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Forever in My Heart

Tue, 2012-11-13 10:39 — Robin Olson

It's been less than a day since our former foster girl Bobette, who was named Kissy after she was adopted in May, passed away. Just typing those letters, "p-a-s-s-e-d" makes me cry. I'm still in shock and still hoping someone will call me and tell me it was just a bad dream, that the Vets figured out a way to save our sweet pumpkin girl and she's going to be okay—but no one calls.

The events leading up to Kissy's death, I'll leave to her "mama," JaneA Kelley of [Paws & Effect](#) ^[1] to write about. This is her story to tell, with her cat. My post is about my reflections about a foster cat who just barely a year ago arrived in my home, with her three young sons. **They'd reached the part of their rescue-story where all the shots are done, they are spayed or neutered, and all that's left is for them to just have fun and wait for their adopters to find them.** It's usually the part of the story where we all can relax, knowing the worst is over and the best is yet to come.



©2011 Betsy Merchant. A stray cat dumped at a Kill Shelter with her six newborn kittens waits for rescue.

Kissy didn't have an easy life. I wrote a great deal about her and her boys, Jakey, Mikey & Teddy...and their three siblings, who passed away a few days after we rescued them from a Kill Shelter in Georgia. **If you do a search on Covered in Cat Hair using the phrase: "Bobette" you can read all the stories, but here are a few: [Life in the Pumpkin Patch](#) ^[2], [Bobette's Secret Pain](#) ^[3]**

[Harvest Time for Bob's Pumpkin Patch](#) ^[4]

and the Cat Writers' Association Certificate of Excellence winning: [It Had to be You](#) ^[5] about Kissy's adoption.

Kissy was rescued in honor of my cat, Bob Dole, after he passed away in September of 2011. He was a beautiful, brilliant orange Maine Coon tabby mix with piercing green eyes. When I saw Kissy's photo and her brilliant orange coat and piercing green eyes, I knew I had to rescue her and her family...which also explains why she was originally named, Bobette.



©2011 Betsy Merchant. Not eating for four days, Bobette was in dire straights.

Thanks to Maria, I had a foster home for the family until they were ready to come to Connecticut. Thanks to Bobby Stanford, I had someone to go bust this kitty and her babies out of the shelter before they got sick or were euthanized. **The pieces fell in place. It was meant to be.**

Kissy was far too thin and far too young to bear the burden of having six kittens. She began to recover and eat again, but after the loss of three of her kittens perhaps part of her shut down. She was a good mother for a time, but as the remaining boys grew, her love for them waned. **She taught me that not all mothers and kittens suffer being separated. In fact, Kissy did better without her boys,** though I know they missed her a lot.



©2011 Bobby Stanford. Moments after rescue.

Kissy was just 9 months old when she had her kittens. I couldn't blame her for wanting to be away from them, as she was barely a kitten herself.

Yesterday when JaneA called me and told me that Kissy had passed away, I broke down and sobbed, completely heartbroken. In that moment I realized something that I'd known for a long time, but perhaps was too close to it to see the truth—Kissy had taught me something else, my foster cat hadn't just died, MY CAT just died.



©2011 Maria S. Safe in Maria's home Kissy can finally relax.

The pain I was feeling was why many people can't foster cats. They fall in love with them along the way and they can't bear to be parted from them when the time comes. **I realized that all these years of fostering cats that I truly do love each and everyone just the same and just as much as I love the cats who live with me for their entire lives, not just for a few months.**



©2011 Maria S. Kissy and her boys.

Each foster cat charms me, delights me, challenges me to learn more, to make fewer mistakes, to remember to cherish each day. **I fall in love with each foster cat, not just a little, but fully, completely. I can't build a wall to protect myself from how I feel about them. Instead of running away from that fear, I push into it.** It does me no good to hide from feelings. In facing them head on, perhaps I gain some gentleness about saying goodbye when they get adopted.



©2011 Maria S. Her spay surgery over, Kissy relaxes in a comfy bed at Maria's.

When I go for a drive, I often pass homes where my foster cats now live. They are still my cats, they just live with other families. **I still feel the tether that connects us. I sense they're out there and they're okay and because of that, I'm okay, too.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Finally in my home, Kissy and I get to know each other.

Maybe I've been kidding myself for a long time that I love my foster cats, but never enough so I can't let them go. It's not true. I love them no less than my own, I've just been practicing letting go and rationally telling myself that I must do this so I can help more. It always hurts, but the pain is bittersweet because I know they'll be happy where they're going.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Family portrait with proud mama.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Kissy and son, Churchy (formerly Mikey).



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Lap time with Sam as Kissy recovers from her corrective surgery. In the end, the surgery didn't help Kissy live more comfortably. Her leg was too deformed to be corrected.

Kissy only lived for two years. She knew a lot of pain in that time, but in the last year she knew a lot of love; love from Maria, me, Sam and finally her true mama-JaneA. She knew it from her fans and friends online who were rooting for her surgery to go well and for her to take her first steps without pain. That didn't get to happen. We're all shocked and terribly sad that Kissy's story didn't get to have the happy ending we all wanted for her. Frankly, I can't stop crying about it.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *Such a good girl.*

Kissy's short life will not be in vain. I don't know what I'm going to do right now, but I'll be doing something to honor her. Kissy taught me a lot and made me realize I was foolish to think that love could be restricted or spooned out in measured amounts. It's all or nothing and I loved that cat completely. I will never forget her and I thank her for what she taught me. Maybe we'll meet again one day? I can only hope so.

For now I share my grief with those of us who fought hard to give her a great life and who will keep fighting for other cats so that they may have the same chance Kissy did. **She will never be forgotten and always be in my heart.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *Fly free, my sweet. No more pain.*

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Comments

Tue, 2012-11-13 11:48 — [Catnymouse \(not verified\)](#) ^[16]

THANKS ^[17]

You are a wonderful person!

Tue, 2012-11-13 17:06 — Aimee (not verified)

So very well written. So [18]

So very well written. So sorry for all of us, especially you, Maria, Sam and JaneA. ::Hugs::

Tue, 2012-11-13 17:35 — Barbara UK (not verified)

Such sad news [19]

Oh No.....not lovely Bobette. I still think of her as Bobette. I had such a soft spot for that little orange girl. I've been over to Jane's site and see that Kissy was due to have her leg amputated and so I guess she didn't survive the operation? I'm so sad and sorry Robin - you must be so terribly upset.

RIP sweet Kissy

Tue, 2012-11-13 20:16 — Teri and the ca... (not verified) [20]

Broken Heart... [21]

There is that connection with the cats, it is not lightly that I, too, call the kittens I raised 'my extended family'. Because just as you feel when you drive by their new homes, they are still 'ours' and just like any good parent, we are there for them through thick and thin.

I posted these words on JaneA's page and want to share them with you, too. because you will have to say it often in the next few days, weeks, years...when the sadness overcomes you...

I so envy our cats - they just work with whatever hand life deals them, they don't worry about tomorrow and they don't regret yesterday - they just take things in stride and figure things out as they go, because they must just put one foot in front of the other and go on. Sometimes that is what it takes - putting one foot in front of the other until it gets easier.

Hugs, Teri

Tue, 2012-11-13 20:55 — jmuhj (not verified)

KISSY [22]

Any words I would write would be only that: words. I am so very, very sorry for your loss! I am also grateful that she knew love and good care, and I hope you share the knowledge that quality, not necessarily quantity, is first priority with our loved ones, always. She certainly had quality care and a lot of love. I know how it feels to always love a loved one, no matter whether (s)he is with one for a lifetime or just a short time, or anything in between. You can't quantify love. It IS. I know she knows that, and is watching over you always. <3(((((((((^ ^)))))))))<3 beloved little sunray Kissy! safe in Perfect Love and guarding you until you are reunited. (O)

Wed, 2012-11-14 04:24 — Victoria Buldak (not verified)

Kissy aka Bobette [23]

I am so sorry to hear of Kissy's passing. I understand that she had a deformed leg and had a cast on it to see if it could be corrected. Am I to understand that while having surgery to remove the leg, she passed?

This is a sad story, but also a loving and uplifting one, it has touched peoples hearts and this is a good thing. It has shown that Kissy's life was of value, she will be remembered.

Accept condolences on your loss, and pass on to Kissy's furever mom our most profound sympathies.

Wed, 2012-11-14 10:01 — Tina Johnson (not verified) [24]

Your Cats.. Your Heart [25]

I stumbled across this site and the aritten words about Kissy/Bobette. I have cried. I am so sorry for the loss of this darling fur baby. I understand how you feel. I have 4 fur babies all of which I picked up off the street or came to me from bad situations or situations that would have resulted in the loss of their lives.

Kissy/Bobette and her little ones got their first real shot at loving care, gentle hands, good food, loving ribs and gentle touch with you. Being a foster requires one to give unselfishly of ones self ... just like we would of our own children. Because of this, in essence that is what they become to us. The truly unselfish part of it all is when we have to say goodbye and give them to their forever homes and families. It will always be bitter sweet and a bit heartbreaking. I understand also when we encounter a kitty such as young Kissy/Bobette and we see the struggle at such a young age as she was, the fight in us for them to have better is a mighty force.

Kissy/ Bobette was your cat. She as well as any you foster will ALWAYS be yours because your gentle touches and loving care was what teaches them that not all us humans are bad, mean, cruel and heartless. Fosters are the mothers and the teachers. My heart goes out to you, to Kissy/Bobette, her babies, and her forever human that carried on your work and blessings of bring a great loving quality to her short life. It takes a big heart to foster, especially when you can see the damage done. The satifying part is seeing your work being carried on when these liitle guys find forever homes. The hard part is wanting not the

rip the person or persons apart that so carelessly put the little guys in the situations they sometimes find themselves in.

Play hard, purr loud as you can and run fast and free Kissy/Bobette in your home Over the Rainbow Bridge.

People like you Robin Olson inspire me....

Wed, 2012-11-14 11:53 — Lisa (not verified)

I remember every one of my fosters [26]

And it was so very hard to let them each go and though I cheered for their adoptions, each took a piece of my heart with them. I not so secretly hope maybe one of my girl Scully's kittens might come back, but that's so selfish of me considering they've spent 7 years almost in their homes now. I often go look at pictures and videos of the fosters. They were each unique and memorable and the thought of any of them dying makes me cry. Kissy wasn't even one of mine, but like so many other people who never met her, she held a special place there. Two years was not enough. I know that leg doesn't bother her any more and she'll never have any worries. I look forward to one day seeing again all the animals I loved, even the ones I never met.

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