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Mon, 2014-05-05 14:31 — Robin Olson

Rescue is an exercise in loving, then letting go, whether the cat leaves to be adopted or passes away while in foster care. It's a challenge we face and have to find a way to accept, but many times instead of finding peace with the loss, we're left with scars on our heart. I think a cat rescuer's heart must look pretty ratty between the effects of sadness and stress on it. It's a wonder it functions at all and miraculous that we find a way to love again and again.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *Mandy a few days after rescue, already brewing the URI that would plague the kittens for months.*

In the case of "the Clementines," ^[1] **our six, once skin-and-bones, flea-covered kittens from Kentucky, my heart was truly tested.** At first it was stressed from worry. The kittens arrived covered in fleas, then got sick over and over again with an eye infection that wouldn't quit. Then I fell in love with their silly antics as they began to blossom from little squirts to young adults. I dreaded the time when they would be adopted. They'd been here far too long.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *Mango and sister, Mandy, together always.*

Our original six kittens, after many many months, were finally well enough to be find their homes. Quickly after being posted on Petfinder first Marigold, then her sisters Blossom and Buttercup were adopted. I was happy to see them find their place in the world, but secretly feared the day when their big brother Mango would find his place, too.

Mango is the biggest of the litter. He's dopey, friendly, a bit too nippy when he's bored. He's always been courageous and ready to bust out of his foster room and dash down the stairs. In seconds he makes it all the way to the basement, tail up, ready for adventure, driving me crazy in the process.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *A world full of adventures awaits Biscotti and buddy, Mango.*

I couldn't open the door to the foster room unless he was eating, but to feed them I had to open the door. I used a big flat cardboard box as a "kitten plow" to push the cats back as I entered the room. It stopped being effective about six weeks ago. Mango was too big and my hands were too full to stop his escape.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *Late night laptime.*

It wasn't so bad that he got out, but it was a pain in the neck to have to retrieve him all the time. He got into a little game with me where he'd run out of the room, dash down the hallway into my bedroom. He'd run over to a plant and chew on the leaves. I'd get him off the plant and he'd sit comfortably in my arms with his front paws crossed over each other as I carried him back to the foster room.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *Fluff and Mango's game time.*

Once Fluff Daddy was here, they developed a new game. Fluff would wait outside the door and as Mango made his escape, Fluff would trill and call out, chasing after him. They'd head into the master bathroom and Mango would run into the shower stall, even if it was wet from recently being used. He'd wait a minute or two while Fluff burred after him, then he'd

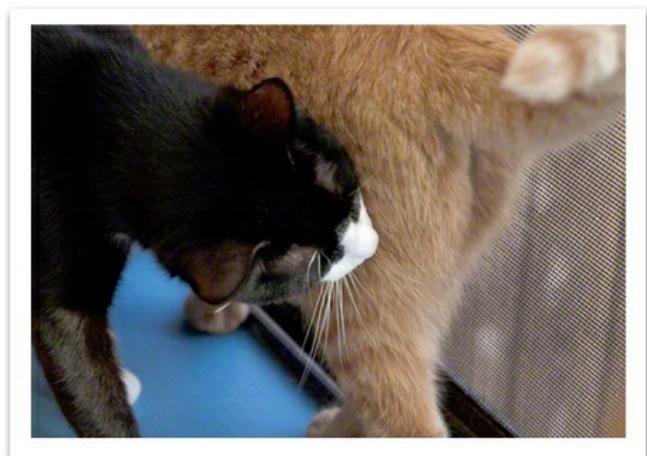
race out, right into my arms and I'd carry him back to his room once again.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *Sweet and silly Mandy.*

After some time I decide to just let him out, get the food put down, then go get him. My favorite part of the game was watching him run down the hallway. **His little butt would wiggle back and forth as he so proudly pranced along, enjoying his little game, waiting for me to come get him. He never struggled to get out of my arms,** even at nine pounds he was never too big to be held.

Mango definitely was a “keeper” in my book, but I knew I just couldn’t do that. He deserved a home. At least that’s what I kept telling myself.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *The final sniff.*

A few days ago, a very nice lady named Ann Marie came over with her mom, Dotty. These two ladies love cats. Ann Marie has an apartment in her parent’s home so when Ann Marie had to go to work, her mom and dad would be with the kittens. I loved the idea of Mango having that much attention, but I also knew he needed a buddy. Mango is a real cat-cat.

Ann Marie agreed saying she’d often had two cats and would welcome the chance to adopt one of Mango’s siblings. As she and her mother played with the kittens, I could tell her choice would be Mandarin.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *Oh Mango!*

Mandy was the smallest of the litter, the most dainty, the polar opposite to big thug Mango. Her eyes are almond shaped, not as round as her brother's, which gives her a very sweet, girly-girl look (*and was one of the few ways I could tell the cats apart when they were little kittens*). Mandy is often rather quiet, but loveable. **She surprised me by fetching one particular, ratty toy. If I threw it she would either return it to me or she would leap high into the air, catching the toy with her front paws.** She looked like an outfielder at a baseball game. I'd never seen anything like it.

I knew Ann Marie and her mom (*who is so gentle with my own cats that when she sat with the two most skittish cats, they didn't run off.*) were falling for the two kittens. It was not long before we were doing the paperwork and I was kissing each kitten and loading them into their cat carriers.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *Mr. Handsome.*

Then the all-too familiar feeling...rip, rip, rip goes my heart.

After the kittens left for their new home and I returned to the foster room it felt completely empty even though two cats remained. Biscotti and Bert, the last of the Clementines, looked up at me clearly confused about what was going on. Mango, the master of mayhem, was gone. His story with me had reached the final chapter. I wouldn't need a "kitten plow" to enter the room any more, nor would I see his little round butt shake its way down the hall ever again.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Baby Mango hit with URI, didn't stop him from being adorable.

At that moment I felt the familiar sting of tears building up in my eyes. My heart bore fresh scars from lost love, but I knew too that the very same love I'll always have for Mango is what also fuels my ability to go on.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. With their new mama, Ann Marie and her mama, Dotty.

Goodbye babies. Have a wonderful life.



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Thu, 2015-04-09 13:16 — Chris (not verified)

Letting Go----- [7]

I really don't know how you go thru such ups and downs.... You have such amazing stories and this one was tears of sadness and joy even I couldn't contain. You are a special person indeed and your love of your fur babies is beyond evident and clear. Thank you for sharing, for always enlightening us with happy, sometimes sad, and lots of much appreciated humor and education as you trod through selflessly helping those kittens and cats in need. You are a blessing indeed.

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