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Dexter's Dark Passenger

Tue, 2011-11-22 14:14 — Robin Olson

Note from Robin: CREEPY PHOTO BELOW, BUT NOTHING GORY! You have been warned.

Terri Royal has a big heart. She loves cats and has been particularly touched by the plight of feral cats in her community of northeastern Georgia. Terri's not one to look the other way when a cat needs help. She and her husband, Warren, always seem to have a foster cat in their home, in addition to their five cats, all of whom were rescues.

Terri is the caretaker for a number of feral cat colonies. She makes sure they get fed and that they're all spayed or neutered. Once in awhile a friendly stray comes along and she helps that cat find a good home, too

A few weeks ago, Terri spotted a tiny kitten when she was putting food out for the feral colony. From her husband, Warren's email to me, he described the situation:



©2011 Warren Royal. Used with Permission. Dexter, so sick, but what is wrong with you little guy?

*He lived in the bushes behind Target and today when she went to feed them, he walked out and was very lethargic- horrible respiratory infection, dripping from nose, mouth, and eyes. **He was blowing bubbles from his nose, and sneezing terribly.***

He was too weak to eat, or to struggle, so Terri just picked him up and put him in a small box. *He's very young- 6-8 weeks, and starving. We think he has 2 more siblings in similar condition.*



©2011 Warren Royal. Used with Permission. Just after surgery.

She [Terri] took him to the emergency vet, who gave him fluids, vitamins, combo test, and antibiotic shot, and some milk replacement. I had to leave to catch a flight (on it now) but he's in great hands with Terri. She took him home, set him up in a bedroom upstairs, with water, a little warm bed, and plenty of food and the milk. (she just told me he LOVES it!). He is resting very comfortably and is purring when she pets him- he seems to love affection.

Terri named the kitten, Dexter. He weighed only 1 lb, 4 oz.

Dexter wasn't doing so well. Although he loved affection and wanted to eat, he had constant, severe breathing problems. He had great difficulty eating. It would take him 30 minutes to eat a small amount of food. Terri gave him milk replacement, which he could eat more comfortably, but the poor little tabby was very ill.

Warren writes: *And he would start sneezing - I mean REALLY sneezing - sometimes 20 times in a row, violently. We would find blood spots afterwards. The vets thought that his nose was just really irritated from all the sneezing, maybe a tiny vessel rupture, and that was causing the bleeding. But also he could barely breathe - he was always breathing very loudly, and sometimes mouth-breathing.*

The Vet said to let Dexter rest. Give it time. Thank goodness Terri and Warren didn't heed the advice. They'd seen cats with upper respiratory before. After another day passed, they were sure something else going on, so they took Dexter back to the Vet.

One of Dexter's nostrils was bigger than the other. Nothing remarkable about that, but it was odd. What happened next was horrifying. When the Vet looked into Dexter's nose, SOMETHING LOOKED BACK...and was MOVING INSIDE DEXTER'S SINUS!



©2011 Warren Royal. Used with Permission. THE WOLF WORM.

Warren wrote:

This little kitten had a 1-inch+ WOLF WORM living in his nose.

It was so big that the hardened vet techs cried when they saw it and what this poor kitten had endured.

They could not believe that something **SO BIG had been in this poor kitten's nose.** They saved it for me in formaldehyde so I can see it when I get home - but they're saying it's like the size of a large garden grub-worm, they have never seen anything like it. **He must have filled up his sinus or partially gone down his throat, his nose was so tiny -**

No one expected that Dexter would have to have surgery, especially to remove a Wolf Worm! [1]. Simply tugging it out was NOT an option. Wolf Worms are Bot Fly larvae. Removing just a piece of them results in a horrific anaphylactic (allergic) reaction and terrible infection which could easily go to Dexter's brain.

But would Dexter survive the surgery?

Warren writes: *But since we didn't know this, Terri had fed him that morning, before the vet visit. **And when they figured out what it was, they had to anesthetize him, which was very risky because he had eaten.** (We have lost other ferals during routine spay/neuters under similar circumstances and had been heartbroken). But we felt that it was an emergency, and we had to go ahead and cross our fingers and hope for the best. They waited a few hours to make it a little safer - and while he was down, we went ahead and neutered him.*



©2011 Warren Royal. Used with Permission. Getting some rest.

The Vet carefully removed the Wolf Worm. It was no longer Dexter's Dark Passenger. Now it was safely preserved in a jar while Dexter began the long road to recovery.

Warren writes: **He is much better now, his breathing is completely clear -** but there may be some residual damage. They say he may always have issues with sneezing, and his nose may be permanently enlarged. But we just don't know. He is very happy, and playing, and eating like a HORSE.



©2011 Warren Royal. Used with Permission. Squirrel!

Since he has been with us, even with the worm, he has gone from 1 lb 4 oz to 2 lb 4 oz , mostly on the milk replacement. But I think now the will really start to thrive...



©2011 Warren Royal. Used with Permission. Making friends with Abby

Dexter will be ready to find a forever home in a few weeks. Though they struggle with the idea of keeping Dex, Terri and Warren know they can't help more cats in need if they have too many cats of their own. It's not an easy decision to make, but **with Dexter's loving personality and winning ways, we feel sure his family will find him soon.**



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If you're interested in learning more about Dexter or want to adopt him, please contact me directly at [info\(@\)coveredincathair.com](mailto:info@coveredincathair.com) and I'll put you in touch with Dexter's family. Transportation can be arranged. Dexter is located in Northeastern Georgia.

The Wolf Worm is not available for adoption.

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Comments

Tue, 2011-11-22 14:50 — [Random Felines \(not verified\)](#) [21]

just when you think you have [22]

just when you think you have seen everything....that was....wow...poor baby - glad his foster parents were vigilante and he is on the mend!!

Tue, 2011-11-22 15:50 — [Sally \(not verified\)](#) [23]

Dexter [24]

That one goes in your "WTF" category! What a brave little boy!

Tue, 2011-11-22 16:00 — <http://lizziema...> (not verified) [25]

Poor Dexter! [26]

Oh what a horrible thing for Dexter. I'm so glad Terri and her husband insisted that he saw the vet again. Also very glad he is recovering well and nearly ready for a new home.

He's a lovely looking cat - very beautiful. I'm sure he'll find a home very soon. X

Tue, 2011-11-22 18:23 — [Daisy the Curly Cat \(not verified\)](#) [27]

First of all, Dexter is the [28]

First of all, Dexter is the perfect name for this little bebbeh! It must be such a relief for him to have his "dark passenger" removed. Dexter looks so sweet.

Tue, 2011-11-22 22:59 — Karin (not verified)

Best of Luck to Dexter [29]

I also had a kitten that had a passenger. He was rescued from a feral colony along with his brother and 2 sisters. Of course, they all had URI when they came to me, so they were given the antibiotics to make them better. The other 3 did just fine, but this poor little guy was always stuffy and squeaking when he breathed. I took him to the vet again, and they gave him different antibiotics. I started noticing one side of his nose was getting bigger than the other side, I looked closely and saw something in his nostril, it was dark and weird looking. I took him back to the vet, and he had a botfly worm in his nose. They pulled the worm out of his nose. The vet and the girls there were amazed, they had never seen something like that before in a babies nose.

That was almost 3 years ago. Squeaky as we named him, because he continued to squeak when he would breathe, even after the worm was removed. He was always smaller than his siblings, got URI pretty regularly. Unfortunately, last month he started losing weight badly, so to the vet yet again. They did bloodwork, but everything came out good. So he was on antibiotics again, and getting fluids daily. He didn't improve, on a Sunday morning I woke up and his eye was really swollen and looked funny, and he could hardly walk. So to the emergency vet we went, I asked them what was with his eye,(same side of the face that the worm had been on) that it just showed up that way that morning. They said they thought it was an ulcer or possibly a tumor. I think that worm definitely caused him more trouble than we had ever anticipated. Unfortunately, I had to send Squeaky to Rainbow bridge that day. He was a young guy, but, I know he had a good life for the short time he was with me. RIP Squeaky!

Wed, 2011-11-23 16:07 — [Robin Olson](#) [30]

I'm so sorry for your loss. [31]

Oh Karin, I'm so sorry. I wonder if there had been a second wolf worm in squeaky? Those worms can cause horrendous damage to a kitten, between the massive infections and allergic reactions they cause. What a sad story and unfortunate outcome. The more I learn about cat health, the more I'm amazed there's a cat overpopulation problem. They suffer from so many issues-and so many problems have similar symptoms...it's nearly impossible to figure out what is going on with them some times. {{{hugs}}} I hope my Bob is looking out for Squeaky at the Rainbow Bridge.

Wed, 2011-11-23 11:06 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

I WISH I were near GA!!!! He [32]

I WISH I were near GA!!!! He is SUCH a beautiful kitty!!!! <3 God bless him and his new family wherever they may be!

CICH @ [Google+](#)
Robin @ [Google+](#)

Source URL (modified on 2011-11-22 14:14): <https://coveredincathair.com/content/dexters-dark-passenger?page=5>

Links

- [1] http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_do_you_know_if_a_cat_has_a_wolf_worm_and_the_treatment
- [2] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/33>
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