



Planet Cat: A CAT-alog

By Arden Moore, Sandra Choron, Harry Choron

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The cat's out of the bag -- a delightful book on all things feline that no cat lover can afford to miss

Following in the paw prints of *Planet Dog*, here is the cat's meow: a lively, entertaining, one-of-a-kind assemblage of more than 400 lists on all things cat. It's all here, from the origins of the species to care and training to breeds and behavior to famous cats in history, art, and literature. The book even includes a list of celebrity cat people. Illustrated with more than 150 photographs and line drawings, this irresistible package is sure to delight cat lovers everywhere.

How to say cat in 46 languages

Hemingway's cats

Cats who changed history

Why cats paint

Tricks you can teach your cat

Great gifts for the pampered cat

Cat food recipes

An IQ test for your cat

Human habits that drive cats crazy

And more!



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Editorial Review

About the Author

Sandra Choron is a writer, editor, literary agent, book packager, and designer. She and her husband, Harry Choron, a graphic designer, are the authors of *College in a Can*, *The Book of Lists for Teens*, and *The All-New Book of Lists for Kids*, among other works.

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Introduction

The first cat book in prose was published in Paris in 1727. It was called *Les Chats*, and for the rest of his life the author, François-Augustin Paradis de Moncrif, was unmercifully ridiculed for believing that a subject as trivial as cats was worthy of an entire volume. He was greeted everywhere by “catcalls,” and when he was elected to the Académie française, cats were released during his inaugural address.

So we thank Monsieur Moncrif for paving the way for *Planet Cat*, but we wonder how he managed to limit his treatment of the subject to only one volume!

Try to write about cats and you’ll find yourself so far afield of veterinary studies that it’s hard to believe you’re still on *Planet Cat*. For intrinsic to any investigation of the cat is an understanding of history, anthropology, biology, literature, art, and even physics. My cat seemed to sense my wonder at this discovery. Typically, as I worked on the book, he would purr at me as I typed, incessantly demanding my attention. When I would finally take a break and look into eyes that appear to be every color of green there is, he seemed to say, “Remember that you are not just writing about cats. You are writing about thousands of years of history and a cultural journey that no other animal has taken. You are writing about an animal who has only recently emerged from the wild, whose tradition reflects the adoration, the hatred, and the fear—sometimes simultaneously—of humans who so often did not understand us. We have been deified and we have been vilified, and we have enjoyed or suffered every status in between. “When you write about cats,” Elvis seemed to say, “you write about the world.” We kept his message in mind when marking out the territory this book would cover. Thus Part 1, “The Culture of Cats,” explores the history and tradition of the cat but also points to the ways in which the cat infuses almost every aspect of our existence—our music and our literature, our language, our favorite advertising images, our belief systems, and our folklore. In looking at “Top Cats” in Part 2, we meet the felines whom we have elevated to stardom, ranging from household names such as Morris, Garfield, and the Cheshire Cat to some of the less-wellknown cat stars, who nonetheless tell us much about who we are: the hero cats of the World Trade Center; the literary cats who serve as muses for writers or haunt our libraries; and the amazing felines who have come to our aid in times of war. In Part 3, “Cat Anatomy and Behavior,” we examine the cat, with all its marvels and quirks of physiology and personality; and in Part 4, “Tender Loving Care and Training,” we offer cat-care basics, with an emphasis on how we as humans interact with felines: how to understand them better, how to interpret their special language, when to play with them, and when not to. That is, throughout this book, we have tried to go beyond the basics to fully explore *Planet Cat*, the space we share with our beloved felines.

We are taught that the greatest difference between cats and dogs is the fact that cats are loners, whereas dogs are pack animals. Why is it, then, that cat-friendly households tend to house multiple cats, but dog-friendly homes usually have only one dog in residence? Do cats hold secrets that they still have not revealed to us? (How does one account, for instance, for the “loner” cats who have adopted birds, mice, and even puppies?) Or is it just that with all their eccentricities and unpredictability, and for the love they provide and the chance

they give us to see ourselves in them, we just can't get enough of them?

Planet Cat suggests some answers.

—S. C.

11 Legendary Cats

1. Bastet, or Ubasti, or Bast Although her duties have changed over the course of time, the Egyptian goddess has been known as the guardian of cats, women, children, love, fertility, birth, music, and dance. She has been dated to at least the Second Dynasty (c. 2890–2686 B.C.) and is often depicted as a young woman with the head of a domestic cat, sometimes holding a musical instrument known as a sistrum.
2. Butter Cat From Scandinavia, a protector and provider. It was believed that cats were “bringers of gifts,” such as butter and milk; thus the name.
3. Cait Sith Scottish folklore tells of a black fairy cat, believed to be a transformed witch.
4. Ccoa An evil cat demon originating in Peru and greatly feared by the Quechua people. He controlled rain and lightning, with which he could destroy crops and human life.
5. Golden Flower In Japan, orange cats, rather than black ones, had all the power. Believed to be supernatural, these cats had the purported ability to transform themselves into beautiful women.
6. The Scottish Grimalkin This cat was said to be a wraith that took the form of a human by day and a fierce panther by night. Grrrrimalkins were associated with witchcraft and thought to be just as devilish as their mistresses. The name comes from its gray color and the archaic word malkin, meaning “cat.”
7. Matagot In the south of France especially, it was believed that the Matagot was a magical greedy cat that could bring great wealth. To access its powers, you had to lure the cat with a chicken, take it home, and feed it the first mouthful of every meal you ate. In Britain, a version of the Matagot is known as Chat d’argent, a black cat who was able to serve nine masters at once.
8. Patripatan Of Indian origin, Patripatan was sent to heaven to pick a flower but got sidetracked and didn’t return home for 300 years, during which time his prince and his people had ceased to age. When Patripatan returned, the country was endowed with beauty and serenity.
9. Ra In ancient Egypt it was believed that each night the great sun god, Ra, took the form of a cat as he went off on nightly battle against the serpent Apopis. The sun rose every morning because Ra won all the battles.
10. Sinh According to Burmese legend, Sinh was the founding father of the Birman breed, which is the sacred cat of Burma. Sinh belonged to the high priest Mun-Ha. When the old man died, Sinh placed his paws on the priest’s body and thereby absorbed his soul. As he did so, his paws turned white.
11. Yule Cat In Iceland, a frightening tradition teaches children the importance preparing autumn wool before onset of winter. In the fall, children are given gifts of new clothing. Those who don’t receive them—either because they didn’t participate in gathering wool or because they did merit such gifts—risk the wrath the Yule Cat, a giant feline with glaring eyes and sharp whiskers. The only way to avoid being eaten by the Yule Cat on Christmas Eve is to stand at window wearing a new garment, even if it’s just a new pair of socks.

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Patricia Vasquez:

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David Betancourt:

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Shane Hamilton:

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