

39a

Welcome to this inaugural edition of *Ask Scooby*.

Bearing in mind this post's **39a** (27D) classification, do, please, feel free to pass by if it's not your thing.

It's not hard, and leaving snarky comments here, or elsewhere, it's ... unworthy. Unseemly.

In the words of the indubitable **mrs**m's indubitable cream-suited Alec Gilroyesque Dennis, words that I have very much taken to heart, and often since smiled at, with, and about, *it's just not very fucking nice*.

Caveats out of the way, Shirley there cannot be anywhere in the world you would rather be, than here in The Caff, witness to this first in a series of everyone's favourite Agony Cat, Scooby 'Humility' Blue, addressing all manner of questions you need answering badly.

If there's time, and I doubt there will be, I'll also turn my whiskers to any that you badly need answering. Probably won't be time for any of that old nonsense though, and we'll all have to settle for good questions and bad answers.

For this inaugural edition, I am indebted to **Rabbigator**, whose question is reproduced below, and which was drawn first from my MASSIVE bag of fan mail.

I was asked recently, by another poster, to my great surprise, and to no little consternation, "Did you really push him down the stairs?"

Crikey! The audacity, the insensitivity, of such a question.

What an explosive start to *Ask Scooby* that would have made, had the question arrived earlier!

Honest answer?

I can honestly say that the Coroner's Report said I didn't.

It is an incident that I am greatly saddened by, and truly wish had never happened.

I really do miss the sappy old goat, and this Catmas is going to be a very different kettle of fish, viewed in the light of the last one that we shared.

So saddened am I at the prospect, I cannot even get too excited at the mention of fish there.

Last year? Turkey and all the trimmings, roasties to die for, all hand-prepped and cooked and served by my own personal butler.

This year? Self-service.

I do at least now have Scooby's Chariot of Great Glory, Oumar, to get to Tesco's for supplies. Not just a car, a velour-trimmed limousine of grace, Blueness, and no little majesty. And, thank goodness, the same time-travelling ability that we had with Smartie.

Peter, the man at the garage, didn't mention any time-travelling potential the car may have, and it wasn't the sort of thing I really wanted to enquire about, but a few tweaks under the bonnet and it's all set for wherever we want to go. Marvellous!

Catmas day itself will be the fifth anniversary of the passing of Bradley, Cat of Cats, Queen of Queens. She of the great tome, *Bradley's Catway Code*. Bradley, the legend. The absolute legend.

I will raise my glass to her, as I did last year with the late CanaryBlue, and to him too of course, now that he has gone also.

I think, for those toasts, I will crack open the Purrsecco that **Lily34** kindly sent over.

That's more than enough about Catmas, not my happiest time of the year, all things considered, so let's go, with no further ado, to **Rabbigator**, who asks ...

Dear Scooby - as the site's only representative of the feline race, are you able to explain to me why even a fine, upstanding cat such as yourself finds it necessary to sharpen your claws - which I fully understand must be kept at razor point at all times - on the furniture rather than the many fine scratching posts and pads that may have been placed around the house for your convenience? My own cats are unable to throw any light on this mystery.

Thank you, **Rabbigator**.

This is one of the most complex questions that I have ever been asked to consider, largely due to its multi-stranded answer, and I am most grateful to you for keeping me on my paws from the word go.

And for allowing me paws for thought since the question was first raised. So many lifetimes ago it seems.

I will do my best.

First Rule of Catschool is to treat everywhere as your own. You are there, wherever 'there' may be, and it is therefore your home. It is all quite logical.

Others may have the title deeds, the mortgage, or the rental commitments, but it is, above all, the cat's home.

I think most humans who have attracted a cat to live with them would agree that, in very short order, the cat is the one wearing the trousers.

And if it is not, it will quickly find both another place to live and another tailor.

A subsection of the First Rule of Catschool is for the cat to treat its home with respect.

This of course includes not clawing at the furniture, though there are further sub-sectional exceptions where this type of behaviour is deemed acceptable, such as when the cat is in extreme distress.

Extreme distress can be brought about by a great many things. A human may be late serving dinner, perhaps. Allowances are made, of course, but any delay exceeding 30 seconds has the potential to cause distress to the cat and thus to a distressing of the furniture.

Both cat-wise and fabric-wise, the clocks going back an hour can be an especially distressing time.

It is reasonable, and correct, to draw the conclusion that great distress can be caused to a cat by not giving it what it wants, when it wants it. In which event, it will more than likely give you, and the furniture, what you don't want, when you don't want it.

A wise human, one with great experience of cats, and a great desire to live a peaceful life, will not only accept the inevitability of giving a cat precisely what it wants precisely when it wants it, it will proactively rather than reactively meet the feline's needs.

I did not, for example, have the first idea that I needed medium/rare sirloin steak, cut up into tiny pieces, and drizzled with garlic butter. CanaryBlue was having that for himself, albeit not cut up into tiny pieces, had more than an inkling that I might like it, wafted a small plateful under my nose while I slept, and had on his hands both a very happy cat and very happy furniture.

I am not sure the cow in question was quite so enamoured with the whole arrangement, but in terms of what is important, I was.

All of the above, however, should not be allowed to overshadow the very crux of your question, and the answer that lies at the heart of it.

... rather than the many fine scratching posts and pads that may have been placed around the house for your convenience?

Rabbigator, the furniture comprises, *is*, the many fine scratching posts and pads placed around the house for your cat's, or cats', convenience.

How is a cat to differentiate between what you consider to be scratching pads, and what you consider to be furniture?

How is the post-shaped scratching thingy any different from the armchair-shaped scratching thingy, or the carpet-like scratching thingy you so graciously laid on?

And I've seen you lying graciously on it, don't think I haven't; this time machine of mine takes me to all sorts of interesting, though often unseemly, places.

To the point though, this is where you come in. You need to have some *catchat*.

Each individual cat that has chosen to live with you, and we are all individual, is overwhelmed by your generosity and the sheer range of scratching material you have provided.

Oh look, here's another gift. This time in the shape of a post. Marvellous! Must try it out, see how it compares with the scatter cushions, so thoughtfully supplied previously.

Having provided your cat with all of these materials, and with no map as to what is acceptable to scratch and what is not, the onus lies entirely with you to guide your cat as to what is behaviour becoming, and what is not.

I can give you an example.

From day one, CB gave me the run of the flat, I was free to explore to my paws' content. I was allowed to jump on, and play with, pretty much anything.

Except for one thing. Well, two things. His loudspeakers.

Never was a loudspeaker more hallowed, or better designed to be both a scratching post and a landing pad, with its cloth-covered bottom and two great big silver discs atop. They immediately grabbed my attention. They could not be more feline-friendly had they actually been designed by cats.

I'm not entirely sure they weren't. The designer, David Whitfield Lewis, sure is one cool cat for coming up with these beauties, so perhaps there is something subliminal going on there.

Certainly, no cat alive wouldn't want to get its claws into a pair of musical scratching posts like that. Denmark's finest.

I recall it being my first day in Flat 3, next door to where I now live.

I was on my haunches, ears back, bottom wagging, tail swishing, otherwise stock still, totally focused, about to pounce at one of them, when I was on the receiving end of a death stare the like of which I had not seen before.

And certainly do not wish to ever witness again.

It was accompanied by an almighty "No!"

I trembled, left in no doubt of any need to think twice about standing down, enjoyed an ear rub, and wallowed in my favourite words, ones I will always associate with CanaryBlue, from the very first days when we met in the park, "You *are* a good girl Scooby, you *are* a good girl."

Hearing that always made me purr.

Oh how I would love to hear him says those words to me again.

He is no longer here of course, but the Daleks of Love, as he used to call them, are. I can do what I like, but I would no more dream of going near them, other than for a listen, and to give the neighbours a listen, than I would of letting any harm come to my dear sister Puss Puss.

The Daleks are, as they have always been, since the day I arrived, off limits.

It is for you **Rabbigator**, as I suspect you already know, to let the kitties know the boundaries, and to school them in the appropriate etiquette for the accommodation they allow you to share with them.

Catschool can only really teach them the basics, rather than the specifics.

Hope that helps.

Thank you very much for your enquiry, **Rabbigator**. It will always hold a special place in my heart and in the history of *Ask Scooby*, and you will always be in my memories for that. Thank you.

Next time, at the request of **Kath**, some discussion on the plight of Larry. *Dear Larry*. The poor bastard.