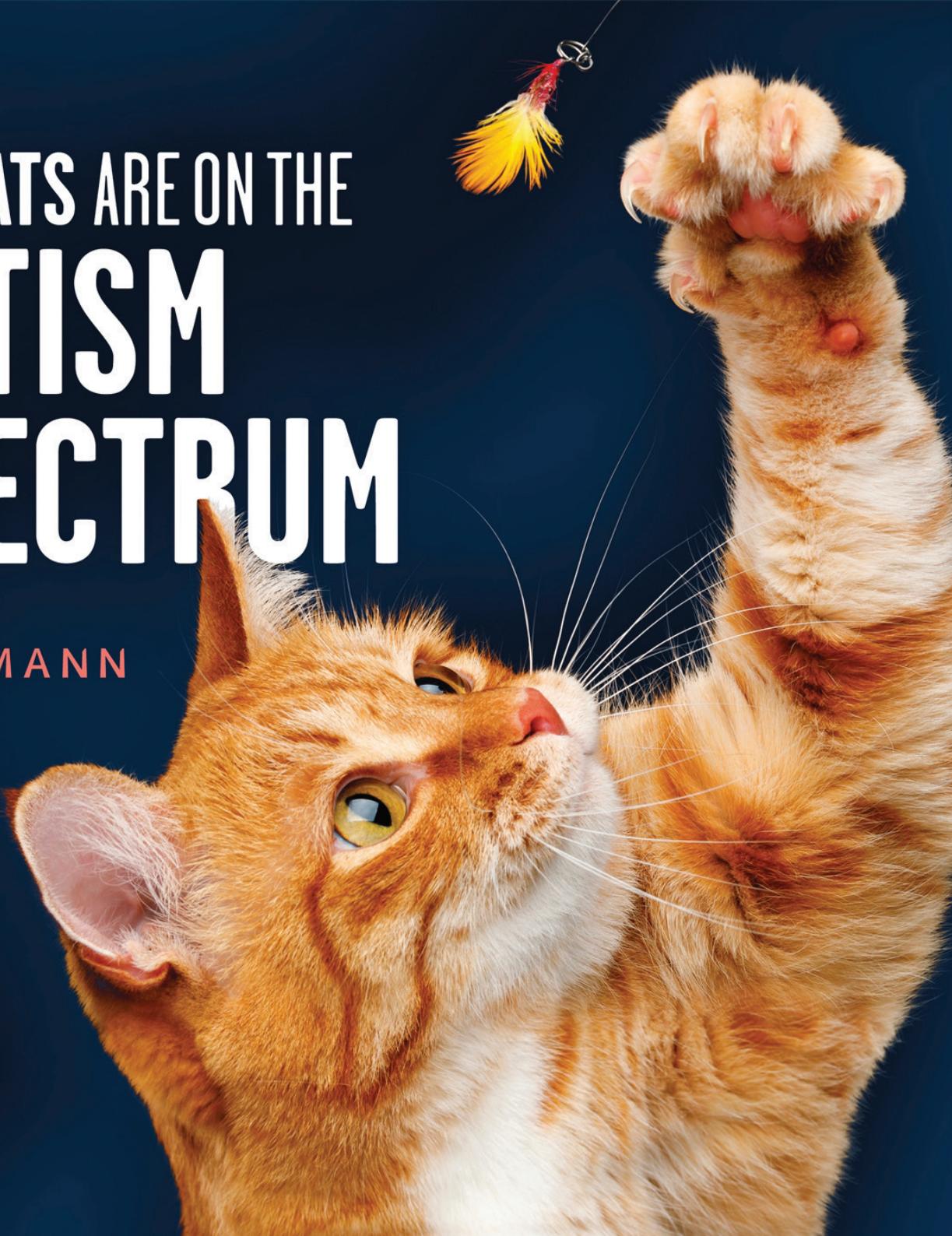


# ALL CATS ARE ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

KATHY  
HOOPMANN

Updated edition  
of 'All Cats Have  
Asperger Syndrome'  
— over 175,000  
copies sold!







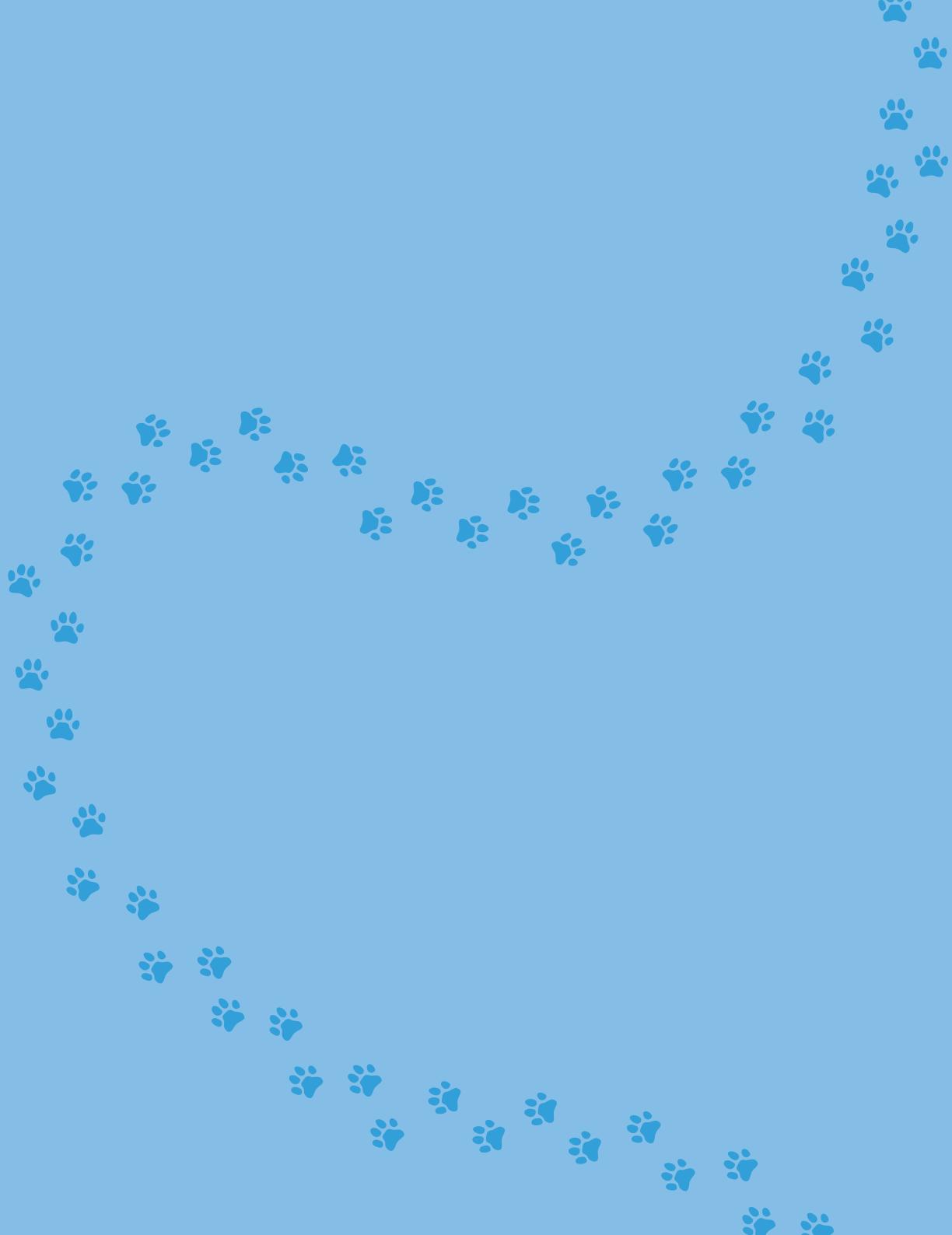
# ALL CATS ARE ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

KATHY HOOPMANN

Foreword by Haley Moss



Jessica Kingsley Publishers  
London and Philadelphia



## Foreword

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Me-wow! I was 13 years old when my mom brought *All Cats Have Asperger Syndrome* home from an autism conference. You'd expect teenagers to think they're too old for picture books when they so desperately want to be seen as adults, but nope – the adorable cats and simple yet positive words to connect everything together made me, a lifelong dog owner and lover, feel a deep connection with cats and autism. I couldn't describe the magic of how cats perfectly explained everything I felt and knew about myself. Kathy's stunning depictions of autism resonated deeply with me. I was already confident and proud to be autistic, and that pride was solidified in a picture book.

Smiles from the book's feline friends were contagious within my house; my mom and dad shared the magic of cats on the autism spectrum with me. I couldn't stop thinking about the many ways *All Cats Have Asperger Syndrome* made me smile as an autistic teenager, and the book loyally sits in my joy-filled autism library well into adulthood.

I unabashedly say this is one of my favorite books of all time. In the twelve years I've had my copy of *All Cats*, it has been a trusty sidekick and teaching tool. Friends and strangers alike have all felt the heartwarming effect of this book and a shared connection to me whenever I introduced them to it. It's the book I used to tell my high school best friend I was autistic. It's the book I kept on my desk at my law office to make colleagues, clients, and visitors feel comfortable learning about autism. It's a book that reminds me that being different is not a bad thing and, sometimes, people on the autism

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Haley Moss, Esq., autistic attorney, author, artist and advocate

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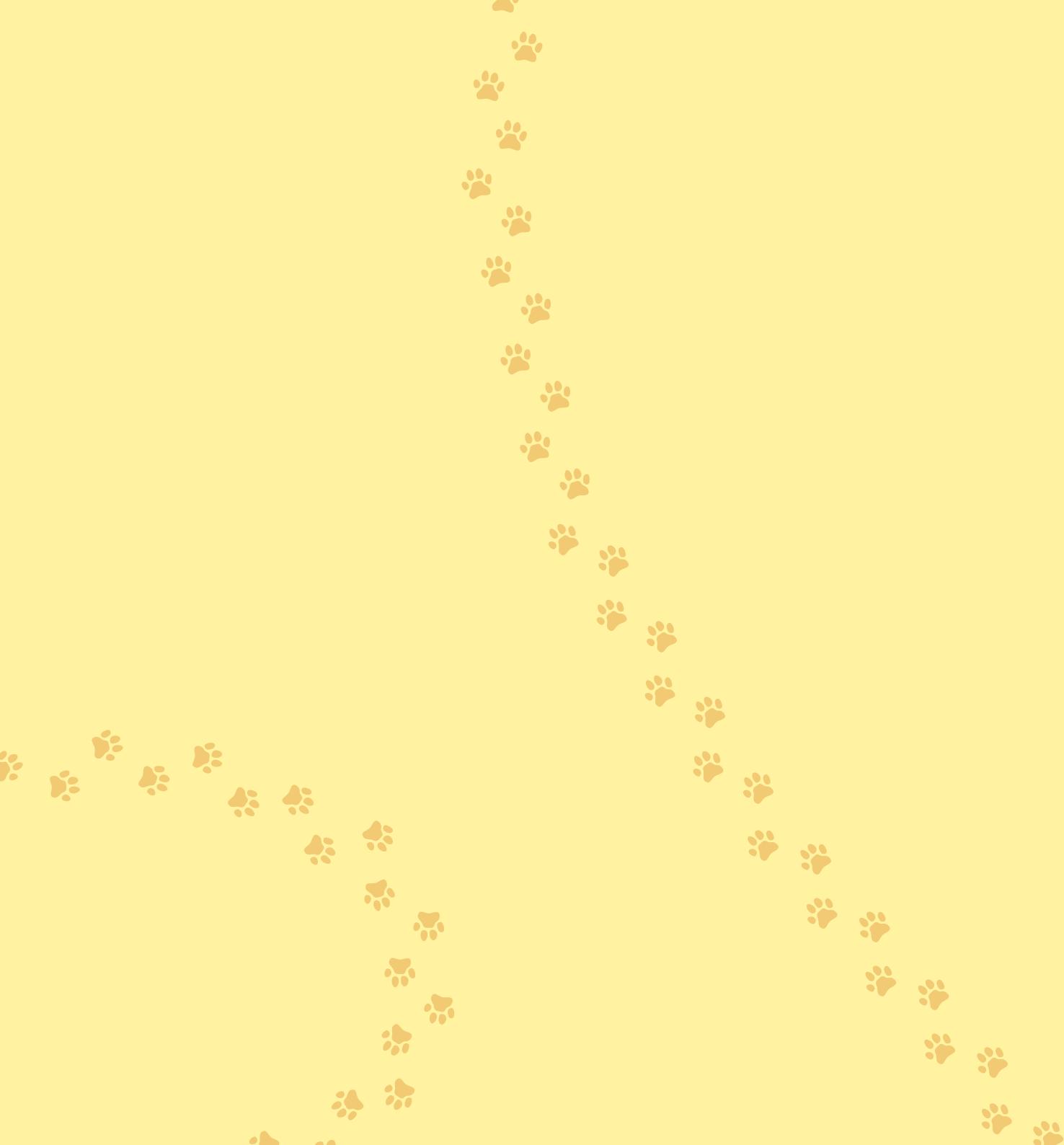
spectrum are both celebrated and misunderstood just like our feline companions.

Cats on and off the page can change hearts and minds. I never had a cat in my life outside of this book until a little over a year ago, but now, I see myself in her. I see my cat in me with our autistic traits, and I can now say all cats are definitely on the autism spectrum.

When Kathy mentioned that my all-time favorite autism book was getting an update to be more inclusive of people all across the spectrum (including us girls!), I was thrilled. When I told my parents that I was fortunate enough to have the honor of writing a foreword to one of my favorite books in the world, my mom freaked out, remembering this was the book that caught her eye so many years back and that continues to touch our hearts.

*All Cats Are on the Autism Spectrum* is like receiving a hug from a lifelong friend you haven't seen in a while. You will always be close with an indescribable bond. Knowing future generations of young people on the spectrum and their families will get to enjoy this book for years to come makes me think we will have a more understanding, accepting generation of cat lovers who become better friends to autistic children and adults alike.

May this book fill your day with meows, laughs, play, smiles – and some new friends and understanding during your journey. Your mileage may vary, but I am still delightfully sharing and spreading the magic of *All Cats Are on the Autism Spectrum* – and hope you do, too.



## A Note from the Author



What's in a name? A lot actually.

In 2006, I wrote *All Cats Have Asperger Syndrome* with the express purpose to demystify the diagnosis in a fun, easy-to-read format. In 2013, the diagnostic tool used by professionals in the United States (the DSM-5) eliminated the term *Asperger Syndrome* and placed it under the generic umbrella of *Autism Spectrum Disorder*. *Asperger Syndrome* was now to be diagnosed as *Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Level 1*. Now that's a mouthful!

Since then, there has been much debate and confusion about the correct terminology to be used. Is it *Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)* or *Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)* or just the *Autism Spectrum (AS)*? Should we say *a person with autism* or *an autistic person* or *someone who is neurodiverse*?

Apart from the change in the diagnostic terms used, other changes were occurring in the autism community. In 2006, it was generally accepted that most of those diagnosed were boys. Now it is known that many girls are on the spectrum. As *All Cats Have Asperger Syndrome* was written with male pronouns, this needed addressing.

Fifteen years ago it was considered empathetic to say there is a little bit of Asperger's in us all. Now that statement is recognised as not only incorrect but insulting to those on the spectrum as it belittles the very real challenges they face daily.

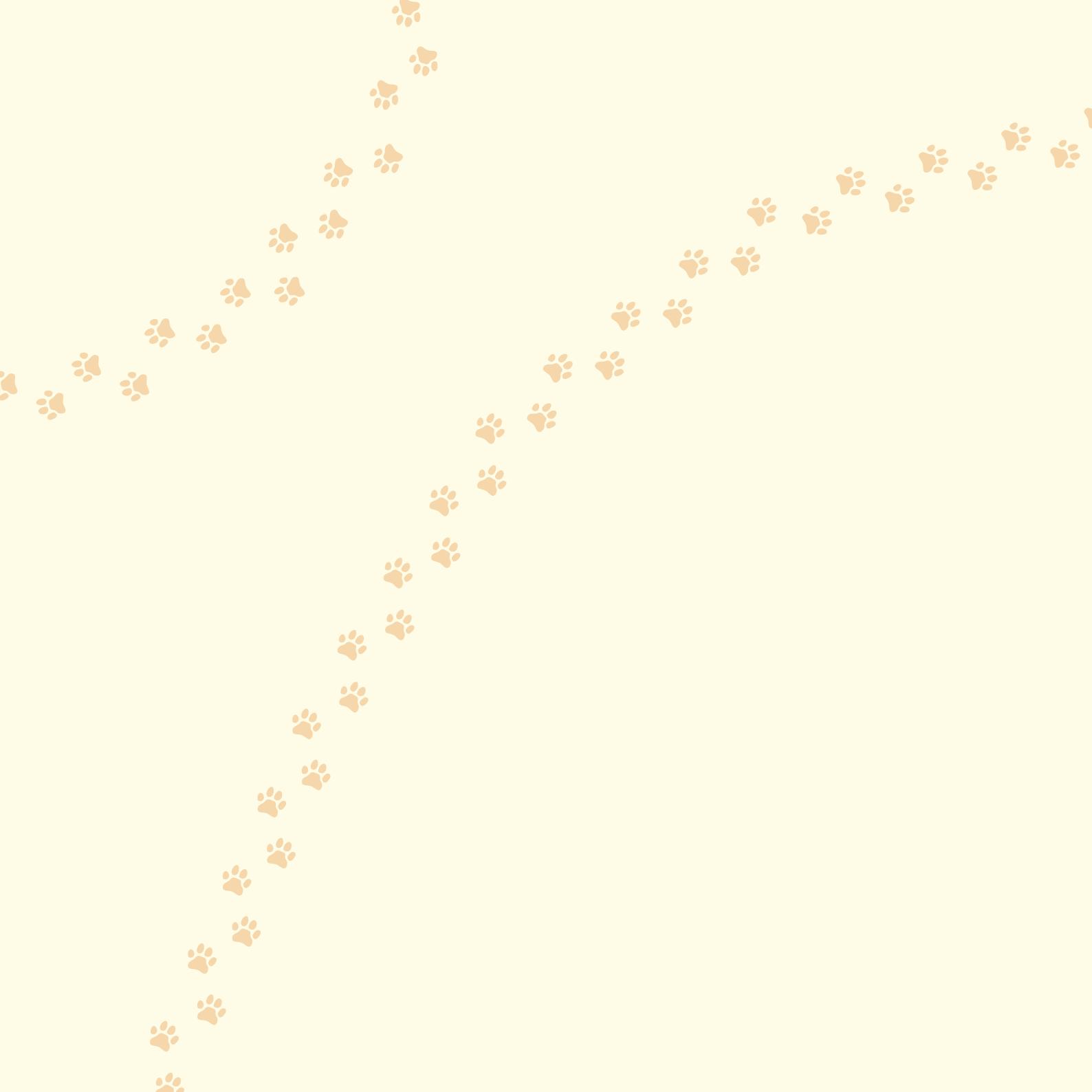
So when it came time to update my book to current terminology and sensitivities, I was faced with a very

difficult task to get things right, especially knowing that word usage and correctness changes regularly.

*All Cats Are on the Autism Spectrum* is written with the very best intentions to reflect the wishes of the autistic community in language and concepts. I know that my choices will not please everyone and that views on language will continue to evolve. However, words do matter, and sometimes we get things wrong, and that's ok if we are gracious about respecting the views of others and are prepared to use their preferred language once we know what it is.

I pray that my readers will see past the finer details of disagreement and join with me in celebrating, and deepening our understanding of, the richness and diversity of the autistic community.





The first signs of autism are usually picked up very young.



Those on the spectrum look at the world in their own unique way.





They like to be near those they love,  
but might not want to be held,



preferring squishy places to a hug.





Instead of coming to people for comfort,  
they may prefer a toy or a pet.



They can be extra adventurous,

and use up some of their nine lives all too quickly.





Autistic people often have exceptionally good hearing, and loud sounds and sudden movements may scare them.



Yet at times they don't respond to their name or requests as if they can't hear at all.



Their other senses can be heightened too, such as touch

“I hate  
bath days!”



“Are you wearing perfume?”



and smell.



They are often fussy about what they eat,



and may want the same food presented  
in the same way, day after day.



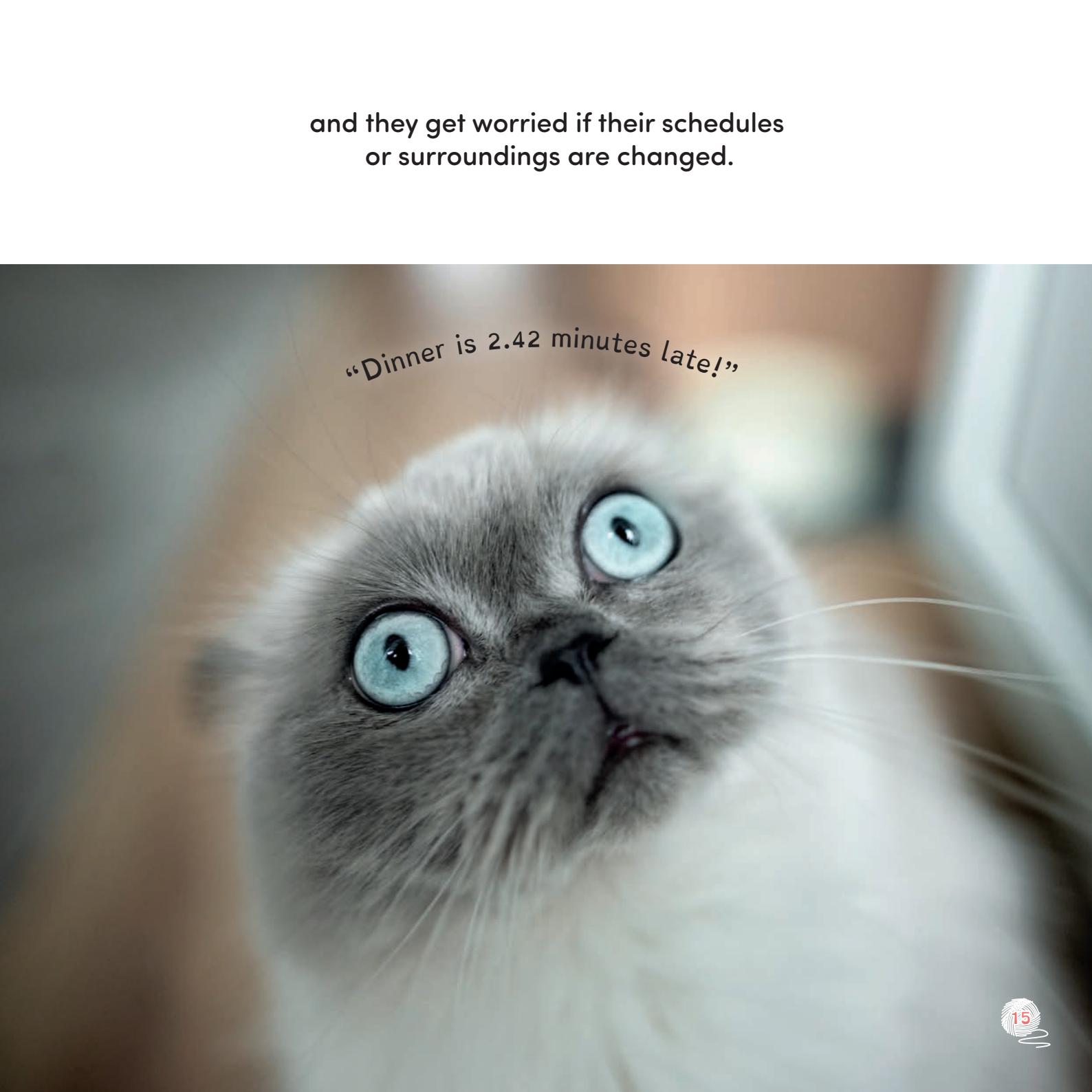


“A morning nap  
on *my* chair.”

Daily rituals comfort them,



and they get worried if their schedules  
or surroundings are changed.



“Dinner is 2.42 minutes late!”,



Yet they may find it hard to stay organised  
and manage their own time.

Autistic people aren't all the same though,  
and their strengths and challenges are like tangles  
of colour, each a little different from the next.



Their abilities and preferences are not fixed,



Good at  
maths

Only eats  
white food

Doesn't like  
to be touched

Hates  
change

Loves  
trains



and can change from hour to hour, day to day,  
depending on moods, foods, and even the weather.



Their faces don't always show  
how they are feeling inside,

and people may think they have no emotions,  
which is not true at all.

*“This is my  
happy face!”*





Crowds confuse them and they are not sure how to behave.

They can find body language difficult to read,

“Are you my friend?”



and may upset others without knowing why,





which keeps them awake at night, wondering what they did wrong and what they could have done differently.

Others follow fads





that might  
not interest  
those on the  
spectrum at all.



If they do want to fit in,  
they may pretend to be  
something they are not,

which is exhausting, and can't be kept up for long.



When life gets too much for them,  
they might have a meltdown,





which they don't do on purpose, can't control  
and feel terrible about afterwards.



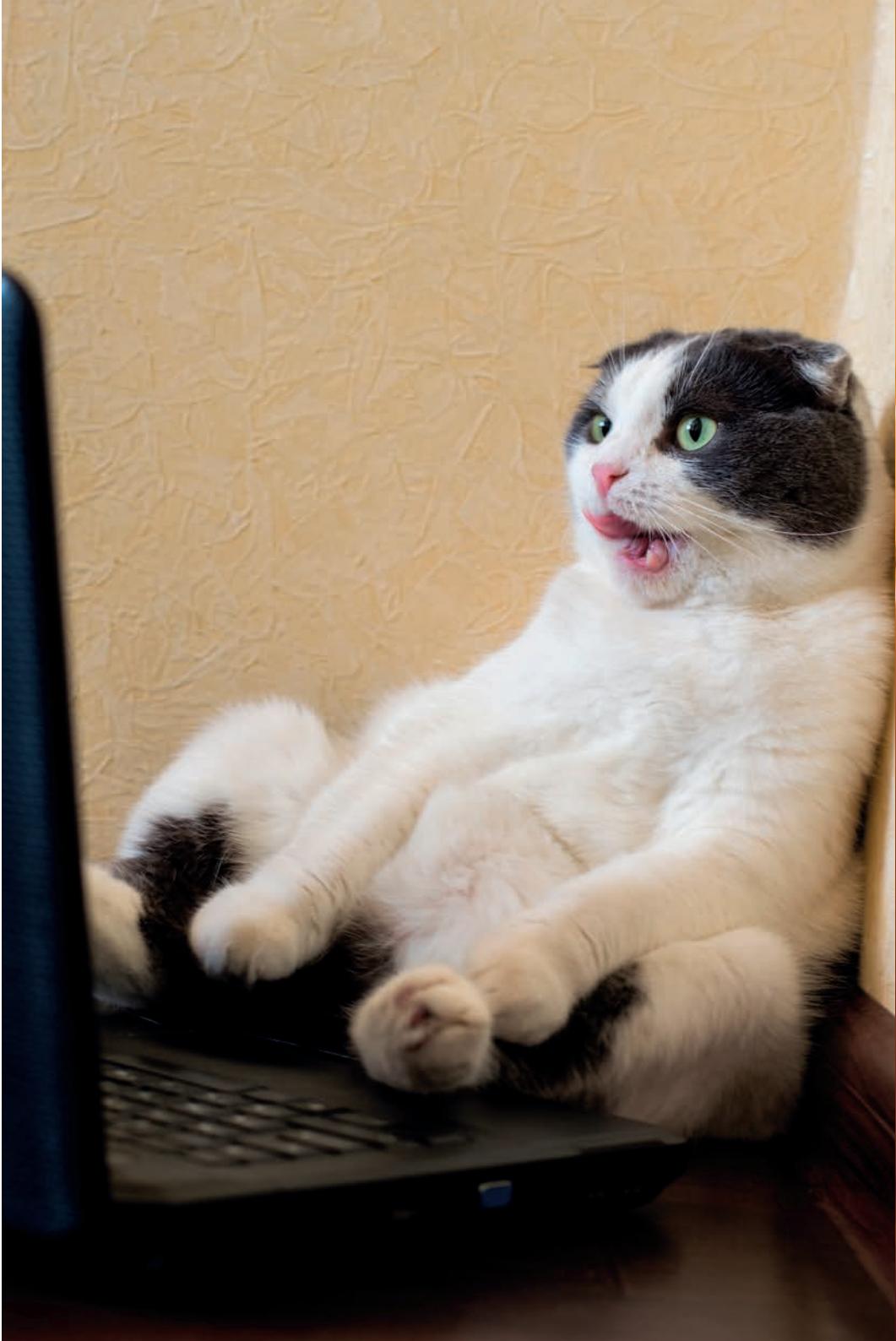
They may become loners caught up in a world of their own,





where they can do their own  
thing over and over again

without being  
disturbed.





“I love ailurophiles!”

Autistic people  
may have a  
very advanced  
vocabulary,

but then they get little words all mixed up



“I hope this tree  
doesn’t bark!”

or misunderstand what people say.



“I haven’t let the  
cat out of the bag!”



When they are spoken to, they may refuse to make eye contact.



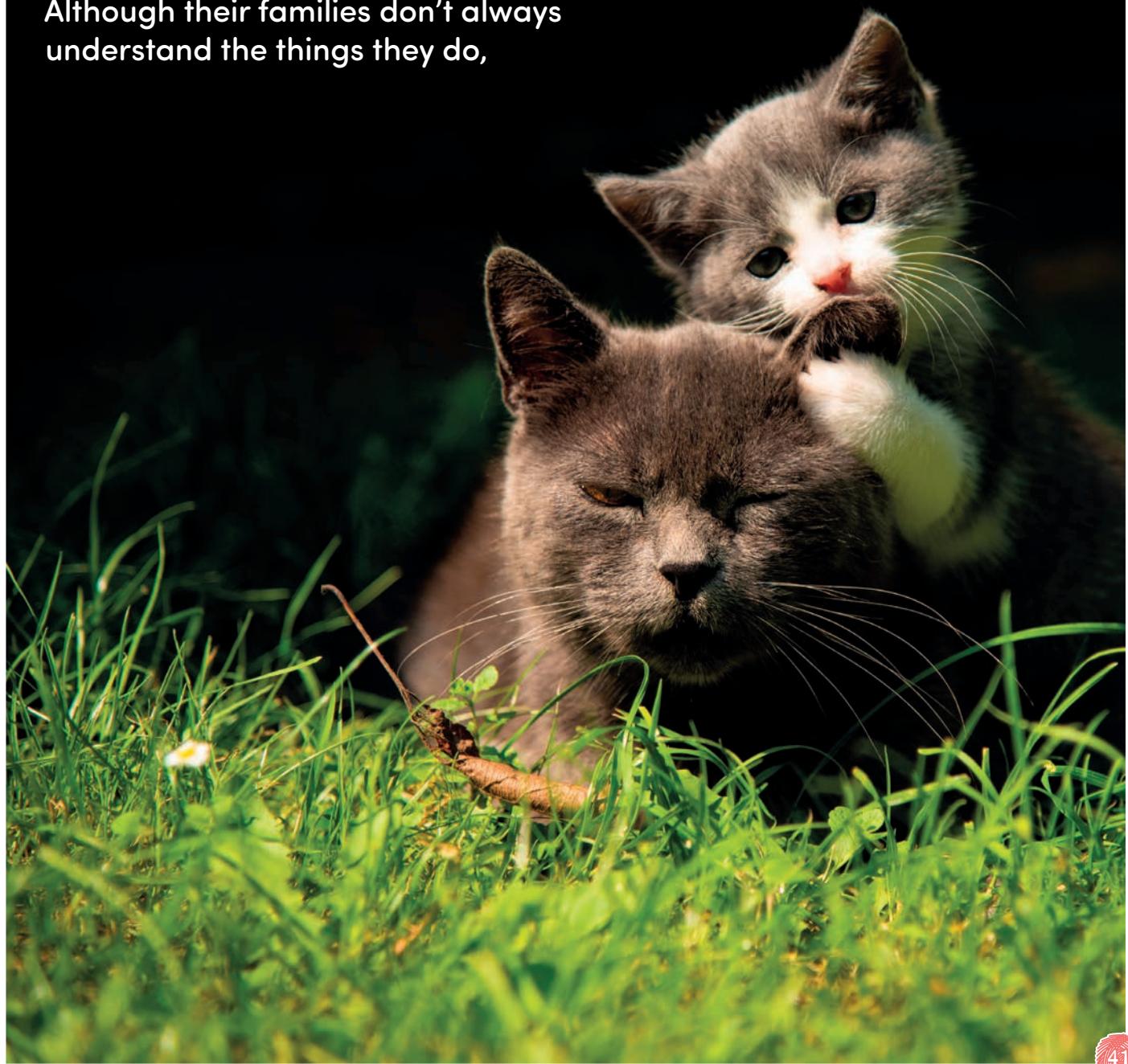
“I like to sleep  
in boxes, in  
baskets, on beds,  
in bowls...”

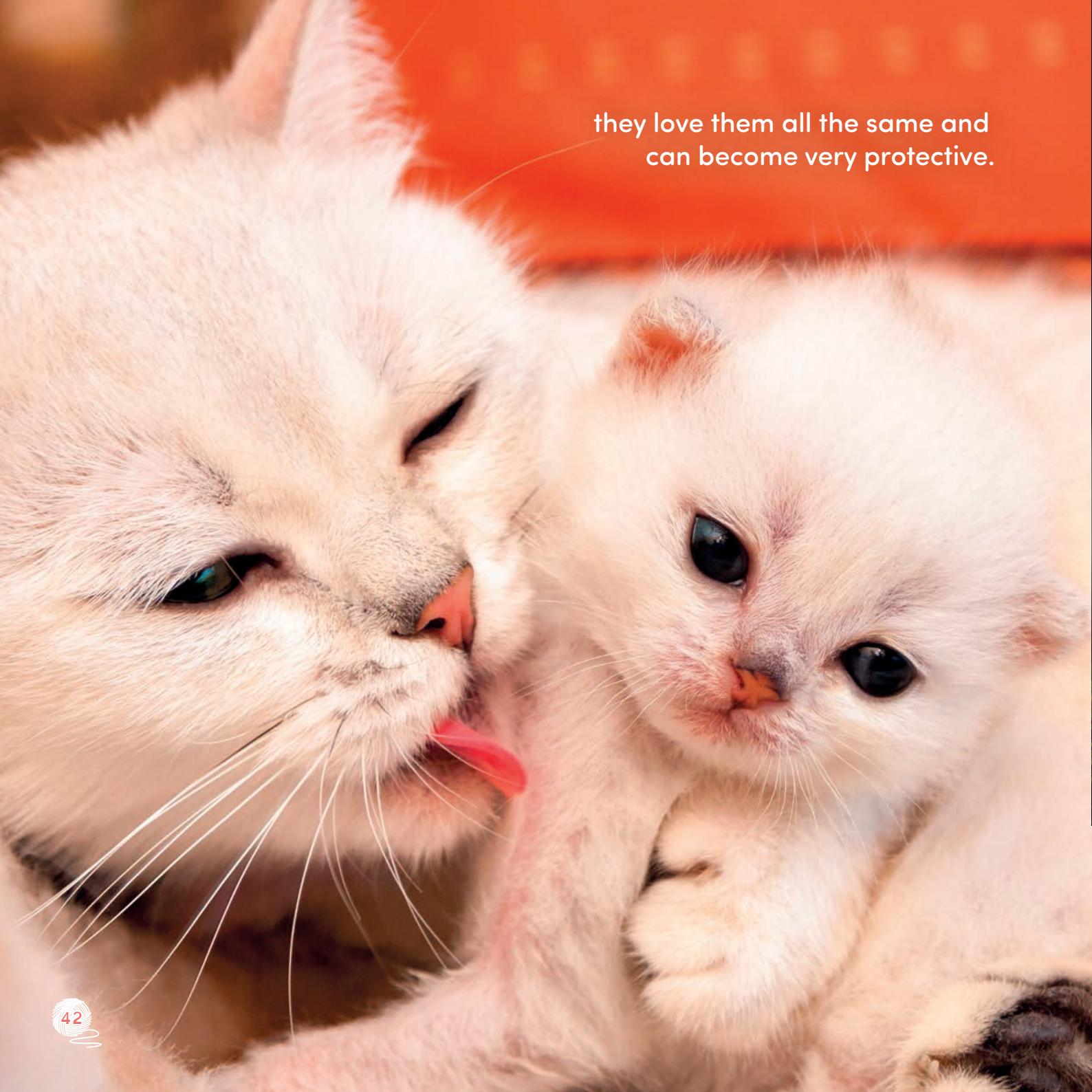
*When they talk, they go on and on about the same topic  
or ask the same questions over and over again*

and don't pick up clues that those  
around them are bored silly.



Although their families don't always  
understand the things they do,



A close-up photograph of a white cat licking its paw while a small white kitten looks on. The cat's eyes are closed, and its tongue is extended. The kitten is looking towards the camera with wide, dark eyes. The background is a warm, out-of-focus orange.

they love them all the same and  
can become very protective.



In many ways, those on the spectrum  
think more deeply than their peers.



“Catnip tastes great  
and it also repels  
mosquitos!”

They may know fascinating facts  
about their special interests,

or have amazing memories,



“We bought this  
cactus 215 days ago.”

or go to great  
lengths to test their  
latest theories,

“See! The moon *is*  
bigger up here.”

and people marvel at their bright intelligent minds.



Often they have a great sense of humour, but they don't always realise that what they are saying



is not appreciated the same way by everyone.

“What’s wrong  
with my ears?!”





And they are honest, which is great of course, although they might be more honest than some prefer.



“Milk? What milk?”

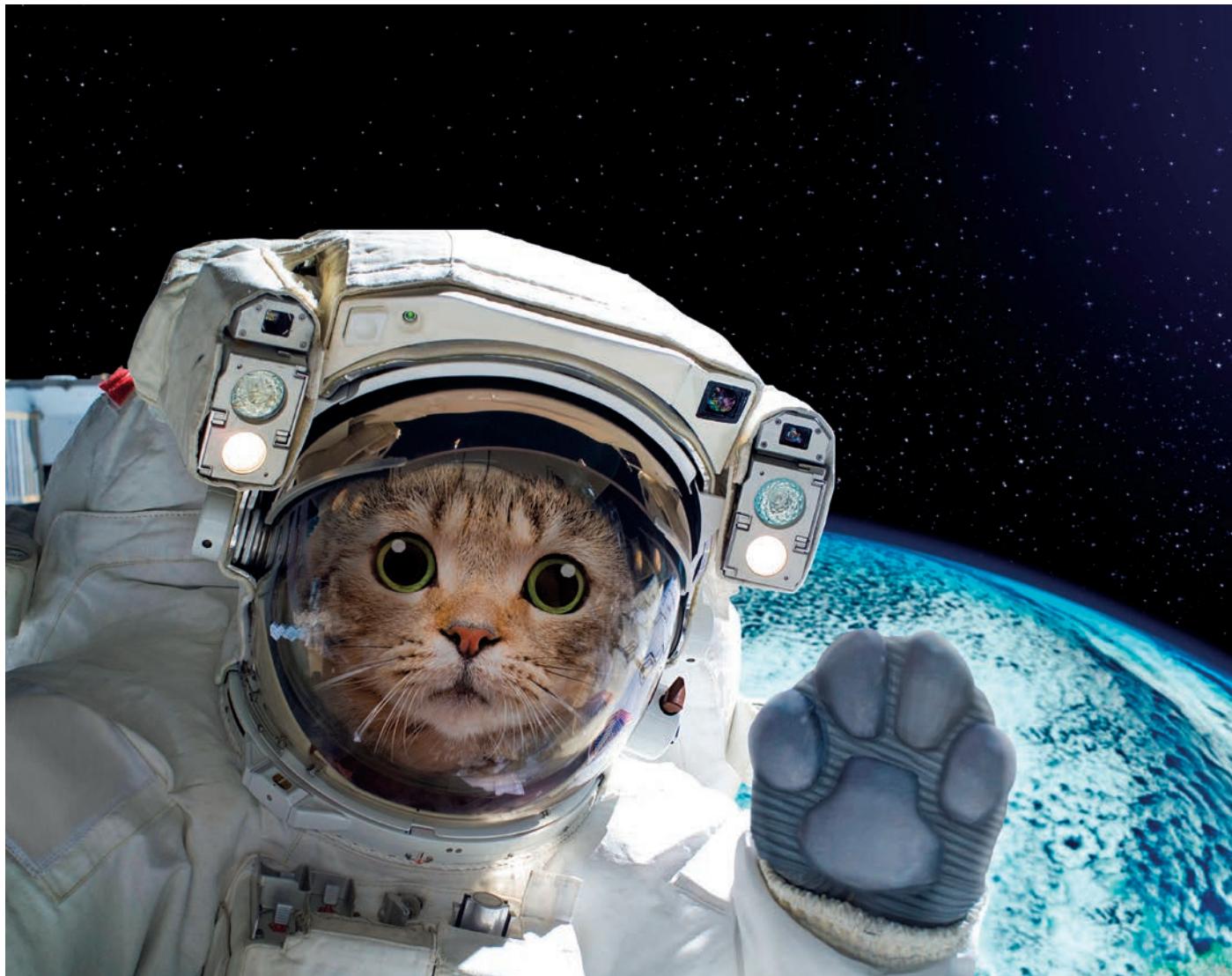
When they try to tell a lie, they are not very good at it.

They treat  
everyone equally,  
regardless of age,  
size or authority,



and are not afraid to stand up for  
what they believe to be right and fair.





However, as they grow older, they may feel different from everyone else, as if they belong on an alien planet,

like an outsider looking into a world  
they never truly understand.



Yet, with their unique perspective on life,





their eye for details that others often miss,

and their passion for researching  
something they love,



many will reach the top of their chosen fields.



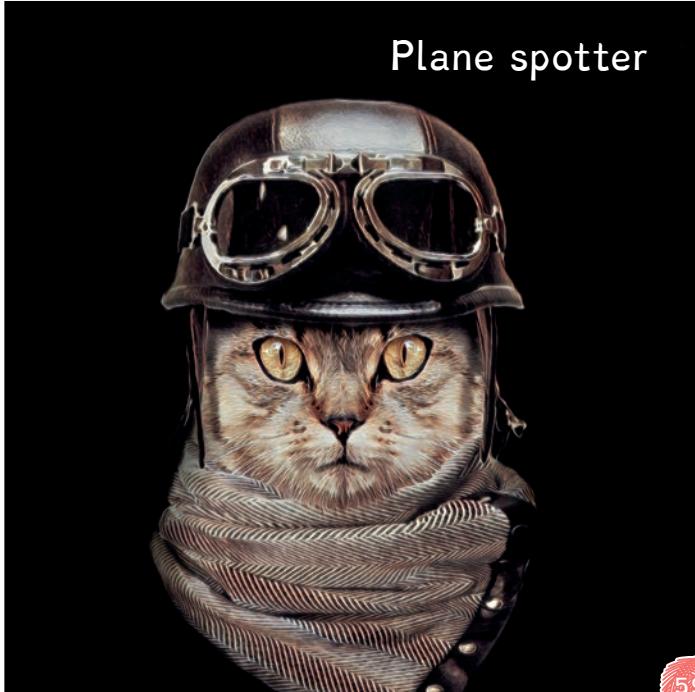
Movie star



Professor



Inventor



Plane spotter

Sure, they may need  
a little help following  
fashionable trends,





but don't forget that **everyone** is important in the tapestry of life.



So those on the spectrum are just like everyone else.  
They need love, encouragement and a purpose for life,

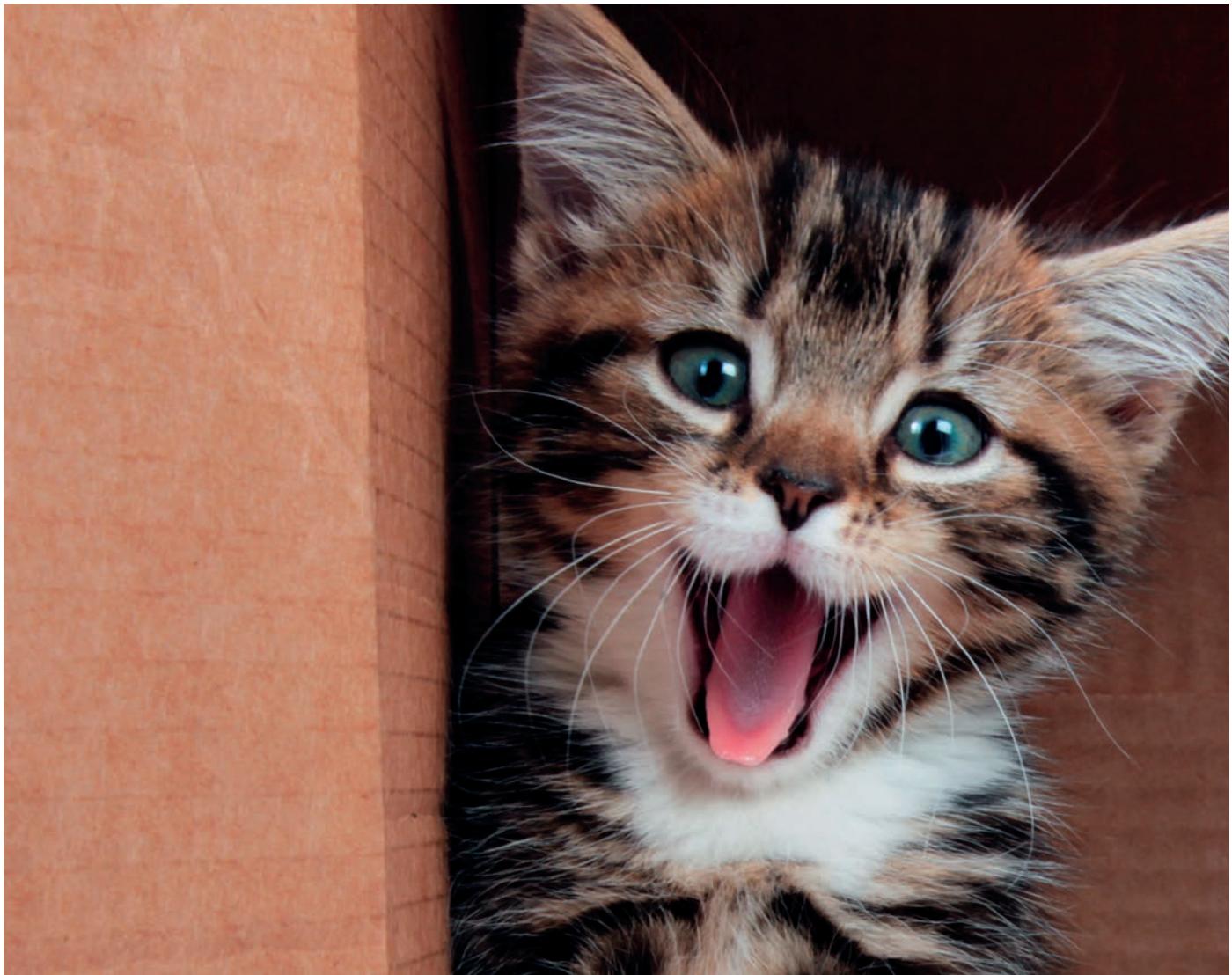




opportunities to try new things,

and space to be themselves,





and then everyone can sit back and enjoy the  
unique individuals they become.



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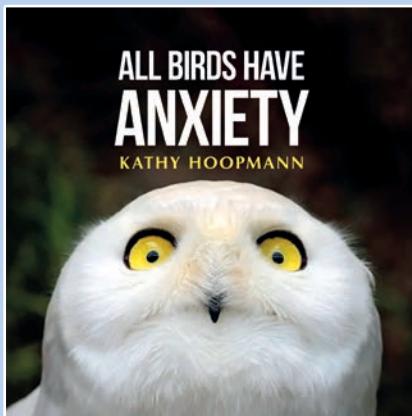
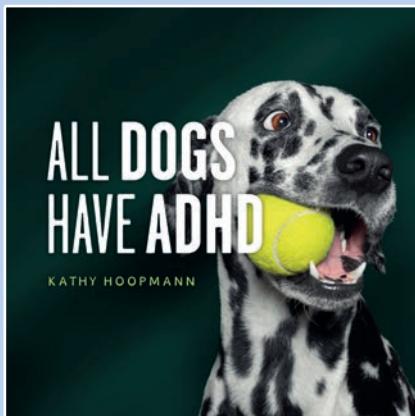
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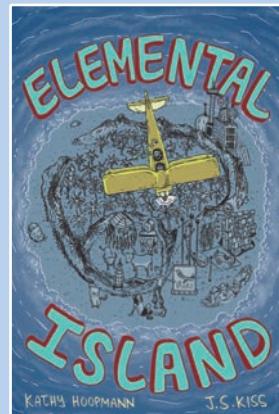
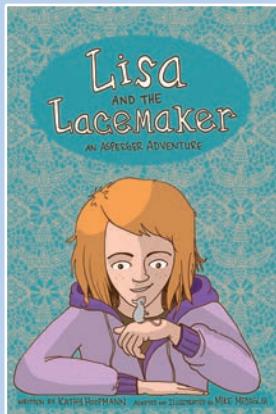
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