

[PDF] The Cheshire Cheese Cat: A Dickens Of A Tale

Katherine Kellgren, Carmen Agra Deedy, Robin Sachs, Randall Wright - pdf download free book

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Description:

From Cat and mouse may be traditional enemies, but in this appealing historical novel, a cheese-loving tom cat named Skilley takes up residence at London's Ye Old Cheshire Cheese, where he befriends Pip, one of the many mice living at the inn. With Pip's help, Skilley convinces the innkeeper that he's a fierce mouser, all the while secretly releasing his "victims." The amiable Charles Dickens, a frequent customer attempting to write another novel, observes them with amusement. Meanwhile, one of the royal ravens from the Tower of London is hidden away in an upstairs room. The plot thickens when a wicked cat threatens Skilley, the mice, and the raven. With many likable characters, a couple of enjoyably despicable ones, and a lovingly depicted period

setting, this eventful chapter book has plenty to offer young readers. Familiarity with Dickens' novels is not a prerequisite for enjoying the story but will add to the pleasure of those who recognize the references here and there. Moser's expressive pencil drawings capture the characters and the sometimes amusing, sometimes exciting tone of the story with finesse. Grades 4-6. --Carolyn Phelan - This text refers to the edition.

Review STARRED REVIEW "He was the best of toms. He was the worst of toms." So opens Deedy (14 Cows for America) and Wright's (The Silver Penny) spry hybrid of historical fiction and animal story, set at Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, a real-life pub "famed as a haunt for London writers." The line refers to Skilley, the mouser at the tavern, where Charles Dickens is struggling to find a lead-in to his new novel. Snippets from Dickens's journal reveal his suspicions that something is askew between Skilley and the pub's substantial mice population. He's right: Skilley, who prefers eating cheese to mice, has agreed not to harm them if they bring him cheese from the storeroom. Pip, an intellectually minded mouse, teaches himself to write using his tail, a skill that comes in handy at multiple points during the novel. Moser's graphite illustrations are realistic and wonderfully emotive, especially in combination with the novel's fresh dialogue, typographical flights of fancy, and wordplay. Expertly realized characters and effervescent storytelling make this story of unlikely friendship, royal ravens, and "the finest cheese in London" a delight. Ages 8-12. (Oct.) --Publishers Weekly

STARRED REVIEW

Gr 5-8 The vagaries of tavern life in 19th-century London come alive in this delightful tale. Skilley, a street cat with a secret (he eats cheese!), finds a home at Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, where he pretends to be a mouser and gets the attention of Charles Dickens, a frequent customer. Befriended by Pip, a precocious mouse who can read and write, Skilley tries to protect his rodent pals and Maldwyn, an injured royal raven hiding in the garret, from Pinch, a ginger alley cat who s out for every tasty morsel he can get. There are cat-and-mouse battles aplenty. Several subplots are happily resolved: the cook reveals that the mice are her official cheese-tasters; Queen Victoria herself comes to rescue Maldwyn; Mr. Dickens finally finds an opening sentence for his new novel, and more. The fast-moving plot is a masterwork of intricate detail that will keep readers enthralled, and the characters are well-rounded and believable. Language is a highlight of the novel; words both elegant and colorful fill the pages: alacrity, scrivener, thieving moggy. And then there are the Dickensian references: artful dodging of Hansom cabs, Dickens saying he has great expectations. His amusing diary entries, revealing both his writing difficulties and his thoughts about Skilley, and the occasionally fanciful page layouts add to the humor. Combined with Moser's precise pencil sketches of personality-filled characters, the book is a success in every way. It should be a first purchase for libraries interested in bringing young readers to the marvels of Dickens via the back or, should I say tavern door. Nancy Menaldi-Scanlan, The Naples Players, FL --School Library Journal

STARRED REVIEW He was the best of toms. He was the worst of toms. And for all his harsh early life and unnatural dietary preferences, ragged London alley cat Skilley gets to look at a queen, too. Landing a gig as mouser for the chophouse and writers hangout Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese is a lifelong fantasy come true for both Skilley and the inn's swarm of resident mice because unlike his feline rivals, Skilley adores cheese and has no taste for mice at all. In fact it isn't long before he and Pip, a mouse of parts who has learned to read and write, have become great friends. Deedy and Wright take this premise and run with it, tucking in appearances from Dickens, Thackeray and other writers of the time. Cat and mice unite to face such challenges as the arrival of a cruel new cat named Oliver (Well, this was an unwelcome twist), a mysterious cheese thief and, climactically, a wise but injured old raven that is the subject of a country-wide search that culminates in a visit to the inn by Queen Victoria Herself. Moser contributes splendid black-and-white illustrations that manage to be both realistic and funny, recalling Robert Lawson while retaining his own style.

Readers with great expectations will find them fully satisfied by this tongue-in-cheek romp through a historic public House that is the very opposite of Bleak. (Animal fantasy. 10-12) --Kirkus --This text refers to the edition.

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