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Bob's Battle with Lymphoma: Too Close for Comfort

Fri, 2011-01-07 13:53 — Robin Olson

I thought Wednesday was bad. Okay, and I was right, it was. Yesterday morning was worse, around 6AM, Petunia attacked Blitzzen who was SLEEPING on the bed with us. She has gone berserk-a jealous rage about MacGruber being here. She's taking it out on Mac and Blitzzen, but mostly Blitz. The poor cat walks around looking miserable. It's got to change. I want peace and quiet in the house for Bob's sake, as well as my own.

Since I was already up with my heart was beating out of my chest from being startled awake, I thought I'd go check on Bob. He was sitting in "his spot," on a fleece cat bed that's covering a heated cat mat that's on three fluffy cat beds. A Princess & the Pea set up if ever there was.

Bob looked glum, but he got up and ate a little bit for me. He looked particularly dreadful, but I had to take Polly and her siblings back to visit Dr Larry. I need to update you on them and will do that soon.

Around 10am, I gave Bob his antibiotic and an antihistimine pill that's supposed to make him hungry. I syringe-fed him some water to wash it down. He gagged. I realized he had gagged right after he ate his breakfast, too. He didn't want a snack. He got up and seemed weak on his feet. He went over to the table and sat under it, to get away from me. My heart sank. Something was wrong.

While at the Vet, I almost had a nervous breakdown. I didn't even want to talk to them about Bob. I just wanted to get the kittens looked at and go home. Dr Larry pulled me aside and we talked...about Bob. He was very concerned that I've already tapped my limit to what I should spend on Bob's care, that I will lose my home, what happens if another cat gets sick, too? What then? I could only answer that I hoped it was a cat I didn't like too much, then started to cry.

Dr Larry kept saying what a great person I am and how I love Bob and give him the best, but there's a point where I have to stop from going broke. He figured I was long past that and I had to agree. Where we differ is where things end. Where do I stop tapping every resource I have? Plus, I don't care about what anyone thinks. I have to go to bed at night and be confident that I did what I felt was appropriate for Bob's quality of life, even if it means it's expensive.



©2010 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob, a week ago.

I went home. Bob looked bad. I offered him some food. He turned away. **Bob ALWAYS PURRS almost ALL the time**. No purr. He was clearly depressed. He licked his mouth-nausea. He gagged a bit. He was supposed to be **HUNGRY**, feeling **GOOD**, not this...no.

I called Dr. I. and voiced my concerns. I didn't know what to expect and maybe I was just seeing something normal or was there a problem? **He told me to bring Bob back to New York and he would do another ultrasound on Bob's abdomen. Perhaps he has cancer in his stomach or intestines.** Time to take a look. He could give another kind of chemo today, too! What? That was not part of the plan yesterday! I told him I had to think about it. **I couldn't do that to Bob**-not another car ride. I couldn't do that to ME. Those tests were gonna COST.

I went online and looked up Elspar. Just about shit a brick. Over and over I saw "**not recommended for cats with LIVER disease or who have had PANCREATITIS!**" Bob **HAD** a horrendous pancreatitis flare up two years ago! Bob has 1/2 of a **LIVER**? WHO would give this stuff to BOB? It was probably making him SICK and possibly hurting him a lot worse than it was

helping him.

So I called Dr. I again. I needed some explanation. I talked to the Vet Tech. She tried to gloss it over. I was not having it. She said to come up and they would run tests. I said how much will that cost? He should be on an IV, that means an overnight stay. There's a snowstorm coming. I would be trapped in New York or not able to go back and get Bob for who knows how long? How much is THAT going to cost? I asked if Dr. Larry could help Bob locally (*and less expensively*) and he's not open 24/7 so that would be a problem. **I was truly panicking. Do I wait it out? Does Bob need to be at the Vet, on an IV NOW?**

It's one thing when you have a cat with upper respiratory. The first few times it may be daunting, but after awhile you KNOW when the cat needs vet care and you KNOW when to let them ride it out. With this-who KNEW WHAT to do?! If I couldn't get Bob to eat, I'd have to force feed him. I could do that, but he was gagging and very uncomfortable. Even I thought he might need some fluids, at least. **They said I could come to the clinic before 5pm or at 10:30AM on Friday they would have an appointment for Bob if I thought I could get him through the night.**

Shit.

I didn't know what to do. It was about 2pm-last time Bob ate (*according to my notes-and yes I take notes about when Bob does just about everything*) was at 7am. It was make or break. He had to eat.

I opened a can of Evo, Beef. Bob seems to have a craving for this for some reason. I put a tiny bit on a plate, warmed it and brought it over to him. I put some on my finger. He sniffed, but did not turn away, as I expected he would. **His old man, softened pink tongue slipped out of his mouth a little way and licked at my finger.** Then Bob sat up! I put the plate in front of him, being careful not to push too much to get him to eat. I didn't want him to run back under the table and hide. He began to eat! He stopped after a few bites and stood up. He's used to eating in "his place" by the kitchen so I walked him over to the spot and put the food back down. **He kept eating. I could NOT believe my eyes.**

He even did his "thing" in the litter pan, then I gave him a few chicken treats, which he ate right up. I didn't want him to get sick from eating too much and he seemed satisfied. He found his way into my office and headed to one of the beds under my desk. He sat right next to Petunia-who he hates and Spencer, who is his co-Boss-of-the-house.



©2010 Robin A.F. Olson. Bob, with his buds. (I'm going to put a better cat bed in "his" spot today!)

I have a space heater running so it's nice and toasty and the area under the desk gets lots of sun, too. The cats settled down and Bob went back to resting. **I didn't want to be too hopeful, but I knew I could hold off on taking him to ANY Vet for awhile.**

The trend continued. Bob ate some dinner, not a lot, but some. The Vet called me from NY. They were wondering how Bob was doing and if I was coming in that afternoon. I told them no. I wanted to say, you're not getting any more money from me today, OK?!

Since there's a storm coming, Sam and I realized we HAD to run to the store and stock up on a few things or we'd be eating Bob's cat food, too. We were gone for an hour or so. When we got home, I unlocked the front door, but before I stepped inside, I thought about Bob. I thought that I could open the door and he could have passed away while we were gone. Then I chastised myself for thinking that, but I couldn't help it! I took a deep breath and opened the door.

There was Bob. Standing up, clearly waiting for us to come in the door. He was obviously HUNGRY again! I was overjoyed!

I couldn't wait to get the groceries put away so I could give Bob one of the treats I bought him. **Bob LOVES raw chicken liver.** Yes, **RAW.** He is a **FREAK** about it. So I cut up two big hunks of liver. **The entire time Bob was getting under my feet, blocking my way, almost tripping me-as he USUALLY DOES when he WANTS FOOD. He can be SO ANNOYING and I JUST LOVED IT! This was a Bob I had not seen since before his surgery!**

I put down the plate of liver. I had to give some to Blitzen, too. He shares Bob's passion for the stuff. Blitzen dug in, but Bob gave him a run for his money. Bob ate with gusto and cleaned his plate! Then he walked over to his heated "Princess" bed and relaxed. Whatever is in that pill was working wonders.

I can't adequately describe what a shocking difference in Bob I've seen. He's more social again, climbs the stairs, is starting to meow a bit, though it's more of an "air-meow." He's a lot less fussy about his food, too. As for the effect those pills had on me...well, I feel like I can breathe again and my heart isn't racing.

Crossing Fingers, but...I think that maybe, just maybe I will be canceling that 10:30am vet appointment for tomorrow.

Update: **I DID CANCEL THE APPOINTMENT. No Vet for Bob TODAY!**

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Comments

Fri, 2011-01-07 14:10 — [Jan Kozlowski \(not verified\)](#) ^[9]

Yay Bob! Yay Robin! Did you ^[10]

Yay Bob! Yay Robin! Did you end up stopping the Elspar?

Fri, 2011-01-07 14:58 — Ingrid (not verified)

This is great news. I had to ^[11]

This is great news. I had to stop home on my lunch hour so I could check FB for a Bob report. Big hugs to you both!

Fri, 2011-01-07 15:30 — Phil (not verified)

Bob ^[12]

Bob needs a break to heal from the inside I think, you and him are under stress at the moment. Its good that he if feeling better and you know what is best for him and yourself.

Fri, 2011-01-07 16:07 — Margaret (not verified)

Bob ^[13]

Wonderful news! Wonderful, wonderful news!!

Fri, 2011-01-07 18:17 — [Bernadette \(not verified\)](#) ^[14]

Bob ^[15]

Robin~there are those days when all we do is observe the sick kitty and even the least hopeful thing they do is a miracle. That vigilance is just as important as what the veterinarian does. There were plenty of nights I went to sleep and wondered if I'd wake up to find whoever was terminal or end stage would pass in the night, or while I was away at an event for the day. And as we always say that our animals will let us know what they need, Bob let you know about the liver!

When one of my cats sees a specialist or emergency, I always talk to my veterinarian right away about any new medications or treatments and if nothing else she's better at explaining things, but we've also found a few medication issues even when I've provided more than complete records.

Enjoy your weekend with Bob! May there be peace in your household, especially now.

Sat, 2011-01-08 00:45 — [Shelli](#) ^[16]

When my grandmother was in ^[17]

When my grandmother was in her late 80's, I had to remind my mom to start each and every phone message with "Bubbe's fine. I'm calling about....."

I'm beginning to feel the same way about Bob.... My heart was racing right along with you, and all I can think about is the intuition - you KNOW when you need to act. And act you did. And I am SO glad Mister Bob ate! And that he's napping near my Spence.

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