

## **Zelda Claw**

All night, thunder growled overhead. Zelda crouched in the darkness, staring. Wind lashed the glistening tarmac and the street lights flickered, casting shadows across the darkened road. Rusted dustbins rattled in the wind, fences creaked and the rain drummed on car roofs. Zelda shivered. Where could she escape from the downpour?

At that moment, Zelda sensed something crawling, something creeping along the pavement, hugging close to the shadows. Silently, a vague shape slipped into a doorway and Zelda was sure that she had glimpsed the flicker of a green eye. She could just hear a low growl even though the rain danced a thousand deaths on the pavement. Her fur prickled as she tensed herself. What was it?

Without thinking, Zelda ducked under a lorry and tucked herself into a space near the engine. It was still warm. She could just make out what looked like an enormous cat pacing through the rain, like a shadow moving silently along the rain washed pavements. Its white, needle-teeth jutted out of a scarlet mouth. Power surged through every step. Zelda flinched, crouching stiller than stone.

Beneath the lorry, Zelda waited but the great rain-cat drew closer and closer. Emerald eyes glittered crazily and Zelda could hear its claws scratching on the tarmac. Nearer it came until the great cat paused by the lorry's engine and sniffed. Could it smell Zelda's fear?

She could bear it no longer. Leaping out from under the lorry, Zelda shot back across the rain-swept road and leapt onto and over the wall. Landing the other side, she paused. Alone! The rain cat had not followed but Zelda could hear it screeching.

And it was a sound that seemed to tear the night in half. Zelda shuddered with relief. She was safe – for now.