

CATS

ON THE RUN



A DIZZYING EVOLUTIONARY JOURNEY

CATS ON THE RUN

THIS COMIC BOOK HAS EMERGED WITHIN THE PROJECT *THEORY OF EVOLUTION IN COMICS*, A COLLABORATION BETWEEN LINKÖPING UNIVERSITY, THE SWEDISH CENTER FOR SCHOOL BIOLOGY AT UPPSALA UNIVERSITY, AND AN ILLUSTRATOR.

THE FACT THAT IT BECAME A STORY ABOUT CATS FALLING INTO A PORTAL, WE HAVE A CREATIVE 11-YEAR-OLD TO THANK FOR – THANK YOU, STINA!

HOW DID THE COMIC BOOK COME ABOUT?

Jonas Anderson is an illustrator and comic artist who has created images for a multitude of books and magazines. Jonas is responsible for the images and design in *Cats on the Run – a dizzying evolutionary journey*.

The comic developed through a creative collaboration between:

Johanna Aringer, who does research on how children and students learn new things within science, especially about evolution, and **Lars Wallner**, who does research on how comics and other pop culture can be used in school. They both do research and teach at Linköping University.

Ammie Berglund and **Lisa Reimegård**, both working at the Swedish center for school biology at Uppsala University.

During the work with the comic book, we have received valuable input from experts on evolution:

Lars Werdelin, who is a professor of paleontology at the Swedish Museum of Natural History and an expert on the evolution of the cat family.

Henning Blom, who is a researcher in paleontology and an expert on the evolution of vertebrates, and

Petra Korall, who is a researcher in systematic botany and also studies students' understanding of evolutionary family trees, Henning and Petra both work at Uppsala University.

The comic book has also been reviewed by children and students.

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An important mission.

AN ORDINARY DAY
SOMEWHERE IN THE
PRESENT TIME.

CLAWD?

CLAAAAWD?



CLAUDIUS MAXIMUS,
WHERE ARE YOU?



CUT IT OUT,
YOU KNOW THAT YOU'RE
MUCH BETTER AT HIDING
THAN I AM!

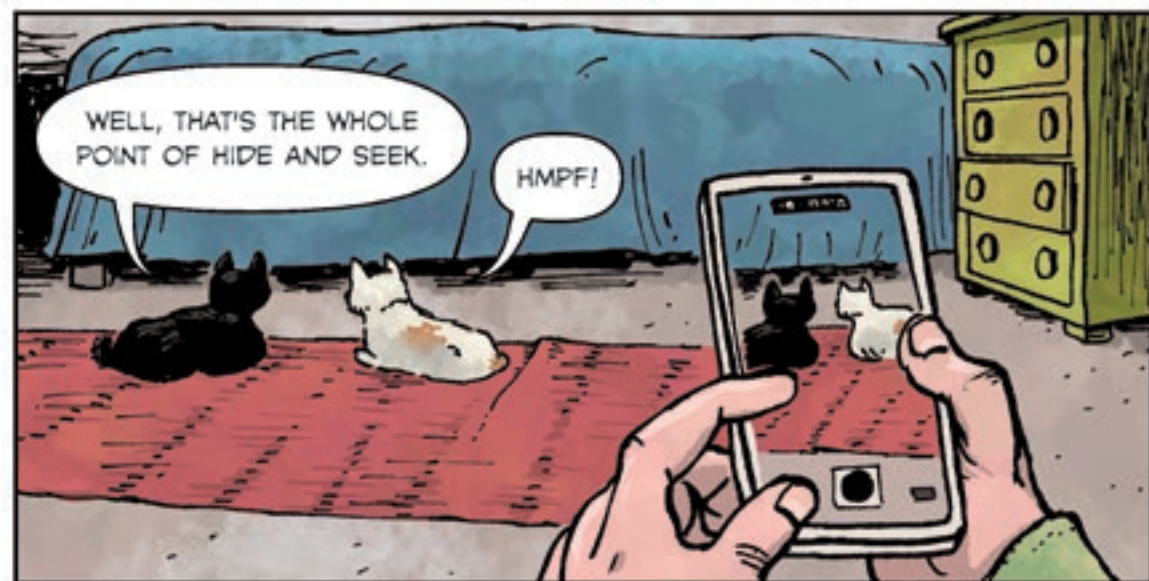


STOP IT, THIS
ISN'T FUNNY!



MEEEEEOOOOW!!!









COME ON, DON'T BE SUCH A COWARD!



LET'S GO, IT'S NOT DANGEROUS. JUST A PEEK!







WHAT

IS

HAPPENING?




















THE COUNCIL OF CATS
CONSISTS OF REPRESENTATIVES
FROM EVERY CAT SPECIES THAT HAS
EVER EXISTED. EVERYONE, FROM THE
LARGEST SABER-TOOTHED CAT TO
THE TINIEST RUSTY-SPOTTED CAT,
IS HERE.

WE HAVE GATHERED
TODAY TO ADDRESS THE
PROBLEM OF MORE AND MORE
OF US BEING FORCED INTO
EXTINCTION EACH YEAR.
ONE BY ONE, THE BRANCHES OF
OUR PROUD FAMILY TREE
BREAK AND FALL.

SABRINA,
YOUR MISSION WAS TO
BRING A HOUSE CAT FROM
THE PRESENT HERE TO GIVE
US NEW PERSPECTIVES
ON THE ISSUE.



YOU MUST UNDERSTAND
THAT THIS IS NOTHING
THAT SOME RUNTS,
WHO CAN BARELY
WASH THEMSELVES,
CAN HELP US WITH!



SABRINA,
MAKE SURE TO TAKE
THEM BACK HOME!

What's the difference between a cat?

YOU'RE JUST
SMALL KITTIES,
NO WAY!

GRRR, I AM
SO ANGRY!

I'M GONNA *BITE* THEM,
THAT'S WHAT I'LL DO!

BITE,
WITH THOSE
ITTY BITTY TEETH?

THEY ARE STILL
SUPER SHARP AND WAY
BIGGER THAN YOURS!

NOT AT ALL!
YOU HAVE TINY, DULL
AND DORKY TEETH!



GRRR!

HISS!

STOP IT!











How long is a tail?

HEY, CLAWD,
COME HERE.

WHAT IS IT?

HAVE YOU NOTICED THEIR TAILS?

IT REMINDS ME OF...

UNCLE PETE WHO
GOT HIS TAIL CAUGHT
IN A DOOR!
THERE WAS ONLY
A STUMP LEFT!

DO YOU THINK
EVERYONE'S GONE
AND GOT THEIR TAIL
CHOPPED OFF?

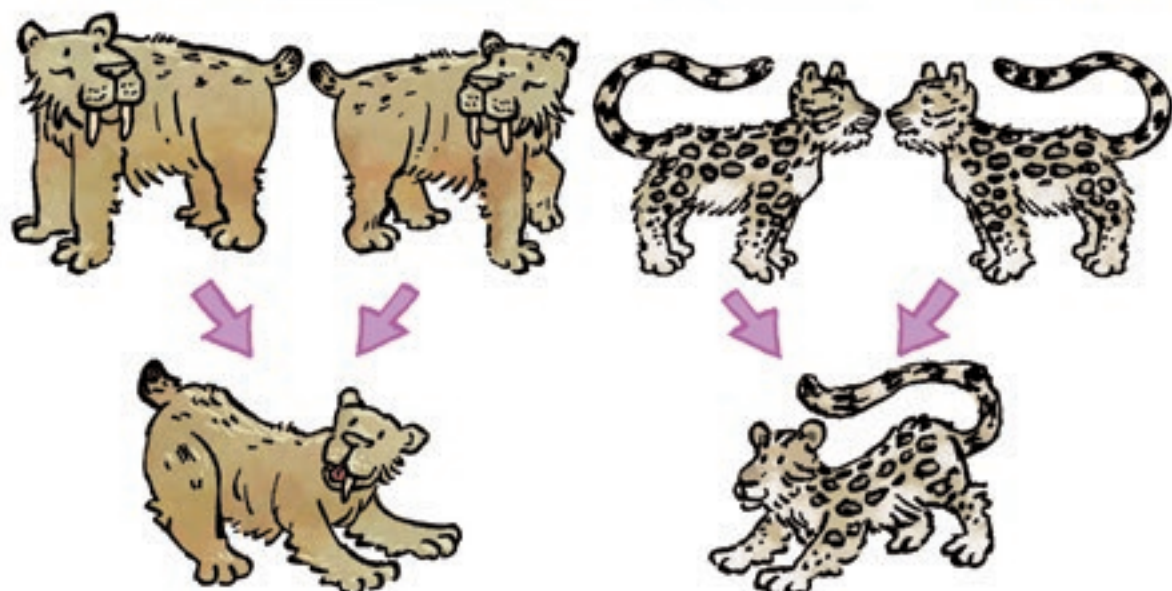


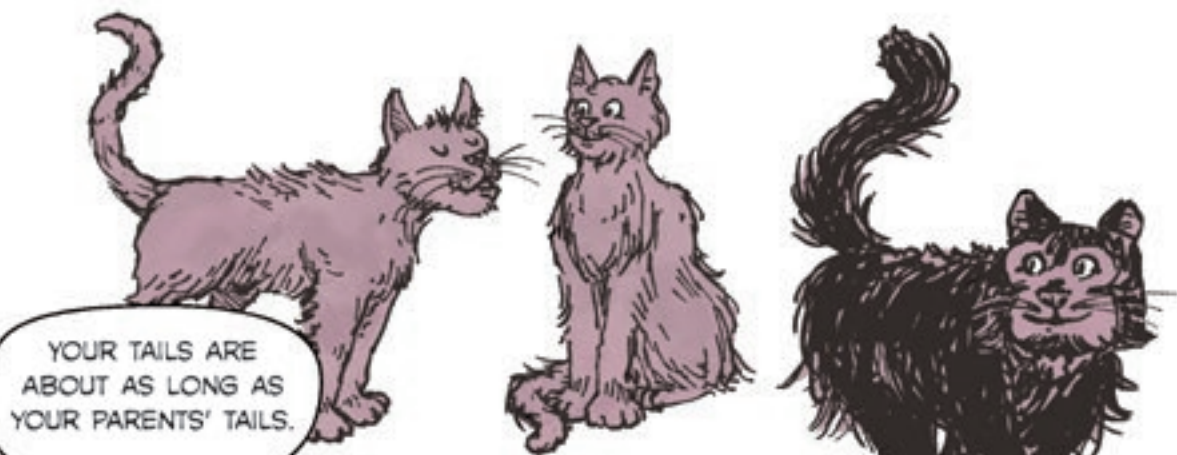


THE HIMALAYAS, 10 000 YEARS AGO.









YOUR TAILS ARE ABOUT AS LONG AS YOUR PARENTS' TAILS.

TAFFY, YOU'VE INHERITED INSTRUCTIONS THAT GIVE YOU A SLIGHTLY LONGER TAIL THAN CLAWD. AND THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT IS, WE DON'T BECOME EXACT COPIES OF OUR PARENTS.



CLAWD SEEMS TO HAVE INHERITED THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SAME THICK TAIL THAT YOUR GRANDDAD HAD.

YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE THOSE TAILS, NO MATTER WHERE YOU LIVE.

SO, MOM GOT HER TAIL FROM GRANDMA AND GRANDDAD, HUH?

NOW I GET IT! MAYBE...



WAS IT YOUR GREAT-GREAT GRANDMA WHO WAS THE FIRST TO HAVE A LONG TAIL?

COME ON, TAFFY! WE'VE GOT TO CATCH UP WITH SABRINA.

SHWOOP!



We've got to save them!

NORTH AMERICA, 10 000 YEARS AGO.









DON'T YOU
REMEMBER THE COUNCIL
OF CATS' TREE? THE CATS
ON THE GROUND, THEY'RE
EXTINCT IN YOUR TIME.

OF SOME SPECIES,
ONLY A FEW CATS REMAIN.
THEIR BRANCHES ARE ABOUT
TO BREAK. THEY TOO WILL
SOON BE EXTINCT.

THAT'S A
CATASTROPHE!



WE'VE GOT TO STOP IT!



THERE'S NOTHING
WE CAN DO.





BUT WHY ARE THEY BECOMING EXTINCT? THAT'S JUST TERRIBLE!



IT VARIES. OFTEN, SOMETHING IN THE ENVIRONMENT HAS CHANGED SO WE CAN NO LONGER FIND FOOD. SOMETIMES, IT'S HUMANS WHO HAVE DESTROYED OUR HABITATS.



THE CAPE LIONS WERE HUNTED AND KILLED BY HUMANS UNTIL THERE WERE NONE LEFT. THE LAST ONE DISAPPEARED 150 YEARS BEFORE YOU WERE BORN.

DO YOU SEE THOSE BIG ANIMALS OVER THERE? THEY'LL BE GONE SOON, AND MY GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN WON'T BE ABLE TO FIND ANY FOOD AT ALL.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, SMILODONS?

THEN THEY CAN'T HAVE ANY BABIES, AND THAT'S THE END OF THE SMILODONS.









WE ALL
KNOW WHO'S
TO BLAME!

Siberian Tiger



YES, I CAN NEVER
BE AT PEACE, THEY
REFUSE TO SHARE
THE FOREST.

Amur Leopard

THEY'RE AFTER
OUR FUR!



Serval

YES, THERE'S
ONLY ONE THING
TO DO.



HUMANS MUST GO IF
WE ARE TO SURVIVE.

THEY SIMPLY MUST
BE MADE EXTINCT!





YOU CAN'T
KILL THE
HUMANS!

OUR HOOMAN
IS SUPER NICE AND
TAKES CARE OF US!



WE GET FOOD AND
CUDDLES EVERY DAY,
AND WE GET TO PLAY
ALL THE TIME!

HMMM...



WELL, YOU LIVE TOGETHER
WITH HUMANS MAYBE YOU HAVE
SOME IDEA ON HOW WE CAN
MAKE THEM STOP DESTROYING
OUR HABITAT.



OKAY, YOU GET
ONE CHANCE, TELL US
EVERYTHING YOU KNOW!

TAFFY AND CLAWD TALK
TO THE COUNCIL OF CATS
FOR SEVERAL HOURS.



A LITTLE WHILE LATER...



HUH?
A VIDEO?



TAFFY AND CLAWD'S HOOMAN POSTED THE VIDEO ON THE INTERNET. IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG BEFORE IT WAS THE MOST POPULAR VIDEO EVER!

A viral sensation!



This is one video you can't miss!



The kittens that inspired the world!

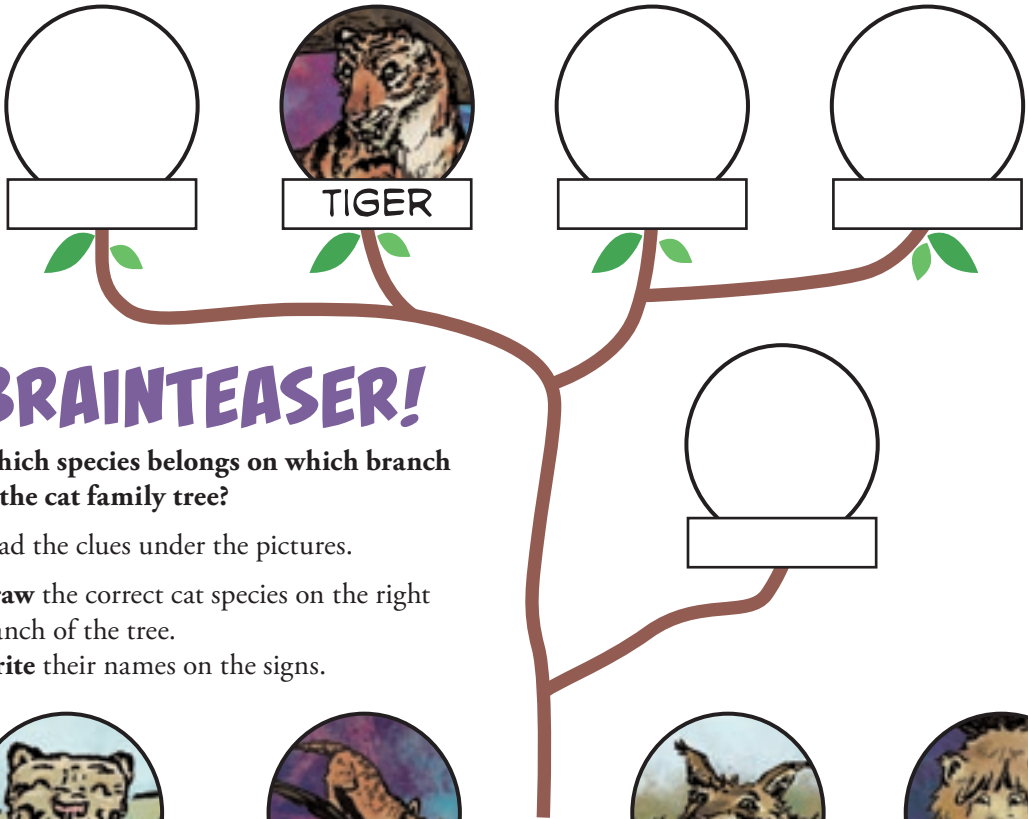


Politicians make decisions that give much better animal and environmental protection all over the world!



ALL CATS ARE RELATED

Here is a family tree with branches for five different species of cats. You might recognize them from the story? In this particular tree, we have drawn five species, but in reality, there are many more cat species. The ends with green leaves mean that the species are alive today.



BRAINTEASER!

Which species belongs on which branch in the cat family tree?

Read the clues under the pictures.

Draw the correct cat species on the right branch of the tree.

Write their names on the signs.



I share common ancestors with all the other cats in this family tree. But our species does not exist in the present.



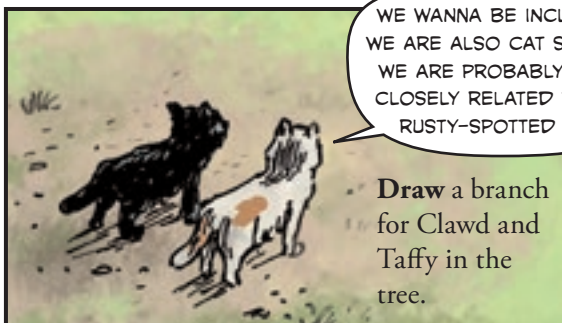
The name of my species comes from the pattern on our fur. In this tree, my closest relative is a cat species with tufts on its ears. It doesn't matter which of us you put to the right or left. It will be correct either way.



I am equally related to the tiger and the lion. In this family tree, my closest relative is one of the smallest cat species that exist today.



In this particular family tree, the tiger is my closest relative.



ANOTHER BRAINTEASER...

A few hundred years ago, lions existed in almost all of Africa. But the lions in South Africa died out. They are called Cape lions. **Draw** a branch for them on the tree.

CLAWD AND TAFFY ARE TWO KITTENS WHO LOVE TO PLAY AND FROLIC. ONE DAY, THEY DISCOVER THAT THE WINDOW TO THE YARD IS OPEN.



THEY FIND THEMSELVES IN AN ADVENTURE WHERE THEY MEET BOTH HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY RELATIVES AND HELP TO PREVENT AN IMPENDING **CATASTROPHE!**

In *Cats on the Run*, the reader follows two kittens as they acquaint themselves with some aspects of feline evolution, as well as the consequences of humans encroaching on animal habitats. This thought-provoking comic can serve as a starting point for discussions and teaching about evolution and biodiversity for students (7–13 years).