



The Wonderful Journey of Cameron Cat: A Puzzle Storybook

Marjorie Newman

Candlewick Press (June 1998)

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This book is one of six paperbacks in *Candlewicks' Puzzle Storybook* series with appealing themes for children: a brave knight rescue, a ghost hunt, a treasure hunt, a monster party, and a space chase. They are designed to expand the imagination and challenge the skills of “children who are just discovering the joys of reading.”

In this one, Cameron Cat gets carried away by curiosity one day, quite literally, and must find his way home through a series of puzzle adventures. Typical of puzzle-type books (i.e., *Where's Waldo?*), Newman's flat story line is like a conveyor belt in its purely functional purpose to move the reader along to the next activity. Hard's lively watercolors come to the rescue, engaging both the young and adult reader in a vibrantly hued world of antic animals, simultaneously lush plant life and cheerful domestic scenes. Touted as an “ideal companion for that L-O-N-G car trip or a rainy summer day” and “perfect for preschool puzzle masters,” the book—intended for 2-to-5-year-olds—may prove too confusing for younger children to pursue on their own. The cartoon illustrations, while rendered in bright colors and bold contrasts, create a complex melange of one-dimensional objects that are sometimes hard for small children to identify. As an activity book for parent and child to enjoy together, *The Wonderful Journey of Cameron Cat* fulfills its mission of pleasant exploration and diversion.

JOSEPHINE ARROWOOD (July / August 1998)

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