

Village School Children's Book of the Month

"Moses the Kitten" by James Herriot

Reviewed by Myra Chapman 1st-2nd Grade Teacher

As a recent read-aloud book in the 1st and 2nd grade class, I shared a favorite book from my own childhood, James Herriot's *Moses the Kitten*. The story of Moses, a tiny black kitten, takes place in the countryside of Yorkshire, England. Told from the author's

(Jame's) point of view, the book begins as he arrives at the drive leading to a rural farm. The wind is blowing

fiercely and the surrounding landscape is gray and barren with winter. The narrator spots a small black shape in the rushes at the edge the driveway. Upon further investigation he discovers a kitten crouched on the ground, barely alive.

As a country veterinarian he knows the kitten needs to be warmed up quickly and tucks him into his coat. The kitten is far from any buildings or other cats and the



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narrator suspects it from the farm he is about to visit. Once at the farm the farmer's wife quickly pops the tiny kitten into the old kitchen oven as the 'old cure'. The vet goes about his business helping the farmer with his animals. When he returns to the farmhouse kitchen he finds the kitten alive and well.

On his next visit he is anxious to see Moses and looks everywhere for the black cat but sees only the wide variety of other farm cats that live throughout the farmyard and buildings. Before James leaves, the farmer asks to show him something. They walk through the barns to the piggery where James is met with an astonishing surprise. Moses has found a very unlikely place to call home and the experienced vet has never seen anything like it before.

This classic story is penned by the author of the beloved memoir *All Creatures Great and Small* and is one of several tales from the author's life as a country vet in England. Herriot's gentle understanding of animals is evident as he describes the tedious job he completes on the farm. Readers are



treated to beautiful realistic illustrations of the farm and animals, and will enjoy looking to find all the clever places that the farm cats find for naps. While some of the

vocabulary and dialogue are old fashioned, this is a wonderful book to read with children ages 5 and up and will appeal to anyone who has a love for animals.