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Fri, 2014-01-24 11:49 — Robin Olson

It's been a long dry spell between adoptions. I got to the point last year where I considered opening up our policies just so I could approve an application. It goes against my grain to even consider for a moment that I wouldn't get every foster cat the best home possible, that I'd just give up and let them go "wherever."

To understand me, you have to know *The Pretzel Story*.

When I was 10, my Mother took me and my brother on an outing. The goal was to pack a picnic lunch, then go somewhere scenic. We lived in a small town in Minnesota, so it had to be somewhere local, but new to us. She chose the [Elk River Nuclear Power Plant](#) ⁽¹⁾, right next to the Elk River so we could have a view of the river and see the big fancy power plant. Just thinking about it now gives me the chills. It also may explain the funny mole on my thigh.



©1972 J. Feminella. Me, my brother and Mother the same year we did the trip to Elk River. Sadly, I have no access to the 140 photo albums my Mother left after she died. This is one of the few photos I have of my childhood from about that time.

Just as she was pulling out of the driveway, my mother stopped the car and turned to me. My brother had the prime seat up front and had also turned to me, but he was sporting his all too familiar holier-than-thou look on his face while I was left to sulk in the back. She said; "Robin, I packed a bag of pretzels. It's with our lunch right next to you. Whatever I do, whatever I say, do NOT give us any pretzels until we get to Elk River."

Honestly, you'd think my own mother knew what she was getting herself into by saying that to me. Did she forget that I lived to please her? That I was an obedient child? As the oldest kid I was the responsible one while my brother got away with murder.

I nodded, then replied, *okay*, in my sullen-relegated-to-the-back-seat voice and off we went.

About 20 minutes later, my mother asked me for a pretzel. I said no. She laughed then said; "*Robin, really, it's okay, give me a pretzel.*"

I thought it was a test. Based on her orders, my somewhat scientific mind urged me to deny her request.

"Robin. Ignore what I said before. Open the bag of pretzels."

I parroted back to her her own words about not doing it, no matter what she said or did, which of course infuriated her.

Meanwhile, my jerky brother jumped in to further ruffle my feathers: "**Yeah, MOTHER SAID! Give us the pretzels!**"

My brother and I were always at odds with each other so I battled back with: **“NO! You told me NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO OR SAY. No pretzels! So NO!”**

“Robin. I’m going to stop the car if you don’t give me the pretzels.”

Dizzy with power, I called her on it. She was bluffing. **“YOU told me not to. No.”**
She was fuming mad, but in the end, **no** pretzels.

I also NEVER heard the end of it. NEVER. Even years later. Okay, after my mother died, yes, I heard the end of it, but you know what I mean.

This is why I don’t do more adoptions. Pretzels.

Right around Christmas I started to get application after application. Some folks wanted kittens as gifts, which is a big no-no for me, but what I did is come up with something to appease their needs. I offered a plush cat toy and a gift certificate. This won over a few people, but some adopted elsewhere or dropped off the map. **I kept at it until I met Steven, who lives here in Sandy Hook.**

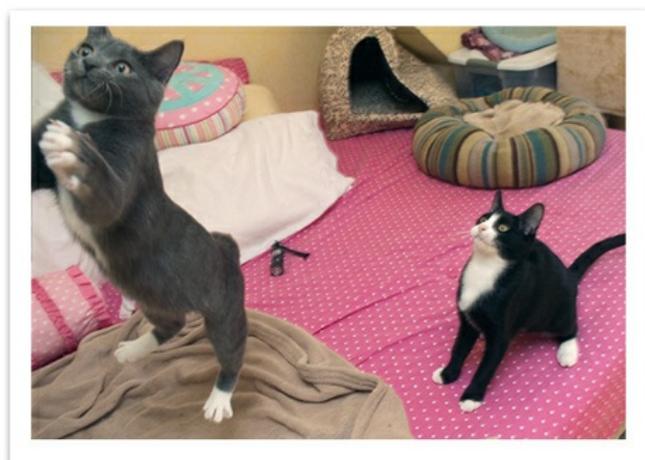


©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Pizzelle, Nanny & Mocha want to know WHO will be adopted next.

Steven is an engineer for IBM. This guy is smart, focused, serious. He also loves cats. His daughter Hanna has been begging for a cat for two years. Hanna is 7. Steven provided me with a very detailed application. He said his wife travelled a lot so that we’d have to work partly around her schedule. Steven would oversee the adoption and she would visit the kittens and approve his selection if they passed muster and were approved. **Steven included an article celebrating him as the Employee of the Month. I read it.**

Then it didn’t matter what else happened because I was going to give him whatever cat or cats he wanted.

Little Hanna went to Sandy Hook Elementary and was in First Grade. Steven heard the shots that fateful morning and ran into the building to protect a classroom full of students. He’s one of the unsung heroes of a national tragedy. Out of respect, I did not ask him about this, but I DID decide fork over as many “pretzels” as he wanted.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Biscotti is amazed at Pizzelle's high-flying chops.

His application was excellent. The home visit was great, but they lacked in having anything for the cats. Since it was a surprise

(this one time I agreed it was okay to give a cat as a gift) for Hanna, everything had to be bought and hidden away. **I gave Steven loads of links, told him what to buy and he responded by getting everything you can imagine-and the BEST of the BEST for his new cats.**

Steven came to visit the kittens. I had a feeling he would like Nanaimo and Linzer, the tuxedo twins. They showed well and he played with them to no end. **He was charmed by Pizzelle who had MANY pending applications already. I was reluctant to let him go, but then again, due to the circumstances I agreed he could be adopted, but...who would go with him?** Steven was open to having two cats. That left either Biscotti or splitting up the twins, which I was loathe to do.



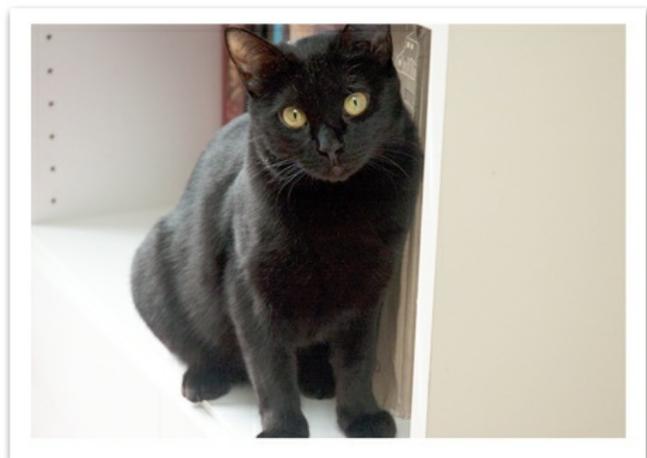
©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Linzer, Biscotti and Nanny (right). But really who can tell the twins apart. Good thing Biscotti has white on his face.

What I hadn't noticed was that Steven was drawn to Mocha. After visiting with the kitties for about 30 minutes I asked him if he felt any bond to the cats. **He caught me off guard by choosing the cat I thought would be the last one adopted. He chose Mocha and Pizzelle to go together!**

I was shocked, but it was a fine match. Mother and son, together always. How lovely...but...mom had to approve, too.

That's when I got my hackles up and I wanted to get my bag of pretzels back.

Mom wanted black cats to match her outfits so she wouldn't have cat hair showing on her clothes or the furniture. Mom is a busy executive and does not want to have anything to do with feeding the cats or cleaning the litter pan. Mom is scared of being scratched.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Mocha, a truly adorable, sweet, playful kitty...and her fur matches the furniture?

Normally every red flag I've got in my gut would be waving furiously, but Steven was so grand and his daughter so sweet, that I simply had to do this adoption. My hope was that with time and education, mom would come around. She couldn't believe me that our cats really don't shed. One of the benefits of the raw diet is that cats don't get hairballs or shed much at all. The coat length-long or short haired-doesn't matter. I literally tried to pull some fur off one of the cats and it just doesn't come out.

The big day arrived. **I was honored to be able to bring Pizzelle and Mocha to their new home and witness this little girl's dream come true.** The night before, Steven sent me a photo of Hanna next to the gigantic cat tree they got for her new cats. I was bummed they told her she was getting cats, but found out they only told her she was getting Mocha. She was really happy about that, so much so that she said she HAD to keep Mocha's name and would not change it. The surprise was that Pizzelle would be joining her, so we worked out a plan to bring him out after Mocha had already come into the house.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. 'Zellie poses for the camera.

We got Mocha settled. Hanna was delighted. **She was more subdued than I expected but was following Mocha around the room as she sniffed and inspected everything in her new home.** At my suggestion, Mocha and Pizzelle would be in a big finished basement for the first week as to not overwhelm them with having free reign of the house.

Mocha did GREAT. She was happy, interested in everyone, tail up, but I was worried. Just after we loaded Mocha into her carrier, before we left our house for Steven's, she started growling. It reminded me of how she behaved shortly after she arrived off the transport. **For the first week she was furious with the kittens-hissing, growling, lashing out at them. I was faced with the realization that it could happen again with Pizzelle in their new home.** The short drive was enough to make her forget her own offspring and she'd be fighting and angry in front of her new family. I had to diffuse the situation. The mom might not understand and want us to take Mocha back, but first we had to surprise Hanna with her second cat. I hoped Mocha wouldn't charge Pizzelle the second she saw him.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Mocha was just as playful as the kittens. She's just a big kitten, herself.

Is this adoption going to stick or is it all going to fall apart if Mocha can't calm down fast? Stay tuned for the conclusion in Chapter 4 airing in a few hours.

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Comments

Fri, 2014-01-24 15:05 — jmuwj (not verified)

RE: MOCHA and PIZZELLE ^[8]

I would also be very wary of a woman like that, Robin ;(but I do pray the adoption is a good, loving, lifelong one, and that the woman is yet another of the converts to cats once she lives with and learns about this beautiful mom and her son.

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