



## ***Batcat and the Seven Squirrels***

Eric Walters

Illustrated by Kasia Charko

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### **About the Book**

*Batcat and the Seven Squirrels* is a story about a boy and his family finding and raising seven abandoned baby squirrels.

Nathan has always loved animals and longs for a pet. When a baby squirrel shows up at Nathan's door, he wonders what could have happened to its mother. It isn't long before his family discovers six more orphaned baby squirrels in need of food and shelter. With help from Batcat, a neighborhood cat who is fed by many but owned by no one, Nathan learns to care for the squirrels. But all babies must leave the nest eventually. Will Nathan finally find a pet to call his own?

### **About the Author**

**Eric Walters** began writing for his class to entice them to become more enthusiastic readers and writers. He has now written over 100 books which have been translated into thirteen languages and have won over 125 awards. In 2014 he received the Order of Canada. He is the co-founder of a children's program in Kenya ([www.creationofhope.com](http://www.creationofhope.com)).

### **About the Writing**

When Eric was eight years old, he and his father found a starving baby squirrel at their back door. They eventually found seven squirrels, abandoned and orphaned when their mother was killed by a car. Helped by their beaten-up old tomcat named Batcat, they raised the litter until the squirrels were able to be independent. This story, as you can imagine, is near and dear to Eric's heart.

**Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections***Prereading Ideas*

- Owning a pet is a big responsibility. What are some things you and your family would have to consider when deciding whether or not to get a pet?
- What are some reasons people choose not to have pets? What are some reasons people choose to have pets?
- Why is a pet squirrel an unusual pet?
- What is domestication? Why are some animals domesticated and others aren't?

*Classroom Discussion Questions*

1. Nathan's parents allow him to bring a wild animal into their house. Why did they do this? What are some reasons why this wouldn't be a good idea? Do the family's reasons for bringing the squirrels in outweigh the reasons not to?
2. Where do you think Batcat came from? Lots of animals live on the street with no homes or owners, what kind of problems does this cause for the animals and the community they live in?
3. Nathan and his family let Batcat come in and live with them. Do they own Batcat now? What responsibilities are they assuming for Batcat by letting him into their home?

*Suggested Activities*

- Make a pros and cons list for pet ownership. Have the class take sides and debate the merits of pet ownership.
- It's natural for people to want to help animals that have been injured or abandoned in the wild; baby squirrels, injured birds, stray kittens. Do some research on the Humane Society ([www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org)) website to learn what they recommend you do if you find an abandoned or injured animal.
- Research the steps of responsible pet ownership. What do you need to do when you are deciding on a pet for your family? What do you need to do once you have this pet?

**Websites of Interest**

Humane Society: [www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org)

**Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers**

*Prince for a Princess*

*Saving Sammy*

*Sky Above*

**Reviews**

“Both endearing and instructive...a high-interest story with a gentle message that is sure to appeal.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

*Saving Sammy*

“Young readers will be captivated with this adventure based on a true story. Not only does the book teach children what to do with a baby beaver that is found in one’s backyard, it also serves as a great introduction to animal shelters and wildlife conservation.”

—*Library Media Connection*

“Morgan and her family, with their two dogs, are engaging, and their willingness to care for a small wild animal and make sure it has a safe future sets a good example for young readers. The story can also serve to introduce interactions with wild animals for children who live in larger urban centres and may not encounter wildlife regularly. Well-written, with a variety of vocabulary suited to the reading level.” —*Resource Links*