



The Cat Who Smelled a Rat

By *Lilian Jackson Braun*

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Meet prizewinning reporter Jim Qwilleran and his extraordinary Siamese cats Koko and Yum Yum—the most unlikely, most unusual, most delightful team in detective fiction!

The way Jim Qwilleran sees it, there's nothing worse than being left high and dry. But that's exactly where he's been ever since a record-breaking drought hit Moose County. He's bedraggled. Beleaguered. And, following a rash of fires at local historic minesites, deeply bewildered. Some blame the blazes on bad weather conditions, but Qwill's thinking arson. And when a mysterious explosion is followed by a blood-chilling murder, he starts seriously praying for snow—and answers. Good thing Koko can smell trouble a mile away...

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Moose County journalist and philanthropist James Qwilleran, better known to fans of Lilian Jackson Braun's evergreen series of feline-inspired thrillers as the owner of a couple of remarkably prescient Siamese cats named Koko and Yum Yum, is comfortably ensconced in his winter residence in Pickax at the beginning of *The Cat Who Smelled a Rat*. But he and the other citizens start hoping for snow when a series of arson fires threaten their safety as well as the historically significant shafthouses that sit atop the long-closed mine sites scattered throughout the county.

Qwilleran and his pets take quite a while to connect the fires with the death of a local builder in a seemingly unrelated accident. But his leisurely jaunt to the conclusion of this lightly plotted adventure leaves plenty of room for the author to do what she does best, which is sketching the picaresque characters who people Pickax and dwelling on the small-town charms of a place where everybody knows everything about everybody. The cats are quicker to solve a crime than the local constabulary. Only Koko could find the clues hidden in an antique pitcher and an old-fashioned glove box, and only a cat lover could consider this a mystery or even a romance. There's no suspense, very little drama, hardly any blood, and not even a hint of sex between Qwilleran and his lady. But Braun's fans are legion, so we know she must be doing something right. --Jane Adams

From Publishers Weekly

The 23rd entry in Braun's Cat Who... series (The Cat Who Robbed a Bank; The Cat Who Saw Stars; etc.) testifies to the amazing popularity of mysteries featuring cats. Once again philanthropist-journalist Jim Qwilleran, columnist for the Something, the local newspaper of Pickax City in Moose County, turns for crime-solving help to his insightful and sensitive Siamese sleuths, Koko and Yum Yum. It's late October and the residents of Pickax are praying for the Big One, the annual blizzard that ushers in the long winter. This year it is much needed since the extreme drought conditions have made the area a virtual tinderbox. After several fires break out, volunteers form the Citizens' Fire Watch to protect the historic shafthouses, all that remain of the county's once prosperous mines. Anxiety increases as more fires occur and a volunteer is shot dead at one of the shafthouses. When the president of the local curling club dies from a fall, Qwilleran, with a twitch of his moustache and an ear-splitting shriek from Koko, joins his feline assistants to find the rat responsible before snow flies. Regular fans will enjoy being back with old friends and will be intrigued by the eccentric new additions to Pickax. The complexities of small-town life and the feline antics portrayed with Braun's apt wit and humor combine with a puzzling mystery to make for a most welcome addition to the series. (Feb. 5) Forecast: With a solid bestseller track record for this series, this entry is sure to claw its way up the lists. British rights have been sold to Headline.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School-This delightful feline detective series continues with returning characters and introduces new residents of Pickax. It is the feline hero, KoKo, who realizes who is setting fires to the used bookstore and to the abandoned mines, causing deaths in the process. Unlike other cat series, such as those by Rita Mae Brown and Sharon Rousseau Murphy, KoKo and his mate, YumYum, remain typical cats accomplishing their sleuthing and giving hints with sniffs, yowls, placement of hairballs, and upset plants. Even their owner, Qwilleran, doesn't always understand what they are trying to tell him, but he is the one who sets the rattrap to unmask the villain in the dramatic climax. Braun provides an intricate detective story while portraying life in

small-town America; everyone knows everyone, cares about them, is curious about them, and is eager to gossip about them, too. Purchase where the series is popular.-Claudia Moore, W. T. Woodson High School, Fairfax, VA

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Molly Wilson:

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Kevin Blais:

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