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Missing Mazie.

Fri, 2011-12-30 09:37 — Robin Olson [1]

Mazie went to her new home on Christmas Eve. I tried to think of it as a gift to her, a forever home, one that she'd been waiting for for so very long. She'd been with me for fourteen months. The least I could do is send her off to the best home possible since she'd been waiting for so long. This was not an easy adoption on a number of levels. I struggle with my decision because it's difficult to have faith in how the future will play out, but hopefully some day I'll look back on this and be glad about the choices I made.

I have to consider the options. In all the time Mazie was here, she had only one other application from a 65 year old retiree. While I'm sure the home was fine, Mazie would have been the only cat in a quiet home. Somehow it seemed unfair that she would have such a solitary life. **I always imagined Mazie playing with kids and having lots of fun. She has a lot of energy and would thrive in an active home. I held out, hoping that a family would come along one day.**

I got an email a few weeks ago from a woman who said her daughters fell in love with Mazie. They realized that little kittens got homes easily and were very sad that Mazie was still waiting for hers to come along. They wanted her to come and live with them so they could give her lots of love and be their kitty. I got a lump in my throat when I read that. Maybe this was what I was waiting for?

©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Blitzen (top), the DOOD (middle) and Mazie (in the basket)

The girls are 4 and 7. I usually don't adopt out to families if there are children under 5 in the home-especially if kittens are involved. Yes, there are always exceptions to this policy and **I felt that since the girl was nearing the age of 5 in a few months, that I'd give them a chance.** I would know if it was okay to move forward once I met them.

The woman was just divorced and had custody of the children only half time. This gave me some relief. **Mazie would have alone time with the Mom and some peace and quiet. Perhaps it was the perfect blend?**

The home itself was neat as a pin, a sweet three-bedroom cottage style house built in the early 1900's. I loved it. There was even a white picket fence wrapping the front yard. I saw the two girls as I walked down the path towards their front door. They were standing in the doorway, their faces pressed against the glass. Then they started bouncing up and down. I couldn't help but smile.

©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Nap time before the adopters come over.

That was the last time I could hear anything for the next 30 minutes.

The woman came to the door and greeted me. She was very friendly, but seemed a bit stressed. **The girls said a quick hello, then started fighting and screaming, tossing seat cushions at each other, then yelling some more at a pitch that was so high and so loud I thought my ear drums were going to split.** Their mother was mortified. She said how the girls had been great all day, but now they, perhaps were overtired or hungry. Whatever the real reason was, the girls were just hyper. My ears started to ring and I think I heard every other word that was said. In a way it was funny, here was the mom telling the girls to be good angels and them ignoring her. **For once it seemed it was easier to have young cats running around breaking things, than live with these two kids.** There was no getting through to them-even threatening them that they could never meet Mazie if they didn't cut it out. The best they would do was stop for a few seconds, then think of some other way to torment each other (and us).

©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. My first goodbye to Mazie.

I liked the Mom. She had a good job and would be home a lot. I knew Mazie would be fine with her, but with those kids? I just didn't know. **I did, however, know two things: kids get tired eventually AND kids grow up. I had my first kitten when I was just four years old. Whose to say these girls shouldn't have a similar experience?** I didn't see them as being violent to an animal. I saw typical sibling rivalry and I guessed they were revved up because someone new was in the house.

Their mom was not a pushover. I knew she would be responsible and make sure Mazie was safe, but how would Mazie handle this? There was only one way to find out.

I invited them to come over the next morning.

I thought that perhaps the girls would be different in my home. **At first, they were much quieter, especially when they realized Mazie would run off if they got too loud.** Mazie didn't seem to care for them, keeping a safe distance. I told the girls to sit on the floor and let Mazie come to them. She did, but very hesitantly. The girls would try to grab at her, unable to hold back their enthusiasm. I supposed they expected her to be friendlier, and I did, too, but clearly Mazie was getting crankier, the longer they were there.

©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Blitzen and the DOOD say goodbye, too.

I didn't want to be close-minded and just say no. This was their first time with Mazie and vice versa. Perhaps they would all learn to adjust and become really good friends?

I took the girls upstairs to meet the kittens while Sam stayed with their Mom and Mazie. I wanted Sam to observe things so I could have his opinion. He's a dad, after all, with a full grown daughter. I depend on him to see things or understand things I could not.

The girls were little turds. Sorry to say that, but the older one was shockingly critical about there being cat litter grains on the floor and that it smelled in the room. It did smell, but I had just cleaned out the pan and put in fresh litter and with it being cold outside I had the window tightly shut. I opened the window and she stopped complaining and went on to focus on something else that annoyed her. The younger one was a little drama-queen about the kittens scratching her *(which I warned her about, but she still wanted to see the kittens and one of them did scratch her…at least that's what she claimed, with tears rolling down her cheeks and NO SIGN of anything on her leg, which you'd think had been amputated by a kitten, she was in such distress.).* **Am I a fan of kids? Yes, sometimes. I love my nephew, but he's family. Again, kids are kids. They can easily be egocentric and thoughtless. Did they just go through the trauma of having their parents split up? Yes. Were these girls going to do harm to Mazie? No. Would they annoy her? Yes, probably. Would I be terminally confused about what to do? Looks that way.**

I didn't know what to do and I said as much to the Mom. I was able to get some feedback from Sam for a quick minute when the mom was dealing with the girls. He said that he saw the Mom with Mazie and that she was very sweet with the cat. That Mazie seemed to like her very much and was quite relaxed and content to be with her. **He also said that although the girls were not being angels, that the excitement of having a new cat would wear off and that they'd soon go on to something else. That the Mom would really be Mazie's buddy and that Mazie could protect herself as well as find a place to hide if the girls got out of hand.**

I asked the Mom what she wanted to do. She wanted to go ahead with the adoption and surprisingly, the girls did, too. **They didn't whine about wanting the kittens. They wanted Mazie.**

I said we could give it a try for a few weeks and see how it went. I had a lump in my throat. **I realized I wouldn't want Mazie to go because she's well rooted in my heart, but I also had to remember that she will get a lot of attention, okay maybe too much, but she will be the Queen of her home, instead of one of the crowd.**

I packed up Mazie's bed and gave them a new cat scratcher, another cat bed, some treats, some raw food and a few toys. I knew they would get her more things, but I wanted her to have something familiar. **I also wanted to tell Mazie to give it time; that it would be okay. I wanted to believe that, too.**

Mazie's been gone for a few days. I keep looking for her or expecting to hear her meowing. I saw the DOOD in her favorite spot; a fabric basket that hangs off the cat tree. It made me sad that she wasn't in it.

The mom sent me a photo of Mazie with the girls. **The girls are all smiles. Mazie looks miserable.** I wanted to bust through their door and take her back, but it was only the first night.

©2011 Robin A.F. Olson. Mazie, relaxing in her new home.

A day later I got another photo. The girls went to be with their dad for a few days. I knew Mazie was getting a break from them. The photo shows Mazie laying on the bed in the sunshine, washing her face. **She looks as happy as can be and no sign of any stress.**

It would have been easy to say no to this adoption and just keep Mazie, but I didn't feel she would be in any danger. Kids grow up and things change. *I think Mazie will have a comfortable life with occasional irritations, nothing any different then any of us experience from day to day.* I'm not being glib, I'm just trying to keep myself from freaking out and running over to the house and taking Mazie back.

Let's give it some time and see how it goes.

Fingers and toes crossed.

Update: Just before I posted this story I got an update from Mazie's adopter. She wrote: *"Mazie is doing overall very well. She loves the home and is seeming to acclimate very well. She loves to talk and run around the house at night and she tends to sleep during the day. The girls arrived back on Wednesday AM. They were very excited about seeing her again and tended to want to see her even if she was a little apprehensive because of all the noise and excitability. She has made some good progress since Wed AM and the girls have also been spoken to about the fact that if they cannot be calm around her and earn her trust that she may have to go back. I am using this for leverage and it seems to be working well.*

I expect things to calm down over the next few weeks and I also think that Mazie will continue to gain confidence and trust in her surroundings. We love her so much she is a wonderful addition to our family :-)"

Comments

Wed, 2012-01-04 12:37 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

Mazie

It's always painful giving away a loved one, and I can tell that it has caused some heartache. However I think that with good parenting the children will be fine with the cat, and I'm betting [2] any acclimatisation issue is in no small part down to the new surroundings. The girls will grow up to love their new furry friend, and you can take solace that Mazie seems to have gone to a good home. Sitting in the sun she looks happy enough! Good luck to Mazie.

Sun, 2012-01-01 02:12 — Shelli

For what it's worth, Malka,

For what it's worth, Malka, age 6, & Noah Matan, age 3, love on Quincy a bit too much sometimes, but he has found some great places above the reach of little hands, and is still the most tolerant of felines. I also think that cats in general, "get" that kids are kids, and will avoid them until they go to bed, and then come out and love on the tall ones until the "shorties" wake up.

So of course, I have the kids help feed Quincy, which is good all around!

Fri, 2011-12-30 16:41 — http://lizziemade.blogspot.com (not verified)

Sounds okay Robin!

That lady sounds sensible. Little girls can be very excitable and shrill - which is obviously hard to cope with if you have sensitive ears and/or are a small cat. However, their mom sounds as though she has Mazie's interests at heart and will do her best to make sure she's not harassed or distressed by the little girls. As Sam says, the children will get used to Mazie and will settle down - and find other stuff to do. All children fight from time to time, they all get hyper and overexcited. And most small girls are drama queens and/or bossy/critical. You almost certainly caught them at a bad moment - and your explanation for their behaviour is almost certainly correct.

I would think that Mazie will soon establish a few ground rules of her own; cats do. Our old man has dished out his own feline brand of discipline before now - the Boy has had a couple of smacks (claws in!), for misdemeanours. Sherlock doesn't put up with being poked or prodded (though the Boy is now 14 and treats Sherlock with a lot of respect). He likes to stroke and cuddle Sherlock, which they both enjoy, but if he doesn't stop when the cat says, then the cat dishes out the discipline! Mazie will do this with the little girls - a couple of smacks from a claws-in paw or a warning nip on the hand, and they will learn to be more respectful - especially if their mother continues to be sensible and backs up the cat's actions with a firm explanation that their behaviour is not acceptable.

I think you had a very hard decision to make, but it seems you have done the right thing. If Mazie is miserable, I think the new owner will notice this and will come back to you for advice - or even bring her back if necessary. But I think Mazie will be contented enough. As you say, none of us have lives that are happy all the time - there are little irritations. And she gets peace and quiet while the children are away, or out at school etc. The photo of Mazie washing her ears in the sunshine is lovely - a picture of things to come, I would think.

Another Well Done to wonderful Robin and Sam!

Fri, 2011-12-30 10:14 — Jean Smith (not verified)

Mazie

I would definitely feel the same way that you do. I am a senior citizen and have two granddaughters that have always known from the start that you don't be mean or do anything to the furry family members or the doggies, as they are family too. Hope this doesn't sound strange. They get along with all of our furry family and love them very much. Hope that Mazie does well with this family and if she doesn't seem to be doing good, wouldn't have any problem going and bringing her back home.

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