The Cat Who Could Read Backwards
by Lilian Jackson Braun

Stands The Test Of Time! Great Fun Especially For Cat Lovers

The first appearance in hardcover of the first installment of the authors ever-popular series features the unusual detective team of award-winning reporter Jim Qwilleran and Koko, his brilliant Siamese cat, who penetrate the world of modern art to solve a mystery. 135,000 first printing.

My Personal Review:
My wife is a great lover of mystery books and she has been hounding me for a long time to read some of the books in the Cat Who series. I finally gave in and found that I enjoyed this first book of the series very much. Unlike many mystery novels this book is light reading with no sex, violence or profanity and the plot is not so laden with details that the reader gets bogged down with them. The plot is in fact just a little too light in some instances but I was so enthralled with the characters that I hardly noticed.

The best thing about this book is the authors engaging style of writing. Even without the kind of plot that draws the reader completely into the story the writing style makes this book hard to put down. Furthermore, the characters are so fun and realistic that the reader will quickly become attached to them, which is a trait quite necessary for a long running series like this one.

The primary human character is Jim Qwilleran, a top-notch investigative reporter who has apparently spent years in the newspaper business but because of his problems with alcohol has run out of job options. Having cleaned up his act he finds himself with a job offer from the Daily Fluxion but to his dismay finds that he will be covering the art scene for the features department. Soon he finds himself immersed in the art community, which is full of some very odd characters that don't like each other at all. Most importantly he meets his own papers art critic whom almost nobody likes, including the bartender at the press club. It seems that the only being that likes the critic is his cat Kao Ko-Kung who also takes up with Qwilleran. Kao Ko-Kung or Koko for short is the cat of which
the title speaks and he is an amazing cat indeed. The author has obviously spent a lot of time with cats for her description of their mannerisms is impeccable.

Soon there is a murder in the art world and it is not who the reader will expect to be murdered. Qwilleran is on the story in a flash but is often wandering along the wrong track until Koko lends his help. After the case is solved one of the reporters buddies asks him how it feels to play Dr. Watson to a cat and that is just how things seem to play out. The clues are there but neither Qwilleran nor I picked up on them until Koko basically waves them in our collective faces.

The ending was just a little of a let down but the basic fun nature of the story and the extraordinarily entertaining characters more than make up for it. This book was just simply a delight to read and I intend to follow the exploits of Qwilleran and Koko into several more books.

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