

My Name Is Moses

Robert (Bob) Hart

AuthorHouse (Nov 7, 2012)

Softcover \$13.95 (75pp)

978-1-4772-1650-7

Books “written” by animals are nothing new. Even *Black Beauty* was told in first person by a very special horse back in the late 1870s. Robert (Bob) Hart has published *My Name Is Moses* on behalf of Moses the cat, the almost-human pet of a couple named Larry and Carrie. Hart’s relationship to Larry and Carrie is never made clear, but Moses undoubtedly needed someone with opposable thumbs to help get his story into print, and Hart took on the job.

Pet lovers everywhere tend to think that their own animals are phenomenal. In truth, some are. Pets bring out the best in their owners—or families, as some prefer to view things. Readers devour animal stories; they can be endearing, delightful, and absolutely comforting, particularly when human life feels overwhelming. Sometimes, comparing pet antics can even be competitive, and any pet who, like Moses, takes on the task of talking about his own exploits invites comparison to other worthy animals of his species.

Moses’s most dangerous exploits result from being allowed to roam outdoors. Jumping fences, climbing trees, and chasing birds, he suffers a few injuries that eventually convince his owners to keep him closer to home. Young readers and listeners will enjoy hearing his tales as they are all very familiar, and Moses always gets better quickly and learns his lesson. “My folks really do try to do whatever is best for me,” Moses explains. “I know they love me a lot!”

The stories are accompanied by small black-and-white photos, amateur snapshots of the type taken by loving pet owners everywhere, showing Moses looking cute and playing adorably. Again, children will find the pictures sweet, although most could use some cropping and technical enhancement.

Hart tells Moses’s story simply and adequately. An occasional unbalanced sentence, like “Running away as fast as it can, we’ve not seen it again,” mars the text, but such instances are few. There are some typographical and punctuation errors, and the spellings of certain words, like *shiney*, *tastey*, and *cheesey*, all with an -ey ending, hint that this may not be an American story. The setting is never mentioned.

Overall, *My Name Is Moses* is a light, enjoyable read, particularly for the pet-loving child. Cat owners will recognize Moses’s behaviors and reactions, probably even relating to Larry and Carrie when they claim that he “is as close to being human as he can be.” Longtime cat lovers all tend to remember an exceptional cat or two who has had this very same quality.

CHERYL HIBBARD (January 29, 2013)

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