

The Cat Who Saw Red Study Guide

The Cat Who Saw Red by Lilian Jackson Braun

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Plot Summary

The Cat Who Saw Red is a story about a newspaper writer who stumbles into a murder mystery that begins when he agrees to help an old girlfriend leave her jealous husband. Jim is unable to find any proof of what has happened to Joy, though he knows that what her husband, Dan, has been telling just doesn't add up in any respect. Jim is able to finally figure out what has happened but not before Dan realizes how close Jim is and attempts to kill Jim as well.

Jim Qwilleran is a newspaper reporter for the Daily Fluxion who has recently been assigned to cover the fine cuisine section of the paper. Upon his first assignment Jim finds himself at Maus Haus where he meets up with an old girl friend named Joy. Joy and her husband, who are both potters, are obviously having marital trouble. Jim looks Maus Haus over and decides to move in. After Jim moves in Joy admits that she is looking to get a divorce but can't save up enough money. Jim gives her some money and later that night Jim hears a scream.

The next day no one sees Joy. As the days continue Dan, Joy's husband, says that Joy has went to Florida, although Joy told everyone she hated Florida. Jim begins to dig into things and finds that Dan is working on a new glaze for his pottery. Dan's pottery is known to be hideous but Joy's art is very pretty and she sells much more than Dan seemingly without trying. The houseboy, William, is also looking at Dan suspiciously and soon William goes missing as well.

Dan throws a big party to show off his pottery and everyone is taken aback by how wonderful the glaze is although the people admit that the glaze would have looked much better on Joy's pieces than Dan's. That night after the party Jim accuses Dan of being a liar and explains about several lies that he has caught Dan in. Dan has a quick answer for everything and Jim can't pin anything on Dan. That night Dan sneaks into Jim's room with the intention of killing him but trips on an intricate pattern of yarn that Jim's highly intelligent cat, Koko, has spun through the room.

Jim explains to the others living in the house that Dan had killed Joy's cat and used the ashes to make a wonderful looking glaze. When Joy threatened to leave Dan had killed Joy and used her body the same way he had used the cat. When William got too close Dan had killed him and intended to put him in the kiln as well but there were pots in there and Dan had to store the body until later. It was William's body that got Dan in trouble since there was nothing left of Joy's body in the kiln.



Chapter 1-4

Chapter 1-4 Summary

The Cat Who Saw Red is a story about a newspaper writer who stumbles into a murder mystery that begins when he agrees to help an old girlfriend leave her jealous husband. Jim is unable to find any proof of what has happened to Joy, though he knows that what her husband, Dan, has been telling just doesn't add up in any respect. Jim is able to finally figure out what has happened but not before Dan realizes how close Jim is and attempts to kill Jim as well.

As chapter one begins Jim Qwilleran is having lunch with some friends he works with. He explains that while he was at the vet office with his cats that the vet noticed that Jim was out after breath after chasing around Koko, Jim's cat. The vet suggested Jim go to the doctor for a check up. Jim was told by the doctor that he needed to loose thirty pounds, so he has started a diet. His friends say that he will never be able to stick with it but Jim argues saying that he has even bought an antique doctor's scale with some prize money Jim won for some articles that he wrote. When Jim gets back to the office his boss tells him that Jim is going to be in charge of the new food critic column in the paper. Jim tries to turn it down since Jim is a recovering alcoholic and has just started his new diet. His boss refuses to let Jim back out. That night Jim calls an old friend and asks her to go out to eat with him. She has plans but tells Jim that he can take her place at a dinner party at a place called Maus Haus. Robert Maus is the owner and is known for his fine cooking.

In chapter two Jim arrives at Maus Haus and a young man name William Vitello, a very lax looking butler, answers the door. William is friendly and offers to show Jim around explaining that most of the guests live there. Jim is surprised to find that the people live there and it is explained that Maus Haus is a boarding house. Jim is introduced to Rosemary Whiting and Hixie Rice among others. While Jim is walking around the vast room he bumps into Joy Wheatly, an old girl friend of his. Joy explains that she is married and her name is now Joy Graham. Joy explains that her and her husband do pottery and live at the Maus Haus. Jim is introduced to Joy's husband, Dan, and it is immediately clear that there is marital strife between the two. Joy goes on to explain about a art show that her and husband are going to be putting on. Jim is showed around the house by Joy. Jim decides he will ask about one of the rooms that Robert Maus has up for rent. During dinner conversations are going well until Dan interrupts some compliments that Robert Maus and others are paying on Joy's work. Dan is talking about how wonderful his own pieces are compared to Joy's. The conversation at the table stops abruptly and everyone is silent.

Chapter three begins with Jim moving into the new room at Maus Haus. When Jim gets his cats to the new apartment Jim is quick to walk through and make a thorough check of everything before he lets Koko and Yum Yum out to make sure that they can't escape through any vents or unlocked windows since Koko can push them open. That night at



dinner Jim sees Joy for the first time since moving in. Jim talks about his cats and Joy explains that she had a cat that had disappeared. Dan makes some jokes about the cat being stolen for experiments which clearly upset Joy. Joy soon loses her composure and turns on William and yells insults at him as well as Hixie. Jim is taken aback remembering Joy as a kind person. Joy excuses herself saying she has been working too hard.

In chapter four Jim returns to his room. Soon after Joy arrives and comes in for a talk. Joy talks to Jim about several different things regarding her art and then explains that she is going to get a divorce. Joy says that there are some great ideas for glazes that she has been holding back so that her art doesn't surpass her husbands. Joy tells Jim that she has been to see a lawyer but that the lawyer wanted a lot of money and Joy is broke. Jim has a little of his prize money left from his articles and offers to give Joy \$750. She eagerly accepts promising to pay Jim back. She writes out a note and Jim notices that her handwriting still looks odd and where she writes his name it looks like "Qwwww." It is against Jim's better judgment to lend the money but he knows he can't refuse her. Joy leaves with the check and Jim goes to bed. At some point in the night Jim is startled awake by a scream. Jim looks around thinking perhaps it was just a dream when he notices the cats are all awake and looking around. Then there is a blue convertible car that peels out of Maus Haus and drives away. Jim looks at his watch and sees that it is three twenty five in the morning.

Chapter 1-4 Analysis

There is a lot of imagery that is used in the story to indicate that something more has happened than just a car leaving in the middle of the night and a scream. Chapter four ends with the rain drops that are falling being described as enormous tears.

Jim seems to pay a lot of attention to his cats and the things that they do. As the story continues there will be many times that the cats will type different things on the typewriter and Jim will try to decipher what it could mean although it will often seem like a drastic stretch. Despite this, Jim seems to value the cats and credits them, Koko particularly, for the solving of past mysteries.

Joy left Jim before without a word about where she is going. In the next chapters Dan will explain that she has left him before but always comes back. Of course this isn't the truth and Joy has been murdered. Dan has killed Joy and is so focused on his own art that he is willing to continue to kill. Jim's own admissions and reasons behind the murders will never be heard of course. It was detrimental that Joy had ran away other times without letting anyone know where she was going. This makes it hard for anyone to say it is odd that Joy had disappeared. It will be this fact that makes it easier for Dan to account for Joy being gone.

There is another plot in the story that is touched on briefly. There was a double suicide at Maus Haus years earlier although no one speaks of it. It is suspected that one of the suicides was actually a murder but nothing was ever proven. The people that were at

Maus Haus when the incident occurred have refused to talk about it since it happened. This tragedy will continue to be spoken of throughout the story but will never be solved. Its value will lie in the fact that it explains many of the anomalies that Jim finds while in his new apartment.



Chapter 5-8

Chapter 5-8 Summary

In chapter five when Jim gets up he heads down to breakfast and finds that neither Dan nor Joy are there. No one has seen either of them for breakfast. Jim then asks if anyone else heard the scream in the night but no one else in the house seems to have heard what Jim is describing. Noticing that Robert Maus has a slightly blackened eye, Jim decides it would be a good idea to ask Robert to come have dinner with him at the restaurant, Toledo Tombs, as a guest of the Daily Fluxion. Robert agrees eagerly. Jim asks that the house keeper check on the Grahams and when they call the room they find that Dan Graham answers and says that everything is just fine. When Dan comes down to breakfast he is telling Jim about how wrong the newspapers are for tearing down artists in the papers. When Jim asks about Joy, Dan tells him that Joy has left him in the middle of the night. Dan explains that Joy has left him before but always comes back and he thinks that she will be back soon again. Joy left her car wherever she went and Jim is wondering if Joy left with another man and the \$750 he gave her, but Jim refuses to think that of Joy. Jim asks about the scream he heard and Dan says that Joy got her hair caught in the electric pottery wheel and Dan had to turn the pottery wheel off. Jim takes Koko out for a walk and the blue convertible that Jim had seen the night before is in the garage but its extremely clean. Jim goes back to his apartment where Koko hops up onto the typewriter and types out 30.

Chapter six starts out with Jim at work explaining to his friend how Joy ran off. Jim's friend advises him to stop payment on the check but Jim is worried that Joy may need the money wherever she is at. Jim focuses on his mustache, which twitches whenever Jim has a correct hunch about the crime that he is investigating. That night at dinner Jim gets an opportunity to question Robert Maus about the other tenants at Maus Haus and where Robert got his black eye. Robert explains where his black eye came from although Jim is not sure it is the truth. That night when Jim gets back to Maus Haus he goes to Hixie's room and hears her arguing with a man in her room. Jim is unable to tell who the man is but knocks on Hixie's door and invites her to a cheese tasting with him. Hixie shields her door so that Jim can't see who else is in there with her but agrees to go with Jim. Jim isn't interested in Hixie, who is a larger sized lady, but is interested in the answers she will willingly babble at him. Jim goes on to his apartment where he finds that Koko has typed the word dog on the typewriter.

Chapter seven begins with Jim waking up the next morning and trying to find out what Dan Graham's middle initial is. Jim is certain Dan's middle name must start with an O since Koko wrote d-o-g on the paper, however Jim is unable to find anyone that knows. Charlotte Roop stops in to talk to Jim for a moment. He is unable to get much information from Charlotte but she does tell Jim that Joy refused to ever use the electric machine for her pottery because she thought it took away from the personal touch an artist gave their work. After Mrs. Roop is gone Jim begins to have a quiver in his mustache telling him that Joy is dead but he refuses to listen to the feeling.



In chapter eight Jim stops at the library and picks up books on pottery. Soon the afternoon arrives and Jim has to go to the cheese tasting. While at the cheese tasting, Jim learns from Hixie that Max Sorrel, the owner of the Golden Lamb Chop, is in danger of loosing his restaurant because of rumors that are being spread around town regarding Max's food ingredients and the sanitary state of his kitchen and the workers. Jim takes Hixie home and decides to go to the Golden Lamb Chop alone. Once there at the high end restaurant Jim notices that there are no costumers. Max is working seating guests but sits with Jim between guests arriving. There is virtually no one there. Max gives Jim his opinion of those that live at Maus Haus. Max tells Jim that there is something not right about William and says that he saw William coming out of Jim's room the day before when Jim was gone. Jim dismisses it and soon discovers that the blue convertible that he had seen leaving the night he heard the scream was Max's and he left because he had been called saying he restaurant was on fire. After Jim leaves the Golden Lamb Chop he wonders if Dan might be the one behind the slander that is being spread about the restaurant. Jim knows that Max is known by some to be a ladies man while he refuses to get married. After back at Maus Haus Jim sees that Dan is setting up for the pottery showing. Dan claims that it isn't fun alone but he expects Joy to be back anytime. Dan also says that he has bought enough champagne for three hundred guests. Jim goes to his room where Koko is walking around a book titled "The Ancient Art of Potting."

Chapter 5-8 Analysis

Jim puts a lot of stock in what Koko tells him. There is a short period of time when Jim is trying to figure out what the word dog means that Koko has written on the typewriter. In the next part of the book it will be explained that it wasn't Koko that wrote dog but William when he was in Jim's room. William was in there for a reason and most likely was looking sneaky, as Max described him. The role that this piece of this puzzle plays won't be revealed for some time in the story.

The Golden Lamb Chop is a subplot in the story but it will be one that is resolved in this book. Max is described as a ladies man in some regards although he is not ever seen with any woman. He has strong opinions of people that live at Maus Haus although there is no indication as to why he has these opinions and never anything to substantiate his claims.

Hixie has provided Jim with a lot of information. Later in the story she will add Jim a little more insight into Dan's character although nothing else that she tells him points to any significant answers. Charlotte Roop is very closed compared to Hixie. It is hard for Jim to get any information or clear answers from Charlotte Roop about much of anything. Toward the end of the story there will be larger pieces of her past revealed although they will not tie into the mystery of Joy and her murder.

Koko typed out the number 30 on the typewriter but it isn't until much later in the book that Jim explains that the number 30 signifies the end of a story. It is moments like these that seems that Jim is making Koko's clues fit whatever he believes has happened to

Joy. Just as the word Dog obviously stood for Dan's initials, even though Jim didn't know Dan's middle name, and then it is revealed that the word Dog was written by William as a joke.



Chapter 9-12

Chapter 9-12 Summary

Chapter nine begins with Jim calling an old acquaintance that works for the police and asking if any bodies have recently been dredged from the muddy river behind Maus Haus. The only ones that have come in do not match Joy's description at all. Soon Robert Maus comes to Jim's room and informs Jim that he knows that Jim gave Joy a large sum of money with which to leave Dan. Robert explains that Dan was afraid to come and see Jim himself because Dan is hoping that Jim will be able to get him a large amount of free press about his pottery and the show that will take place. Robert explains that he simply wants to avoid a scandal at the Maus Haus but Jim is angry and storms out. That night Jim goes out to eat a dive called the Petrified Bageal with William. Over dinner William says that it was him that had written the word Dog on the typewriter when he let himself in to feed the cats some left over caviar. William has been doing his own type of detective work and tells Jim what little bit of information he has on Dan, which isn't much. William says that he is going with Robert Maus the next morning early to the farmer's market and invites Jim along. When William and Jim leave the Petrified Bageal William goes to his mother's house and Jim goes back to Maus Haus. Jim steps into the house to find Dan working on the displays that will be in the show. Dan explains that he got a letter from Joy saying that she wants Dan to mail her some of her clothes to Miami. Dan asks Jim to come up the next night for drinks and to look over the art that Dan has been working on and Jim agrees. Back in his room Jim begins talking to Koko about how much Joy had hated Florida.

In chapter ten Jim gets up early to go with Robert and William to the farmers market but William isn't there. Robert explains that it is typical of William to oversleep. Jim goes to look in William's room but finds that William's bed is made and there is no sign of William. Robert and Jim leave without William. Once outside the house Jim sees William's ugly car but Robert isn't concerned saying that William's girlfriend might have driven him. Once back from the farmers market Jim goes to the office where he is assigned to go to Rattlesnake Lake for a cake-baking contest. Jim tries to refuse, wanting to stay close by in case anything involving Joy's disappearance comes up. Jim's boss forces the issue and Jim agrees to go if the paper photographer, Odd Bunsen will come to Maus Haus to shoot pictures of Dan's pottery. Jim's boss agrees to the terms. When Jim arrives back at Maus Haus he explains that he has a short car trip to take but that he hates the thought of taking the trip in the company car since it is a lemon. Rosemary Whiting offers to drive Jim if he doesn't mind the company. Jim is taken aback by the offer but quickly says that her company would be appreciated.

Chapter eleven starts off with Jim and Rosemary in the car on the way to Rattlesnake Lake. Rosemary admits that she wanted to be with Jim in order to talk to him about the disappearance of William. Rosemary felt like William was a friend and she is worried about him even if no one else in the house is. William had stopped in to see Rosemary and told her that he thought he had something on Dan. Rosemary says that she also



had been told by Joy that she hated Florida and Rosemary thinks it odd that Rosemary would write Dan from there. Jim and Rosemary arrive at Rattlesnake Lake and eat then sleep. Jim is able to sleep in but finds when he awakens at noon that they changed the order of events and he missed the contest but is able to take pictures of the winners. Jim and Rosemary head back to Maus Haus and upon arriving Jim is informed that both of his cats have died. Jim knows that it must be poison and vows to kill whoever is responsible.

In chapter twelve Jim is in his apartment smelling the food and sipping the water trying to determine if either has been tainted with a poison. There is a piece of paper in the typewriter with the letters pb on it. The first thing that comes to Jim's mind is poisoned beef. At that moment Jim hears a scratching and finds that Koko and Yum Yum are at his window scratching to get in. Jim confronts the house keeper who explains that she had left the window open for a moment while cleaning when the animals were asleep. The cats got out and she had panicked making up the story of the cats dying in order to save face. Later Jim is approached by William's girlfriend. She tells Jim that William and her had a joint bank account and that she knows William wouldn't have just left without saying something to either her or William's mother. She tells Jim that William said Dan was doing something odd with the kiln and firing all wrong even though Dan was a good kiln operator. Jim tells the girl to keep an eye on the account and to make sure that there are no substantial withdrawals. The girl explains that she and William only have eighteen dollars in their account.

Chapter 9-12 Analysis

Jim was quick to tell William's girlfriend that she needed to keep an eye on her account. The reason he told her this isn't clear. He may have been thinking that if something happened to William then William's account information may have been taken. After the conversation that Jim has with Rosemary and then later Jim's Boss it seems certain that Jim is thinking that something may have happened to William. It may also be that Jim is thinking that there is a possibility that William has left and will try to take the money out of their account. There is no way to verify what Jim was thinking when he said this statement. It is odd that Jim thought to tell William's girlfriend to watch her account but Jim never thinks to keep an eye on his own. There has been a lot of foreshadowing in the story in regards to the money that Jim gave Joy. In the next few chapters what became of the check will be explained and it will urge Jim on in many regards. It will also be here that Jim's familiarity with Joy's unique handwriting will come in very handy.

Rosemary's age is never told. Jim thought she was in her forties roughly but this theory is challenged when she says her sons are both doctors. Jim then thinks that she is an attractive fifties. This is again challenged when Jim learns that she has several grandchildren and the youngest is twelve and one of them is in college. Jim has some small feelings that slowly begin to develop for Rosemary although there is very little time for anything to come of this romance.



William's girlfriend talked about the fire in the kiln that Dan had done all wrong according to William. This is another clue to what happened to Joy. Jim has asked Odd Bunsen to come out and take pictures but Jim in all actuality has no intention of writing any kind of article about Dan or his art. Jim is desperate to get a closer look into Dan's pottery room and Dan's apartment. Despite the fact that Jim is obviously very capable he wants to be sure to get Koko in there. It seems that Koko and Jim's mustache play much the same role and only enforce what Jim already is beginning to understand for himself. It is seen that Koko is often the cat that Jim focuses on. When the two cats go missing Jim scolds himself when they are returned for missing Koko and not thinking as much of Yum Yum. Later in the story Jim will have some of this behavior pointed out to him by Rosemary.



Chapter 13-17

Chapter 13-17 Summary

As chapter thirteen begins Jim is going over all the different things that he knows are going at Maus Haus but can't decide what is connected and knows that there are still a lot of pieces missing. The cats have knocked some of the paintings sideways and when Jim gets up to put the painting back straight he notices something behind the painting. Jim moves the painting and finds there is a peep hole looking down onto the pottery room behind his apartment. Jim immediately begins to wonder what is the purpose of this whole and wonders if William knew about it. The phone rings and Odd is on the phone asking what he needs to bring to the photo shoot for Jim. Jim tells Odd to bring everything that he will explain when Odd gets there. Jim goes down to tell the housekeeper that there will be an extra guest at dinner. She stops Jim and tells him that she saw someone coming down from the stairs by Dan Graham's apartment in the middle of the night carrying a large sack and then she heard it splash in the water. She admits that she couldn't see the face but did hear the splash. Jim thanks her for the information but isn't too quick to believe her remembering how she had made up the story about the cats dying. Odd arrives later that evening and Jim fills him on how he wants Odd to do things so that Jim will have an opportunity to look around. Jim also explains that he wants a chance to get Koko into the apartment as well. That night after dinner they go up to shoot Dan's pottery and Odd suggests they put a pet into the picture with some of the pottery so that it adds to the human interest aspect. Dan doesn't have a pet so Odd says they can use one of Jim's pets.

Chapter fourteen continues with the photo shoot underway. Odd is pretending to shoot pictures without any film in the camera while Koko walks around the room. Koko gets to the basement door and Jim opens it. A foul smell comes up from the basement and Dan explains that the smell is the clay and says that they can't go to the basement because there are rats down there. Koko continues to be focused on the basement. While snooping around Jim finds a phone number and memorizes it. There is also a packet of envelopes that Jim pockets after his lip begins to quiver. Back in his room Jim calls the number and finds that it is an over seas airline. Jim calls a diver and asks that there be a search done where the housekeeper claimed to have seen a bag being dumped. Rosemary stops by Jim's apartment and upon hearing that Dan wouldn't let them in because of rats explains that Maus has exterminators in on a regular basis and there can't be any rats. Jim sits down in front of his typewriter and sees the pb letters from Koko. It suddenly strikes Jim that pb is the symbol for lead.

In chapter fifteen Jim is at the office and has written an article about Robert Maus and his fine culinary cooking. In the article Maus is quoted as saying that an electric oven isn't as good as a stone fireplace. Jim receives a phone call from Maus' firm explaining that one of their largest costumers is a maker of electric ranges and they ask Jim to retract the article. Jim refuses. A short time later Jim gets another phone call from someone warning him not to run the piece in the paper about his dinner at the Golden



Lamb Chop. Whoever it is warns Jim that they will retract their extensive and valuable advertising if he runs the article. Jim calls his boss and explains that mobsters apparently no longer threaten to kill you but to withdraw their advertising. Jim again says that he will not comply and that he will run the article as it is. That evening Jim goes out with Hixie to her Friendly Fatties meeting. Hixie is usually fat and jolly but when they return back to Maus Haus Hixie breaks down crying. She tells Jim all about her desire to get married and the fact that no man wants her. Hixie tells Jim that she was in love with a married man who wanted to leave his wife. The man asked Hixie to go away with him but said he couldn't leave his wife and so Hixie had broken it off. Hixie accidentally lets it slip that it was Dan that she was having an affair with. Jim asks Hixie her age and when he learns she is only twenty four he tells her to just be patient that she is still young. Jim walks Hixie home and when he returns he looks in the peep hole to see what Dan is up to. Jim watches as Dan begins burning all of Joy's clothing.

In chapter sixteen Robert Maus comes to Jim's room and explains that the next door neighbors have been complaining lately about the smoke that is coming from the pottery chimney, William, the houseboy, is gone just as they are giving a party for three hundred for Dan's pottery showing, and because of Jim's article there is a major client that has severed their connections with Maus' law firm. Jim begins to apologize when Robert goes on to say that Charlotte Roop has given a long list of complaints about Jim such as his being in Hixie's room late and Rosemary being in Jim's room. Jim doesn't understand the big deal but Robert begins to describe the law firm that he works for and says that any hint of a scandal will result in Robert being let go from the company. Since Robert is the owner of an art boarding house, he is already in danger of being thrown out. At that moment the phone rings and the bank informs Jim that his bank account is overdrawn and that a check to Joy Graham for \$1,750 had been cashed. Jim stops payment on the check saying that it is a forgery and that the check was made for \$750 and not \$1,750. Jim turns back around but Robert has already left the room. That night the house is filled with people to see Dan's artwork. The art is hideous, as everyone seems to agree, but the glazes that he has put on them are gorgeous and captures everyone's attention. One of the critiques say that the glaze would have been really dazzling on Joy's pieces rather than Dan's. Later Jim discovers that what was found at the bottom of the river was Joy's pottery pieces, not Dan's, with Dan's glaze on them. Jim decides to confront Dan in the hopes that Dan will be forced to give up something and slip up in some way. That night Jim has a drink with Dan and tells Dan he thinks Dan is a liar and explains all the things that have happened that make him think that Dan is lying including the forged check for a thousand dollars more than Jim wrote it for. Dan is quick with his answers and Jim is unable to catch him in a lie. Dan also says that he just cashed the check like Joy asked him to and if anyone changed it, then it was Joy. When Dan leaves Jim is frustrated and feels certain that Dan is lying but knows that he hasn't been able to prove anything.

Chapter seventeen begins with Jim running over everything he knows about Dan, Joy and the events that have occurred since he has been at Maus Haus. Jim realizes that the glaze recipes that Dan has been using were written down in Joy's handwriting in the ledger and that the pieces found in the river prove that Joy had put the glaze on her own pieces before she disappeared. Jim begins going through the Pottery book he got from



the library when he suddenly rushes to see Robert. Jim tells him to get the red glaze that ancient China used to put the bodies of infant babies in the kiln. Jim says that that is where Joy's body has gone. Robert tells Jim to think this over before they make any allegations. Jim goes back to his room knowing he can't sleep and so he takes a medicine to induce sleep. Jim is sleeping soundly when suddenly there is a crash. In the living room the cats had strung yarn through the house and Dan had come in to kill Jim and lay flat on the floor with his head bleeding. The next day Jim is talking with Rosemary and Hixie about what had happened. Jim knows that Dan would have gotten away with killing Joy if he had not killed William. Dan had been unable to put William's body in the kiln because there were pots cooling in there. The police found William's body in the basement. Dan had killed Joy's cat trying out the new glaze recipe and it worked so well he killed Joy and put her body in next. Dan had tried to destroy Joy's pots so that no one would know that she knew about the glaze before Dan. Charlotte Roop comes in and announces that she heard the owners of the Hash House food chain discussing the fact that they had been unsuccessful in their attempts to run Max Sorrel out of business. Charlotte agrees to testify to this fact to help Max out. Just then Koko begins typing on the typewriter and types K-V-R. Jim explains that Koko is ordering caviar.

Chapter 13-17 Analysis

Charlotte has been a firm lady throughout the story and has a strong sense of what is appropriate and what is not. She was very loyal to her employer but in the end it was her upstanding character traits that forced her to turn on the job that she loved. In this way the mystery surrounding Max Sorrel's restaurant, the Golden Lamb Chop, comes to a close.

It is also clear what happened to Joy, her cat and William. There is never an explanation as to what happened to Dan. At the end of chapter seventeen after he breaks into Jim's apartment Dan is found with his head bloodied and he is laying on the floor. However it never explains that he dies or that he is arrested. Regardless of what happens to Dan it is clear that the truth was discovered and if possible then Dan will be punished for what he has done. Through the story Dan shows no remorse or any sign of guilt. He makes jokes about Joy constantly and never even says anything about William that would indicate that Dan had any feeling in any respect about William. William knew something about Dan but never told anyone, thinking he could figure the mystery out himself.

Jim attributes much of the figuring out of the mystery to Koko. In the last chapter of the story it seems that if Koko and Yum Yum hadn't laid the yarn out through the apartment then Jim would have slept through the attack since he had taken medication to help him sleep.

In addition to everything else that happened Robert Maus was let go from his law firm since the murder was associated with Maus Haus. The reader never sees what becomes of Robert Maus but Rosemary and the others in the house seem to be certain

that it is better that Robert is let go from his law firm since Robert's true passion in life is cooking.

Jim and Rosemary seem to be in the beginning stages of a romance. Despite what is shown in the book, including a kiss, there is no statement clarifying what is going on between the two of them. It is certain that Jim cares for Rosemary.



Characters

Jim Qwilleran

Jim is a writer for the Daily Fluxion. It is this newspaper that has Jim reviewing cuisine from gourmet diners. Jim owns two cats that Jim believes are very intelligent, especially Koko. Jim keeps a typewriter out for Koko to type messages on. Jim is very devoted to his two cats, but is divorced and seemingly has no other relationships. When Jim moves into Maus Haus at the beginning of the story his land lady cries which seems to imply a great deal about Jim's character.

When Jim sees his old flame, Joy, it is quickly seen that Jim is willing to do things that might be inappropriate considering that Joy is married. Despite his obvious feelings for Joy it becomes clear to Jim that what he cared for was the old Joy that he remembered and not what Joy had become. Jim often has hunches accompanied by a twitch in his mustache or something that Koko writes on the typewriter, such as the number 30 or pb. While he attributes the solving of many cases to Koko it appears that Jim is typically just talking to himself and the cats serve as an outlet for Jim's monologues.

Jim used to be a newspaper reporter covering crime stories, but often times it will appear that Jim is much more like a cop than a newspaper reporter. Although Jim knows within himself that Joy has been killed, and later that William is dead as well, Jim never calls the police or makes a formal request to the authorities to look into what has happened to either of them. Jim is very self sufficient and doesn't seem to be close to anyone with the exception of the cats. Jim has a friend that he works with but they only talk a couple of times during the story.

Dan Graham

Dan is the main antagonist in the story. Dan is very self absorbed and kills his wife rather than let her leave. It appears that Dan didn't necessarily want his wife to stay, as is shown by the fact that Dan was having a very serious affair with Hixie, but rather wanted Joy's glaze and the fame that would be brought from the pieces. Any time that Dan is talking he is typically quick to explain how wonderful his own art pieces are and how anyone that doesn't speak highly of them is someone who is a moron and doesn't know what they are talking about. When Dan speaks in a room it usually ends all conversation from anyone else that happened to be speaking.

Dan is very cool and causal after Joy's disappearance. This is very disturbing when the fact comes into play that Joy is already dead at this point. Not only did Dan kill Joy but he used the ashes from her body in his kiln to add color to his Living Glaze. Never in the story does Dan show any anxious behavior or seem guilty. He has a seemingly plausible explanation for everything that happens when Jim confronts him. Despite his calm behavior Jim knows that Dan has more going on than is being revealed. Dan also



never seems upset or worried after he kills William and is hiding the body in the basement, but simply doesn't want anyone to go down there.

Robert Maus

Robert Maus is the owner of Maus Haus. Robert is a lawyer but his true passion is for cooking. After there is a scandal of murder at Maus Haus, Robert is let go from his firm. It is said that it is a blessing that Robert is no longer a lawyer so that he can pursue his love of cooking.

Hixie Rice

Hixie is a very jolly girl who is overweight. She is obsessed with the thought of getting married but is unable to get a boyfriend. She later admits in the story that she had an affair with Dan but that he was willing to run away with Hixie but not to get a divorce. For this reason Hixie breaks off her affair with Dan.

William Vitello

William Vitello is a tenant at Maus Haus. William fancies himself a spy of sorts and finds incriminating evidence about Dan Graham. William is murdered by Dan and is left in the basement to rot with a pile of clay. It is William's murder that gets Dan caught since Dan is unable to get rid of William's body the way that he got rid of Joy's.

Joy Graham

Joy Graham, formerly Wheatly, used to be a girlfriend of Jim Qwilleran's. Joy is murdered by her husband because he is jealous of her pottery. Joy's body is put into the kiln and produces a red glaze on Dan's hideous pottery pieces.

Max Sorrel

Max Sorrel is the owner of the Golden Lamb Chop. Someone begins spreading rumors about Max's building and it nearly ruins Max. Max seems to have a strong opinion about everyone that he meets, and claims that he can tell a lot about someone by watching the way that they eat.

Rosemary Whitley

Rosemary is an older woman who looks very good for her age, supposedly due to the fact that she eats a lot of health food. Jim suspects she is much older than she looks when she says something about her children being doctors and having older



grandchildren. It is Rosemary that goes to a bakery contest with Jim that he has to cover for the newspaper. On the way Rosemary explains that she thinks something bad has happened to William.

Charlotte Roop

Charlotte is an older woman that lives in Maus Haus. It is rumored that Charlotte told her boss about the love affair that ended in two suicides many years ago. Charlotte works for the owners of the Hash House and hears them talking about how they had worked so hard to run Max Sorrel out of business.

Basil and Bayley Penniman

Basil and Bayley are the owners of the Hash House chain of restaurants. The Penniman brothers also own the newspaper that is the rival for the Daily Fluxion. It was Basil and Bayley that spread the rumors about the Golden Lamb Chop with the hopes that they could ruin Max Sorrel and take over his location for the Hash House restaurants.



Objects/Places

Koko

Koko is the cat belonging to Jim Qwilleran. Koko is able to type on the typewriter. Jim attributes much of what he is able to figure out to the fact that Koko knows what is going on and is trying to help Jim.

Living Glaze

The Living Glaze is the amazing glaze that Dan is putting on his very ugly pottery pieces. It was Joy that discovered the recipe for the Living Glaze but Dan killed her and tried to pass it off as his own design. In order to get the red Living Glaze Dan burns Joys body in the kiln.

Maus Haus

Maus Haus is the boarding house ran by Robert Maus. It was left to Robert by relatives with the stipulation that the house be used in some respect to help art of some form. Robert Maus decided to make the house into a boarding house for those that are working in the artistic fields, including pottery and the culinary arts.

Daily Fluxion

The Daily Fluxion is the newspaper that Jim Qwilleran works for. Jim writes the culinary reviews for the Daily Fluxion.

The Golden Lamb Chop

The Golden Lamp Chop is the restaurant owned by Max Sorrel. Max is about to go into bankruptcy because there are horrible rumors being spread about the restaurant. Jim eats here and receives a threatening phone call warning him to not run the story about the Golden Lamb Chop.

Hash House

The Hash House is owned by the Penniman brothers. They are not in the same league with the Golden Lamb Chop but they want the location that the Lamb Chop is located on for more of the Hash House chains.



Miami, Florida

Miami is supposedly the place that Joy went to escape Dan, according to Dan. There are several people who doubt this since Joy was often heard saying that she hated Florida. It is also rumored that Joy went to Florida to meet with a lover.

Peep Hole

There is a peep hole that is found under a painting in Jim's room. It is through this hole that William is able to get some incriminating evidence on Dan. It is also through this hole that Jim sees Dan burning Joy's clothes that Dan was supposedly sending to Joy in Florida.

Typewriter

Jim has a typewriter that Koko leaves messages on for Jim. It is on this typewriter that Koko writes 30, pb, and several other messages, all of which Jim takes to be clues to what has happened to Joy. Jim believes for a short period of time that Koko has written dog on the typewriter but it is discovered later that William wrote it on the typewriter while Jim was out as a joke.

Basement

While pretending to take pictures of Dan's artwork Koko begins circling the basement door. There is a foul odor coming from the basement but Dan claims that it is only the clay because it makes a strong smell as it ages. Dan tells them they can't go down to the basement because there are rats there. It is discovered later that it was actually William's body in the basement and that is the reason Dan was dissuading everyone from going down there.

Mustache

Jim has a mustache. Jim says that whenever his mustache twitches that it is certain that whatever hunch he has is certain. When Jim has a hunch that Joy is dead and his mustache twitches he chooses to ignore this hunch. The majority of the other times Jim pays close attention to his mustache.



Themes

The Quest for Truth

The Cat Who Saw Red quickly becomes focused on searching for truth. The main character in the story is a newspaper reporter. While his job is supposed to be focused on the food it becomes clear that Jim Qwilleran's past job as a crime beat reporter is something that Jim hasn't entirely given up. While it is possible that Jim might not have been so eager to get involved if the victim hadn't been Jim's old flame, Joy, it does seem that he enjoys the gathering of clues and the mystery that is involved.

While the quest for truth is an emerging theme in the story there are several mysteries that will not be solved and questions that will be left unanswered. There were two suicides at Maus Haus that happened years before and it was rumored that one of them might have been a murder. Qwilleran does investigate these to a very small degree. However, there is never any conclusive information gathered on the mystery that leads to a concrete answer.

In addition to the suicides that happened years earlier and the disappearance of Joy and William, there is also a mystery surrounding Max Sorrel and who is behind the ruination of his restaurant. It isn't Jim that discovers the answer to this mystery but it is something that Jim takes time to look into and inadvertently gets involved in while doing his column about cuisine.

Instinct

A continued theme that happens throughout the story is Jim's need to trust in his instinct. Often this isn't called instinct but is referred to as Jim's mustache twitching or Koko, the cat, giving a hint. The cat paws at something or hits a key on the typewriter that always leads Jim to an accurate assessment. There are those around Jim that know that his cats help him in solving the mysteries that he begins looking into. No one ever tells him that it is odd that his cats are to be credited with the advancements that Jim is able to make. It may be that since this book is not the first in the series that Jim's acquaintances are used to Jim giving his cats credit for what has happened.

Jim makes connections between what the cats type or 'tell him' that an average person perhaps would not make. Koko gets on the typewriter and types out the number 30 which Jim connects to an old writing term meaning the story has ended. He takes this to mean that the cat knows that Joy is dead. Jim had thought that something had happened to Joy. Jim also says that he needs the mustache because it is the twitching of the mustache that lets him know when something is going on. While Jim refuses to call what he feels an instinct it is clear that he has strong inclinations and that they are often correct.



Love

The theme of love is seen in several different places in the book. The main character in the story, Jim Qwilleran, isn't necessarily looking for love but it is clear that he is open to the aspect of finding someone to date. Jim is quick to look at Rosemary as a possibility of someone to spend time with. It is the other characters in the book that will display a desire for love as a motive for their actions. Joy seems to have had a desire to love her husband but their marriage was falling apart. Because there wasn't any love in their relationship she was ready to divorce Dan.

The suicides that happened at Maus Haus years before were based on the desire for love. The first person found drowned was a young man who had fallen in love. Because he was gone the woman that he had loved also killed herself. While there isn't any definite closure to this story it is suggested that the first suicide victim wasn't an actual suicide but murdered by a man who was also in love with the same woman. All these people were driven by their desire for love.

There is another character in the book, Hixie, who wants badly to be in love. She is so concerned about not finding someone to spend her life with that it seems to control much of what she does. The depth of her despair isn't realized until she confides in Jim after ending her affair with Dan. While the love in the story often is shown in a very negative light it is clear that it is always an ever constant theme.



Style

Point of View

The story is written in third person point of view. The view given is from the main character, Jim Qwilleran. The view in the story is omniscient proven by the fact that Jim is standing on a bathroom scale and is upset because he has gained three pounds despite his diet. Jim doesn't realize that his cat, Koko, is standing on the back of the scale. At the end of the story Jim states that he has lost ten pounds, and there is a notation about him being unaware that three of those ten pounds came from Koko.

The view in the story never comes from another character other than Jim, but he is a reporter and often finds ways to interview other characters in the story. Through this method there is a lot of background and personal information given on the rest of the characters seen in the story. Jim will also do research on the others in the story. The story consists of large portions of dialog along with many descriptive passages throughout the story. Jim will often be in his apartment talking to his cats in order to figure out what is going on. This is more or less inner dialog since there is no one else around for Jim to talk to. It is seen later in the story that Jim will be doing this even when he thinks that the cats are gone. These moments will relate a lot of information to the reader that otherwise might not be known.

Setting

The story takes place in what could be called real place and real time although Maus Haus, and the characters in the story are all fictional. The setting often doesn't need much explaining since it is easy for the reader to understand the concepts of a muddy river and a newspaper office. The main settings in the story are Maus Haus, and the muddy waters that are behind it, and Jim's office although Jim doesn't go there much. There are several places that Jim and the other characters will go to but they will only be there for a moment and sometimes these places are not described in much detail.

The most descriptive setting in the book is that of Maus Haus. This may be in part due to the fact that Jim lives here and the murders occur in this setting. It also may be attributed to the fact that it is a very unique place and it is hard to understand what the boarding house looks like since it serves so many other purposes. The author clearly wanted to convey the character that the house had. This may also be the reason that the murders that happened there so long ago are mentioned more than once in the story.

Jim sees Maus Haus for the first time after going there for a dinner and is able to move in quickly. Because he is new to Maus Haus and is taking in all the sights as a newcomer it gives the reader information that might otherwise might not be explained since Jim is in awe of the building.



Language and Meaning

The language in the story is very informal and easy to understand. There are many of the characters in the story that talk differently than the other characters. This change in grammar and speech will indicate a character's personality traits. Robert Maus often pauses before he speaks and Dan Graham typically uses old clichés while he is talking and ends his phrases asking if the people he is talking to know what he means. There is a lot of dialog in the story and often times the author will identify the two people talking but then there won't be a dialog tag to go with the vast majority of the conversation. For this reason it will be important to pay attention to who is talking and not when the conversation switches from person to person so that it will be known who is speaking.

There will be points in the story when large pieces of time are gone. This will be easy to identify and the author uses several different ways to convey a lapse in time. Often it will be at the end of a chapter to the beginning of the next where time disappears but it is also seen that in the story there will be a time switch, such as when Dan comes in to attack Jim. As soon as Jim wakes up there is a switch to later that day when Jim is explaining what went on. The situation between Dan and Jim is only described by Jim and is not actually seen by the reader.

Structure

The Cat Who Saw Red by Lilian Jackson Braun consists of one hundred and eighty three pages and is divided into seventeen chapters. The chapters vary in length and the author ends the chapters at the end of events or scenes rather than with the number of pages that the chapter holds. Often it is seen that a chapter will end with Jim having a revelation, often due to Koko typing an enlightening message on the typewriter.

This book is the third in the series and so there is a lot of character development that has happened before this book begins. Despite this there is no lack of understanding of what the characters are going through and the plot is easily understood. It is also seen that there are some things that are clearly left open that would be easily put into the next novel if the author so decided, such as Jim's growing relationship with Rosemary.

The main plot in the book is obviously the murder of Joy. While this takes up much of the book's focus it also is clear that there are other subplots that add to the story such as Max Sorrel's restaurant's ruination, the murder suicides that happened at Maus Haus years earlier, and several smaller more personal stories of the major and minor characters, including Jim's growing relationship with Rosemary. While many of the plots are found to come to an end there is a lot left open in the story.



Quotes

"Finally she said, 'I had a cat, but he disappeared a couple of weeks ago.'" Chapter 3: Page 30

"An artist was drowned- a long time ago- and some people thought it was a murder." Chapter 4: Page 36

"Qwilleran had no idea at what hour he fell asleep-or how long he had slept when he was startled awake by a scream." Chapter 4: Page 43

"Qwilleran's hunches were usually accompanied by a prickling sensation on the upper lip, and when this happened he was never wrong." Chapter 6: Page 59

"Qwilleran returned to Maus Haus on the River Road bus, pondering the pieces of the puzzles: two missing persons, a drowned child, a slandered, restaurateur, a lost cat, a black eye, a scream in the night." Chapter 13: Page 134

"Koko, wearing his blue harness and leading Qwilleran on the twelve-foot leach, entered the pottery with the confidence of the one who had been there before" Chapter 14: Page 142

"Whereas, the tennis club, our immediate neighbor to the west, has made a formal complaint about the issue of smoke from our chimneys." Chapter 16: Page 161

"If only they had put his glaze on her pots: I'm going to suggest that in my review." Chapter 16: Page 164

"The confrontation had settled none of his doubts. Either he was on the wrong track entirely, or Dan was a fast-talking con man." Chapter 16: Page 175

"Two artists had drowned there long ago, more recently as small child, and now perhaps Joy, perhaps William." Chapter 17: Page 176

"In ancient China they used to throw the bodies of unwanted babies into the pottery kilns." Chapter 17: Page 179

"He was wearing his new suit for the first time, planning to take Rosemary to the Golden Lamb Chop, and the scale indicated he was ten pounds lighter. He also felt ten years younger." Chapter 17: Page 181

"If Dan had committed only one murder, he could have risen to fame with Joy's glazes. But when he spiked William's drink with lead oxide, he was in trouble." Chapter 17: Page 181



Topics for Discussion

Discuss the reasons that Dan was willing to kill Joy. Would Dan have let Joy go if she hadn't had the secret to the glaze figured out? Is there any indication that Dan loved Joy?

Later in the story Jim admits that it was the old Joy that he had been thinking of and not the way she was just before she had been killed. What appears to be the differences in Joy between her younger and older stages? What appears to be similar? What does it reveal about Jim that he is able to realize that she wasn't the same girl he had cared for?

Hixie is very anxious to get married. Is it understandable that Hixie is desperate to find a husband? Explain. Is it possible that Dan really cared about Hixie? Explain.

What role does Koko and Yum Yum play for Jim? Is it possible that Jim would have figured out what happened to Joy without the help of the cats? Explain. How would the story have been different without the cats?

Discuss motive. What is Dan's motive for killing his wife? How does this compare to the motive that Dan had for killing William and Joy's cat and the attempted murder of Jim? Explain your answers.

What reason does Jim have for moving into Maus Haus? Would Jim have moved in there without Joy's presence? Is there any indication as to whether Jim will stay now that Joy's murder has been put to rest?

Which of the characters in Maus Haus have the most influence or give the most help to Jim in his investigation into what has happened to Joy? Which characters give the most hindrance? Explain your answer.