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[Home](#) > The Accidental Feral. Ch 5. In this Moment.

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Mon, 2014-07-21 14:10 — Robin Olson

It's never easy to care for a cat when they fall ill. Regardless of your resources or skills, managing your own heart is probably the toughest part of seeing your dear companion weaken and eventually die. Perhaps it's a blessing that cats live the moment. They don't ponder the "what ifs" about their life or fret over the bad choices they've made. If they're breathing and on the right side of the grass, it's all good.

Sadly, we often know what lies ahead and that's why it's so difficult on us. It's why I've found myself crying when I'm out running errands and I have a few moments to myself. A mournful song plays on the stereo and I think about what is yet to come for a very special cat named Big Daddy and my heart breaks.

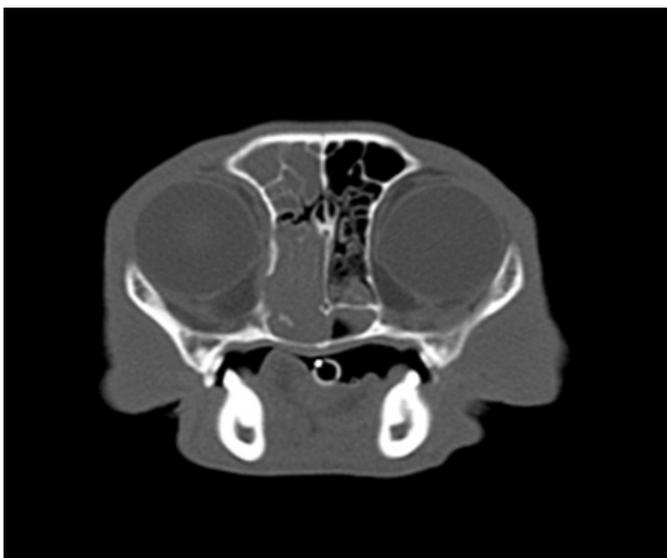


©2014 Warren Royal. Our first glimpse of Big Daddy.

I've followed Big Daddy's journey from just after the moment his caretaker and BFF, [Warren trapped him](#) ^[1], to the long phone calls over the past few days discussing what should be done next for him—relieve his suffering from aggressive nasal cancer or find a way to fight the battle anew.

What began as a [near-death scare](#) ^[2] a few months ago, going temporarily blind and having a lung collapse, was only the beginning of what has been one heartbreak after another for this soulful looking creature. For a young cat like Big Daddy, hearing the word "cancer" was a devastating blow even though Big D has plugged along as best he could whatever came his way. He's just "that kind" of cat.

Big Daddy started chemo and did fairly well. There was a reduction in the spread of the cancer as the swelling in his lymph nodes went away, but what we didn't know was the mass that was either removed or only partially removed months ago had come back and was growing dangerously large. More tests confirmed it was in his right sinus and pushing on his right eye and next...his brain.



Last week's CT Scan. The dark area between Big Daddy's eyes is clear sinus and the gray area that is similar to the black is the mass located.

But Big Daddy didn't know this. He couldn't breathe very easily and his sense of smell was so weak he lost his taste for his favorite food. He still played, not as joyfully, but he didn't let the mass completely stop his love for life. Warren knew that if something wasn't done, Big Daddy's time was almost up.



©2014 Warren Royal. Warren & Big Daddy.

Warren and I had a long talk about giving him radiation. The truth is it may only be palliative. It's not a cure. Big Daddy has terminal cancer. The question we don't know the answer to is when he will die and how long we can put it off and keep him happy and comfortable in the meantime.

We reached out to professionals. Warren spoke with a radiologist who said that nasal cancer responds very well to radiation and, "knock wood" so far she's never seen it NOT reduce the size of the mass. [Dr. Gerald Post](#) ⁽³⁾, our oncologist Vet who worked with Fred, also weighed in and agreed that Big Daddy's treatment should be radiation along with chemo. The chemo would stop the spread of the cancer to his GI tract and the radiation would reduce the mass. It would mean 5 days in a row of radiation for Big Daddy and some discomfort, but the hope would be in a few weeks time, that Big Daddy would no longer be struggling to breathe and his vision would remain intact.

Warren's only concern is quality of life for Big Daddy. He does not want him to suffer. Warren gave up on going to important business trips to stay home and make sure Big Daddy got to his Vet appointments and so he could continue to provide care. For a professed former dog lover, Warren's tune has certainly changed. **I have rarely ever seen anyone so dedicated to providing the right care, whatever that may mean, for a cat.**



©2014 Warren Royal. Taking a break to catch his breath.

Considering what the costs involve for the chemo, the CT scan, the radiation, I'm ever in awe that Warren just won't give up. He knows if he doesn't do something right now, Big Daddy is lost to us all.

We've "gone to the well" a few times very recently, asking for donations to help Big Daddy keep going. No one wants to ask for help but the truth is, Vet care is expensive, especially when you're dealing with cancer.

The good news is that Warren has a surprise up his sleeve and I have one, too.



Warren's company, [Royal Bobbles](#) ^[4], produces custom bobbleheads. While he's been busy researching and caring for Big Daddy, he and his team have been creating a Big Daddy bobblehead. **The final design has just been approved and the exciting news is that EVERYONE who donates \$50.00 (either as a sole donation OR if you've donated a few dollars in our last fundraiser and donate again to reach that \$50.00 mark) will get a Big Daddy bobblehead of their own.** It's a special Thank You gift Warren wants as many folks as possible to have. They will start shipping in 90 days.



©2014 Warren Royal. Some special one-on-one time.

My surprise is that Chris C., a dedicated supporter of my rescue, [Kitten Associates](#) ^[5], has offered up a fundraiser challenge! She will match, dollar for dollar, every donation that comes in up to \$500.00! That means if you donate \$10, it will mean \$20 for Big Daddy!

Our starting point for the matching funds challenge will be when the YouCaring fundraiser reaches \$500.00 total. **Thank you SO MUCH, Chris! You're part of the team making a big difference in Big Daddy's life.**

You can donate via Big Daddy's fundraiser below OR **you can also call in a credit card to Blue Pearl Veterinary Partners at 404-459-0903 OR mail a check to them at: 455 Abernathy Road NE, Sandy Springs, GA 30328. MAKE SURE you put "For Big Daddy/KittenAssociates"** on the note section of the check so they know to add your donation to the account.

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Because we know what Big Daddy faces we choose to do something about it. Although the day to day struggle to not lose faith remains a big challenge, I'm proud to say that Warren will slay dragons for Big D. That much is clear. **What else is clear is that Big Daddy is a Hell of a lucky cat, even with the darkest days yet to come. He could have been lost to us so long ago...alone...dead...behind that Home Depot where Warren first discovered him.** Because of that I try to take some comfort in the joy that we all get to know a truly special cat through Warren's photos and updates, instead.

Let's try to be like Big Daddy. In this moment, everything is all right. That's what matters.



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Comments

Mon, 2014-07-21 15:08 — jmuwj (not verified)

RE: BIG DADDY ^[10]

Wishing I was still middle class. As I'm not, I am sharing on twitter, with love and *PRAYERS* for sweet, sweet Big Daddy. Bless his strong warrior soul.

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[7] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/33>

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[10] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/9188#comment-9188>