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The Clementines Arrive with Lots of Unwelcome Friends Part 1

Thu, 2013-10-24 12:20 — Robin Olson

Three weeks ago Sam and I drove to Philadelphia. With miserable traffic on a Friday night and rainy roads it took 5 hours instead of 3, but we were determined to get there. Our goal was simple, eat a big sandwich at [Tony Luke's](#) [1] and pick up 6 orange kittens who were scheduled to arrive via a legged transport. **They were nicknamed *the Clementines*, but some might have called them *the Lucky Ones* because we had rescued them from a small rural animal control in eastern Kentucky just hours before their lives were scheduled to end.**

CLEMANTINES - URGENT, OVERCROWDED!
Tabby - Orange/Tabby - Grey Mix: An adoptable cat in Stanton, KY
Medium • Baby • Female

3 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

These beauties are only a few weeks old and living in an overcrowded situation. They are at high risk because of limited space and lack of cat adoptions. They are of mixed genders, there are 6 remaining. Please help where you can! They are litter box trained.

Volunteer contact phone is 859-948-0371 or visit the shelter on Echo Hollow Rd in Clay City, Ky. 606-663-0021.

There were six kittens from one litter and one kitten (the dilute calico pictured here) from another litter. The dilute was "pulled" from the shelter by a rescue group right away, leaving the orange kittens behind.

I'd never done a rescue from Kentucky before and I had to trust people I didn't know who promised me they would make sure the kittens were quarantined properly and vetted before they arrived. It left me feeling very uneasy because I had no choice but to hope that the kittens were really cleared of fleas, de-wormed, given their first vaccination and checked before leaving for Connecticut. I feared that coming out of a shelter they would be sick, but was assured they were healthy. The last thing I wanted to do was put my other foster cats or my own cats at risk of getting a disease or parasite.

Before we even started our trip, I got a call from my friend, Izzy. She and her hubby, Mark, will frankly drive just about anywhere to help cats in need get to their home and on this day they'd offered to drive from Pennsylvania to West Virginia and back to Philly to rendezvous with us. I've depended on them many times as my link to make some of these rescues happen. Izzy's voice sounded a bit funny as she started to speak. **I knew something was wrong.**



©2013 Friends of Powell County. Not a life for such lovely creatures. I'm so grateful we could get them out thanks to the efforts of people in Powell County.

"Did these kittens get treated for fleas, by any chance?"

I told her they had been bathed only and a vet had seen them just the day before to give them a clean bill of health.

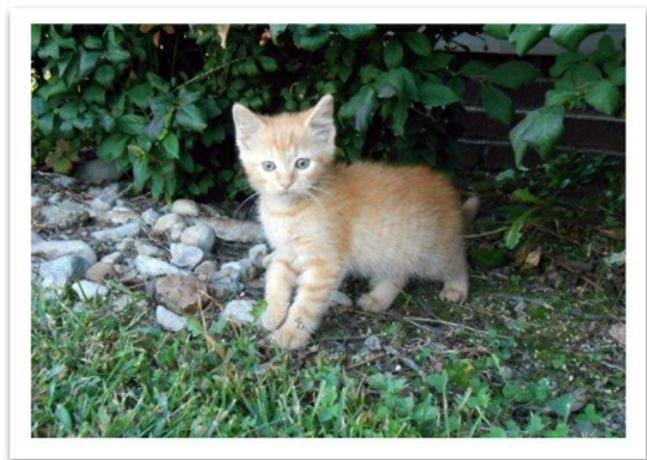
“Well I just killed a little bugger coming off one of the kittens and now I’m seeing another one.”

My heart sank.



©2013 Foster Home in KY. Just for the record, this is NOT QUARANTINE.

During the supposed two week quarantine, I learned that the kittens had been brought outside, Vet’s orders. He said they needed 15 minutes of fresh air every day. When I learned that I just about popped. What kind of foolishness is this? I sent my contact a number of emails, furious that they kept breaking quarantine by going outside. She wouldn’t understand why that was wrong. I saw photos of them in a cage outside in someone’s yard, but when I saw photos of them running around in the grass that just infuriated me. You can’t have quarantine if the cats go outside! Am I crazy? I felt like I was losing my mind. They just didn’t get it and I knew they were exposing the cats to who knows what. So much for having “clean” kittens arrive. **It also made me very worried-did they REALLY get ANY vetting? How could a vet see them the day before, say they were ready to travel, when they were crawling with fleas? You might get a stray flea after seeing the vet, but a lot of them? No way.**



©2013 Foster Home in KY. Blossom enjoying "quarantine."

“What do you want to do?” I asked.

“Well, we can stop at Walmart and I can get some supplies and bathe them while we’re driving.” Izzy said without skipping a beat.”

“What?!”

“It won’t be perfect but it will be something. I’m seeing a lot of fleas.”

“Great.”

So Izzy rigged up a small container with apple cider vinegar and a drop or two of dish soap and water. She soaked the kittens up to their necks as Mark drove 65 mph towards Philly. She picked off and killed as many fleas as she could while I sent off an angry email to the folks in Kentucky.



©2013 Izzy. Fleas anyone?

Once I had time to let the news settle I became fearful I was now going to have to deal with an explosion of fleas throughout my house.

I made a few calls and talked to some of my rescue friends. They assured me it's not that big of a deal, but to not take it lightly, either. There would be a great deal of vacuuming in my future and washing all the linens that the kittens were exposed to.

Due to having limited space for fosters, I had planned to crate the kittens in the one room we NEVER allow cats. It's the room that has the expensive family heirloom rugs and precious family items I can't risk cats destroying. I didn't want the kittens in the room, but thought for just one night it would be okay since they had been vetted. Now I had to worry about the kittens dropping fleas all over the rugs and them getting into the nearby linen closet. I just didn't have much experience with fleas. You'd think I had after over ten years of doing rescue, but most often the cats have been quarantined before I get them.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. The photo is not great, but the dark blobs in the photo are clumps of dead fleas. The bottle was full of them

I had a big tub of diatomaceous earth.^[2] It's fossilized algae and it gets onto the exoskeleton of the flea and basically dries them out and they die. It's very safe for pets so I sprinkled it liberally all over the room, the bedding where the kittens would sleep, anywhere that made sense. The plan was to re-bathe them at their new foster home that would open up the following morning. I just had to keep the fleas at bay for one night.

This foolishness cost me. I had to buy 16 doses of Revolution®^[3] to cover my cats and the foster cats. I could not risk letting one flea start a nightmare throughout my cats. I had to buy another 12 doses (for now) to cover the kittens (a 2-month supply) once they were big enough to be treated. I didn't dare do it right away because I was told they were all very underweight and probably a bit too young for much more than a bath.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. After three tries I finally named all the kittens. We have: Mango (top left), Sherbert (below Mango), Marigold (center), Mandarin/Mandy (lower right), Buttercup (top right) and Blossom (not in photo) .

I couldn't give them Capstar, which kills fleas in 45 minutes, because they were too fragile. It was very frustrating.

We arrived in Philly around 8:30pm and had a few minutes to eat before Izzy and Mark arrived. The sandwiches we'd been looking forward to were VERY spicy, not at all what we remembered. Just as we gave up on finishing them our friends arrived.

Izzy got out of the car. She was holding a plastic bottle that at one time held a beverage. She showed it to me. It was the wastewater from bathing the kittens. It took me a minute to make sense of why the water was MOVING. There were probably over 100 fleas wiggling around in the fluid. I felt sick.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Sherbert before things got really bad for him.

"I didn't get them all, but I got a lot of them, nasty buggers." Izzy said as she shook her head.

I bent down and looked into the cat carrier. It was dark and tough to see the kittens. I could barely make out their faces, but I could see their coats were ratty and they were anxious, unsure of what had been happening. **I told them it would be okay and that they were almost home, but I feared this was just the tip of the iceberg with having problems with the kittens and sadly I was right. Having fleas would be nothing compared to what was to happen next.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. The first sign of problems to come. Blossom's eye is infected. Will this happen times 6 kittens?

Part two next up...

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[Kitten Associates](#) ^[11]

Comments

Thu, 2013-10-24 13:09 — Catnynouse (not verified)

Hi Robin, Back here to save ^[12]

Hi Robin,

Back here to save on cost, we use Golden Retriever size revolution for cats. A tube can be used for 5 adults cats if they weight around 4 to 5 kg. We just use a needle to syringe out 0.3 to 0.35ml of revolution per cat.

Thu, 2013-10-24 14:29 — jmuhj (not verified)

RE: Clementines Pt. 1 ^[13]

I'd feel exactly the same way. Hope you gave the ACC/shelter people hell over this! How uncaring and irresponsible toward you and Izzy, not to mention the KITTENS. Grrrrr! (Aren't they adorable, though! :))

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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Links

[1] <http://www.tonylukes.com/>

[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diatomaceous_earth

[3] <https://www.revolution4cats.com/default.aspx>

[4] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/32>

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[12] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/6700#comment-6700>

[13] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/6701#comment-6701>