

Feline Fragments 40 (2024)

(page checked Marrh 2026)

The Cat's Meat Man London and elsewhere



From the mid-eighteenth until the early nineteenth century the pliers of this trade – mostly men, but occasionally women – were to be found in London and other large English cities. They would have a barrow with chunks of horsemeat, which was in plentiful supply from the knacker's yards, where the many horses that died on the streets (or were slaughtered, being too ill or old to work) were taken. The meat could also be mixed with other types (beef, lamb) too old to sell for human consumption. The barrow would have a slab at one end, where a sharp knife would be used to cut the meat into smaller pieces; some would be sold on skewers, or commonly was made up into half-pound bags (about a quarter of a kilo). Starting at dawn and selling door to door, each vendor might serve the owners of some 200 cats, and some dogs, daily; a respectable income could be earned. The barrows would likely be followed by some cats, who knew that bits of meat could fall from them!

Not everyone welcomed the cat's meat man, and there were complaints about the disagreeable smell. But, as horse-drawn vehicles decreased in number and eventually disappeared from the streets before World War 2, so the cat's-meat vendors also vanished.

I think there were similar arrangements in Paris, and maybe also in New York.





Sometimes, perhaps in the later years, the meat was sold from more permanent outlets, such as market stalls, or even a shop (*below*).





[Design you trust](#) (undated: many more photos)



In 1909, a New York man selling wild catnip door-to-door in Harlem was surrounded by 30–40 cats rolling and mewling. He was arrested for “inciting a crowd,” though the crowd was feline.

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Feline Fragments 41 (2024)

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Dusya

The Cat who Befriended a Lynx



In June 2007 a lynx cub, named Linda, was born at the zoo in Leningrad (now St Petersburg) in Russia. When she was about two months old it was decided to put a young domestic kitten into her enclosure; it isn't clear what prompted this move, or where Linda's mother was at the time. The two animals, who were then about the same size, were left together for short periods to play and become used to each other, while zoo staff kept an eye on them. The kitten was called **Dusya**.

It worked out well; the two cats played together, groomed each other and communicated with each other. After a time they were left together in the same enclosure and became inseparable. They were fed different diets, according to their needs, with Dusya's food being served in a small house with a narrow entrance, so Linda couldn't steal it. That didn't stop her stealing Linda's food, though!



Despite their obvious size difference as Linda grew up, it seemed that Dusya was often the leader in their activities. They had toys given by the staff, and Dusya in particular loved empty boxes. She became quite wild, and didn't like to be petted.



The unusual friendship lasted for 12 years, until Dusya died on 3 January 2020. I don't know what she died from, or what became of Linda afterwards; I hope she found another friend.



[Brughtside](#) (undated, c, 2019: many photos) | [Russian news site](#) (Jan. 2020)

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