

Black Cats are Worth Another Look



Black cats are revered in other cultures, why are they so underappreciated in the United States? Many cultures believe them to be honored members of the family whom bring good fortune to them. What are Americans missing by not giving black cats a fair tail twitch at finding a new life? These beautiful creatures are passed over time and time again for their more colorful counterparts. Sure those other cats may have striking markings, a pushed-in face, long hair and an attitude to match, but this sleek, nimble, and crafty creature has alluring charm and ancient grace. Hopefully after reading this you will give a second glance to sharing your life with a feline noire.

The Background of Superstitions

The origins of the black cat superstitions are shrouded in mystery, but here are a few ideas. Perhaps the innate nature of The Cat may hint to the otherworldly reputation that they have wrongly received; the tie to Egyptian culture did not help matters. It was believed that cats acted as “familiars” to witches. The cats were wrongly viewed as evil creatures that gave power to their master. Even today, some believe that the black cat is a demon in disguise trying to cut off a person’s access to heaven. Women who were accused by neighbors as being in league with the devil were women who lived alone (a suspicious circumstance by itself in those times) whom might have one or more cats about the house as pets or as vermin control. Since “black” is the color of “evil” in western society, black cats were especially suspect to superstitions.



There are positive connotations and good luck associated with the black cat. This began in Ancient Egypt with the sacred goddess BAST; the Egypt goddess was the official deity of Egypt for many years. Many courted her favors, by procuring black cats into their households; believing that BAST would become part of that cat in spirit, and grace the home with riches and prosperity. Egyptian women believed that the ideal beauty was that of a cat. They used make-up to emulate the feline aspect of the elongated eyes to give them a mysterious cat-like look. In those times, a person, who killed a cat, even accidentally, was put to death. And when a cat died, the owners used to shave off their eyebrows as a sign of mourning.



And then this is what the rest of the world believes...

- The Scottish believe that a black cat’s arrival to the home signifies prosperity. Furthermore, it’s believed that any woman owning a black cat will have many suitors.
- In Italy, if you hear a cat sneeze, then you are in a streak of good luck.
- In the Yorkshires, a black cat was said to bring the fishermen home safely from the seas. Black kittens were often catnapped and sold to the highest bidder by racketeers trying to cash in.
- In Great Britain, black cats are a symbol of good luck.
- In parts of Europe, if a black cat crosses your path you are considered to have good fortune. If a black cat walks into your home you are truly blessed.

- The mass burning of cats during the middle ages led to unfortunate consequences-the proliferation of rats, which not only decimated food resources, but acted as the carrier of illness, the culmination of which was the Great Plagues.
- Cats are considered to be very clean animals. The Prophet Mohammed is said to have kept cats himself, and popular legend tells that one time, the Prophet had to respect the call to prayer, but his cat was sleeping on the sleeve of his robe. Rather than awake the cat, the Prophet simply tore his sleeve, and went off to prayer.

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