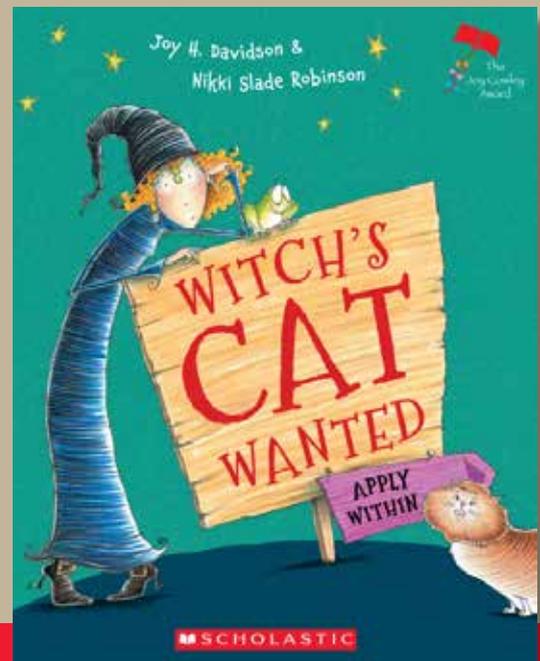


Witch's Cat Wanted Apply Within

By Joy H. Davidson

Illustrated by Nikki Slade Robinson



- Reading • Writing • Rhyme • Art
- Adjectives • Health & PE • Social Studies

Synopsis

Witch's Cat Wanted is a delightful read-aloud story of a witch's search for a friend; a friend in the form of a cat. The story opens with the witch anxiously stirring her cauldron, asking of it how she can find a cat, because without one she can't be a real witch.

In response, out of the cauldron pops a sign that reads 'Witch's Cat Wanted – Apply Within'. Shortly after the witch puts the sign on her front gate, three cats come to her door, one after the other. To each of them in turn, she recites a list of criteria needed by the successful applicant. The fluffy Persian refuses the position because he gets broom-sick, the elegant Siamese refuses because he won't eat animal gizzards, and the plump tabby refuses because he is a forgetful cat who could never remember her spells.

Dejected, she stirs her cauldron for the last time, believing that her career as a witch is over. The answer to her problem floats up like alphabet soup: S-P-C-A. Filled with hope, the witch quickly flies to the SPCA where the man offers her a kitten, because that's what most people want. But the witch says no. She wants a witch's cat, and not an ordinary moggie either. Hearing that, the man leads her to a cage in the shadows, revealing a small black cat. The cat recites what he can do, which matches her requirements exactly, even down to the need for a good friend. Overjoyed, the witch takes him home on her broomstick, and they feast on animal gizzards that night. Then the witch sits in bed with her new best friend, and they both read her Spell Book from beginning to end.

About the Author

Joy Halloran Davidson was born and raised in Auckland and, after living in Whangarei for six years, moved to Hawkes Bay with her husband and a little black scruffy dog called Charlie. There, her home and writing sanctuary was a little cottage by the sea in Napier. Joy has recently returned to live on Auckland's North Shore. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Sciences from Auckland University, and a Diploma in Writing Stories for Children from The New Zealand Institute of Business Studies.

About the Illustrator

At the age of five, Nikki Slade Robinson decided she was going to write and illustrate children's books when she grew up. Nikki followed her dream, doing a Diploma of Visual Communication Design (Illustration) at Wellington Polytechnic. She has illustrated many children's books, as well as having both written and illustrated a number of her own. Nikki lives in Opotiki on the East Coast with her husband and their two daughters.

Writing Style

This is a humorous and tender story perfect for reading aloud. The main character, the witch, is easily relatable and likeable for both children and adults. The story moves quickly using a mixture of straight prose and rhyming text and ends happily, making it a book that will be requested over and over.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- Look at the cover. What characters can you see here? What do you think the witch is thinking? (Cover)
- Why do you think the witch is looking for a cat? Do you think she will be successful in her search? (Cover)
- Consider the first page of the story. (p.3) Before turning to page 4, have the students suggest what might be the perfect cat for a witch.
- What does 'anxious' mean? How can you tell the witch is anxious? Why would she feel that way as she stirs her cauldron? (p.4)
- The witch asks her cauldron how to solve her problems. Who would you ask? (p.4)
- What do you notice about the first four lines on page 5? Why do you think they are written like this?
- Why did the witch cross her fingers? What does it mean when someone crosses their fingers? When have you crossed your fingers? (p.6)
- How can you tell what the witch is thinking? (p.9)
- What is a 'moggie'? Is a Persian cat a 'moggie'? (p.9) Is a Siamese cat a 'moggie'? (p.12)
- What are 'gizzards'? Would you eat them? What is your favourite food? Why do you think this text is written in rhyme? (p.10)
- What is a 'fur-ball'? (p.11)
- What does being 'fussy' about food mean? Do you know anybody who is 'food-fussy'? (p.15)
- What is the SPCA? (p.19) Why might nobody else have chosen the small black cat at the SPCA? Why do you think the black cat was in a cage hidden down a long corridor? (p.24)
- What does it mean when someone is 'down on their luck'? (p.27)
- How has the illustrator shown that the witch is happy? What is her wand doing? (p.27)

Activities

ACTIVITY 1: FRIENDLY ADJECTIVES

Begin by reminding the children about adjectives by listing all the adjectives that describe the cats in the story. Put words such as fluffy, elegant, tatty or crooked in word circles on the whiteboard, then ask the children to suggest words of similar meaning, and add these on spokes. Ask the children for suggestions of adjectives that describe a friend they have, or a friend they'd like to have. Collate the children's suggestions on the whiteboard. Ask the children to choose 3 or 4 adjectives that are the most important to them in a friend and ask them to make a 'Friend Wanted' sign using the adjectives they chose.

ACTIVITY 2: RHYMING SPELLS

As a class, write a spell for a happy class/day/school using the example of the rhyming spell in the book. Begin by reminding the children of word families they are familiar with or that you have recently been focussing on. Take suggestions of words that describe a happy class and the actions of those within it and put them into the cauldron drawn on the whiteboard. Support the children to group the words into rhyming families, e.g. kind/mind and share/care. There is an opportunity to introduce, or remind the children of, words that rhyme but are not spelt the same that may be useful for your poem, e.g. fair and share.

ACTIVITY 3: STORY STARTER

Your neighbour is a witch. Begin by drawing her. Write about the spells she does and why it's a good or a bad thing to have a witch for a neighbour.

ACTIVITY 4: SPCA

This would be a really useful story to lead into a unit on the SPCA and the work they do. The SPCA fundraising cupcake day happens around mid August every year. For more information about events and how to become involved visit:

www.spcacupcakeday.co.nz

www.facebook.com/SPCACupcakeDayNZ/

To arrange to visit the SPCA, or to have someone come to your school, visit:

www.rnzspca.org.nz

ACTIVITY 5: ROCK STAR'S PET WANTED – APPLY WITHIN

Make up a new rhyme for a rock star looking for an animal friend. What attributes would a rock star look for? (Or choose your own subject e.g. butcher, farmer, author, gardener.) Create a 'Wanted' poster advertising for the animal.

Written by Sarina Dickson



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC