



CHAPTER 1

Cookie

My wanting a pet has now turned into an obsession which is probably not very healthy at all. Wanting or thinking about something so badly



that it verges on **ALL THE TIME** can never be a good thing but I just can't help it.

I'm an all or nothing kind of person and sometimes when I get an idea into my head, there's just no shifting it, and right now I **NEED** to



have a pet. Plus, **everyone** else seems to have one.

Suzie Ashby (the most annoying girl in our class and potentially in the world) has FIVE, at least she did on my last count and I don't EVEN have one. I didn't really think I was an animal kind of person but then last month I was walking home from



school when a random cat snuzzled me in the street. It came over to me, (yes me!) and rubbed up against my legs then purred loudly before walking off.

I was **GOBSMACKED!!**

Animals don't usually like me much (and to be fair I'm a bit cautious of them myself, especially big birds).



But ever since that moment I've wanted a pet. Preferably a cat. I've even chosen one in the local pet shop. I've called her Bluey on account of her huge blue eyes. She costs £150 which I know my parents would never splurge out on a cat, so I've started saving up. I only have £7.63 so far but it's a start.

Big birds terrify me. I quite like the idea of a cute little budgie or a fluffy yellow canary but anything bigger, no thanks.



I once got chased by a swan when eating a sandwich in



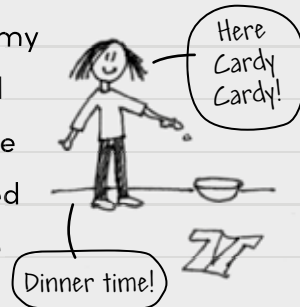
our local park and it has scarred me for life. Quite literally. It pecked my hand and has left a tiny beak shaped mark on it.

I could never be a hand model on a moisturiser ad now. Thanks a bunch, swan. I had to lob the sandwich (coronation chicken – my favourite) into the pond to get it off my case.

But it didn't stop me having scary swan dreams for weeks, where they would just come out of nowhere and chase me.



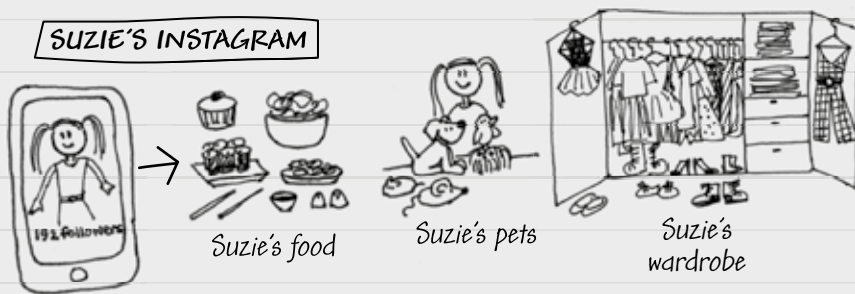
I just think that it would be so nice to have something fluffy and warm to cuddle while watching telly on the sofa. Between you and me I've actually started pretending my old mohair cardigan is a cat and have been cuddling it in a cat like manner. I even pretended to feed it once from an old plastic kiddie bowl I used to use as a baby.



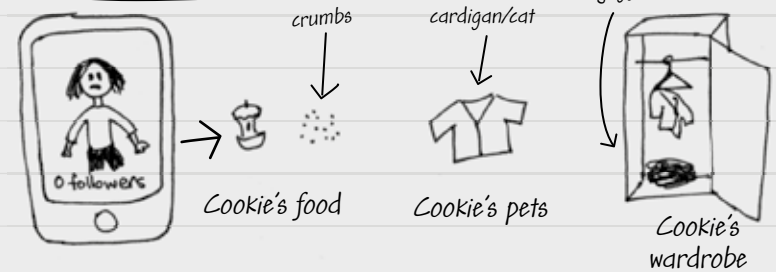
Ok, I'm aware how crazy this is all sounding but it just goes to demonstrate how badly I need a pet. Maybe something is lacking in my life and that will fill the void.

Things that may be lacking in my life...

1. My parents won't let me go on ANY social media. Suzie Ashby has her own Instagram site with 192 followers where she posts photos of food



COOKIE'S INSTAGRAM



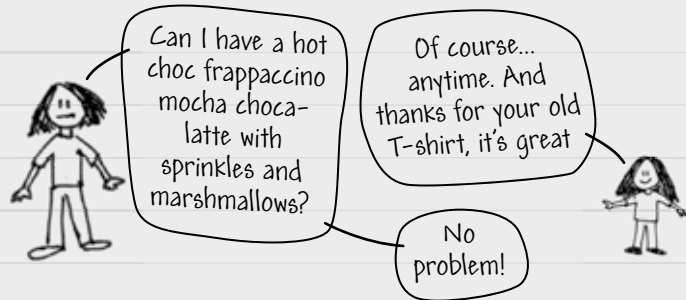
she's eaten, clothes she covets, oh yeah, and all her gazillion animals. (I would be happy with just one).



2. A younger sibling. I have two older sisters and continually get bossed about.

Being the youngest also means getting all their hand me downs. No one would be interested if I had an Instagram site with pictures of me in my third hand bobby jogging bottoms.

I would dearly love a younger brother or sister to boss about who would look up to me and wear my old clothes.



3. Ok, I can skirt the issue no longer, and so for the last void... **Keziah, my best friend in the whole world, is leaving.** Her Dad's got a job in Solihull and they're moving at the end of term which is SO hideous I cannot begin to go into it. Void is not the word, chasm is more accurate. I'm no longer gonna have my



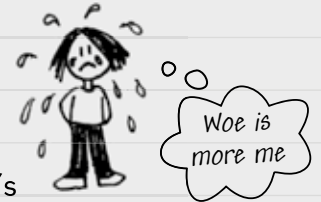
Keziah

partner in crime. Me and Keziah are SO on the same wavelength: we have the same sense of humour, we like the same stuff and often even think the same things, we are kindred spirits! Plus, she's not allowed a mobile phone either so we can be oblivious of cool apps and social media together. Keziah is leaving...



WAAAAHHHH!

My worst nightmare (swans aside) has come true. And why Solihull? Why not the other side of town? Why not a few roads away? Why not next door to me? I hadn't even heard of Solihull before this. Keziah reckons it'll be much worse for her, and that she'll have to go to a new school where she won't have any friends. I pointed out that I won't have any friends either once she's gone. It's not that I'm unpopular or anything, it's just I've always felt like I don't really fit in and there's no-one else I really want to hang out with. When Keziah joined school, at last all that changed. But now just two and a bit years later she's leaving.



I googled Solihull and it was named "Best Place to Live in the UK" in a quality of life survey, so not



rubbish at all. Great... Keziah is leaving me behind, while she goes off to her new brilliant life in the best place to live in the UK.

So, I'm gonna need to get a pet to fill the Keziah shaped chasm and these are my options...

Cat – dream pet, have even chosen one. They are just like cuddly toys that you feed and that sometimes poo on your bed. Although Bluey looks too hygienic to poo on my bed, she is just sublime. LOVE her and her BIG eyes.

Currently too expensive so that rules that out for now.

Dog – WAY too much maintenance, I would have to walk it every day. I find it hard enough to exercise myself never mind a whole other animal.



Bluey

Fish – this is the only thing that I reckon my parents might go for but you can't really cuddle them on the sofa without a) getting soaked or b) suffocating them to death or worse still, c) both.



Hamster/ mouse/ other rodent – Keziah had mice in her house last year. They nibbled holes in the pocket lining of her favourite coat when she accidentally left a KitKat in it and they did little black poos everywhere. Gross. The council had to get rid of them and it took weeks. Off putting.



Bird – (a small one). Suzie Ashby has a budgie that flies around her house and sometimes sits on a perch in the corner of her bedroom. Apparently it likes listening to classical music. I know all this from Suzie's Instagram, which I made Nahid find for me once.

Nahid is my eldest sister who's currently at uni. She's **ALWAYS** on social media.



Nahid

I reckon I may have a realistic shot at a bird. My mum is always commenting on birds: their singing, how pretty they are, how they eat the rice she puts out for them in the garden. Yeah who



knew birds like rice? (Cooked, not raw.)



Apparently, mum used to give them leftover rice all the time when she was growing up in Bangladesh. I'm

not sure how cuddly a bird would be on the sofa but here's hoping...

Bird wins. I will get a bird. A small one. Obviously. A pet will never replace Keziah, but I want one anyway. Maybe it will help mend my broken heart.

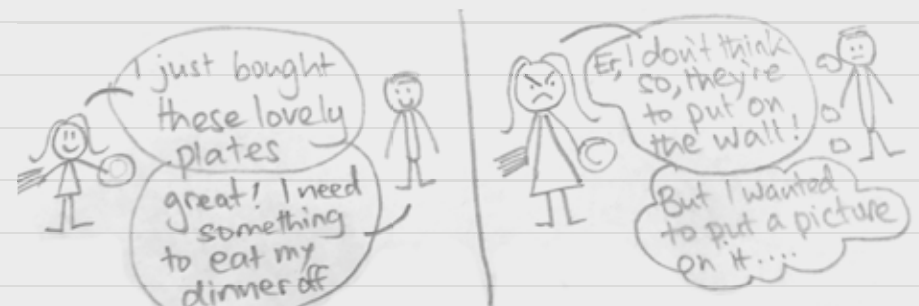
But how do I get my hands on a bird? Hmm...



CHAPTER 2

Hungry Birds

OMG. What have I done?! There's a bird in our house. A massive, gross, ugly pigeon with scary, stare-y eyes flapping its wings and feathers around all over my living room. It's about to knock all my mum's plates off the wall. I mean, who puts plates on a wall when



they are clearly for eating off!?!

My middle sister, Roubi, is supposed to be