



The Cats of Ulthar

H.P. Lovecraft

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"The Cats of Ulthar" is a short story written by H.P. Lovecraft in June 1920. In the tale, an unnamed narrator relates the story of how a law forbidding the killing of cats came to be in a town called Ulthar.

The Cats of Ulthar was a personal favorite of Lovecraft's, who was an ardent cat lover.

The Cats of Ulthar Details

Date : Published (first published November 1920)

ISBN :

Author : H.P. Lovecraft

Format : Kindle Edition

Genre : Horror, Short Stories, Fantasy, Fiction, Lovecraftian, Classics

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From Reader Review The Cats of Ulthar for online ebook

Betza Chial says

Gatos, esfinges y Lovecraft que más se puede pedir.

Miriam says

This is the fourth of the Dreamlands story cycle, and apparently the author's personal favorite. Certainly it is clear that he likes cats more than humans. I enjoyed and sympathized with his obvious gloating over the idea of horrible deaths befalling people who hurt animals.

Not as creepy as the horrifying Millions of Cats.

Sarnath <--previous | next --> Celephaïs

Amina says

Ha! in your face old creepy couple who hate cats!!!

That end, oh my God that end! I really wish, from the bottom of my heart that this will happen to all animal abusers! AMEN!

???? ?????? says

in Ulthar no man may kill a cat

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? Irena ? says

[(hide spoiler)]

Elaine Carass says

What a weird short story. I don't normally bother with short story's but been a cat lover I read this one, I found it to be straight to the point about cat haters and how I wished the villagers had sorted them out. Did the black kitten really get killed? But in the end the cat haters got there justice.

It was strange how a story of only six pages managed to drag me in and make me feel like I was the village story telling at its best

StoryTellerShannon says

An interesting fairy tale as to why cats cannot be killed in Ulthar.

OVERALL GRADE: B minus.

Tim Pendry says

A remarkably good early (1920) story, slightly marred only by his insistence at the end on spelling out what we know already, Lovecraft weaves dark fantasy, a suggestion of Egyptian mythology and true horror into a tale of magical invocation and the revenge of cats on vicious humans.

Lovecraft holds our attention throughout. Dunsany is frequently cited as an influence but Poe is in there as well. Certainly this is a story for those who love and respect cats but who have considerable doubts about their fellow humans.

Bark says

You can read it here at GR by clicking on that "preview button" or online [here](#) .

It is said that in Ulthar, which lies beyond the river Skai, no man may kill a cat; and this I can verily believe as I gaze upon him who sitteth purring before the fire. For the cat is cryptic, and close to strange things which man cannot see.

Once upon a time in Ulthar, before said law was put into action, there lived a sinister old couple who delighting in slaying any unlikely cat that straggled upon their property. This is a tale about two despicable, horrible, awful people who get exactly what is coming to them. I hated them but loved this creepy, atmospheric tale of revenge.

(view spoiler)

Thank you Irena for bringing this story to my attention.

LaGranVacaCosmica says

Si bien Lovecraft me encanta, eso no impide que no me guste algún que otro cuento de él, este es el triste caso de una historia que parecía que me fascinaría y encantaría, pero me terminó decepcionando enormemente, creo que esta decepción es digna de hacerle reseña en mi canal, esperen lo próximamente, para saber mi opinión más extensa

pd: lo había leído hace tiempo, y quiera darle esta segunda oportunidad, pero mi opinión sigue siendo la misma

Bill Kerwin says

This early Dunsanian tale, first published in the amateur literary journal *Tryout* (1920), resembles the work of Dunsany more deeply than mere style: although distant and ironic, it somehow manages to convey the spirit of naïve folklore. Like many of our ancient myths, it answers a question: why is it forbidden to kill a cat in Ulthar?

It is a slight tale, but nearly perfect. Lovecraft, who liked cats a lot, chose it one of his personal favorites. I am a cat person too, and find the story's attitude toward cats—mysterious, dangerous creatures, worthy of respect and devotion—to be a sensible one. Like Lovecraft, I must admit this is one of my personal favorites too.

Lindsay says

This almost reads like a Grimm's fairytale, and was my first exposure to Lovecraft's affinity for cats :-) Part of the dream cycle, which revolves around the mighty The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath. Short but memorable.

Nadin Adel says

????????? ?????? ?????? ??????? ?????? Grimm

???????? Hans Christian Andersen

osoi says

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2222 22222222 2222222222 222222 222 22222222 222222222222 gives me the creeps. 2 222222 222 2222222 222

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annikeh.net

Enchantress debbicas ? says

ooooo, a creepy little tale that I enjoyed quite a lot. I have had it sitting on kindle for quite sometime after picking it up for .99 last year. I think I was afraid to read it. So glad I opened it p last night because I wanted something short while trying to get sleepy. I was hooked right from the beginning, which starts like this:

"It is said that in Ulthar, which lies beyond the river Skai, no man may kill a cat; and this I can verily believe as I gaze upon him who sitteth purring before the fire. For the cat is cryptic, and close to strange things which men cannot see. He is the soul of antique Aegyptus, and bearer of tales from forgotten cities in Meroë and Ophir. He is the kin of the jungle's lords, and heir to the secrets of hoary and sinister Africa. The Sphinx is his cousin, and he speaks her language; but he is more ancient than the Sphinx, and remembers that which she hath forgotten."

As I read on I began to fear it was not suitable for me at bedtime and that I would not be able to continue without being set up for bad dreams. But, it was actually very good and I was quite satisfied with the ending. No bad dreams at all. I love cats too. And I had no need to fear for the cats in this story after all.

I think this is only my second H.P. Lovecraft. I will look for more reads by this author. I saw a book with a collection of his at the flea market last weekend. It was pricey for a used book. But, I might go back and look for it this weekend. :-)

Lyn says

Excellent short story, reads like a fairy tale.

Lovecraft captured at once the innocence and primal terror of a folk tale. First published in 1920, this is one of his finest works from his earlier period and one of his better stories overall.

In the town of Ulthar, it is illegal to kill cats. Lovecraft relates the anecdote of why this law came to be and in doing so he demonstrates his exceptional ability to convey a sense of dark, ancient magic upon an innocent world.

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

An odd little H.P. Lovecraft tale, only ten paragraphs long, told in a portentous voice:

It is said that in Ulthar, which lies beyond the river Skai, no man may kill a cat; and this I can verily believe as I gaze upon him who sitteth purring before the fire. For the cat is cryptic, and close to strange things which men cannot see. He is the soul of antique Aegyptus, and bearer of tales from forgotten cities in Meroe and Ophir. He is the kin of the jungle's lords, and heir to the secrets of hoary and sinister Africa. The Sphinx is his cousin, and he speaks her language; but he is more ancient than the Sphinx, and remembers that which she hath forgotten.

It's a very promising start, but I felt like it went downhill from there. There's a highly creepy old couple, doing ... something? ... with all of the village cats they can get their hands on, and the sheeplike villagers, unwilling to do anything about this awful behavior. Things come to a head in a gruesome, otherworldly kind of way, as so often happens with Lovecraft.

And that's all I'll say about that, since you can easily read this tidbit for yourself, except that it never pays to mess with cats, and those who do will inevitably come to a horrific and well-deserved end.

I felt like this was a pretty thin tale, but my friends Althea Ann and Lyn really liked this one, so check out their reviews.

It's free online in several places, including here: <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/love...>

Sophie (Blame Chocolate) says

Review also at Blame Chocolate.

This short story was one of Lovecraft's favorites, due to his love for cats, and even though I'm a cat lover myself, I feel like it didn't quite hit the mark. I enjoyed it, for sure, but felt it was too brief for me to feel any sort of attachment or fondness for the characters or the story itself.

Nevertheless, Lovecraft is certainly a talented writer and his ideas are exceedingly progressive. I like his writing style immensely and felt the narrative included just the right amount of unsettling details to keep the reader entertained. However, I could sort of guess the ending from the very beginning and so it didn't feel very suspenseful to me.

Thus, only three candy corns.

Althea Ann says

A re-read (of course!)

The inhabitants of the village of Ulthar have long tolerated the creepy old couple that they suspect has been kidnapping and killing their pets. After all, they don't have any hard proof, and perhaps it's easier just to mourn Fluffy. However, a boy from a travelling nomad caravan has no such compunctions. When his

beloved kitten falls victim to the unsavory couple, he will appeal to his strange gods for justice - and finally, things will change in Ulthar.

Sara M. Abudahab says

It is said that in Ulthar, which lies beyond the river Skai, no man may kill a cat.

Old grumpy couple who live in the city of Ulthar enjoy capturing and killing the cats of their neighbors, but when a caravan of wanderers passes through the city and the precious black kitten of Menes goes missing.... what will he do?
