



Cat of Many Tails

Ellery Queen

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The city was in a panic!

Like a savage cat, the unknown strangler had pounced on his victims. Victims chosen seemingly at random. One murder after another. The police were completely baffled.

The mayor ordered Ellery Queen on the case. There were the facts, laid out as neatly as the corpses. But where did they connect?

Ellery believed that these seemingly mad murders were all committed by the same person. But he couldn't prove it. He believed that there was a pattern in the killings that would provide a solution. But he couldn't find it.

Ellery was as baffled as the police. They worked desperately. But the murders went on.

The cat was still at large!

Cat of Many Tails Details

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Author : Ellery Queen

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From Reader Review *Cat of Many Tails* for online ebook

Johnny Carruthers says

This was (after a fashion) my first exposure to Ellery Queen, although it was not the first of his books that I read. In 1971, *Cat Of Many Tails* was used as the basis for the TV-Movie *Ellery Queen: Don't Look Behind You*, which starred Peter Lawford as Ellery, and Harry Morgan as Inspector Richard Queen. (And for reasons I have been unable to fathom, Inspector Queen somehow morphed from being Ellery's father into his uncle.)

Susan says

It's been a long time since I've read an Ellery Queen mystery. I really enjoyed this one. Ellery's father, the policeman, convinces him to help in a current case of serial murders by a person called The Cat. The Cat's tails are his victims, as the newspaper keeps printing a drawing of the cat with an ever-increasing number of tails. As the radio and newspaper continue to hype the case, NYC is in a state of panic and the police are getting nowhere. They also get a psychiatrist to help after his niece becomes one of the victims. Ellery thinks he has figured out how the victims are chosen, and enlists a young newspaper reporter and a young woman (with whom the reporter immediately falls in love and makes himself a nuisance) to help him investigate. As the panic level rises, the police and Ellery get more desperate, and finally set up a trap hoping to catch the Cat. The typical Queen twist at the end was good - I saw it coming, but only a few chapters before it was revealed. Enjoyable read.

Delia Binder says

Highly-Flawed, but Fascinating, Early Serial Killer Thriller

As a lifelong mystery fan, Ellery Queen (the writer and the character) are not among my favorites. The character himself feels too much like a collection of traits rather than a person, the characters surrounding him seem to come from Central Casting rather than being fully fleshed-out persons or interesting twists on type, and even the best stories feel like puzzles written at a remove rather than adventures written to engage you at an emotional as well as intellectual level.

Linda says

Growing up I was a big fan of Ellery Queen, but I guess like all things, this time the reread was laborious and dated. I still enjoyed the story and the character but there was too much extraneous "stuff" and musing in this story...it could have been edited down and still been enjoyable. Oh well...I still treasure my discovery of these stories the first time out.

Courtney Carlson says

I've read enough EQ to guess the twist at the end, but the plot was sound and satisfactory. His writing is more overwrought than usual, though, and if it was my first Queen I would have put it down in disgust after the first chapter.

Ambre Golden says

I was a bit disappointed when I re-read this book (and read it for the first time in English). The narrative style is strange and a bit pompous at times (the beginning of the book, until Ellery's first scene, really put me off). Jimmy really annoyed me a lot and I could have done without the pseudo-psychoanalytic explanation at the end (some parts of it were relevant, but others seemed added merely because apparently you can't have a serial killer who didn't have sexual issues of some kind).

I still really liked the mystery and all the suspenseful moments in the last half of the novel. Now I need to re-read *Ten Days Wonder*, which is supposed to take place right before this one (there are several references to that case, although not really spoilers).

Lorraine Rankin says

My first Ellery Queen book, kept me involved from beginning to end. The ending was a complete surprise. Great story. Will read more Ellery Queen. Five stars!

Renee Wolcott says

This was my first Ellery Queen mystery, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Queen matches wits with a serial killer as panic grips the city.

Kathy says

Very dark. A little drawn out. I figured out the solution, which is always a little "Yay, me!" "Darn."

Kristina Reads - Books. Blogs. Memes. says

This was a fun read and step back in to the past for me. Strangely enough I think I just the other day finished a book from Netgalley that was largely based on this story (but I'm not going to tell you what it is because I only gave it two stars).

I had to look up a lot of old-timey terms I had never heard before but I was also surprised by some of the

good humor I found in this book. I guess I had a very stiff view of how people carried themselves back in those days so the fact that there were a lot of jokes that I think would still land in literature today was refreshing. ("he curled up on the sofa like an indignant sloth.") ("It's enough to make you cancel your membership in the human race. Come on, let's all get drunk.") ("First things first, that's my motto. I just invented it.")

Of course this is also pre-civil rights era so you will use of an outdated term for African Americans, but it seems done in good humor (not *trying* to be racist). I did find it very funny when the investigators are blown away that one of the Cat's victims was black. They joke that maybe the Cat is a civil rights activist, making sure to target black and white victims equally (not really, the Cat still killed many more white people, but whatever). Additionally, since this is immediately post-WWII, we have a couple funny comments as follows:

"I'll tell you there's as much sense in these killings as there was in a Nazi crematorium."

"[He] used to say the Cat was anti-Semitic because in a City with the biggest Jewish population in the world he hadn't strangled a single Jew. Then he'd laugh and contradict himself and say the odds were the Cat was Jewish because of that very fact."

My complaint is that it went long in some places. I was over halfway in before I really was excited to read this because it just seemed to take a long time to ramp up. Then the end stretches on longer than it needed to, but I thought the twist and logic it took to get there was very interesting, so I didn't mind too much (as opposed to the other book I mentioned above, whose ending follows the exact path of this book but was so difficult to read that it caused me to drop my rating from three stars to two). I don't think I'll be reading any more of this series but I did enjoy reading this one.

Peggy says

I listened to this audiobook and was surprised that I enjoyed it as much as I did. A serial killer is terrorizing Manhattan. The victims appear to have no connection whatsoever and the killer leaves no clues except a silk cord he uses to strangle. Ellery Queen becomes involved at the request of his father, who is the police investigator in charge of what has been dubbed The Cat murders. The mayor names Ellery Special Investigator. The story is a satisfying mystery of unravelling the scant clues. I would have given it 5 stars except for the ending (no spoilers). The ending's surprises and twists just took a little too long to wrap up. Even when it became clear, the author chose to drag it out a little longer than I wanted, making me anxious for the conclusion. But overall it was a very good book.

Midori says

2.5 stars for this mystery that didn't stand the test of time for me. I read this particular Ellery Queen at least several times back in the day and can only think that I must have skimmed madly.

The narrator was somewhat annoying too, perhaps he was trying to evoke the fast talking bantering tone of the Tracy and Hepburn movies with varying success.

Once the novelty of long ago patterns of speech, smoking, drinking scotch (a lot), and contemplating a job as a 'public stenographer' wore off it was a slog rather than a skip to the finish.

Mary Stenvall says

I have a particular fondness for the "Golden Age" mysteries - those from the thirties and forties - and Ellery Queen is a favorite among those. This one I missed so was a welcome change to return to the cerebral one at his best.

Tairu says

Me dejó con ansiedad y un terrible dolor de cabeza.

Pamela says

[It is painfully obvious that these two guys have absolutely NO idea how a woman's mind works. (hide spoiler)]
