

## ABOUT

### *the Author*

**E**ILEEN SPINELLI is the author of over thirty-five picture books and novels, including *Something to Tell the Grandcows* (Eerdmans) and *When Mama Comes Home Tonight* (Simon & Schuster). Her book *Now It Is Winter* (Eerdmans) was named a Bank Street College Best Children's Book. Eileen lives in Pennsylvania. Visit her website at [www.eileenspinelli.com](http://www.eileenspinelli.com).

## ABOUT

### *the Illustrator*

**G**ERALDO VALÉRIO was born in Brazil and has created art for many children's books, including *The Hungry Ghosts* by Julius Lester (Penguin). He has collaborated with Eileen Spinelli on *When You Are Happy* and *Do You Have a Hat?* (both from Simon & Schuster). Geraldo lives in Toronto. Visit his website at [www.geraldovalerio.com](http://www.geraldovalerio.com).

## PRaise FOR

### *Do You Have a Cat?*

"Delightful, whimsical paintings contribute to this joyous portrait of pet ownership. The historical figures are as diverse as their feline companions, from Domenico Scarlatti to Florence Nightingale to Cleopatra with cats who are depicted as musicians, healers, and muses."

— *School Library Journal*

## DO YOU HAVE A CAT?

Written by Eileen Spinelli

Illustrated by Geraldo Valério

Hardcover ISBN: 978-0-8028-5351-6 ❖ \$15.99

10" x 10" ❖ 26 pages ❖ Ages 4–8

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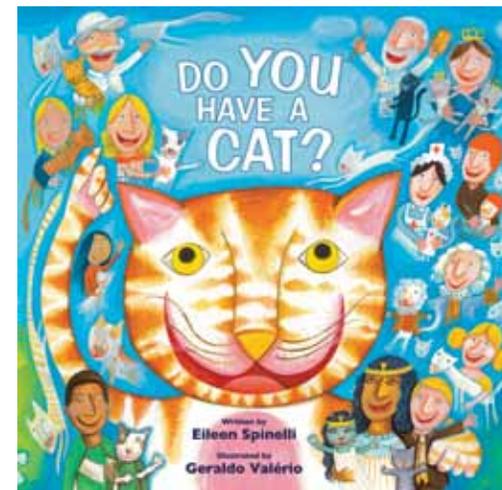
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## DO YOU HAVE A CAT?

Written by Eileen Spinelli

Illustrated by Geraldo Valério



*Do you have a cat?*

*A tabby cat? A Siamese?*

*A dainty cat? Or one with fleas?*

*Or maybe one who was a stray  
and living in an alleyway?*

*Do YOU have a cat?*

## THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

- ❖ Pets
- ❖ Companionship
- ❖ Historical figures

## VOCABULARY

Look up the following terms in a reference book: aggravation, stray (noun), tomcat, devoted, companion, enchanted, precise, sacred, caterwaul.



## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE READING THE BOOK

1. Read the title of the book and look at the illustrations on the front and back covers. What kinds of people do you see? What do you notice about the cats? What do you think this book will be about?

2. Think about a pet you have or wish you could have. What kind of animal is it? What do you and this pet do together? Why do you think many people like having pets?

3. Open the book and look at the inside front cover. Read about Henri Matisse, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Albert Schweitzer, and their cats. Do these stories remind you of another story you've heard about an animal? Share your story with a friend or family member.

4. Read about cats in a children's encyclopedia. What interesting facts can you learn? For example, how much sleep do cats need every day? How good are cats' senses of sight and sound?

## QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON AFTER READING THE BOOK

1. St. Martin de Porres brought sick cats home and cared for them. Today, many people adopt cats from animal shelters, or places for animals that have no owners. Why is it important to help these animals?

2. Domenico Scarlatti's cat is described as "curious." What does "curious" mean? Have you heard the expression "curiosity killed the cat"? Talk with an adult about what this expression means. Do you agree with it?

3. Florence Nightingale felt that cats "made good companions for / people feeling sick or sore." Why might pets — especially cats — be good friends for those who are sick? What qualities do they have that might help people feel better?

4. The cats in this book are all very different, but they are all good companions, or friends, for their owners. How about the owners? How can cat owners be good companions for their cats? What can they do to make their cats comfortable and happy?

5. The writer ends each poem with a question: "Do YOU have a cat?" Why do you think she repeats this line? How does it help you connect with the book?

## ACTIVITIES

1. The illustrator painted some of the cats so they look like their owners. For example, Florence Nightingale's cats are wearing nurses' caps, and Calvin Coolidge's cat is holding an American flag. Draw a picture of a pet you have or would like to have. Make the pet look like you. What would your pet wear, hold, or do?

2. Who else do you know who has a pet? It could be someone famous, a family member, or a friend. Perhaps your aunt has a parakeet or your friend has a guinea pig. Write a poem about this person and his or her pet. Make your poem five lines long, like the poems in the book. Try to make the lines rhyme.

3. Which historical figure in the book did you find most interesting? With an adult, do some research to learn more about this person. Then make a poster about him or her. Include a list of interesting facts. Also include pictures that you draw by hand, download from websites, or photocopy from books.

4. Choose one of the poems in the book and write a short story based on it. For example, St. Martin de Porres had many cats that he "took in," or rescued. Write a short story about one cat he rescued. Where did he find the cat? How did the cat act when St. Martin took him home? How did he or she get along with the other cats?