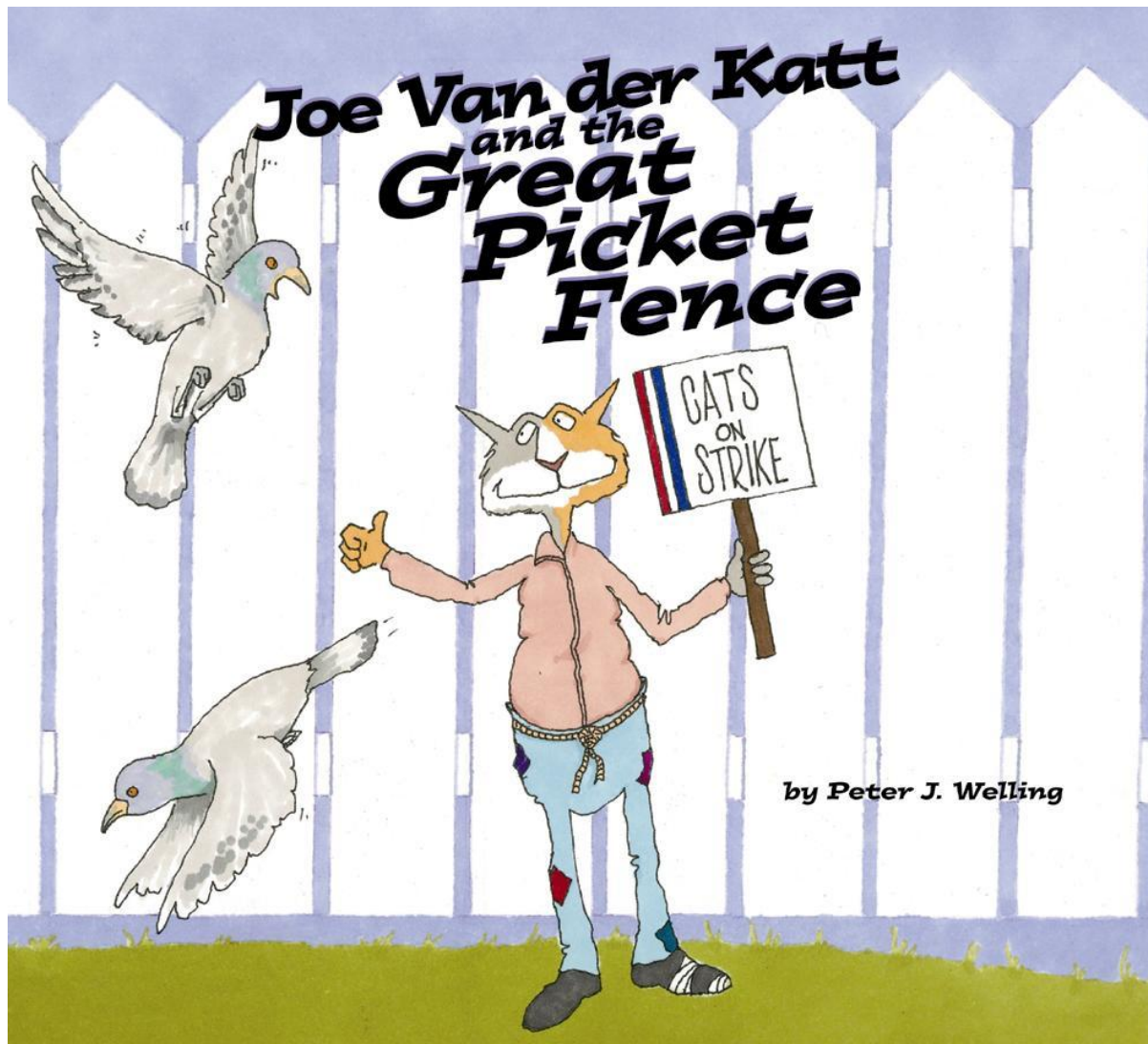


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## Study Guide for



Guide created by Peter J. Welling  
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## An Introduction to *Joe Van Der Katt and the Great Picket Fence*

Written and Illustrated by Peter J. Welling

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***Joe Van Der Katt and the Great Picket Fence*** focuses on the labor movement in the United States. It also focuses on cats (with lots of word play) and things pertaining to the Netherlands. And as with all of my books, characters from previous stories appear. Also, in each of my books, a specific character appears on every page--sort of a *Where's Waldo* type of thing. In ***Joe Van Der Katt***, Froggie is the ever-appearing character.

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### History, humor, and stuff in the pictures

After all, a picture book is more than just words.

Pg 5. The town's name is a comment on the factory towns that were prevalent back in the day. The coach driver is swinging a **cat** o' nine tails.

Pg 6. The train is the F E Line...(feline). There is a picture of Andrew McGroundhog's shadow in Wobbly and Gomper's box. Wobbly was a nickname for members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and Samuel Gompers helped found the American Federation of Labor (AFL). High overhead, the redbird from Shawn O'Hisser is frightened by a cat on the **catwalk**.

Pg 7. In the background, Shawn O'Hisser spots a cat burglar. J. Paul Kitty is a play on J. Paul Getty, the rich oil baron.

Pg 8. Stickers on the crates include Cheshire Cat and **Katmandu**.

Pg 9. The sign on the bananas is the punch line from a knock-knock joke kids like to tell. (Knock-knock. Who's there? Banana. Banana Who? Knock-knock. Who's there? Banana...and the child repeats the joke numerous times until, sensing adult frustration, he or she says: Knock-knock. Who's there? Orange. Orange who? Orange you glad I didn't say banana?)

Pg 10. **Catechism** on the table.

Pg 14. Check around here and elsewhere for Dutch words, such as the painting of the cow (koe) or the bowl of apples (appel).

Pg 15. J. Paul Kitty is making a list dividing things into categories. In the background Justin Potemkin is washing windows.

Pg 16. Painting of a **cataract** being dusted by Michael Le Soufflé.

Pg 21. Deb's Diner. Eugene Debs was also one of the founders of IWW, thus the IWW sign on the wall. Specials of the house: Cat bird, Fish, Blue Saucer Special. A direction sign for the cat's bathroom reads Litter Box.

Pg 23. Tongue in cheek sign in an all cat world: No Barking (posted on a tree nonetheless.)

Pg 25. Wooden shoes (Klompen). Groningen Tarts used to be Groningen Pies but pie in Dutch doesn't mean the same as it does in English. (Groningen, in the north of the Netherlands, is where my maternal grandparents came from.) And the street is Pamplona, as in the running of the bullies...er, bulls.

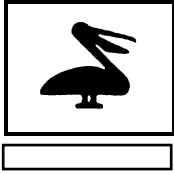
Pg 26. Combining two of the signs will give you AFL-CIO.

Pg 28. Subtle but Mr. Tiger is eating a hamburger...and now we know where the bully boys went.

Pg 30. The signs on the wall of Debs Diner have changed now to reflect the recent influx of beef in many forms.



Did you remember to find Froggie on every page? If not, look again!



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## ***JOE VAN DER KATT AND THE GREAT PICKET FENCE*** Written and Illustrated by Peter J. Welling

“Filled with visual puns, the cartoon illustrations depict felines of many socioeconomic backgrounds.”

--*School Library Journal*

“A fun story filled with puns, jokes, and colorful drawings.”

--*Midwest Book Review*

Filled with clever wordplay, sight gags, Dutch words, and dozens of hidden pictures that will keep readers coming back for repeated readings, this is the story of the legendary labor leader, Joe Van der Katt. You may not have heard of Joe because he is best known for improving the plight of blue-collar working *cats* all over the world.

Joe Van der Katt and the other cats from the poor section of Litterbox work for pennies a day in the Cat's Cradle Company for J. Paul Kitty, one of the Fat Cats who lives on the nice side of town. After not getting paid what they're due, the cats grow tired of Mr. Kitty's wrongdoings and go on strike, giving new meaning to a "picket line" in this hilarious fable about Labor Day.

“Fat Cat Kitty cheats Joe Van der Katt and his other employees when Joe asks for a pay raise... Joe and the proletarian cats go on strike, and ... but no, no, no! ...it wouldn't be kosher of me to give away how the plot thickens.” - - John Goodspeed, *Maryland Star - Democrat*

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Peter J. Welling teaches writing and illustration courses for Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis's Continuing Education Program. He is a father of four and grandfather of three. Mr. Welling was selected as a Distinguished Alumnus for the Liberal Arts and Sciences Division in 2003 by Indiana University at South Bend and is an active member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators.

Each of Mr. Welling's books tell a simple story of both popular and lesser-known holidays and events. *Andrew McGroundhog and His Shady Shadow* (\$15.95) explains how Groundhog Day came to be through a Scottish groundhog. *Shawn O'Hisser, the Last Snake in Ireland* (\$15.95) is a legend of St. Patrick's Day. *Michael Le Soufflé and the April Fool* (\$15.95) offers an inventive explanation for April Fools' Day, involving a French rooster. *Justin Potemkin and the 500-Mile Race* (\$15.95) tells about America's most popular auto race through the eyes of a Russian hare.

### **JOE VAN DER KATT AND THE GREAT PICKET FENCE**

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32 pp. 9 x 8½ 31 color illus.

Ages 5 and up Dutch glossary

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