

Escape, entertainment for younger fans of sci-fi

Star Ka'ats And The Winged Warriors

By Andre Norton and Dorothy Madlee
Walker & Company, \$8.95

By IRIS COMFORT

Special to the Sentinel Star

The Star Ka'at series, co-authored by Andre Norton of Winter Park and the late Dorothy Madlee of the *Sentinel Star*, has consistently garnered an enviable collection of kudos, ranging from Publishers Weekly to School District evaluators across the country. "Star Ka'at," the first book of the science fiction series for young readers, was nominated for the prestigious Omar's Book Award in 1981-82.

"Star Ka'ats and the Winged Warriors," the fourth and final of the series, illustrates vividly why the series has become so popular with the adults who buy

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books for children as well as the children who read them.

With us again (from "Star Ka'at") are Jim Evans and Elly Mae Brown, the two resourceful children adopted and rescued from an impending doomsday on earth by their furry friends, a race of intelligent Ka'at space travelers. Also reappearing are the beguiling Ka'ats, Tiro and Mer, who have taken the children by spaceship to Zimmorra, the Ka'at's special world, and sponsored them.

This time the story concerns not only the children and Tiro and Mer, but a terrific macho, unregenerate rescued earth cat named Botos; plus some of the other rescued earth cats who can't quite make the adjustment to the orderly civilized Ka'at world. In the world of Zimmorra, all work is done by machines and robots, while hunting — even of mice — is forbidden.

Just about the time that Boots has moused his way to the edge of bad trouble, the Ka'at Council meets and considers a challenging project. With their largest star ship repaired, a Ka'at expedition

can now be assembled to check on the welfare of a colony of ka'ats which had settled on another world in time long past. Fighter Boots volunteers for the journey as do others of the discontented earth cats. Elly Mae and Jim offer useful talents, too — their hands, which can grasp and hold tools, and their inventive minds.

Every bit of courage and fighting talent is needed when the expedition reaches its destination, a planet where they encounter hostile life forms of monstrous size.

How the landing party deals with a life and death predicament makes for an enthralling space tale, and the characters make a reader care what happens to them in their search for peace and harmony and personal purpose in life.

Artist Jean Jenkins, illustrator of the last three books in the series, has produced excitingly imaginative interpretations of the text.

Bucking a market loaded with downbeat, depressing "problem" books for children, "Star Ka'ats and the Winged Warriors" serves a contrast of welcome escape and entertainment.