FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Picture Books

Come Meet Muffin
Joyce Carol Oates Mark Graham Illus.
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What feels at first like snippets of information about a family's new cat gradually develops into an adventure story. Muffin is established as brave and productive. He likes watermelon and peanut butter and sleeps at night at the foot of Lily's bed. Then one morning, noticing two stray deer, he climbs out into the snow and leads the deer back to their mother by following their trail. Now lost himself, Muffin smartly climbs a tree, remembering that "…he could climb a tree!" and spies his house in the distance. Tracing his own way past familiar landscapes he arrives home to a relieved family, both human and feline, feeling very happy himself.

While the telling of the tale is simplistic at times, it is never condescending. Oates is able to present a story that will resonate with youngsters on many levels. It is especially fun when Muffin feels proud of himself and only the reader knows why. The family, like most owners of "The Independent Cat" is clueless as to their cat's whereabouts. The illustrations enhance the reading experience. Muffin is brought to life in rich, attractive oil paintings. The innocence of the fawn coupled with the intelligence of the cat make their rescue almost believable. Once Muffin sets out on his adventure the art works especially well at conveying the blue coolness of a wintry morning. This book would cause a child to look at his own animal with added respect.

Martha Topol