

## Stella's Thoughts on AILUROPHOBIA

BY MICHAEL LEAVERTON



©Getty Images

**F**or complex reasons, some people have phobias and fears about cats. I decided to ask my cat about it. I didn't discover much of anything.

**Stella, did you know some people are afraid of cats?**

Aside from the mail carrier?

**The mail carrier is not afraid of you.**

The mail carrier is SO afraid of me. Have you seen the way she drops the mail through the slot? That's a panic drop if I've ever seen one. The mail TREMBLES.

**I think she just has trouble stuffing it all through.**

The magazines REEK of fear. Don't forget my senses are tuned to the jungle.

**Forget the mail carrier, Stella. I'm talking about people with legitimate cat phobias. For whatever reason, cats terrify them.**

For whatever reason?! How about that I'm an apex predator! I could take off their arms!

**I'm just wondering how you feel about these people.**

Honestly? I like them. They know. A good, honest fear of cats is just practical thinking. Can we invite them over? I'd like to meet them.

**We are not inviting people who are afraid of cats over to meet you.**

Think of it: I could parade around the room as they cower. You could grill

chicken. I could try out the new hiss I've been working on. I'm assuming the mail carrier would attend.

**You have a new hiss?**

Yeah, check it out: HHHZZZEEEEZZZZZ — cough.

**Did you just cough?**

No. Maybe. Jeez, I think I hurt myself.

**I always tell you that you have to watch your —**

Better yet, we'll throw a surprise party! Get everyone comfortable and then BOOM — the door slams open and it's me, with my new hiss. Then everyone rushes for the door.

**Stella, people who are afraid of cats need good feline role models. We need to show them that a fear of cats is an unwarranted fear.**

But it IS warranted. I swear I'll make them scared of me. Please, don't take this away from me. Let's have the party. Let's scare the mail carrier.

**I just think there's enough dog people in the world, and we could use more cat people.**

Wait, dogs get their own people? How is that even possible?

**I guess people really like dogs.**

That's insane. Have you seen what dogs do on walks? Relieving themselves everywhere on everything. I can't even look at our street without thinking of what takes place out there. It's like every inch of it is just drenched in —

**We get it, Stella. Dogs go to the bathroom outside.**

You should be afraid of THAT.

**Actually, that's one of the reasons I got a cat instead of a dog, to be quite honest.**

Wait, you got me because of my bathroom savvy? Is that what you're saying?

**Um, yeah? Sort of?**

Huh. That's cold-blooded. I'm actually impressed. If we join forces we could throw a heck of a surprise party.

**I don't want to scare people, Stella.**

Think of it as treatment. There has to be a ton of people who have phobias of you. I know, like, six off the top of my head. Let's give them a night to remember.

**We're ending this conversation now, Stella.**

Maybe the mail carrier is really afraid of YOU! Wouldn't that be a kick in the pants.

**'Night, Stella.** 🐱



**ailurophobia:** an abnormal fear or loathing of cats



Stella, a Bengal, has a firm grip on her handler, freelance writer **Michael Leaverton**, whom she rescued from an alt weekly many meals ago. They live in San Diego.

