

# Cam Jansen

## and the Mystery Writer Mystery

by **David A. Adler**

illustrated by  
**Joy Allen**

PUFFIN BOOKS



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## Click! Can Cam find a missing car?

“What about my car?” Danny’s father asked again.

“I solved that mystery,” Jim E. Winter said as he walked into room 17. “I know what happened to your car. Now I have to sign more books.”

Jim E. Winter took a hanger from the coatrack. He took off his raincoat and hat and hung them up. Then he turned and faced Danny’s father.

“Your car was stolen,” Jim E. Winter said. “That’s what happened to it. Now you must call the police. And I have to sign more books.”

Jim E. Winter quickly left the room.

“Hey,” Mr. Pace said. “He didn’t solve this mystery. If he did, I would have my car.”

Danny turned to Cam. “Now it’s up to you,” he said. “It’s up to you to find my dad’s car.”







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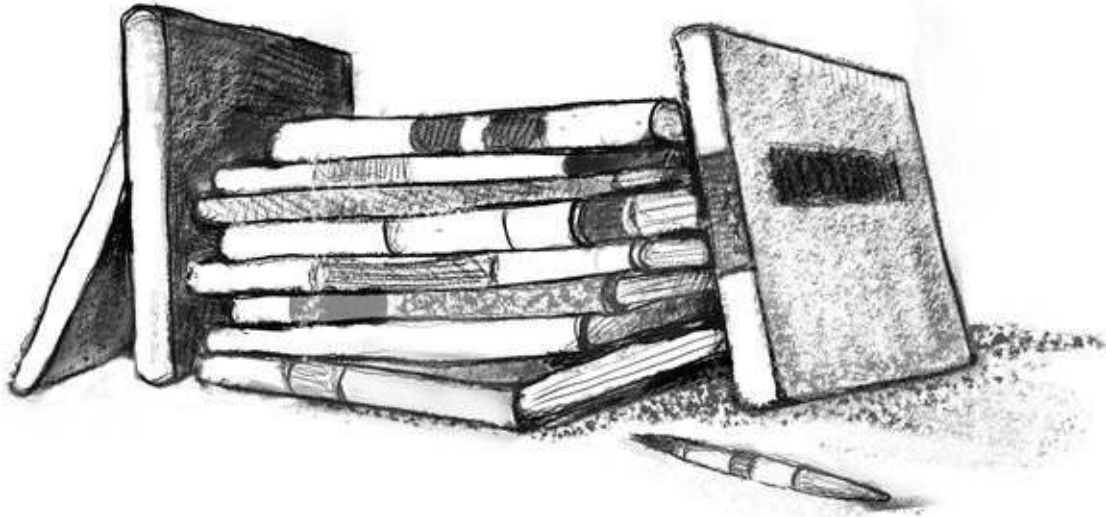
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For Tzvi Lewisohn, my neighbor with the great story ideas

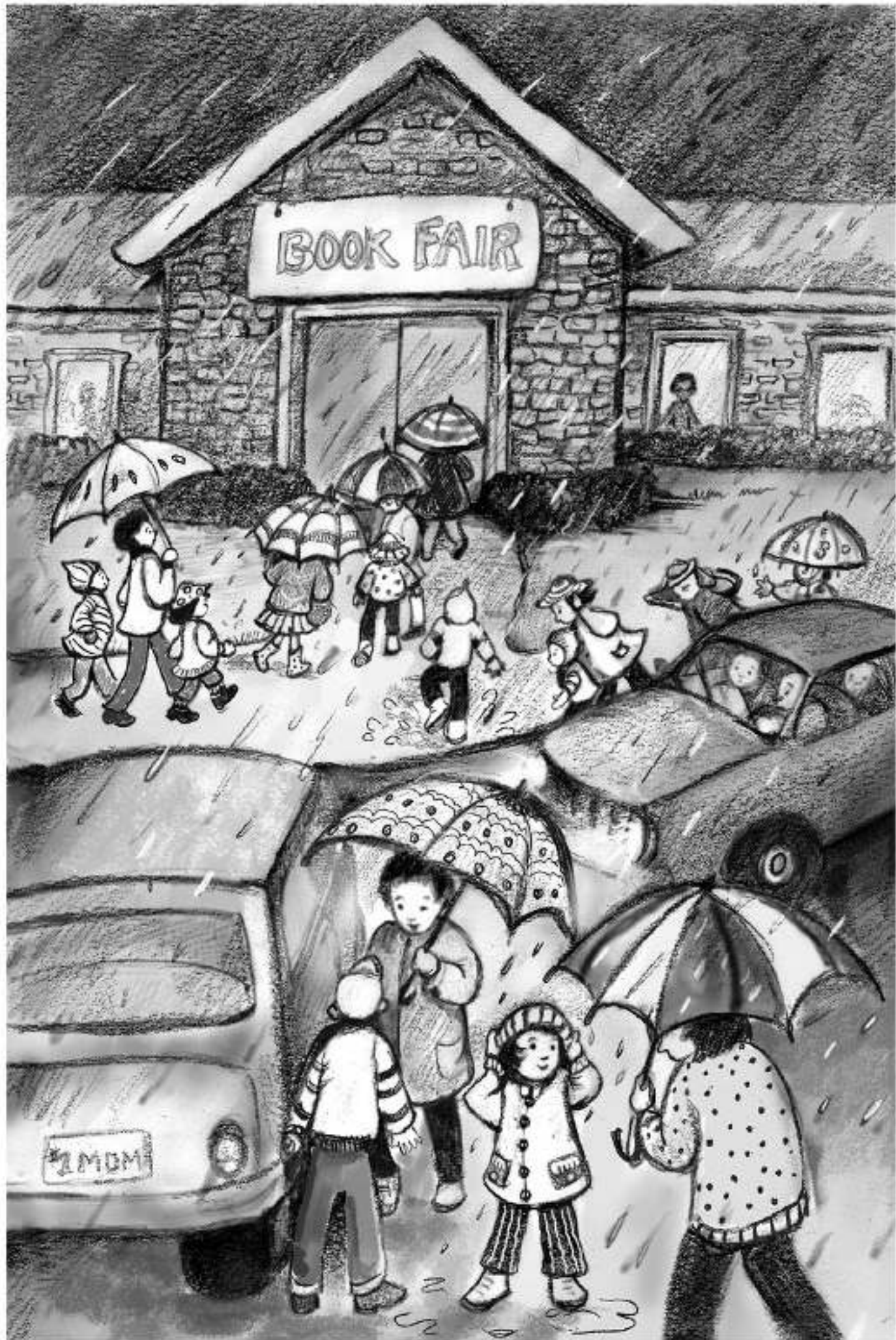
—D.A.

To my grandson Curt, a great reader and friend, who takes me on many adventurous trails and  
mysteries

—J.A.











## Chapter One

“‘I can solve it!’ Barry Blake says at the start of each book. ‘I can solve any mystery.’ He’s so smart,” Cam Jansen told her mother. “He’s strong, too. He once lifted the front of a truck just to find a clue.”

“Yes,” Mrs. Jansen said. “But do you remember what else he always says? ‘I can solve any mystery and be home in time to help Mom with dinner.’ He’s a very good son.”

It was a cold, rainy December night. Cam and her mother were on their way to school. It was the night of the yearly book fair. Jim E. Winter, the author of Cam’s favorite books, the My Name is Barry Blake Mysteries, would be there.

“It’s so difficult to drive in this weather,” Mrs. Jansen said, and leaned forward. “With all this rain and the cold, it’s hard to see out. The car windows are all fogged up.”





Cam's mother was stopped at a traffic light. She took a tissue and wiped the inside of the front window.

"Did you ever see a picture of Jim E. Winter?" she asked Cam.

"Yes. There's one on the back of each of his books."

"I bet there's no fog on your memory," Mrs. Jansen said. "Tell me what he looks like."

Cam closed her eyes. She said, “*Click!*” Then Cam said, “I’m looking at a picture of Jim E. Winter. He’s really young. He has a dark bushy mustache and lots of dark wavy hair.”

The light changed to green.

Mrs. Jansen drove slowly.

Cam said, “In the picture he’s wearing a polka-dotted bow tie and a striped shirt.”

Cam has what people call a photographic memory. She remembers just about everything she’s seen. It’s as if she has a camera and a file of pictures in her head.

Cam said, “*Click!*” again.

“On the cover beneath the picture,” Cam said with her eyes still closed, “is lots of information. It says, ‘Jim E. Winter was once a police detective. He’s written more than one hundred books. He lives near a forest and has a dog named Jake.’”

When Cam wants to remember something she’s seen, she closes her eyes and says, “*Click!*” Cam says it’s the sound her mental camera makes.

Cam’s real name is Jennifer, but when people found out about her amazing memory, they called her “The Camera.” Soon “The Camera” became just “Cam.”

Mrs. Jansen was just about to turn onto the school’s front drive. “We’re finally here!” Mrs. Jansen said. “And I’m glad. It’s not easy driving in this rain.”

Cam opened her eyes.

“Mom! Be careful!” Cam said. “Someone is walking just ahead.”

Mrs. Jansen stepped on the car’s brakes. She waited for the man to cross the road. Then she drove past the front of the school to the side parking lot.

“Button your coat,” Mrs. Jansen told Cam when she stopped the car. “Put on your rain hat.”

Mrs. Jansen took an umbrella from the backseat. She opened it. Then she and Cam hurried into the school.

There was a large mat by the door. Cam and her mother wiped their shoes.

A sign directed them to hang their coats in room 17. Mrs. Jansen closed her umbrella. She and Cam hung their coats, hats, and umbrella in room 17.

Beth Kane and her father were in the room, too.

“Hi, Cam,” Beth said.

“Hello,” Beth’s father said, and shook Cam’s hand. “It’s nice to see you again.”

Cam smiled. “Thanks.”

Mr. Kane shook Mrs. Jansen’s hand.

“Your daughter is amazing,” he said. “You must be so proud of her.”

Mrs. Jansen smiled. “And Cam has told me how nice and smart Beth is.”

Then, as they were about to leave room 17, Danny and his parents entered the school.



“Hey, there’s Cam Jansen,” Danny told his parents. “She’s the *clicking* girl. And there’s Beth. She’s the girl who never likes my jokes.”

Beth told Danny, “No one likes your jokes.”

“Hey,” Danny’s father said. “I’m Mr. Pace, and you’ll like my jokes. Here’s one: What do you get from nervous hens?”

“I know that one,” Danny said, and laughed. “The answer is ‘scrambled eggs.’” Then Danny asked his father, “Do you know Snow White’s father’s name? It’s Egg White. Now the yolk is on you, Dad. Do you get it? The *yolk* is on you.”

“That’s enough jokes,” Danny’s mother said. “Let’s just hang up our coats.”

“Wow,” Beth said as she, Cam, and their parents walked into the hall. “Danny’s father tells ba

jokes, too.”

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“Welcome,” Dr. Prell, the school’s principal, said. “We have books for everyone. The book fair is the gym.”

The doors to the gym were open. Cam, Beth, and their parents went in. They stood there for a moment and looked at the many tables. On each was a pile of books and a sign so people would know what kind of books were on the table.

“I’m looking for history books,” Mrs. Jansen told Cam. “You can look by yourself, but please don’t leave this room.”

“I want to meet Jim E. Winter,” Cam said.

Beth said, “Me, too. I love his mysteries.”

“Stay with Cam,” Mr. Kane told his daughter. “I’m going to look at the biographies.”

Children and their parents were looking at books. There were small children, too, running between and under the tables.

“There he is,” Beth said, and pointed. “He’s in the back of the gym, right by the wall.”

Cam looked across the gym. An old bald man with a white bushy mustache was sitting by a table at the far end of the gym. A long line of children were waiting for him to sign their books.

“That man is bald! That can’t be Jim E. Winter,” Cam said. “I saw a picture of him with dark, wavy hair and a dark mustache.”

Beth said, “You must have looked at an old picture of him.”

“Yes,” Cam said. “It must have been a *very* old picture.”



Cam looked at the many people waiting to meet Jim E. Winter. Each had a My Name Is Black Mystery for him to sign.

“Well,” Cam said, “I don’t care what he looks like. I don’t care how old he is. I just want to meet him.”



## Chapter Two

“I’m getting Jim E. Winter’s newest mystery,” Cam said. “I want him to sign it. Then I want to read it.”

Cam looked at the many tables and signs in the gym. There were tables with easy-to-read books, biographies, cookbooks, mysteries, other fiction, and riddle and joke books. Danny and his father were at the riddles and jokes table.

There was a table in the middle of the gym with books by Jim E. Winter. That’s where Cam and Beth went.

Many children and their parents were there. Cam and Beth had to wait to get close to the table.

Beth picked up a book. “This is number twenty-seven, *My Name Is Blake and the Scary Movie Mystery*,” Beth said. “It’s the newest one.”

Cam took a copy of *The Scary Movie Mystery*. Then she found a copy of Jim E. Winter’s first book, *My Name Is Blake and the Diamond Rattle Mystery*, and took that, too.

“Hey,” Danny said, “look at all the joke books I found.”

He had four books. His mother, Mrs. Pace, was with him.

“My dad has even more,” Danny said, and pushed close to the table. “Now I’m getting a Jim E. Winter book.”

Cam found another Jim E. Winter book she had not read. Now she had three books. She went to the end of the line to get her books signed. The line went down the middle of the gym. Beth, Danny, and Danny’s mother got on line right behind Cam.

“This is a long line,” Danny said, “and I know just what to do so we don’t get bored waiting. I’ll tell jokes.”

“Please don’t,” Beth told him.

“Danny,” Mrs. Pace said, “save the jokes for Dad. He likes them.”

Danny opened a joke book. He read a joke and laughed. “Are you sure you don’t want me to tell you this one? It’s really funny.”

“Yes,” Beth said. “I’m sure.”

“We’ll look for Eric,” Cam said. “That’s what we’ll do while we wait. He told me he would be here.”

I know he wants to meet Jim E. Winter.”

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Cam looked across the gym. It was crowded. Lots of people were looking at books. Cam's mother was still standing by the history table. She was holding an open book and reading it. Beth's father was by the biography table.

"There he is," Beth said. "Eric is by the easy-to-read table. One of his sisters is with him, but I'm not sure which one."

Eric has twin sisters, Donna and Diane.

Cam waved to Eric. He saw her and waved back.

Danny's father came over. He was holding a large stack of books. "Give me your joke books," he told Danny. "I'll pay for them and put them in the car. Then we can get more."

Danny gave him his joke books.

"Waiting is boring," Beth complained. "This line isn't even moving."

"Yes it is," Danny said. "The back of the line is moving. It's getting longer. Even more people are waiting to get their books signed."

Some children from the front of the line walked past.

“He wrote, ‘Happy Reading, Virginia,’” one of the children said. “He signed it, ‘Detective James Winter.’”

Cam and everyone behind her took a few steps forward.

Cam said, “If we read our books while we wait, we won’t be bored.”

Cam opened *My Name Is Blake and the Scary Movie Mystery*. She started to read it to herself.

In the first chapter, Barry Blake is waiting on a long line, too. He and his mother are waiting to see a scary movie. Then, just as they are about to buy tickets, a woman comes to the ticket office.

“Someone stole my purse,” the woman in the book says. “I was watching the movie and someone stole it.”

“Don’t worry,” Barry Blake tells her. “I’ll find your purse. I’ll solve this mystery. I’ll solve it fast and be back in time to see the movie. After the movie, I’ll go home in time to help my mom prepare dinner.”

In the second chapter, Barry Blake walks into the theater. The woman shows him where she was sitting.

The people on line ahead of Cam moved up. Cam and the others moved one step closer to Jim Winter.

“I’m still bored,” Beth said, and closed her book. “What’s taking so long?”

Cam stepped off the line. She looked at the table.

“He’s not just signing books,” Cam told Beth and Danny. “He’s talking to people. He’s posing for pictures.”

Eric, his sister Diane, and their father walked over.

“Hi,” Eric said. “Are you waiting for Jim Winter?”

“No,” Beth told him. “We’re waiting for Jim *E.* Winter. Don’t forget the *E!*”

The line moved again. Cam and the others took a few steps forward. Now they could hear Jim Winter. He thanked a girl for reading his books.

“What is your name?” he asked.

“Gina,” the girl answered.

Jim E. Winter signed her book.

Cam and the others took one more step forward. It was their turn to meet the author.

Just then Danny’s father came back. He was wearing his raincoat and carrying an umbrella. Both were wet. He was also carrying a large bag of books. He hurried to the front of the line.

“It’s gone,” he told his wife and Danny. “I paid for the books. Then I went outside to put them in the car, and the car was gone!”



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