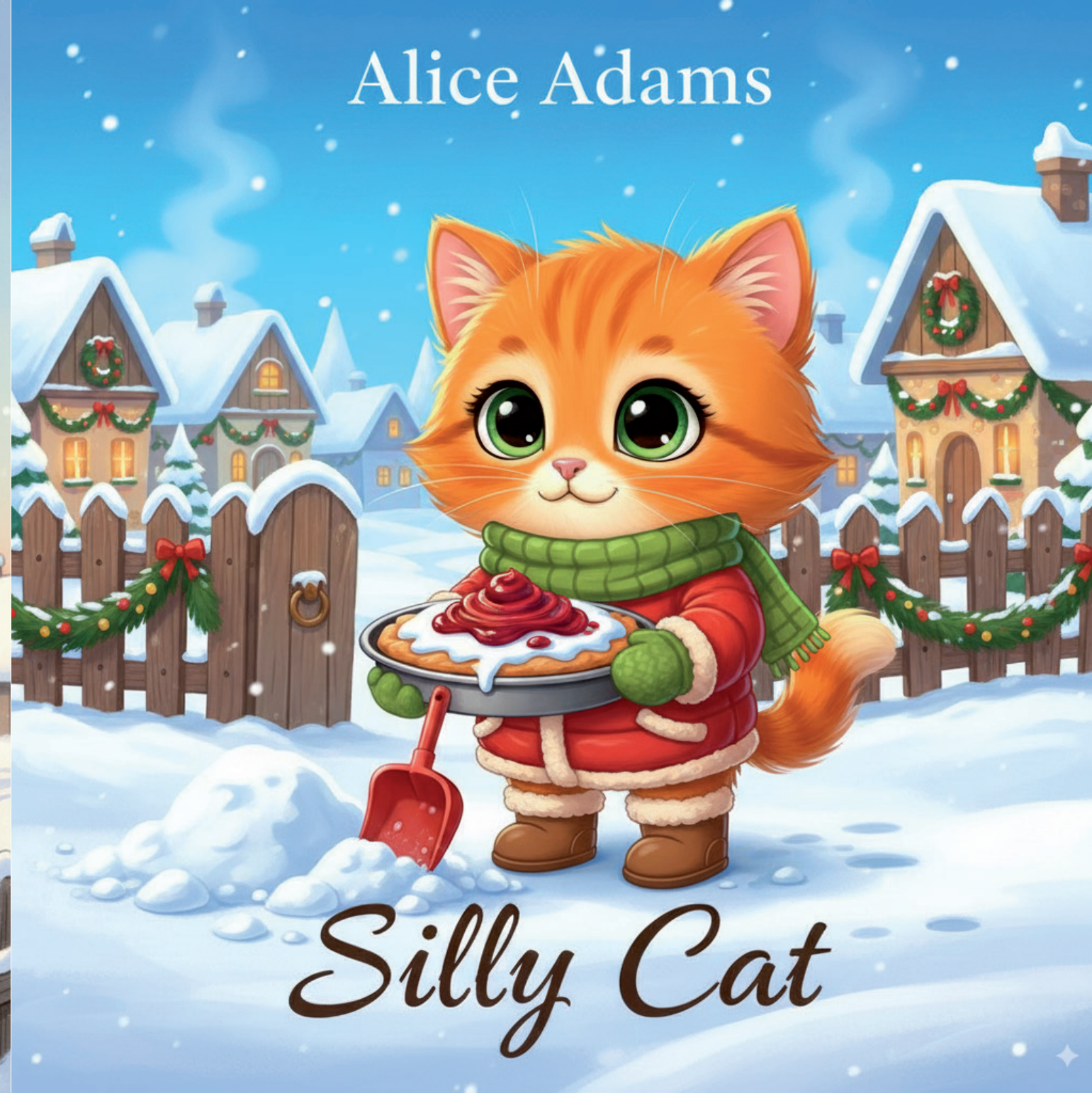




Alice Adams



*Silly Cat*





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*Silly Cat*



Alice Adams (real name Ksenia Marchuk) was born on April 22, 2001, in Vinnytsia, Ukraine. Alice began writing poetry as early as the 4th grade, also experimenting with rap lyrics. Many of these early works were lost when her grandmother destroyed them, believing they were nonsensical. Despite this, Alice continued to write, which led to her first literary achievements. At the age of six, she wrote a short version of the fairy tale that would later become “Brave Bee Berry,” originally titled “The Adventures of the Bee and the Chamomile.” Although she intended to send it to a children’s TV program, this dream did not come true.

While studying at Vinnytsia Lyceum No. 11, Alice joined the literary studio “Sribnyi Peredzvin” (“Silver Chime”) of the Prosvita Society named after Taras Shevchenko, under the guidance of poet Svitlana Travneva (Yelyseeva).

In May 2016, she won first place in the school competition for beginner poets “Spoviduyus u Slovi” (“I Confess in Words”) in Vinnytsia. Later that year, on October 12, 2016, she took part in the 14th regional stage of the All-Ukrainian Children and Youth Arts Festival “Surmy Zvytiahy” (“Trumpets of Victory”), where she received a participant’s diploma and became a laureate of the 1st degree in the Author’s Reading category. In the autumn of 2016, Alice participated in the final stage of the same festival in Lviv, earning a diploma for her original poem and a special jury award for the relevance



of her works in the category “Author’s Poetry and Prose.”

On December 22, 2016, she won the All-Ukrainian Literary and Art Contest “Ya Hordyi Tym, Shcho Ukrayinets Zrodu” (“I Am Proud to Be Born Ukrainian”) in the “Poetic Hope” category. That same year, she also received a certificate of appreciation for patriotism and participation in the art campaign “Zakolot” (“Revolt”).

In April 2017, Alice took third place in the city competition for beginner poets “Zelene Hrono” (“Green Cluster”).

Soon after, her work was published in the literary and art magazine Vinnytskyi Krai (“Vinnytsia Region”).

In 2023, after graduating from Weston College (UK) with a degree in Music Performance & Production, Alice revisited her childhood fairy tale and adapted it to reflect modern realities.

In 2024, she self-funded and printed the first 50 English-language copies of “Brave Bee Berry” at the Ukrainian printing house Master Knyg, selling them successfully at The Bakehouse at Wick Farm.

She also sent three copies to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales for her children – Princes George and Louis and Princess Charlotte – and received a warm letter of thanks in response.

In 2025, Alice published the e-book version of Brave Bee Berry with the Indian publishing company Book Bazooka, making it available on Google Play, Google Books, and Amazon Kindle.

Her creative journey reflects resilience, dedication, and the ability to transform childhood inspiration into meaningful stories for young readers.



**It was a snowy winter day. White fluffy snowflakes danced in the air, slowly floating down to the ground. The wind played with them, twirling them in a graceful dance. In the yard, children's laughter rang out — they were building snow forts, making snowmen, and joyfully throwing snowballs.**

**The air smelled of frost, chimney smoke, and the promise of Christmas.**

**Winter always brought joy, especially to children. For it was in winter, on the eve of Christmas, that everyone waited for a miracle. Both grown-ups and little ones went caroling, spreading the good news of the birth of Jesus Christ. The hosts treated them with sweets or gave them a few coins. For children, it was both fun and a chance to earn a little pocket money.**

**In a cozy little house on the edge of town lived a family of cats.**

**Mother Cat, Father Cat, Grandma, and five kittens — all with soft, fiery-orange fur, bright green eyes like emeralds, slender tails, and pink paws with tiny pads as soft as clouds.**

**The kitten brothers looked so much alike that a stranger would never tell them apart. But each had a character of his own.**







The eldest, Murchyk, was serious and liked to be in charge.

Musya – cheerful, playful, and a bit stubborn.

Murka – a true sweet tooth and a dreamer.

The youngest, Ivasyk – restless and talkative.

And Vasylko, the middle kitten – mischievous, curious, and kind-hearted – always stood out from the rest.

On Christmas Eve, the house was full of cheerful bustle.

Mother and Father were cleaning and decorating the home, Grandma was busy in the kitchen, and the kittens were trimming the Christmas tree. The fire crackled in the stove, clay candle holders flickered on the windowsill, and the air smelled of vanilla and pine.

*- Let me hang this star! - cried Musya, holding up a shiny ornament.*

*- No, me! I found it first! - protested Murchyk, tugging it gently from her paws.*

*- I want to hang the bell! - shouted Murka.*

*- Hey, let me hang something too! - piped up Ivasyk.*

*- Don't worry, there's plenty for everyone! - laughed Mother. - The tree is big, and there are enough decorations for all of you!*

The kittens giggled as they hung ornaments, nearly tangling themselves in garlands. Little Vasylko stood aside, watching the commotion with wide eyes. He wanted to help too, so he quietly padded off to the kitchen to see Grandma.







The kitchen was full of cozy chaos.

It smelled of freshly baked bread, mushrooms, cabbage, and honey. On the stove simmered a pot of uzvar — a sweet fruit drink — while in the oven golden doughnuts were baking. On the table sat bowls of flour, poppy seeds, and dried fruits.

Grandma Maria, also fluffy and orange, was kneading dough while softly humming a Christmas carol.

*- Grandma, what are you making? - asked Vasylo, peeking over the table.*

*- Oh, my dear, there's so much to do! - smiled Grandma. - On the Christmas table there must be kutia and uzvar. Kutia is a symbol of abundance, and uzvar cleanses the soul. We'll also have meatless borscht, varenyky with potatoes and cabbage, stuffed cabbage rolls with millet, mushrooms, fish, stewed cabbage with peas, beans, kalach bread, doughnuts, and porridge.*

*And of course - your favorite cherry pie!*

*- Mmm! - purred Vasylo. - Can I help you bake it?*

*- You're still a bit too small, - Grandma chuckled kindly. - But you can watch how I do it. When you're older, we'll bake together.*

Vasylo looked a little disappointed but stayed to watch.

He gazed as Grandma sifted flour, as it fell like white snow, as the dough rose and seemed to breathe.

The sweet scent of vanilla and cherries filled the air.











*"I can do that too!" thought Vasylko. "If Grandma won't let me bake with her, I'll bake my own pie!"*

He slipped outside.

The frost nipped at his cheeks, and the snow crunched beneath his tiny paws, but he didn't stop. He scooped a bowl full of snow, grabbed a spoon, a baking tin, and a jar of cherry jam.

*- Snow is just like flour, - he muttered. - And jam is the filling. It'll be delicious!*

He poured the snow into the tin, added jam, mixed it carefully, and even made pretty patterns on top. When he saw that Grandma's pie was already cooling on the table and the oven was still warm, he placed his "pie" inside.

*- It'll be golden, fragrant, and fluffy! - purred Vasylko proudly. - Everyone will be amazed at what a clever cook I am!*

He sat beside the oven, dreaming of how everyone would praise him for his wonderful pie – not noticing how it slowly melted away from the heat.

Evening came.

Outside, the snow was falling thick and soft; inside, candles flickered and the Christmas tree sparkled with ornaments and garlands.

When the first star appeared in the sky – the same one that had once led the Wise Men to Bethlehem – the family said a prayer.

Father, the eldest in the family, took the first spoonful of kutia. Then everyone began to eat.



There were twelve dishes on the table – from kutia to varenyky, from fish to cabbage.

- *This cabbage is delicious!* - exclaimed Musya.
- *And the dumplings! I've already had seven!* - boasted Murchyk.
- *I want more uzvar!* - gladly said Murka.

The adults smiled.

- *Eat up, but don't get too messy!* - Father joked. - *Grandma cooked all of this just for us!*
- The family ate, talked, and laughed together, their hearts warm and full. When it was time for dessert, Vasylo straightened up proudly.

- *I baked a pie too!* - he announced.
- *Really?* - Grandma raised her eyebrows. - *Bring it here, let's see and taste!*
- *With pleasure!* - said Vasylo and ran to the kitchen.

But when he opened the oven, all he saw was a tin of water with a few cherries floating in it. His heart sank.

He returned to the living room, set the tin on the table, and whispered softly:







*I wanted to bake one like yours, Grandma... but my pie melted away.*

*- What did you make it from, my dear? - asked Mother gently.*

*- From snow... - Vasylo lowered his head. - I thought it was like flour - white and soft...*

Grandma smiled tenderly and hugged him.

*- Well, we may not have a pie, but we do have a wonderful compote now! Bring some glasses - we'll drink it together.*

*And remember, if you really want to learn, I'll teach you. We'll bake side by side, all right?*

Vasylo's eyes lit up. He hugged Grandma and purred happily.

From that day on, he always helped her in the kitchen — kneading dough, stirring pots, and learning every secret of her recipes.

And the next Christmas, they baked the most delicious pie in the whole town.

When Grandma took it out of the oven, she drew a beautiful snowflake on top with sweet cream — a reminder of that very first “snow pie” where it had all begun.







### **Ukrainian dishes vocabulary:**

**Kutia** – a sweet ceremonial porridge made of boiled wheat grains, poppy seeds, honey, nuts and/or dried fruits. It is regarded as the most important dish of the Christmas Eve supper in Ukraine. Symbolism: The grain represents eternal life and renewal; poppy seeds fertility and abundance; honey happiness.

**Uzvar** – a traditional non-alcoholic drink made by boiling dried fruits (such as apples, pears, plums) and sometimes adding honey or nuts. Symbolism: Respect for wintertime, purification of soul and body, and inviting ancestors to join the meal.

**Borshch** – a beetroot soup often prepared in a meatless version for Christmas Eve in many Ukrainian households. Symbolism: Reflects the tradition of the meat-free festive supper and connection with Ukrainian national cuisine.

**Varenyky** – dumplings made from dough filled with potatoes, cabbage, mushrooms, berries or other ingredients; on Christmas Eve they are typically prepared meat-free. Symbolism: Prosperity, good fortune and family unity.

**Holubtsi** – cabbage rolls stuffed with grains or vegetables, often prepared without meat for the Christmas Eve supper.

Official website of Ukraine. Symbolism: Home comfort, care and familial warmth.

**Hryby** – mushrooms, served pickled, fried or in a mushroom broth during the festive supper. Symbolism: Connection with nature and the earth, part of the fasting meal tradition.

**Ryba** – fish (fried or in aspic) included as one of the meat-free dishes on Christmas Eve. Symbolism: Faith and spiritual nourishment.

**Kapusta** – stewed or fermented cabbage, sometimes cooked with peas or mushrooms and served as part of the festive table. Symbolism: Simplicity, humility and good fortune for the coming year.

**Kvasolia** – beans or legumes cooked with vegetables or served as a side dish at the Christmas Eve supper. Symbolism: Renewal, health and family togetherness.

**Kalach** – a festive braided bread often round in shape, placed on the Christmas table. Symbolism: Eternity, prosperity and the Holy Trinity.

**Pampushky** – soft sweet buns or doughnuts, sometimes served with garlic butter (for soups) or powdered sugar (for dessert). Symbolism: Joy, celebration and wholesome festivity.