



## The Cat and the Curmudgeon

*Cleveland Amory*

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In this heartwarming, uproarious sequel to Amory's bestselling "The Cat Who Came for Christmas," the cat named Polar Bear finds that being rich and famous is not all it's cracked up to be.

## The Cat and the Curmudgeon Details

Date : Published January 1st 1990 by Little Brown & Company

ISBN : 9780641588266

Author : Cleveland Amory

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Genre : Animals, Cats, Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir

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## From Reader Review The Cat and the Curmudgeon for online ebook

### Tricia says

I struggled to read this book. A friend recommended it, but eventually I found myself skipping 10-20 pages at a time and I ended up putting it down. I thought it would be like A Streetcat Named Bob or Dewey the Library Cat, but really this guy just likes to talk about himself. The book rambled on and on. It shouldn't be called "The Cat and the Curmudgeon," it should be called "The Cat ... Actually, This Book is Just About an Egotistical Hermit." Two stars are because the tiny pieces that mention the cat are good. The rest of the book - leave it.

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### Judith says

We first met Polar Bear, Amory's rescued white cat, in "The Cat Who Came for Christmas". This is a follow-up to that story, written in much the same style.

This is less of a story, though. It is more a series of anecdotes of life with Polar Bear, ranging from the peripheral to the central role. We explore fame as it relates to a cat, astrology, film, the Black Beauty Ranch, and Polar Bear's effect on Amory's romantic life here. All is written in Amory's signature style, which has a kind of childlike simplicity combined with a curmudgeonly ego.

I am glad that, once again, we are invited into Amory's passion: the Fund for Animals, which he founded and led for many years. His love for animals of all kinds led to the rescue of many, probably most notable the hundreds of burros from Nevada lands. At one point in the book Amory heads to the Black Beauty Ranch with Polar Bear, to introduce the cat to the rescued animals. Polar Bear maintains his dignity and self-worth through all of the introductions.

It's an entertaining, light read that I hope has inspired some to think more seriously about the lives of other animals on this planet.

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### Laura says

I was motivated to read this after having gotten a copy of The Cat Who Came For Christmas as a Christmas present when I was a kid. Both books tell the story of how Amory unexpectedly became the proud owner of a white cat while building a nonprofit organization, traveling for business, attending a Greenpeace protest, and more. Amory initially wasn't a "cat person", but slowly and grudgingly comes to appreciate and understand his new pet, Polar Bear, who matures into an adaptable, personable cat who accompanies his owner on numerous adventures.

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### Patrick Gibson says

Cleveland Amory writes some the damndest convoluted sentences. There. Now that I have that off my chest

I can also say that some of those damn sentences are clever and dare I say it—heart warming. I am in danger of turning into a pillar of salt here, but this is a sweet book. The cat named Polar Bear is now famous because of the first book about him “The Cat Who Came for Christmas” and now this celebrity must be dealt with in all its social ugliness.

The bulk of the book deals with Polar Bears cameo in a movie and the vexations he causes Amory. It’s lighthearted and a Valentine to cat lovers (of which I am one, but still feel like I should be sniffing sulfur or burping Brimstone). Don’t be afraid—sometimes a massive dose of sugar ain’t such a bad thing.

“As anyone who has ever been around a cat for any length of time well knows, cats have enormous patience with the limitations of the human kind.”

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### **Valerie says**

Another book I really need the prequel for. I hadn't read anything else by Amory before, so I can't make comparisons. It took me a bit to get into it, but I may get on with it intermittently.

I have to say that I don't like the author of this book personally, even when I AGREE with what he says-- which I occasionally do. He's not a 'curmudgeon' in any sense I would recognize. He has, from his own description, dozens of friends. And he invites (or permits) people into his home, which any truly asocial person would refuse to do, except in emergencies. Being nasty to your friends isn't a sign of a curmudgeon. True curmudgeons aren't nasty toward anyone, because they don't get that involved in their lives.

Furthermore, I find the author bigoted and argumentative, two traits that would assure that I, personally, would cross the street to avoid him. I don't just mean the crude misogyny, either. I also include the bigotry against people with allergies, for example.

Despite all this, I did finish the book, though I had qualms in the middle. I began to fear that the book might end with the cat dying, since cats are short-lived creatures. I can reassure any reader with similar qualms that it does not.

And there are some good elements. I hadn't realized that the signing chimpanzee Nim was retired to a sanctuary rather than (as originally planned) becoming just one more laboratory chimp, and I'm glad to know it. And there are other descriptions of animals being kept in good conditions on a ranch for retired animals as well. It's one of the better parts of the book. I just wish it had been written by somebody who wasn't so obnoxious, is all. But I still might read the prequel if I find a copy around.

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### **SouthWestZippy says**

Not one I would reread but a good book.

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### **LibraryCin says**

3.75 stars

This is the second book Amory has written about Polar Bear, the white cat he rescued off the street one Christmas. Polar Bear is older in this one, and according to Amory, both he and Polar Bear are curmudgeons. Each chapter has a slightly different focus, but some themes include fame/celebrity (from the first book), movies, romance, and Amory's animal sanctuary.

I quite liked it, but I find Amory to be very similar to me in my thoughts on animals and how they should be treated, so I'm sure that helped with my enjoyment, as well. I loved the chapter on the ranch (the sanctuary) that described some of the animals there and the things they'd been through. I also loved that he named the ranch after Black Beauty and talked a little bit about the book (which I've very recently reread). A lot of the book didn't specifically focus on Polar Bear, but he was always brought into the mix somehow!

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### **Evelyn Morgan says**

This is Cleveland Amory's second book about his life with Polar Bear, the quirky white cat who adopted him ten years ago. The most interesting part to me was when Polar Bear was introduced to all kinds of animals at Black Beauty Ranch, a rescue farm run by the Fund for Animals. He met all kinds and sizes from rabbits to llamas to elephants. Mr. Amory writes in a tongue-in-cheek style, but you can tell his love for his beloved rescue cat is very real.

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### **Kaethe says**

January 1, 1991  
December 28, 2014

This book is both a look at the business of being a writer and even more about the Fund for Animals and its rather daring efforts to stop the clubbing of baby seals and the illegal killing of whales. So, progress, yay! It is fascinating to see how far animal rights has come, in large part because of the efforts of this one man who cared so much. Sometimes I need the reminder that change is possible.

Personal, signed copy.

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### **Carfig says**

A little too much about Amory's thoughts about indoor/outdoor cats, dating (for himself) and astrology for cats, and not enough about Polar Bear, but a few good anecdotes. My favorite is about the animal sanctuary in Texas, Black Beauty Ranch. Amory had mentioned in passing in the first book that he and friends had rescued the wild burros from the Grand Canyon, by air-lifting them out of the canyon. Their new home was the ranch. Among all the famous people littered in the book, George Foreman came to the ranch to adopt four burros. He was told to choose them himself. His response: Get the four that are least likely to be adopted, and I'll take them. What a champ!

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### **Sgtpetsounds says**

I found most of this book very difficult to read. Not because of the convoluted sentence structure – although that certainly didn't help – but it was just boring. There are some interesting stories in here but they are mixed in with a whole lot of nothing. I found myself essentially forcing myself to push through the boring bits, trying to find some more interesting bits. Generally that's not a sign of a good book.

The title is quite misleading; the cat, Polar Bear, is really more of a framing device for Amory's stories about himself. Polar Bear makes meaningful appearances in less than half of the stories although a token effort is generally made to link the other stories back to him. For example the first chapter basically consists of Amory's musings on fame. This has nothing to do with Polar Bear apart from a brief description of an incident that occurred when a camera crew tried to film him for a TV show, but throughout the chapter Amory talks about Polar Bear's supposed feelings on becoming a celebrity after the previous book was published in an attempt to justify the chapter's inclusion.

I suspect what happened is that Amory used all of his interesting stories about Polar Bear in his first book (which I haven't read, so maybe that's not the case), assuming that he would publish it and it would be done. Then, when the book became a hit, he knew he had to write a sequel but couldn't come up with enough content so he just padded it out by writing about whatever came to mind to and weakly linking it back to the cat.

As an animal lover I do have to admire all of the work the Amory did for animal rights. In fact, I found the chapter in which he discusses the Black Beauty Ranch and the animals there to be the most interesting part of the book, even if it was rage-inducing to read about some of the awful things people had done to the animals before they got there. As for his work as an author, I'm not entirely sold on it. Maybe the previous book would be worth a read, if, as I suspect, he put all of his best Polar Bear stories into it, but I simply can't recommend this one.

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## Eric\_W says

Cleveland Amory is the the P.J. O'Rourke of the animal world. I can't resist quoting one of my favorite passages in a book filled with humor.

"Hunters have never seemed to understand what I have tried to do for them. As far back as 1963, for example, on the Today show I announced the formation of a new club -- one to be called the "Hunt the Hunters Hunt Club." All the club ever tried to do was to define the word "conservation" for the hunters the way they have always defined it for the animals. We were shooting them, in other words, for their own good. But from the beginning the hunters made no effort to understand this, even though we made clear we never used words like "shooting" or "killing." Instead we used the hunters' own words -- words with which they would feel comfortable -- "culling," "trimming," "harvesting," or just "taking." We wanted them to understand that if we didn't take them, in no time at all there would be too many of them. They would be crowding the woods and the fields and the roads, and they would be breeding like flies. All we really asked of the hunter, when you came right down to it, was for him to take the long-term view. In the end we both wanted, after all, the same thing -- we both wanted a stronger herd. We even asked them directly if they had ever seen a hunter out there in the middle of the winter, starving in the woods. It was not a pretty sight. The hardest criticism we had to take was that the "Hunt the Hunters Hunt Club" had no season on hunters. Nothing could have been further from the truth. The club's very second rule forbade members to take hunters -- and I quote: "within city limits, in parked cars or in the dating season." And the third rule clearly stated that, after harvesting their hunter, members were not to -- and I quote again -- "drape him over the automobile or mount him when they got home." Mounting the cap or jacket, we felt, was in better taste."

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## **Ethan says**

Amory was a privileged, Harvard-educated New Yorker, animal rights activist, and friend to the stars whose writing is aimed at a reasonably erudite audience, the kind of people who have stacks of partially read issues of The New Yorker or The Atlantic Monthly scattered around their apartments. Think Andy Rooney with a thesaurus. Yes, some of his sentence structures are convoluted, but that just makes them all the more funny when you unravel them. You sometimes have to work to get the joke, but the humor is there.

The real star, of course, is Amory's cat, Polar Bear, who is just as much a curmudgeon as Amory. My fellow cat lovers will approve. He also has amusing anecdotes about another animals --and even some humans!

Amory is definitely a product of a certain corner of 20th century America. They don't make them like this anymore. I'm not entirely sure that's all bad, but -- call me a curmudgeon if you must even though I am a bit too young according to Amory -- it does make me sad that someone like Amory probably wouldn't make it in our comparably vapid world of Twitter and viral videos.

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## **Marieke says**

It was okay; an easy read, quite enjoyable for a lazy afternoon.

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## **Allison Fetch says**

Many other reviews hated the author's convoluted sentence structure, but I had no trouble reading the writing. In fact, most of the hilarity in this book was due to the very tongue in cheek delivery style associated with this style of writing. However, for the first time in a number of years, I met a book that I didn't want to finish. So I didn't. There was absolutely No. Plot. As in, none. Basically the book was a series of essays, which wasn't what I was looking for at all. This book sat on my shelves for years and now it's time to pass it along. Maybe someone else will find that it holds their interest since it certainly didn't hold mine.

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