am looking for a bed. Not a fancy bed. Not a big bed. Just a **smallish,** dry, snug spot where a cat can curl up and sleep. That is all I **wish** for. One little spot. The sun is going down behind the rooftops and the air is getting cold. I trot past a big tree and a bush full of blue flowers, and I tell myself: tonight, Pip, tonight you are going to find the best sleeping spot on this street.

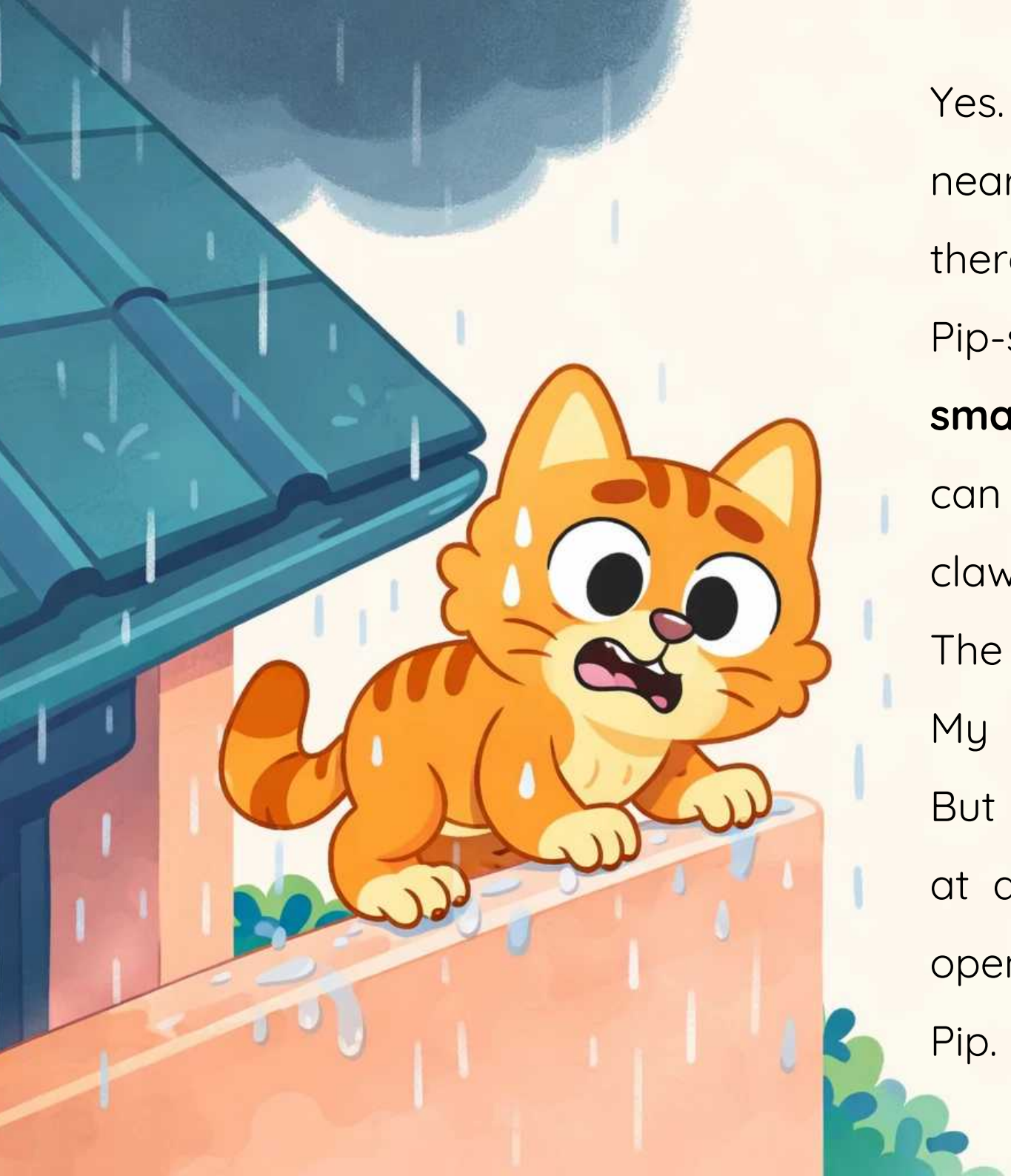


A box! A big brown box, just sitting there on the sidewalk. I trot over and peek inside. It is stuffed. Animals on top of animals on top of animals. Legs and tails poking out on all sides. 'What are you looking at, Pip?' snaps the patch cat from deep in the pile. 'This box is taken,' says Gray Spot, pushing a paw at the edge. 'No room! No room! No room for Pip!' they all chant. Well. No need to be so **selfish** about it.

Never mind. There are other spots. Better spots! I find a row of trash cans in the alley. They are **biggish** and round, sort of like beds with walls, if you think about it. I lift the lid off the nearest can and get a big shock. Two yellow eyes blink up at me from inside.

'This is my trash can!' snarls Inky. 'But we could both fit,' I say, leaning over the rim. 'There is loads of room. Just shift that tail a little bit to the...' 'No room for Pip!' Inky growls, and slams the lid shut. Clang. Inky is so **mulish!** That is two spots down and no spots found. And the sky is getting darker by the minute.

Then it starts to rain. Not a little drizzle. Not a soft sprinkle. No, no. Big, fat, cold drops that go splat right on top of my head. I sit there among the wet plants with my mouth hanging open, getting soaked. No box. No bin. No bed. All I **wish** for is one dry spot, and now I am wet and shivering on top of it all. Could this night get any worse?



Yes. Yes it could. But wait. Up near the roof of that house, there is an opening. A Pip-sized opening! It looks **smallish,** but just right. If I can get up there... I dig my claws into the wall and climb. The rain makes the wall slick. My paws slide. My legs shake. But I keep going, one stretch at a time, because that opening is calling: come on, Pip. There is room for you.

I made it! I pull myself up on the ledge and flop down, panting. It is not snug. It is not soft. But it is dry, and right now dry is all I **wish** for. I curl up and try to sleep. But a thought keeps poking at me. What about the patch cat and **skittish** little Gray Spot in that old box? What about Inky in that trash can? Are they safe out there?

Flash! Bang! Crack! Lightning splits the sky and thunder shakes the roof under my belly. I picture them out there, scared and soaked. The patch cat with her ears flat. Gray Spot shivering. Inky with no place to hide. This storm is **freakish.** 'Get out of there!' I yell. They can not hear me, but I yell it again. 'Find a safe spot!'

The lightning has started a fire! Through the smoke and rain, I see the box in flames and the trash can tipped on its side. Then the patch cat, Gray Spot, and Inky come running up the path, soaking wet. 'Come up! Quick!' I call. They scramble toward me with their ears back and eyes wide. The box they would not share, and the trash can Inky snarled about? They **vanish** in the flames. All the spots that said no room for me... gone.

'Pip?' says Gray Spot, gripping the railing in the lashing rain. 'Can we... can we come up there with you?' I look at them. Three soggy animals who said there was no room for me. Part of me wants to say it. You know the words. No room. No room for you. But I look at their **sheepish** faces and think about how cold and scared I was just an hour ago. I reach my paw down. 'Come on up. Quick, before the next flash.'

Now there are four of us squashed under one tiny roof. The patch cat's paw is in my ear, quite **ticklish** if you must know. Gray Spot's tail is up my nose. Inky is sitting on all of us. Water swirls below, but we are safe. Well. Safe and damp. 'Pip?' whispers the patch cat. 'I am sorry we said there was no room for you.' 'Don't worry about it,' I say. 'We have been through enough tonight.'

We are **squished.** We are squashed. We are packed in so tight that no one can move a whisker without bumping a nose. It is the most crowded, most cramped spot on this street. And you know what? It is just the spot I **wish** for. There is room for all of us.

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Pip just wants one small, dry spot to sleep, but every box and bin on the street already has an owner who snaps "no room for Pip!" Then the rain turns freakish, a storm rages, and Pip finally finds a smallish gap near a rooftop, dry at last. But when the animals who turned Pip away come knocking, soaked and scared, will Pip give them the same answer they gave? Created to align with the UFLI Foundations scope and sequence (Lesson 122: -ish), this book practices words like 'wish', 'smallish', 'selfish', 'mulish', 'sheepish'.

Phonics Focus: -ish

biggish, freakish, mulish, selfish, sheepish, skittish, smallish, squished, ticklish, vanish, wish

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