

Fragments 11 (2008)

(page checked February 2026)

Dorofei, the Kremlin Cat
Schrödinger's Cat

The Kremlin Cat

In recent times there have been [Socks Clinton](#), India Bush and then Willow Biden in the White House, and various cats in [Downing Street](#). From 7 May 2008 there was also a feline presence in the Kremlin. When Dmitry Medvedev took over from Vladimir Putin (who has a Labrador dog called Conni) as Russian president on that date, his wife Svetlana's cat **Dorofei** (Dorotheus) moved into the official residence.



Dorofei was a blue-eyed Siberian colourpoint, a breed now known as the Neva Masquerade, chosen by Svetlana — or some say he chose her — from a cat breeder in about 2004. It's reported that at one time the Medvedevs lived near Mikhail Gorbachev, former leader of the Soviet Union, who also had a cat, and the two felines got into a fight. According to Moscow's daily newspaper *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, the Siberian came off second best and had to be given antibiotics for a month to recover his health. More drastically, he was then neutered to discourage future fighting.

This information is from the online English version of [Pravda](#) (March 2008).

President Obama meets Dorofei

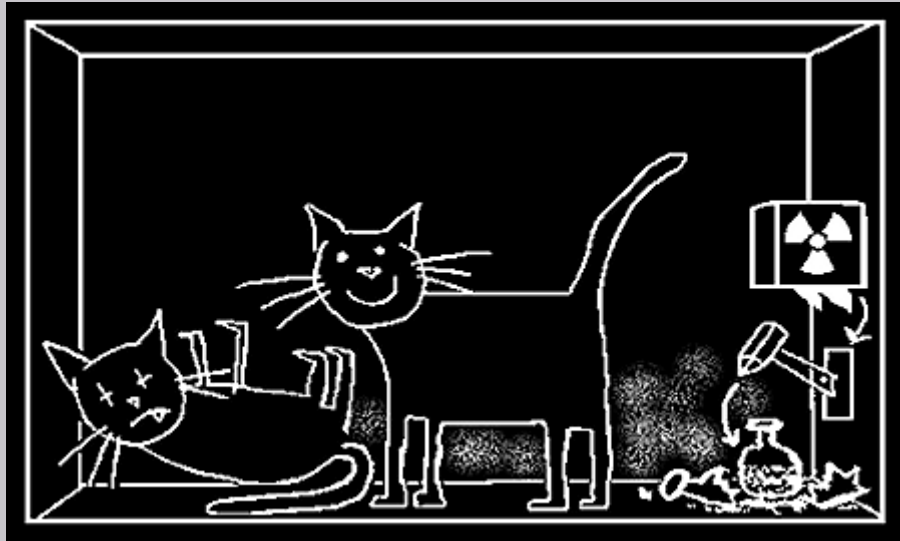


On a trip to Gorki, outside Moscow, in July 2009 to meet Russian president Dmitry Medvedev for political discussions, President Obama and First Lady Michelle encountered Dorofei. The cat looks friendly, but we don't know whether the visitors approached any closer or said 'hello' to Dorofei. Meanwhile White House dog Bo remained at home.

Photo by Mikhail Klimentyev/AFP/Getty Images

Note: from May 2012 Medvedev was no longer president of Russia, but remained in government as prime minister.

Schrödinger's cat



It's not a real cat — but part of a paradox, a 'thought experiment', presented by the famous Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger in 1935 and aimed at demonstrating how the ultra-small-scale world of quantum mechanics impinges on the large-scale human world.

The premise is that a healthy cat is shut inside a steel chamber that is windowless and completely soundproof. In the chamber also are a radiation monitor and a minute quantity of a radioactive substance — so small that over the course of one hour there is a chance that one of its atoms will decay and emit a radioactive pulse. If that happens, the radiation monitor will detect it and will trigger a hammer, which will fall onto and smash a small glass flask containing a lethal gas. Just the tiniest amount of the gas inhaled by the cat will cause it to die instantly.

However, there is an exactly equal probability that none of the radioactive atoms will decay during the hour, and so the hammer will not be activated. We're not allowed to look inside the box, or to install any form of cameras or microphones — so if the system is left to itself for an hour, what can we know about the cat's fate? The answer is we can't know anything without opening the box, when the cat will be either alive or dead. Until that time, there is a 50/50 probability of one state or the other.

According to the laws of quantum mechanics, the cat's state of being alive or being dead is tied to the decay or non-decay of one single atom — and that process is subject to quantum uncertainty. The cat, isolated from the outside world, can be said to be neither alive nor dead during the one-hour period; it exists in a potential cloud or 'superposition' of both possibilities at once. The idea behind the slightly gruesome scenario is to show that we cannot talk about subatomic particles being neither in one state nor another, unless we also consider larger things being in neither one state nor another. Quantum mechanics truly describes a bizarre world, quite at odds with our understanding of how things work in our everyday life!

Schrödinger's 'cat-in-a-box' idea has generated a number of jokes, such as:

- As every cat owner knows, the cat has three states: alive, dead and b----- furious.
- And of course; the cat always dies because the box in every diagram has no air-holes.
- Having dated physicists, this researcher can confirm they all own cats.

Feline Fragments 12 (2009)

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Cleveland Amory, Polar Bear and animal rescue



Cleveland Amory (1917–1998) was an American author, humourist, journalist and TV critic. Some of his work has reached the status of 'classics', especially his three books on sociology, but it is his lifetime of work for animal welfare in the United States of America to which tribute is paid here. As a young man Amory was introduced to animals and their care by an aunt; and also as a boy he read Anna Sewell's famous novel about a horse, *Black Beauty*, which influenced him greatly and led to his dream of one day creating a refuge for mistreated and abandoned animals.

In 1962 he joined the board of directors of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), and then in 1967 he founded The Fund for Animals, remaining its president until his death in 1998 and taking no pay for the job. Another notable achievement was to recruit celebrities of the time such as Doris Day, Mary Tyler Moore and Angie Dickinson into his campaign against the use of animal fur in the fashion trade. However, many more people probably know him as the author of three best-selling books that are largely about his cat, **Polar Bear**. The white cat was rescued, by Amory and an animal-rescue colleague, from the freezing streets of Manhattan, New York, on the evening of Christmas Eve 1977. Never having lived with a cat before, Cleveland found his life changed by Polar Bear and the relationship between the two of them, and he became absolutely devoted to the feline, whom he described as 'the best cat ever'. (See [Feline Folios](#) for details of the books about Polar Bear.)

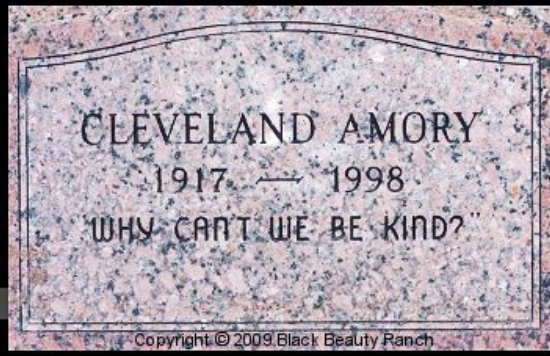
In 1979 Amory was finally able to realise his boyhood dream when land was acquired in western Texas and the [Black Beauty Ranch](#) was set up near the town of Murchison. It occupies some 1400 acres (more than 500 hectares) and is a refuge for rescued, abandoned, abused and injured animals of all kinds, in 2024 650 of them. It isn't a zoo; Amory was adamant that it's for 'animals to be looked after, not looked at'; and the public is not admitted except in limited numbers and for special occasions. At the gates to the ranch are inscribed the last

lines of Anna Sewell's book: *I have nothing to fear, and here my story ends. My troubles are all over and I am at home*. In 2005 HSUS and The Fund for Animals joined forces to be better able to achieve their common goals.

There is no space here to detail the astonishing rescue and rehabilitation work that the ranch has achieved, and continues to achieve. Anyone interested should obtain a copy of CA's book *Ranch of Dreams*, completed not long before his death — but be warned: it's not all comfortable reading. It's readily available from online sellers of second-hand books (*ISBN 0-670-87762-X, published in 1997 by Viking Penguin*). Also recommended is the ranch's informative website ([link above](#)) where news can be found of current work and the animals living there at present, and there is a video featuring some of those animals. There's also a brief tribute to Cleveland Amory, and details of how you can help the ranch's work if you are so inclined.

Polar Bear visited the ranch many times with Cleveland during its early years, and so when he died in 1992 from kidney failure, to Amory's enormous sadness, the cat was buried in one of his favourite spots beneath three trees, and a fine memorial was erected. When Amory himself died six years later, he had requested to be buried close to his beloved cat and a further headstone was placed. We're greatly indebted to Brenda Blackwell of Black Beauty Ranch for meeting our request for photos of the memorials and the spot where Amory and Polar Bear are buried; they can be seen in the photos below.





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