

# INTRODUCTION

We have been informed by those patient researchers who really enjoy delving into facts and figures that cats are now the most popular pets in the United States. Several reasons are listed with solemn sincerity: a cat can become an "inside" animal in a small apartment; it does not have to be escorted on "walks" but is more civilized about intimate functions; it is a pleasant lap sitter and comfort; it is less expensive (Ha, have you priced food and cat litter, or vet bills recently?); and so on. So much for official recognition.

However, no matter how sensible one imagines oneself to be, still the cat remains a mystery either intriguing or irritating or both. We cannot help but believe that cats, always choosing to go their own way, do possess a quality for weighing the human with whom she or he chooses to live, and have a masterful way of training the whole household into a system most benefiting the cat.

Is this some form of magic? Of course not. Magic has been placed beyond the boundaries of acceptance. If we suspect that we are chess pieces to be played for fun or profit by our "pets," then we have definitely courted insanity.

Magic and cats, however, have been linked in our minds for generations. Cats have been worshiped and reviled, studied and misunderstood for generations upon generations. They are still masters of themselves—magic or no magic.