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## The owl and the pussy-cat

*Edward Lear*

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**Edward Lear : The owl and the pussy-cat** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The owl and the pussy-cat:

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Edward Lear's classic poem, The Owl and the Pussy-cat, beautifully illustrated by Charlotte Voake and introduced with a foreword by Julia Donaldson The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea In a beautiful pea-green boat... Edward Lear's classic poem has delighted readers of all ages for generations. It is given new life by Charlotte Voake's exquisite illustrations in this beautiful new edition. Introduced by a foreword from world-renowned children's author and Lear devotee, Julia Donaldson, this is a book to be treasured by Lear fans both old and young. Be sure to look out for Julia Donaldson's sequel to this much-loved poem, The Further Adventures of the Owl and the Pussy-cat.

From Publishers Weekly This version of Lear's popular poem is distinguished by its very Victorian but unfussy illustrations, which focus not only on the familiar lovestruck pair, but on their very model of a Grand Tour. After festively boarding a luxurious "pea-green" boat decorated with gilded carvings, the couple--together with assorted animal families--ride gondolas, sail past the Statue of Liberty and land on a tropical island where passengers and crew celebrate their nuptials. In Todd's masterful renditions, these elegant, genteel settings and costumes are almost photographic in their clarity. Models of propriety abound: sumptuous teas are served, and guests gather for a shipboard musicale where the owl "sang to a small guitar." The dapper creature is resplendent in a plaid deerstalker cap and (later) in tails with blue spats, while his perfectly beguiling mate dazzles with her lace bustles and parasols. Detailed without being cluttered, the illustrations are inventive without stretching the text too far in this perfectly satisfying variation on an old favorite. All ages. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal PreSchool-Grade 2 There are plenty of clever, humorous details in Galdone's bright watercolor illustrations, but on a whole, this book fails to live up to earlier Galdone classics. In this version, the two animals' pea green boat is the "HMS Nonsense," and the bong-tree is a tree hanging with sounding bongos. These details will attract children, as will the careful matching of picture to text, but overall the use of color is too intense. The usual subtlety evident in Galdone's illustrations is missing here; each part of the double-page spreads begs for equal attention, and the pussycat looks near-drunk on most pages. Humorous, creative touches including the self portrait on the back flap of the jacket still make this book worth consideration, but Hilary Knight's charming version (Macmillan, 1983) or Cauley's romantic interpretation (Putnam, 1986) would be superior choices. Barbara S. McGinn, Oak Hill Elementary School, Severna Park, Md. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Ages 2<sup>+</sup>-6. Illustrating Lear's classic poem with simplicity and good humor, Beck provides a series of rather literal interpretations of the familiar lines, exactly what preschoolers need to understand what's going on in the verses. Crosshatched ink drawings are brightened with watercolor washes in the full-page and double-page pictures. Glancing at the six or eight picture-book versions of the poem in their collections, some librarians may wonder if they need yet another. Perhaps not, and yet the large scale and the innocent air of Beck's artwork make this edition more accessible to younger children than some other versions. A charmer. Carolyn Phelan