The Blue Cat Club
by Bernard Smith

About Easystarts
Easystarts are Penguin Readers written to the lowest level in the Penguin Readers series. They are specially written originals, using 200 headwords and the simplest grammatical structures.

There are more than twenty titles to choose from across a range of styles and subject matter. All titles are in full colour, with carefully selected photos and/or artwork which helps to guide early learners of English. There is one page of activities at the back of each book.

Penguin Readers Easystarts provide pleasurable reading for all tastes at an appropriate level of difficulty.

Summary
The Blue Cat Club is a funny, romantic story about a fashionable young couple, James and Chantal. One evening they drive to nearby Cannes, in the south of France, and spend a memorable evening at the Blue Cat Club.

Merlin, the ‘Man of Magic’, is a good magician. Everyone is laughing and enjoying the show. But when Merlin comes to James and Chantal’s table, James is not happy. He thinks Merlin is too friendly with Chantal.

Merlin is going to do a trick with a big box and five long swords. He chooses Chantal as a volunteer but James says ‘no’. Chantal persuades James to volunteer instead.

On the stage James walks into the big box and Merlin closes the door. Next, Merlin pushes the swords through the box. But when he pushes the last sword through there is a terrible noise from inside the box, ‘Aaaaaagh!' Is James hurt?

Merlin quickly opens the door. James’s eyes are closed and his shirt is red! But then James walks out, smiling and holding up a tomato juice bottle! He has played a trick on Merlin. Chantal smiles at James and assures him that he will always be her ‘Mr Magic’.

Communicative activities
The following teacher-led activities cover the same sections of text as the exercises at the back of the reader.

BEFORE YOU READ
1. Students look at the front cover of the book. Ask them questions about the book based on the cover illustration:
   a. Where is this?
   b. Who are the man and woman sitting at the table?
   c. Who is the man in black? What is he doing?
2. Ask students if they like magic. Do they know any famous magicians? Do they watch magic shows? Can anyone do any tricks? (If you have time, or as a follow-up activity, students can show their tricks to the class. Then other students can try to guess how the trick was done.)

AFTER YOU READ
1. Students look closely at the illustrations on the following pages. What are these characters thinking in each picture?
   a. James – page 5
   b. Chantal – page 5
   c. Merlin – page 12
   d. James – page 14
   e. Merlin – page 14
   f. Chantal – page 15
2. Who do you like best, James, Chantal or Merlin? Why?

Extra words
There are twenty extra words, in addition to the 200 headwords, used in each Easystart title. The extra words used in this title are highlighted in question 1 at the back of the reader for teacher and students. They are:

- box
- cabaret
- cat
- club
- egg
- end
- front
- hole
- laugh
- magic
- necklace
- push
- shoulder
- stage
- sword
- tomato juice
- touch
- volunteer
- wallet
- watch (n)
ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK
Look at the picture on page 1. Where is this place? Who are the people? Write three or four short sentences about the picture.

ACTIVITIES WHILE READING THE BOOK
Pages 1–3
1 Write the correct word in the sentences below:
cabaret cat club front magic tomato juice
(a) My mother has a ________. His name is Tommy.
(b) I sit at the ________ of the class.
(c) The man is standing on water! It’s ________!
(d) I like eating tomatoes but I don’t like ________.
(e) You can dance at the ________ every night. On Saturday night there is also a ________.

2 Write questions for these answers using ‘where’:
(a) In a small town near Cannes.
(b) In France.
(c) In their garden.
(d) To the Blue Cat Club.
(e) In a big street near the sea.
(f) At the front.

Pages 4–7
1 Write the correct words in the sentences below:
egg laugh necklace shoulder touch wallet (n)
(a) I put my money in my ________.
(b) Do not ________, the animals!
(c) I eat an ________, and some bread for breakfast every day.
(d) The girl is wearing a long dress and a beautiful ________.
(e) The baby sits on his father’s ________.
(f) What is the time? Look at your ________!
(g) Merlin does magic and people ________.

2 Answer the questions.
(a) What does Merlin do?
(b) Is Merlin friendly?
(c) Does Chantal like Merlin?
(d) Does James like Merlin?
(e) What does Merlin take from James?
(f) Do you like Merlin?

Pages 8–11
1 Write the correct words in the sentences below:
box end hole push stage sword volunteer
(a) There is a ________ in my coat. I can’t wear it.
(b) I ________, and the door opens.
(c) Your hand is at the ________ of your arm.
(d) Merlin has five ________s, and one ________ on the ________.
(e) Merlin needs a ________. He asks Chantal.

2 Read the sentences below. Put them in the right order, from 1 to 10.
(a) Merlin takes the five swords quickly from the box.
(b) Merlin looks at Chantal with a smile.
(c) The people in the room look at James.
(d) Two men bring a big, heavy box on to the stage.
(e) Merlin closes the door.
(f) Merlin opens the door of the box.
(g) James gets into the big box.
(h) James says ‘Not her, thank you.’
(i) Merlin pushes the swords into the box.
(j) James stands up quickly.

Pages 12–15
1 Are the sentences right or wrong?
(a) Merlin pushes the sword into James.
(b) James is having a little game.
(c) James’s shirt has tomato juice on it.
(d) James is not OK.
(e) People at the tables are laughing at James.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK
1 Look at the pictures in the book. Do not read the words. Use the pictures and make the story again.

2 Work in pairs:
Student A: You are Chantal. You want to go to a club and you want to see some magic. Talk to James. Does he want to see magic? What does he want to do? Why do you want to see magic? What do you like?
Student B: You are James. You want to go to the cinema. You want to see a film. Talk to Chantal. Does she want to see a film? What does she want to do?