



Basil and the Pygmy Cats

Eve Titus , Paul Galdone (Illustrator)

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Now debuting in an exciting new package, Basil and the Pygmy Cats has been hailed by the Los Angeles Times for its wild imagination tempered with pure humor.

Basil and the Pygmy Cats Details

Date : Published September 1st 1989 by Minstrel (first published January 1st 1971)

ISBN : 9780671641191

Author : Eve Titus , Paul Galdone (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Basil and the Pygmy Cats for online ebook

Carrie ReadingtoKnow says

Fans of Disney's The Great Mouse Detective are quite likely to enjoy the Basil of Bakerstreet books by Eve Titus, which the movie is based on. The second book in the series was just as fun as the first. In "Basil and the Cave Cats" (originally published as "Basil and the Pygmy Cats") Basil is off on an archaeological expedition to discover a lost island where tiny cats were ruled by mice.

We read this book aloud (kids aged 4 - 12) and we all chuckled and laughed at various parts of the story, and enjoyed ourselves a great deal. Highly recommended.

Bev says

This was sort of Sherlock Holmes meets Indiana Jones. Basil is not only the world's greatest mouse detective, he also has a hobby dabbling in archaeology (he discovered Rockhenge, you know). The story begins with Basil and Dawson planning a trip to Bengistan (near India) where Professor Ratigan (Basil's arch-enemy) has taken over the mousedom. As they are finalizing their plans, a scientist from the British Mousmopolitan Museum comes by with an ancient goblet with a design that seems to indicate that there is an island (very close to Bengistan--what a coincidence!) where pygmy cats are said to be ruled by mice. Would Basil like to join an expedition to find them? Well--of course! (view spoiler)

Whimsical fun with far less mystery and much adventure. Still sure to appeal to young readers.

First posted on my blog My Reader's Block.

Luisa Knight says

I adore Eve Titus's characters, and when you combine her stories with Paul Galdone's illustrations - you get excellent entertainment!

Sherlock Holmes has a protege - a mouse, Basil of Baker Street. Like his human counterpart, he solves all kinds of daring mysteries that your family will enjoy. Clean, fun and makes a great read-aloud!

Reading Level: 1st - 4th grades

Cleanliness:

Children's Bad Words

Mild Obscenities & Substitutions - 1 Incident: By Jove!

Religious Profanities - 2 Incidents: heavens!

Religious & Supernatural - 3 Incidents: Pertaining to archaeology, it mentions idols, gods and goddesses throughout the book. There is a friendly two-headed sea monster. Island natives think them must sacrifice to their god when a volcano erupts. Indirectly, Basil's actions imply that this is wrong.

For a full cleanliness report, which includes Conversation Topics, Romance Related and Parent Takeaway, visit my website. I have hundreds of other detailed reports too, and I also have Clean Guides (downloadable PDFs) which enable you to clean up your book before reading it! Visit my website: [The Book Radar](#).

Chris says

I thought this book was very mysterious, really fast-paced and very well-written children's mystery adventure novel. It had really beautiful illustrations, really good characters, very exciting adventure, really great mystery, really excellent humor and a really nice story. It's just as good as "Basil of Baker Street." I'm really looking forward to read more books about Basil the mouse detective. I really recommend this book to both children and adults.

Sarah says

This is a great beginner chapter book. Short, quick chapters with adventure and mystery. I love Sherlock Holmes and this is a great story to introduce children to Holmes. Basil of Baker Street is the great mouse detective!

Ollie Reeder says

The civilized mice rescue the dull-witted Pygmy islander cats from an erupting volcano and help themselves to a bounty of ancient treasure. Even though it's cats and mice more racist than I would expect from a 1970s children's story. I still enjoyed the book because it's Basil.

Kristin says

What a fun adventure! I love Basil, and love the way Titus tries to make Sherlock Holmes accessible to kids through these chapter books (although the language can make these difficult for younger readers to grasp. I guess kids were more well read when these were published.)

While parts of this story were a little too unbelievable, even for a mouse detective (Ratigan got away from the greatest mouse detective twice? In one book??), this book felt like Treasure Island meets mystery. Fun and unique.

Heidi says

While I enjoyed this book and it's premise, sort of a children's version of Sherlock Holmes, I have some concerns about some of the content. Maybe because it was published in the 1950s the content is seen as acceptable, but to me it rings a bit like the attitudes so prevalent during the colonial era, when powerful outside countries moved into smaller, supposedly less civilized countries and saved the so-called 'heathens'.

This book unfortunately and probably inadvertently rings of some of that sort of attitude. Part of the story focuses on archaeology which is fine in and of itself, but when Basil and his cohorts arrive at the island of Kataarh and start digging they discover the remains of a mouse city and somehow dig most of it out in a matter of days/weeks? But do they give the artifacts to the miniature cats to whom they belong? Nope, they load them up on their ship to take with them, despite the fact that Basil can speak the native language. And the others, including Dawson take it on themselves to create a map of the island, naming features as they see fit because the cats seem 'dull-witted' and 'primitive' and immediately think Basil should be their king.

And the coincidences were a little hard for me to accept. For example, at one point in the story Basil and Dawson end up in the dungeon of a palace, which just happens to have an escape tunnel attached to it that leads them to their friend the Maharajah that they are there to rescue. And Basil on board the ship Rosetta after leaving Bengistan somehow doesn't recognize his arch-enemy Ratigan in disguise?

In addition, everyone on the island ends up having to flee because of the erupting volcano, and Basil takes upon himself the job of 'king' to persuade the cats to leave with them, and then back in London, the mice decide how and where the cats are to live and the cats are simply 'content' with it all. While the intentions of the book are good, I can't say that I can recommend this particular volume in the series. This book contains too much that is reminiscent of colonial imperialism.

Stasia says

These illustrations are So. Stinking. Cute.

Selah Pike says

My least favorite of the series so far. I understand that it's a product of its time, but the racism and condescension towards the cats is extremely off putting.

Saskia Marijke Niehorster-Cook says

Basil is an antropomorphic mouse with an uncanny similarity to our dear Sherlock Holmes.

In this, the second or third book in a series, he embarks upon a voyage to visit the Maharaja of Beningstan, who is being held captive by Ratigan, Basil's nemesis. After liberating him, his friend repays him by giving him a large ship in which to search for the lost island of Kataarh and the pygmy cats.

The island is re-discovered and turned into an archeological sight, where much is learned about an ancient mouse civilization that teaches pygmy cats to become civilized. The mice perished a long time ago due to a tsunami, but the pygmy cats are still there.

Basil returns to London, where he tells the regular cats about his discoveries during a truce between cats and mice.

It is a sweet story. I would range it in the category of fun mouse stories like A mouse and a motorcycle by

Beverly Cleary or the more contemporary series of Geronimo Stilton, or Stewart Little, or the tale of Desperaux...

Megan Wilcox says

Basil of Baker Street does it again!

Really fun story. Very entertaining, and a fun mouse-y twist on Sherlock Holmes.

Great story! Though it was a bit too short... I finished it in less than an hour.

And once again, the cover is too cute!

Excited to read the other Great Mouse Detective books by Eve Titus!

Tegan says

I liked the idea of the story in this one better, but it is definitely a product of its time. The title was clearly changed, as it should have been, from its original, but that also doesn't change the content from being something that wouldn't get published today. This is one to definitely talk about with your kids after reading. I also, from an anthropological perspective, really don't like them selling artifacts that aren't theirs. Really a product of its time, morally, ethically, personably, etc.

Yukiraking says

This one had a much more whimsical feel to it than the first one. This was an adventure story that had elements that brought back fond memories of Indiana Jones, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader and of Gulliver's Travels. It didn't feel like Sherlock Holmes, which I must admit I found a tad disappointing. I also found myself confused about Ratigan. He was mentioned so casually, in a way that assumed I knew who he was (and I did, but not because of the books). It made me feel like perhaps I read the series out of order. According to the re-release in the edition I'm reading, this is the second one they released, which I felt meant I was meant to read it second. But Ratigan was cursing Basil, saying that he'd bested his "last time" but he wasn't going to win this time. As far as I'm aware, there wasn't a last time?

But again, I might've read them out of the intended order.

I enjoyed the adventurous elements of it, though I sorely missed the mystery of the first book. But it was just such a strange and fun story that I found myself insanely curious about how it would end. I'm going to continue onto the next book, and I hope I figure the Ratigan thing out.

Edward Petersen says

Jack and I really enjoyed this one. It was less of a mystery and more of an adventure, with another adventure wrapped inside. I think he's hooked on this series.

