

Cat Quotes — 2 (2004)

(page checked April 2026)

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I don't speak from any position of authority, but it seems to me cats could well be the animals that have been most written about. There must be many thousands of books written about them; and so, too, there are large numbers of quotations. No list could hope to be comprehensive, and I have merely selected some that I've come across over the years which have appealed to me; some are very well-known, others less so. They're arranged very roughly in sections, such that quotes about similar aspects of cats appear together.

The photos are our own originals of cats we've either lived with or encountered: sadly I don't think any of them are still with us. A number of the pictures are from 'chance encounters', and these are referred to as 'anonymous', giving the year. Unless stated otherwise, photos were taken in the UK.

Remember: 'The smallest feline is a masterpiece.' — *Leonardo da Vinci (1462–1519)*



Nature of Cats

Cats were put into the world to disprove the dogma that all things were created to serve man. — *Paul Gray*

With the qualities of cleanliness, affection, patience, dignity and courage that cats have, how many of us, I ask you, would be capable of becoming cats? — *Fernand Méry (1897–1983): French wildlife writer*

The phrase 'domestic cat' is an oxymoron, – *George F. Will (b. 1941): American writer and journalist*

Before a cat will condescend
To treat you as a trusted friend,
Some little token of esteem
Is needed — like a dish of cream. — *T. S. Eliot (1888–1965)*

Cats are mysterious folk. There is more passing in their minds than we are aware of.
— *Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832)*



Tweetie (1982)



anon.

I have noticed that what cats most appreciate in a human being is not the ability to produce food — which they take for granted — but his or her entertainment value.
– *Geoffrey Household (1900–1988): British novelist*

Women and cats will do as they please, and men and dogs should relax and get used to the idea. – *Anon*

As every cat owner knows, nobody owns a cat. – *Ellen Perry Berkeley (author and animal-rights activist)*

Way down deep, we're all motivated by the same urges. Cats have the courage to live by them.
– *Jim Davis (b. 1945): American cartoonist, creator of Garfield*

Most cats, when they are out, want to be in, and *vice versa* — often simultaneously.
– *Louis J. Camuti (1893–1981): renowned New York cat veterinarian*

Are cats lazy? Well, more power to them if they are. Which one of us has not entertained the dream of doing just as he likes, when and how he likes, and as much as he likes?
– *Fernand Méry (1897–1983): French wildlife writer and journalist*

A cat is a demure animal; it will not come into the living-room wagging its tail and knocking over lamps and tables. – *H. Monger Burdock: American writer*

When she rolls over on her back, the way horses do, only far more gracefully, a little wave peaking and curling over itself, she is the most joyful thing alive. – *Rosellen Brown (b. 1939): American author*

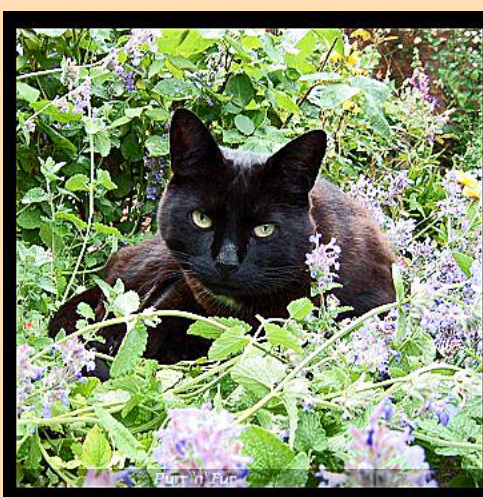
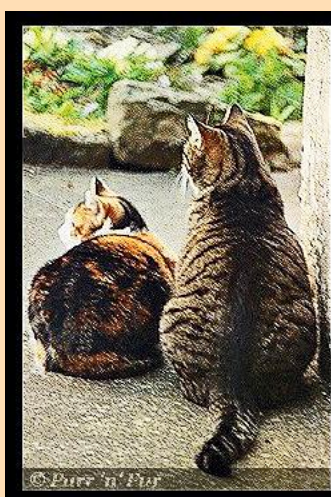
Cats seem to go by the principle that it never does any harm to ask for what you want.
– *Joseph Wood Krutch*

. . . the cat is a character of being; the dog is a character of doing.
– *Michael J. Rosen (b. 1954): American writer*

Cats find malicious amusement in doing what they are not wanted to do — and that with an affectation of innocence that materially aggravates the offense.
– *Helen Winslow (1851–1938): American author, editor and journalist*

You can't own a cat. The best you can do is be partners. – *Sir Harry Swanson*

Let us be honest: most of us rather like our cats to have a streak of wickedness. I should not feel quite easy in the company of any cat that walked around the house with a saintly expression.
– *Beverly Nichols (1898–1953)*



A dog will sit beside you while you work. A cat will sit on the work.
– *Pam Brown (b. 1948): Australian poet*

All kittens, from the very first, set out to teach their humans to adapt to the needs of a cat. As a reward, they grant them the status of honorary cat. – *Pam Brown*

Cats like doors left open — in case they change their minds. – *Rosemary Nisbet*

If it's raining at the back door, every cat is convinced there's a good chance it won't be raining at the front door. – *William Toms*

The cat of slums and alleys — still keeps, amid the prowlings of its adversity, the old, free, panther-like tread with which it paced the temple courts of Thebes; still displays the self-reliant watchfulness that man has never taught it to lay aside. – 'Saki' (H.H. Munro: 1870–1916), 'The Square Egg'

Prowling his own quiet backyard or asleep by the fire, he is still only a whisker away from the wilds.
– Jean Burden (1914–2008): American author and poet

A computer and a cat are somewhat alike – they both purr, and like to be stroked, and spend a lot of the day motionless. They also have secrets they don't necessarily share.
– John Updike (1932–2009): American novelist and poet

Cats have absolute emotional honesty; human beings, for one reason or another, may hide their feelings, but a cat does not. – Ernst Hemingway

Cats are absolute individuals, with their own ideas about everything, including the people they own.
John Dingman (painter & bibliophile).

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Cats' Attitude

A dog is a man's best friend. A cat is a cat's best friend. – Robert J. Vogel

Thousands of years ago, cats were worshipped as gods. They have never forgotten this. – Anon

A cat's got her own opinion of human beings. She don't say much, but you can tell enough not to make you anxious to hear the whole of it. – Jerome K. Jerome (1859–1927): English writer and humourist

Dogs have owners; cats have staff. – Anon

Who knows but I make my cat more sport than she makes me? – Jean Montaigne

When my cats aren't happy, I'm not happy. Not because I care about their mood, but because I know they're just sitting there thinking of ways to get even. – Penny Ward Moser: American author

The cat could very well be man's best friend: but he would never stoop to admit it.
– Doug Larson (1926–2017): American columnist and editor

Dogs look up at us, cats look down on us, but pigs treat us as equals. – Winston Churchill (1874–1965)

No intelligent person can be conceited in the presence of a cat. No living creature can so ignore.



Anon.



museum cat (Basel, Switzerland, 1975)

Cats know how to obtain food without labour, shelter without confinement and love without penalties.
– W. J. George (1900–1975)

Dogs come when they are called; cats take a message and get back to you. – May Bly

Cats allow us to love them, for which we should be duly grateful. – Jane Taylor-Browne

It is easy to understand why the cat has eclipsed the dog as modern America's favorite pet. People like pets to possess the same qualities they do. Cats are irresponsible and recognize no authority, yet are completely dependent on others for their material needs. Cats cannot be made to do anything useful. Cats are mean for the fun of it. In fact, possess so many of the same qualities as people that it is often hard to tell the people and the cats apart. – P. J. O'Rourke (1947–2022): *American journalist and satirist*

. . . cats invented self-esteem. There is not an insecure bone in their body.
– Erma Bombeck (1927–1996): *American humourist*

The cat surveyed his new home and promptly drove all the rats and mice out of the cave. Once he had finished with them, he started on the food supply. This prompted man to move all his things to a higher watermark, and may have led to the development of the table — which has come to be a bone of contention between cat and man ever since. – Eric Gurney (1910–1992): *Canadian cartoonist*



Tommy (2004)



Zebulon (Switzerland, 2004)

Cats always know whether people like or dislike them. They do not always care enough to do anything about it. —Winifred Carrière (author)

A cat is there when you call her — if she doesn't have something better to do. – Bill Adler (literary agent)

Cats can work out mathematically the exact place to sit that will cause the most inconvenience.
– Michael Stevens

You can feel an awful fool standing at the bottom of the garden yelling, 'Pussy, pussy, pussy' across a totally deserted meadow. Especially when you realise that pussy, pussy, pussy is watching you with benign interest from the shelter of the garden shed. – Marcia Fischer

You can tell a dog to do something. You can put it to a cat as a reasonable proposition. – Michael Stevens

A cat likes to hear you calling him. He sits in a bush a yard from your shoes — and listens. –Pam Brown

If you are worthy of his affection, a cat will be your friend, but never your slave.
– Attributed to Théophile Gautier

No one ever commanded a cat. You can shout at a cat, and it may vanish through the window, or start washing its tail, or stare at you in pained surprise. But it will never apologise, never promise not to do it again. – C.R. Milne (1920–1996): *English author and bookseller*

A cat can be trusted to purr when she is pleased, which is more than can be said for most human beings.
– *William Ralph Inge (1860–1954): English author, priest, dean of St Paul's cathedral*

Cats are absolute individuals, with their own ideas about everything, including the people they own. –
John Dingman: printer and bibliophile

Even overweight cats instinctively know the cardinal rule: when fat, arrange yourself in slim poses.
– *John Weitz (1923-2002): American writer and historian*

Some people say that cats are sneaky, evil and cruel; true, and they have many other fine qualities as well. – *Missy Dizick (author)*

To a cat, NO! means 'Not while I'm looking.' – *anon.*

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