

# The Diary of a Killer Cat by Anne Fine

## Group and guided reading

[Perhaps in a flash at the top:

- Year 3
- More able readers]

### Book summary

Tuffy is a cat who lives up to his name – he certainly is tough! He’s got a reputation as a bit of a killer, and his family is getting fed up with him bringing home dead birds and mice. Then one day he manages to wrestle a dead rabbit through the cat flap – and things get serious! The family are convinced that he’s killed next door’s pet rabbit. But Tuffy is only a cat, so he can’t explain that he’s not guilty ... Dad creeps out at dead of night to replace the body of the rabbit in its hutch as if nothing has happened. But later the family find out that the neighbour’s rabbit died naturally – Tuffy didn’t kill it after all! Who’s going to explain to the neighbours how their rabbit ended up back in its cage? Not Tuffy!

### Key learning objectives

Year 3: Strand 7, Understanding and interpreting texts: Infer characters’ feelings in fiction

Year 3: Strand 8, Engaging with and responding to texts: empathise with characters and debate moral dilemmas portrayed in texts

## Session 1

### Introduction

- Look together at the title and cover. Ask: *What sort of cat do you think this is? What kinds of things might a killer cat do? What do you think his diary will be like?*
- Read Chapter 1 (Monday) aloud to the group. Ask: *Why is Tuffy in trouble? Do you think this is fair? How does Tuffy feel about it?* Briefly talk about children’s first impressions of Tuffy and of the book. Do they think it’s going to be funny, or serious? How do they know?

### Independent reading activity

- Ask children to read Chapter 2 (Tuesday) independently.
- Ask: *How do Tuffy’s family feel about him? Why do you think this is? Do you think Tuffy is a bad cat, or is he just behaving like a normal cat?*

### Homework/follow-up

- Ask children to read Chapter 3 (Wednesday). Explain that at the next session you would like them to tell the group why Tuffy is in trouble now.

## Session 2

### Introduction

- Share children’s answers to the follow-up question from Session 1.
- Ask: *What kind of person is Ellie? How do you think she feels about the way Tuffy behaves? Would you be upset if you had a cat who behaved like that?*

### Independent reading activity

- Ask children to read Chapter 4 (Thursday) independently.
- Ask for a volunteer to explain what the problem is with the rabbit. Ask: *Do you think Tuffy killed the rabbit? What do his family think? What do you think they are planning to do with the rabbit?*

### **Homework/follow-up**

- Ask children to read Chapter 5 (Friday) and jot down some predictions about what they think will happen next.

## **Session 3**

### **Introduction**

- Talk about what happened in Chapter 5. Did children guess that Dad would try to put the rabbit back? Share their predictions.
- Read Chapter 6 (Still Friday) aloud to the children and share their reactions. Had they guessed Dad would nail up the cat flap? Ask: *How does Tuffy feel about this? Is it fair?*

### **Independent reading activity**

- Ask children to read Chapter 7 (Saturday) independently as far as page 44.
- Pause, and ask for a volunteer to sum up what happens at the vet's. Ask: *Why was Tuffy going to the vet's? Why did the vet rip up his record card?*
- Ask children to read the rest of the chapter independently. Then ask: *What really happened to Thumper? Did Tuffy kill him? How do you think Mum and Dad felt when they heard what really happened to Thumper?*
- Reread page 55 together. Ask: *Do you think Ellie is right that Tuffy is really a hero?*

### **Homework/follow-up**

- Ask the children to write a diary entry for their own pet, or for Tuffy. They should talk about it in pairs before they write. Challenge them to make it funny and copy the style Anne Fine uses in the book if they can.