

Cat in the Rain Characters

Writer: Ernest Hemingway | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

The American Wife ☼☼☼: She is the central character of the story. Throughout the narrative, her loneliness, neglect, emptiness, and desire for love are clearly shown. When she sees the cat curled up under the table in the rain, she feels deep affection for it.

Major Characters

- **The American Wife ☼☼☼:** She is the central character of the story. Throughout the narrative, her loneliness, neglect, emptiness, and desire for love are clearly shown. When she sees the cat curled up under the table in the rain, she feels deep affection for it. She does not just want a cat; she longs for womanhood, care, identity, freedom, and a sense of importance. Her wishes to grow her hair long, eat with her own silverware, wear new clothes, enjoy spring, and have a cat all symbolize her suppressed desires. In the end, the cat sent by the hotel-keeper makes her feel valued for the first time.
- **George:** He is the husband of the American wife. In the story, he appears indifferent, insensitive, and self-centered. He keeps reading his book and does not try to understand his wife's emotions, desires, pain, or loneliness. When she expresses what she wants, he repeatedly tells her, "Oh, shut up and get something to read." His lack of attention and understanding increases his wife's emotional emptiness. George stands as a symbol of male insensitivity and emotional distance.
- **The Hotel-Keeper / Padrone:** He is an elderly, tall, calm, and respectful Italian man. The American wife receives from him the respect and importance she never gets from her own husband. The hotel-keeper shows kindness, care, and sincerity toward her. At the end, he sends a cat for his wife, symbolizing his compassion and humanity. He understands a woman's longing and emotional needs, something George fails to understand.

Minor Characters

- **The Maid:** She is the hotel employee who takes care of the American couple's room. Following the hotel-keeper's instructions, she stands beside the American wife with an umbrella so that she does not get wet in the rain. In the end, she is the one who brings the tortoise-shell cat to the wife. She represents care, assistance, and the hotel-keeper's human and compassionate actions.

- **The Cat:** The first small cat seen in the story is not a developed character but serves a symbolic role. It represents the American wife's loneliness, her hunger for affection, and her desire for motherhood. The helpless animal shivering in the rain mirrors the emptiness inside her. The bigger cat sent by the padrone at the end symbolizes the fulfillment of her unspoken and long-suppressed desires.

LxNotes