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This Fragile Life

Wed, 2012-06-27 20:33 — Robin Olson

The past few days have been a stress-filled blur. Our team of rescuers have been trying to determine if Opal will be having kittens or need a c-section, then questioning whether or not she'll accept her newborns. Will she provide care for them or will we have to find a surrogate or find someone who can bottle feed the kittens every 2-3 hours around the clock for the next two weeks? Not knowing what is to come, with a belly full of fear, is not the best way to take action. When there are fragile lives at stake, thinking clearly isn't always easy.

Early Tuesday morning, Cyndie heard cries from the room where Opal is staying. She knew more kittens were born, but with Opal becoming more and more stressed every time Cyndie opened the door, she decided to wait and not look just yet.

Cyndie, Maria and I were all exhausted and worried. We'd stayed up late texting and calling each other with updates, hoping that Opal would give birth. I started to read up on feline C-sections, thinking it was going to come to that if Opal didn't go into labor soon. **I knew that Opal had a kitten around 5:20AM on 6/25, then nothing until almost 24 hours later, even though we could see the kittens moving inside her abdomen as she laid on a flannel blanket. Just before I was going to tell Cyndie to take her to the Emergency Vet, Opal gave birth to three more kittens on 6/26.**

The problem was we didn't even know if Opal would accept her kittens once she gave birth. After the kittens were born, she stayed near them but seemed uninterested in caring for them. **Cyndie had to clean the placenta off one of them and thought it had passed away, but after rubbing the little body, she took some breaths, struggling to live.**



©2012 Cyndie Tweedy. *Baby One.*

Each kitten is a mix of white and orange tabby. There are two boys and two girls. **They are grossly underweight and probably premature. Opal wasn't due to give birth for two more weeks.** Looking back on it, she was probably so stressed from being in foster care that she gave birth early.



©2012 Cyndie Tweedy. *Baby Two.*

Over the past day, I've frantically been looking for another lactating queen to give these kittens to in the hopes the kittens would make it. To my surprise I could not find any-at least ones that weren't already nursing 5 or 6 kittens. I had to find a backup plan. Cyndie and Maria worked hard searching, too.



©2012 Cyndie Tweedy. *Baby Three.*

Cyndie found an experienced person who could act as a backup bottle feeder, if we needed one, and we got a lot of suggestions about how to handle the situation. Being 1000 miles away makes it difficult for me to make decisions that should be made by those in the same room with the kittens. **My gut says to feed those kittens regardless if they get anything from Opal. Opal is only 9 months old and in poor condition. We don't even know if the milk she's producing is any good.** The kittens got their much needed colostrum during a syringe feeding from Cyndie, so at least they have that, **but they are NOT gaining weight** yet.



©2012 Cyndie Tweedy. *Baby Four.*

We did get some answers today. **Opal IS caring for her kittens and Cyndie has seen a few of them nursing, but we don't know what sort of milk they're getting.** Is it enough? Is it good quality? Cyndie says that the first born is off by himself. Does that mean he won't make it? We're looking for clues, but it's difficult to get into the room because **Opal is NOT okay with having anyone near her** or the kittens and each hour she grows more angry that Cyndie is there.



©2012 Cyndie Tweedy. With mama. Hopefully not the only, but one of the first photos we'll have of them all together.

Maria is going to loan Cyndie some heavy gloves so she can get the kittens some supplemental feedings. In addition to everything else, we have to be concerned that Cyndie could be harmed while she's only trying to help Opal and save the lives of her newborns. **We're going to do a small fundraiser so we can purchase a baby monitor ASAP. This will allow Cyndie to view the family without stressing Opal and will cut down the number of times Cyndie will need to enter the room.**

I want to find that place in my heart where I have faith it will work out, but I'm having a hard time. I think the other gals are as well. It feels like these kittens have the odds stacked against them. I don't know if they'll all survive even another day. **I don't want to upset anyone, but this is an upsetting situation. I wish we were at the point where we could look back and say how scared and worried we were but it's all okay now. We're nowhere near that place, but I do know we're all dedicated to getting there.**

If you can help us purchase a Baby Monitor and set aside some funds for Vet Care and baby formula, please use the ChipIn widget, below.

Your donation is **TAX-DEDUCTIBLE** as my rescue, [Kitten Associates](#) ⁽¹⁾ is a 501©3 Non-Profit Cat Rescue.

If you'd prefer to send a check, please make it out to: *Kitten Associates* and please note on the check the funds should go to "Opal's Family" mail it to:

**Kitten Associates
P.O. Box 354
Newtown, CT 06470-0354**

Any funds not used for the care of this family will go into our General Fund.

If you can't make a donation, you can help us by getting the word out. Every dollar helps and

every Re-tweet or FB Share does, too. THANK YOU for caring about these fragile little kittens!

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Comments

Wed, 2012-06-27 21:52 — [Catnynouse](#) (not verified)

have you considered setting up a webcam? ^[14]

You can buy an inexpensive webcam and enough cable to reach into the area where she is. Hook it up to your computer and you get sound and visual.

Wed, 2012-06-27 22:30 — [Val](#) (not verified)

Dang! ^[15]

Dang! You are certainly between a rock and a hard place (is that the saying??). Do you or don't you intervene with Opal? I'm glad I don't have that stress. I sent a few \$ to the baby cam. That definitely is the best option. Hopefully, Opal will surprise everyone and her mommymones will kick in.

I'm worried about the one that is separated from the group. Usually that means mommy knows that one won't make it. :(

Val

Wed, 2012-06-27 23:41 — [Tamar Arslanian](#) (not verified) ^[16]

Wow ^[17]

i cannot imagine how stressful this all is. poor sweet Opal...how do we know we've made it past the scary/touch-and-go part?!

Thu, 2012-06-28 03:53 — [Nina](#) (not verified)

Have you looked into taking ^[18]

Have you looked into taking one in from a shelter or something after testing to help with them? I live in Georgia--further south, but I could find out if there's a lactating mom in a shelter here to rescue, test, and to send if needed?

Thu, 2012-06-28 08:51 — [Bobbie](#) ^[19]

Shared and ^[20]

hope there will be some good... better? news today.

Thu, 2012-06-28 11:53 — [Heather](#) (not verified) ^[21]

Help & Advice ^[22]

I am praying for Opal and her babies, and for her rescuers. I know we're far away, but around here, the rescue I volunteer with is filled with experts on feral momma's and new born kittens. We're on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/VOKRA> ^[23]

Thu, 2012-06-28 12:30 — [jill delzer](#) (not verified) ^[24]

twitter ^[25]

Hello PRB!

I retweeted this via JG's twitter! Hope you get more fundage!

:)

Fri, 2012-06-29 23:20 — [Robin Olson](#) [26]

Thank you, Darling! [27]

Thank you Jill! Go #teamPRB !!!

Thu, 2012-06-28 13:28 — [Marilia \(not verified\)](#) [28]

Hugs [29]

Purrryng so much for Opal, the kittens and congratulations for your dedication!!

Thu, 2012-06-28 15:14 — [Connie and The Crew \(not verified\)](#) [30]

Any chance that she could use [31]

Any chance that she could use some Spirit Essences on Opal. I've had some luck with the Feral one. or maybe some Rescue Remedy?

Thu, 2012-06-28 15:29 — Trevor Patel (not verified)

The Solo Guy [32]

I agree with Val's comment above. You should probably grab that one little one that is off by himself. Sounds like even is Opal is going to figure this out eventually, it is never good when one of the kitts is not near the "food" and warmth.

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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