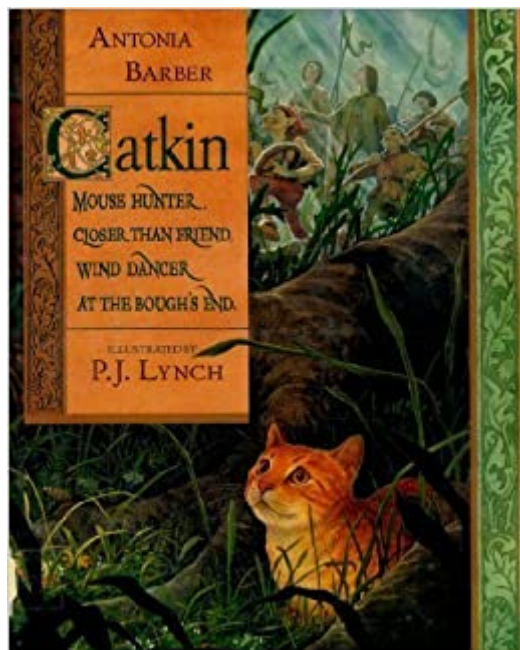


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# Catkin



## Synopsis

The Little People steal a farmer's baby girl, and only Catkin--a tiny, golden-haired cat charged with the child's care--can save her, by solving three baffling riddles.

## Book Information

Age Range: 6 and up

Hardcover: 48 pages

Publisher: Candlewick; 1st U.S. ed edition (October 3, 1994)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1564024857

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Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 9.5 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 15 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,006,314 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #50 in Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > European #486 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Cultural Studies > General #939 in Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > Multicultural

## Customer Reviews

Barber (The Mousehole Cat) and Lynch's (East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon) elegant collaboration rings with the depth and nostalgia of the best fairy stories and the primacy of myth. When a Wise Woman sees danger in young Carrie's future, she provides the girl with a feline protector, Catkin. The girl and her cat are inseparable until the day that a butterfly distracts Catkin, and the Little People bear away the child to their underworld. At the risk of binding himself to the Little People forever, Catkin undertakes the strenuous task of returning the child to her devastated parents. Luminous illustrations complement the graceful text, reflecting the shadows and sunshine of the two worlds. The Little People's underground kingdom is swathed in deep greens, moss and earth tones, while Catkin and Carrie themselves gleam with a golden aura. The sense of legend that pervades this work is borne out by the formal design, which incorporates art of varying sizes and handsome framing devices. Ages 4-up. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 1-3?Told in folkloric cadence, Barber's story is about the rescue of baby Carrie, who was switched for a changeling by the Little People. The hero of the tale is a multitalented cat called

Catkin, so named because he was "...so small that he could sit in comfort on the palm of a man's hand." Because Carrie was stolen while in Catkin's care, the furry fellow risks all to venture into the enchanted land inside the hill. There, of course, he answers three riddles, the last of which frees Carrie but also binds him to that land forever. Posed with a final dilemma, the Lord of the Little People seeks guidance from the Wise Woman; her solution is to have the child and cat spend each winter in the underground realm and return to their own land each spring. The language is graceful and traditionally formal, and the story is charming, resonating of the Tam Lin and Persephone legends. The full-color illustrations, mostly on pages facing text, are dark and magical, and use light and shadow impressively to create drama. Elegantly designed, with Celtic-inspired borders and backgrounds, the book is a sensory pleasure. Independent readers will enjoy it on their own, and it will be a fine choice for read-aloud as well. Carolyn Noah, Central Mass. Regional Library System, Worcester, MA Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

An utter delight! :D A beautiful tale with amazing illustrations that will capture your imagination to the fullest. I read it three times, back to front, before I could put it down. ENJOY! :)

I just recently acquired this early book from PJ Lynch's illustrated works. The changeling story by Antonia Barber is lovely and lyrical and kindhearted, and the accompanying paintings by Mr. Lynch are full of life, full of light and shadow, exquisitely done. Highly recommended.

I thought it would be about a little girl who met this magic cat and they have adventures in another world. It was a little confusing on how the cat saved the girl, but it was still a good story.

My mother bought this book for my little sister when I was a child. We had hundreds of books and this one was not for me, it was not mine, and I did not read it many times. I tell you all that so that you understand the gravity of the rest of this statement. I am 27 years old and I still remember this book well and adore it and its lessons. I don't know what quality above that one you would look for in a book to read to your children. It is touching and beautiful and thought provoking and I am certain that it has created in me a better and more thoughtful person than I would have been without it. Buy the book.

This great book is about a girl and a cat who are friends. The pictures are beautiful and all ages will enjoy it. In the story, when the "Little People" capture the girl, it's up to Catkin to get her back. Read

This Book!!!

Picked up the hardbound edition of this book, and it is just lovely. The illustrations are all beautifully done, sort of like Maxfield Parrish meets 'Sandman' graphic novels. I've read a lot of fairy tales with my kids, but this is one I was unfamiliar with. It reminds me of the story of Persephone from Greek mythology. I saw that one reviewer objected to it because there is a kidnapping, and because the kidnapers don't turn out to be thoroughly evil, as villains usually are in fairy tales. This feature of the story didn't bother me, as a lot of questionable things happen in fairy tales. It is simply a children's story, with riddles and an earnest and clever cat. I saw the moral of the story lying more in the fact that the cat was determined to fix a wrong for which she was responsible (not watching the child which resulted in the kidnapping). In a world where so many people are determined to see everything in black and white, a little ambiguity in a children's story isn't such a bad thing. There are plenty of other fairy tales with wicked villains to supply the all evil vs. all good version of things. For anyone who is worried about the message their children get from this story, I'd suggest they take the opportunity to talk about those issues with them after reading it.

Oh. My. Goodness. I just received Catkin and I have to say, I am floored. In this story, a "dark Lady" and her husband, who is constantly referred to as "the dark Lord" whose "power is great" and has the "power to bind" people to him, kidnap a sleeping child. The kidnapers--who are "immortal" and live in a "splendid palace full of light and glittering with gems" where they hold "revels"--"loved the child" and feed her "only the choicest morsels." "Life was very good" here for the kidnapped child, on whom the kidnapers put a spell so that she doesn't remember her home. The cat in the story, Catkin, was given to the parents of the child by a "wise woman" who negotiates a deal with the kidnapers so that the kidnapers can have access to the child after the child is returned to her home, even though the child should be safe free and clear due to Catkin's courage and skill in beating the kidnapers at their own game. The "wise woman" then returns the child and Catkin to the rightful mother and father and tells them they have to share custody with the Dark Lord. The mother and father are "generous in their joy, and gave their consent to the sharing," and after that their farms "flourished." END SPOILER ALERT All right. Is there anyone out there who isn't the least bit concerned with this story? Do you really want to get a book for your child that teaches that kidnapers live in palaces where life is good and kidnapers "love" their little victim? If your child was kidnapped, would you feel "generous in your joy" and give your "consent to sharing" custody with the kidnapers? How does this story possibly make sense? How could it possibly be published

in this day and age? How is this not, at best, subversive, if not outright satanic? I admit: I skimmed over the reader's reviews. I saw everyone gave it 5 stars (but one person--who gave it 4) along with the official blessing from Publisher's Weekly and the School Library Journal (!), took one look at the incredibly beautiful watercolor illustrations--and make no doubt about it, they are stunningly beautiful--and said sign me up! Perhaps I, too, can make a deal with the Dark Lord for some material success in exchange for the soul of my only child! Oh, that's called a pact with the devil! Ooops! Nevermind! Seriously, I had a long discussion with this with my husband about why, exactly, this particular story is so disturbing. I admit to loving such oldtime classics as Hansel and Gretel and Rumpelstilskin. My husband pointed out that in those old classics, the Bad are obviously Bad--they are undesirable and there is no ambiguity about them. Yes, that is simplistic and problematic in its own right, but do we really want to cast a humanitarian light on KIDNAPPERS, for goodness sake? I have never--never--been as horrified as I am by this book. I read it all the way through hoping I was mistaken about it, but make no bones about it, this is one Bad Vibe book. I don't think I've thrown away a book in my life, but I don't want it in my house and would certainly not pass it along to anyone. Out it goes!

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Catkin

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