



Millions of Cats

Wanda Gág

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Once upon a time there was an old man and an old woman who were very lonely. They decided to get a cat, but when the old man went out searching, he found not one cat, but millions and billions and trillions of cats! Unable to decide which one would be the best pet, he brought them all home. How the old couple came to have just one cat to call their own is a classic tale that has been loved for generations. Winner of a Newbery Honor, this collector's edition—featuring a heavy interior stock, spot gloss and embossing on the cover, and a thread-sewn binding—will bring this beloved tale to a whole new generation of readers.

Millions of Cats Details

Date : Published October 5th 2006 by Picture Puffin Books (first published 1928)

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Author : Wanda Gág

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From Reader Review Millions of Cats for online ebook

Theresa Marsala says

This book was written in 1928, won the Newbury Award in 1929 & is recognized as the first modern picture book. This is my first time reading this classic & I was pleasantly surprise. It was not at all what I expected. I guess I can see how some would call it "gruesome" towards the end by today's standards but I've noticed most old folk tales, fairy tales, or fables do have serious consequences to some extreme extent. I don't hold that against it considering when it was written & how well the moral of the story still holds up today~ vanity is evil & can be destructive. Be humble. With love & care the "homely" can become the "most beautiful"

Kathryn says

Oh, dear... I thought I was going to absolutely adore this story based on the charming illustrations and the idea of a man who sets out to bring home a kitty for his wife, only to find that every cat he sees is just too cute to pass up so he brings home "millions of cats." However...

SPOILER

I thought the end was quite dreadful! Yes, even if this is a tale of the evils of vanity, it was a bit too much for all (but one) of the cats to eat one another up because each wanted to be the most beautiful and therefore the one chosen to be kept by the farmer's wife since she deemed only one could live with them. Eeek! :-/ I'm too much a cat lover to approve--no matter how adorable the sketches of the remaining kitten might be.

Dianna says

[eat each other up (hide spoiler)]

Miriam says

Creepy children's story about an old couple who long for a cat. When the old man finds the valley of cats he cannot choose the prettiest so he brings all million of them home. Where they ultimately eat each other. And the old idiots live happily ever after! WTF?

Mimi says

Can I just say the old man picking out a cat on the hill is pretty much like me tryig to pick a book in a bookstore... ?

This story book is quite quaint, and cute to boot, since it's filled with cats. Great to read out loud to the little

ones.

Mauoijenn ~ *Mouthy Jenn* ~ says

I remember my grandmother sending me this book in a care package when I was young. I enjoyed this so much. I can still see the illustrations in my head. This adorable story about an old man and his cats was one of my most favorites growing up.

Calista says

Surprising! I was not expecting this story at all. I like Edward Gorey and this has some dark wicked humor in it. I thought the ending was funny, a joke. I know people don't like jokes at the expense of the lives of animals, but it was still a joke.

This book was published in 1928 - the Roaring 20s. It is a time of prosperity and excess. The whole country is going boom. I don't know if Wanda meant it this way and I don't know if she foresaw the future, but it works as an allegory for the times it was published. There were millions of cat which could be the prosperity of the people and stock market. What if the cats represent money. There will millions and trillions and they ate up all the resources. Then they all disappeared until there was only one little scraggly kitten left that needed lots of love to nurse back to health. The stock market vanished and prosperity vanish. I keep thinking this. I'm sure it's not meant this way, but as the reader, this is my interpretation.

Wanda's art is black and white drawings. I'm sure color was extremely expensive back then and used scarcely. The pictures are quant and I like the font the story is told in. Wanda was quite an author and I enjoyed this funny little book. It does have a dark twist at the end.

The kids were surprised by the end too. When the cats started to fight, their eyes got real big and the little guy asked, what's going to happen. Their heart strings were tugged when the answer came and the little guy gave a short Ha at the conclusion.

It's a different kind of story and this was a Newbery honor book.

Giulia China says

Millions of Cats it's a children's classic in American literature, any cat's lover should have it in his bookshelf! It's a funny comical illustrated little story, perfect for any kids. As we know from youtube videos anything with cute fluffy cats will go viral!!

Too cute!!Gosh I love them *:*

4.5/5 STARS

Manybooks says

While I did enjoy the story (the narrative) itself, I did not find the accompanying illustrations of Wanda Gág's Millions of Cats all that visually appealing. I have never really liked black and white illustrations all that much, and the many, many cats together kind of remind me of masses of lemmings, rodents or locusts, faceless swarms of animals with no personalities or individual features (the only personable cat, in my opinion, is the little kitten left at the end, all the others are just a big mass of "catdom").

Now after having read some of the more negative and critical reviews from GR friends regarding Millions of Cats, I was actually at first rather reluctant to read it, as I assumed that it would describe in detail the cats eating each other and fighting amongst themselves. However, as others have indeed previously stated, the violence (or rather, the implied and supposed violence, as we only have the assumption of the old couple that the cats might have eaten each other) happens off-screen and thus is not ever really visible or even described. And furthermore, because there is an element of disbelief present (the old man brings home not just too many cats, but millions of them) this probably renders the author's, Wanda Gág's presented text much less problematic for children, who often seem able to accept the often grotesque violence in fairy and folk tales, simply because it is unbelievable, or just too overly exaggerated.

For me, Millions of Cats is not only an entertaining and intriguing story (albeit one with illustrations that I personally do not find all that aesthetically attractive), but also presents a cautionary tale about human responsibility, or more to the point, the lack of human responsibility. It was the old man's responsibility to find one cat to bring home, but he brought home millions. And later, when it becomes obvious that there are simply too many cats, the old couple again does not face their responsibility or accountability; they simply force the cats to fight it out amongst themselves. Furthermore, the fact that the original hill the old man sees is literally covered with domestic feral cats might also be seen as a lack of pan-human responsibility to both domesticated animals (including pets) and the environment in general (humans abandoning domestic cats in the wild and not realising or caring that there are likely not enough natural spaces available for all of them, that the feral cats will also need to eat and drink, and that the cats' presence will obviously also affect the environment, their surroundings). I know that many people regard Millions of Cats as an allegory against vanity, but I think that it could and really should also be interpreted as an allegory against irresponsibility (and perhaps even with more justification than this story being a cautionary tale against vanity). You might even say that Wanda Gág's Millions of Cats could easily present one of the first picture books (one of the first books for younger children) to somewhat promote environmental responsibility, by showing that we cannot simply allow domestic animals to overrun nature.

David Gallagher says

I had a 60 minute break between classes at school, and, to kill time, I decided to go to the library and read a book short and easy enough to be able to finish it fast.

So I picked *Millions of Cats*. From the Children's section.

I could tell this was a vintage/classic children's book, but I wasn't sure exactly how *much* vintage/classic it was.

A LOT.

I started reading thinking, "oh, what a cute story! Such cute kittens! I wouldn't be able to pick one either!"

And a few pages later....

"WHAT. THE. FUCK??"

Is it a children's book? I somehow doubt it - maybe when it was published, but I don't see how children can relate to its cruelty and cattibalism (that's 'cat cannibalism') and not feel shocked by it. *I* was shocked! The couple that want the cat in this story are both selfish and responsible for animal cruelty! Humans messed with nature long ago it seems.

I wasn't drawn to this book - it actually left me feeling cold. I know today's children wouldn't be able to understand the text as a child of that era might have been. Either way, I didn't enjoy it. Too cruel, bizarre and anachronistic for me.

Karol says

I've got mixed feelings about this book. It was engaging and drew me in, but at another level it was repulsive. It does show the disastrous impact of letting greed and vanity take over - and I think children can easily see that the old man collecting all those cats had no common sense. I liked the rhythmic style of the writing, and the overall "craziness" of the story.

Lisa Vegan says

I'm shocked. I really liked this book. I read it only because it's a selection of the Newbery book club for the Children's Books group, and I'm not participating until they get to 1953 or so (mostly because of reading time considerations; I do like the idea of reading every single Newberry and Newberry honor book), but this was an unusual Newbery selection: a short picture book.

I've been reading others' comments and thought that I'd be repulsed by this book; I am not a fan of the macabre.

However, the illustrations and layout and general appearance was terrific. The repetitive line is a wonderfully fun read aloud, and I actually thought the story was sweet, especially the end and the beginning. I was an easily scared kid but even all those cats eating each other (presumably) I don't think would have highly disturbed me; I would have focused on the surviving kitty, growing more wonderful every day.

What a weird book though!

I don't remember this from my childhood but there is a very real possibility I was exposed to it then.

Ah, I just saw another reviewer of this book, a Goodreads friend, recommends it for: Readers Who Enjoyed "The Book of Bunny Suicides" and I think those books are hilarious, and I know that I can have a very

bizarre sense of humor.

Ronyell says

“Millions of Cats” is a Newberry Honor book by Wanda Gag about how a very old couple wanted to have a cat for companionship, but they end up getting a million cats as pets and they have to decide which cat to keep for themselves. “Millions of Cats” may have a gruesome solution to the couple’s problem with having so many cats, but this book is still a great book for children to read for many years.

Wanda Gag’s story is cute and creative as it details a very old couple’s desire to have a cat to care for and put an end to their loneliness. Wanda Gag has done an excellent job at building up excitement in the story as she starts the story off as being tranquil as the old couple just wants a cat for companionship and then becomes a bit frenetic when the very old man takes in all the cats up on the hill. Wanda Gag’s illustrations are cute yet old-fashioned since the scenery and the characters are all in black and white and the characters look extremely simple than what you would find in the present era of children’s books. The images of the very old couple were the true highlights of the book as they look a bit pudgy and yet have cheerful expressions on their faces all throughout the book.

Parents should know that the solution to where the couple tries to have one cat out of all the millions of cats that the very old man brought home is a bit too disturbing for smaller children. I will not reveal the ending, however let’s just say that the way that the cats handle the problem of trying to figure out who is the prettiest is like the predator versus the defenseless animal scenario. Parents might want to reassure their children about the food chain and how there are other solutions in selecting just one pet.

“Millions of Cats” is the perfect book for children who love learning about having a pet and love everything about cats. I would recommend this book to children ages five and up since smaller children would be scared off by the disturbing solution that the cats figure out to see who is the prettiest among themselves.

CaseyTheCanadianLesbrarian says

Things I liked:

- cats, cats, and lots of cats! (duh)
 - the fairy tale feel
 - the fact that the man and woman are always referred to as "the very old woman" and "the very old man"
 - the illustrations that span two pages
 - the black and white illustrations are simple but expressive; very clean feeling
 - this part: "cats here, cats there, cats and kittens everywhere, hundreds of cats, thousands of cats, millions and billions and trillions of cats"
 - the fact that the man just can't choose a cat because they are all so lovely--I can identify with that
 - destructo, vain, cannibalistic cats! I can see how other people might find that disturbing but it rings true to me, as a cat-lover
 - the ugly duckling (or kitten) wins!
-

Brian Yahn says

Millions of Cats is a short and fun story about the dangers of cat addiction, and how it's seemingly so illogical by showing the destructive side of cats, and how they're generally mean and unfriendly and awful pets.

But then by showing just one good, humble cat everything changes, and we remember why the Internet was invented in the first place: to share lolcats and cat gifs.

For educational and historical reasons, it's a must read.
