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The Improbable Cat

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

This attractively produced, pocket-size story has all the tried and tested Ahlberg qualities. It is domestically vivid, succinct, and captivating. The nightmarish central figure is captivating, too, in a more sinister way. Entering the lives of the Burrell family as a pathetic grey limping kitten, this feline monster hypnotises everyone in the family who touches and strokes it, reducing them all to servitude. The house falls to rack and ruin, and so do the characters, as they slavishly feed the creature and it grows in three short weeks to monstrous size. Luckily David, aged twelve, is allergic to cat fur and doesn't touch it, so he watches in mounting puzzlement and horror until, with the aid of Billy the dog (also, of course, immune) he is finally able to launch a violent and successful counter-attack. This terse, suspenseful little story is both witty and serious (as Ahlberg so often is) and its title is important. We live our lives, says David, by expecting what is probable. But 'improbable' and 'impossible' are very different things. Ahlberg's improbable moggy makes for a creepily diverting entertainment.

Running Order:

47

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