

Mr. Patches Is Bored!

Nick Schönfeld

Julie Arnoult, Illustrator

Greenleaf Book Group Press

(48pp)

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Creativity and fun are bolstered at the visual, aural, and textual levels in Mr. Patches is Bored!, a feline-focused picture book that brims with color and adventures.

A spectacular cat who's tired of mundane living sets off on wild adventures in Nick Schönfeld's picture book *Mr. Patches is Bored!*

Among the marvelous cats of the world, Mr. Patches is a particularly beautiful and masterful mouse hunter. Unfortunately, he is also plagued by intense boredom. Every day is the same, spent napping, eating, and grooming. Compounding this, nothing on television is interesting and Mr. Patches has long grown tired of books, games, and the softness of his pillow. Curious about what lies beyond the doors of his house, Mr. Patches goes outside and has extraordinary adventures.

Mr. Patches is a plump, lovable, and adorable hero who possesses a darling curiosity and openness to explore. He also demonstrates imagination, optimism, and a can-do attitude; his sense of wonder is endearing as he models active problem-solving, seeking out novelties beyond the confines of his home's familiarity. And the adventures Mr. Patches goes on are all interactive, whether they involve the nighttime mystique of the Archibald-Foxes' box castles or the frightening adrenaline rush of flying through the air with a dog named Spike.

The illustrations center Mr. Patches's expressive face and amusing theatricality, whether he is sighing in boredom, gaping in wonder at scenery seen from the back of a moose, or clinging onto a branch for dear life after climbing too high up in a tree, requiring the help of firemen. Indeed, maximalist details fill each page to the brim, and their consistent use of bright, vibrant colors matches the whimsicality of Mr. Patches's playfulness. Different drawing perspectives and framing recommend the artwork further; dynamism and movement arise from the varied depictions of the cat's fun seen, for example, from a bird's-eye view, in panorama, or over the shoulder. As a result, a constant sense of zooming in and out accompanies the illustrations' frenetic but fun details.

The text in *Mr. Patches is Bored!* also encourages interactivity. From the onset, it utilizes rhymes, including the iconic line "Before we begin, here's a thing you should know, / All cats are amazing, as far as cats go." In addition to the one or two lines per page steadying the pace and preventing textual overwhelm when paired with the intense colors and detail of the drawings, the repeated sounds exemplify auditory play with language—one antidote to the story's initial aura of lethargy.

A delightful, thrill-seeking cat is not afraid to dream big in the picture book *Mr. Patches is Bored!*, which follows escapades undertaken to vanquish boredom for good.

ISABELLA ZHOU (January 29, 2024)

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