

Stella's Thoughts on AILUROPHOBIA

BY MICHAEL LEAVERTON



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For 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.

