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## The Accidental Feral. Big Daddy's Near Death Scare.

Wed, 2014-05-07 18:24 — Robin Olson

**Saturday morning I got a text message from Warren that made me burst into tears. It was bad news about a cat named Big Daddy, a hunk of man-cat Warren had trapped behind Home Depot near his house in northern Georgia a few months ago. At the time, we assumed the cat was feral, but within hours after being trapped it was clear this cat was the exact opposite. He was SO charming we ALL fell in love with him. I wrote about Big D's adventure in the post: [The Accidental Feral, Big Daddy](#) [1].**



©2014 William Mahone. Used with permission. [www.WilliamMahonePhotography.com](http://www.WilliamMahonePhotography.com) [2]. The face that launched 1000 sighs... Big Daddy.

Soon after my post went up asking for a shelter to take on Big Daddy we were delighted that [Angels of Assisi](#) [3], of Roanoke, VA, offered to provide a placement for him until he was adopted. [You can check out that story here [The Accidental Feral's Next journey is with the Angels](#)] [4]

**After only a few weeks of being with [A of A](#) [3], Big Daddy was adopted, but sadly, was returned due to his serious fear of dogs.** We knew he'd find his home so he returned to the shelter to wait. As far as we knew, Big D was fine until the shocking news on Saturday.

**Big Daddy who has FIV, was in critical condition from a serious upper respiratory tract infection that had gotten so bad one of his lungs collapsed. The lack of oxygen in his system caused him to go blind.**

My own vet, Dr. Larry, had never even heard of anything like that happening before and neither had I. Though technically it could be possible, it was not something that happened with any regularity and also proved how seriously ill Big Daddy was...

**...and explained why there was little hope he'd make it through the night.**

I posted a PawCircle for Big Daddy right away on our [Facebook](#) [5] page and so began the flood of good wishes, prayers and loving messages from over 30,000 people from as far away as Australia and the UK.

**If love alone could cure Big Daddy, then he should be fine, but I knew better.**

It was up to Big Daddy's compromised immune system as to whether or not he would survive once he was getting IV antibiotics and other supportive care.



©2014 Warren Royal. Used with permission. Before Big Daddy got sick

**I wanted to bargain with God to spare Big Daddy's life. I promised I'd rescue more cats or be a better person...I was so busted up I couldn't stop crying. For the next 24 hours I felt sick to my stomach with worry, hoping Warren wouldn't update me or that he would, but only with good news.**

Megan, Big Daddy's foster mom at A of A relayed the story of how things unfolded. With her permission I'm sharing her words here with some minor edits:

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*Big Daddy first got sick last weekend, Chelsea and I saw him on Saturday April 26th and he had the typical URI symptoms - runny nose, sneezy, congested, a little lethargic. He was still in good spirits at that time, while he wasn't coming to the front of his cage demanding love he was accepting when we reached in. He had been started on antibiotics at that point. Put a bowl of wet food in front of him and he chowed down. By Monday (April 28) he was getting worse - very congested, blowing snot, not eating. The vets changed up his meds at this point to guifasen cough tabs, clavamox, and some nasal drops to help with the congestion.*

*On Wednesday (April 30) I brought him home to foster and help him recover, I have a very good track record with sick kittens and thought I'd give Big Daddy a try here. I was aware that because of his FIV he would have a harder time fighting this infection, but I had no idea what was in store for us over the next few days. ... I was syringe feeding him (he was not eating on his own at all at this point), giving him his meds, nebulizing him twice a day, and keeping a humidifier running in his room all the time.*

*He seemed stable Wednesday and Thursday, but Friday evening he began going downhill very quickly. He was wheezing and gasping for breath most of the night. As I was trying to syringe feed him Friday night he had started clenching his jaw so tight I was not able to wiggle the syringe in to feed him at all. At that point I started panicking, unsure what to do for him. I tried giving him subcutaneous fluids, but he was fighting so much that the needle wouldn't stay in.*

***After another attempt at syringe feeding he got very agitated and started walking away from me... He got to the edge of the bed and walked off, not jumped, walked off the bed right into the floor. This is when I REALLY panicked and started to think maybe he couldn't see, I had also noticed that he would sit with his face against a wall and paw at the wall.***

I slept in my guest bedroom with him Friday night, unsure if he would even make it through the night. Saturday morning I got him to the vet at Angels of Assisi with tears in my eyes because I was afraid there was nothing else we could do for our sweet boy, our fabulous veterinarian Dr. Raeann Foster immediately started working on Big Daddy in between paying clients.

He was started on oxygen via facemask; she gave him some steroids, and was planning on starting an IV to give him fluids. After describing how he walked off the bed and was staring at walls she tested his vision and confirmed that he was blind.

***She believed that his brain had been oxygen deprived for so long and that's what had led to the blindness.*** Obviously, with the blindness everything we tried to do was absolutely terrifying to him and he became very stressed and started lashing out at everyone who would touch him. Raeann (with the help of two great vet assistants!) was finally able to start an IV catheter so we could give him fluids.

We got him back on the oxygen, but he became very stressed and thrashed until he ripped out the IV. **At this point Chelsea spoke with Warren to update him on Big Daddy's status and let him know that we may lose him...Warren generously offered to sponsor Big Daddy's care if we could/would get him to a full service clinic.**

I high tailed it to Emergency Veterinary Services of Roanoke and they quickly took him from me to begin examining and working on him. The vet there updated me quickly and warned me that his prognosis was not good and that he could crash and go downhill very quickly. She told me the plan was to place him in an oxygen chamber where he would be able to get continuous oxygen to help him breathe better. When he was more relaxed they would start running blood work and get chest x-rays. They had to take everything very slowly as it didn't take much to stress Big Daddy out and cause him to lash out at the staff. I left him in their very capable hands at this point. I called later that evening to check on him and was told that they'd been able to start an IV to give him fluids and antibiotics, had drawn some blood, and he was resting comfortably.

I called again late that night to check on him again and they'd been able to do all his blood work and x-rays, but did not have results yet. I tried to get some sleep Saturday night wondering if Big Daddy would make it. **I called first thing Sunday morning for an update on him and was shocked to hear that he'd eaten a little on his own! The oxygen and fluids and antibiotics were working wonders! He seemed to be regaining some vision;** he was more relaxed and very friendly with the staff taking care of him. She even told me that he was purring!

She told me that he was not out of the woods just yet, but that she was very happy with the progress he'd made over night. His blood work results were in - his WBC count was very elevated (Which was expected with an infection); his kidney enzymes were slightly elevated (possibly due to dehydration). His x-rays showed the he had a possible collapsed lung, which explained his difficulty breathing. She said they would begin trying to wean him off the oxygen then. So while he was not out of the woods, we became cautiously optimistic for a full recovery!

**...I went to visit BD that evening at the Emergency Vet clinic and he was looking amazing, I could not believe this was the same cat I'd dropped off just 24 hours prior when he couldn't breathe or see!** He was now completely off oxygen, his vision was returning, he was eating on his own, he was purring and loving on the staff...



©2014 Megan Greer. Used with Permission. Big Daddy, down 3 pounds from being sick, got a visit from Megan at the ER Vet.

As the hours ticked by it seemed that Big Daddy was responding to treatment enough to leave the ER. By Monday he was back home with Megan, who would provide him with continued care and monitoring. **With the good news spreading that Big D. was going to make it I think we all shared a sigh of relief and plenty of tears, but it also left us with more questions.**

**What was next for Big Daddy?** How could he go back to A of A's shelter after being so very sick and be exposed to other cats? If he couldn't be in the shelter where would he go? Could he stay in foster care for the time being...but how long could he stay there if it prevented the shelter from saving more lives?

**The answer was starting to take shape, but right now we have to focus on getting Big Daddy stable and off his meds, then see how he does.**

Angels of Assisi has an Amazon WishList that includes some food for Big Daddy. **If you'd like to send him a Get Well gift please visit [THIS LINK](#)** <sup>[6]</sup>. MAKE SURE YOU LEAVE A GIFT MESSAGE THAT YOUR GIFT IS FOR BIG DADDY (he likes Blue Buffalo and Spot's Stew and others).

**A of A would also like to THANK everyone for their support and words of encouragement and to Warren for covering 100% of Big Daddy's vet care costs.**



Visit our **FACEBOOK PAGE** [HERE](#) [5] to **LIKE** our page and Change your settings now.

## Stay tuned for Part Two...*"The Accidental Feral. There's No Place Like Home."*

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## Comments

Fri, 2014-05-09 14:47 — jmuhj (not verified)

### **RE: BIG DADDY** [11]

What a gorgeous, gorgeous boy. \*PRAYERS\* for him!!!

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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