

personal english



Character #30 (Crazy) Cat Lady

A cat lady is typically portrayed as a **middle-aged or elderly spinster** who owns many pet cats or compulsively feeds stray ones. The term is **negatively connoted**, as it is associated with the concept of **spinsterhood**; in recent times the cat lady has been associated with the idea of a romance-challenged (and often career-oriented) woman. A peculiar psychological feature ascribed to cat ladies is the fact that they aren't cognizant of their loneliness and of the poor sanitary conditions of their abode, which they obviously share with a number of cats. People who are aware of it are not normally considered cat ladies, but rather bohemians.

Naftali Berrill, Ph.D., Director of the New York Center for Neuropsychology and Forensic Behavioral Science, has explained the drive(s) behind cat ladies' behaviors thus: 'These may be people who have a very hard time expressing themselves to other people. They may find the human need for affection is met most easily through a relationship with a pet.' This devotion may sometimes (yet, not necessarily) signal **mental or emotional issues** such as depression. Recent research also indicates a link with the parasite **Toxoplasma gondii**, which sexually reproduces exclusively in cats, and causes numerous psychiatric conditions, including **obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)**. This may explain why compulsive hoarding of cats, a symptom of obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), has long been associated with 'crazy cat ladies'. Mass media has also drawn on this stereotype to coin the term **Crazy Cat Lady Syndrome** to refer to the association between *T. gondii* and psychiatric conditions.



Click on the Pictures for two **VIDEOS** on Cat Ladies