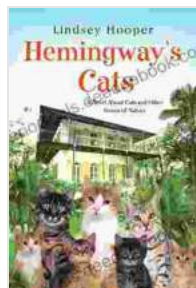


# Hemingway Cats: A Unique History with a Literary Legacy

In the picturesque surroundings of Key West, Florida, a peculiar feline population resides amidst the vibrant streets and shimmering waters. Known as "Hemingway cats," these felines hold a captivating history intertwined with the literary legacy of Ernest Hemingway.



## Hemingway's Cats by Lindsey Hooper

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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## The Polydactyl Trait



A defining characteristic of Hemingway cats is their polydactyly, a genetic condition that results in the presence of extra toes. This unusual trait, also known as "mitten paws," contributes to the cats' distinctive appearance and adds to their endearing charm.

The origin of this trait among Hemingway cats remains uncertain, but some theories suggest that the mutation originated from a single polydactyl cat

that was brought to Key West in the early 1900s. From there, the genetic trait spread throughout the local feline population, becoming an iconic symbol of the Hemingway cats.

## **Hemingway's Feline Companions**



Hemingway had a deep affection for his feline companions, many of which became beloved family members.

Ernest Hemingway, a renowned American author known for his evocative prose and adventurous spirit, developed a strong affinity for cats throughout his lifetime. During his residence in Key West from 1928 to 1939, Hemingway welcomed several feline companions into his home, fostering a deep bond with these furry creatures.

Among the most famous of Hemingway's cats was Snow White, a polydactyl feline who gave birth to numerous litters of kittens that continued the polydactyl legacy within the Hemingway cat population. Other notable cats included Boise, Boots, Sugar, and Slippers, each holding a cherished place in Hemingway's heart and enriching his life in Key West.

### **The Hemingway Home and Museum**



Today, the Hemingway Home and Museum stands as a testament to the author's legacy and provides a unique opportunity to encounter the Hemingway cats. Visitors can stroll through the lush grounds and interact with these affectionate felines, soaking in the atmosphere that once inspired Hemingway's literary masterpieces.

The museum showcases a collection of Hemingway's personal belongings, including photographs, manuscripts, and artwork, offering a glimpse into the author's life and creative process. The presence of the Hemingway cats further enhances the experience, providing a tangible connection to the past and a living legacy of Hemingway's love for animals.

## **Literary Inspiration**



The presence of cats in Hemingway's life and home had a profound influence on his writing.

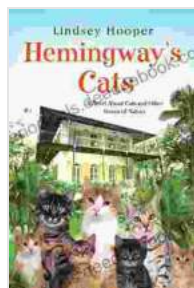
The Hemingway cats not only provided companionship and affection but also served as a source of inspiration for the author's writing. Hemingway often wrote about cats in his stories and novels, capturing their playful nature, independent spirit, and enigmatic presence.

One notable example is Hemingway's short story "The Cat in the Rain," which features a couple vacationing in a European hotel during a downpour. The wife longs for a cat, and Hemingway's description of the animal's arrival conveys a sense of solace and connection amidst the dreary weather.

Hemingway's love for cats extended beyond his own writings. He actively advocated for animal welfare, and his support for the humane treatment of animals further cements his legacy as a compassionate and influential literary figure.

The Hemingway cats are a unique and beloved part of Key West's history and literary lore. Their distinctive polydactyl trait, their residence in Hemingway's home, and their enduring presence in his writing create a captivating narrative that continues to charm and inspire.

Through their playful antics and affectionate nature, the Hemingway cats serve as a living reminder of the human-animal bond and the profound impact that animals can have on our lives and imaginations. Their legacy will undoubtedly live on for generations to come, captivating the hearts and minds of those who encounter their story.



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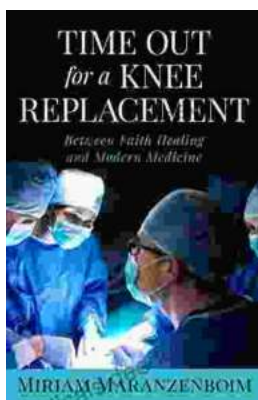
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