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For Freya. Part 2 of 2

Wed, 2014-09-24 22:27 — Robin Olson

continued from [Part 1](#) ⁽¹⁾.

Some stories benefit from stretching the facts a bit here and there, but in telling Freya's story I'm so stunned by the latest events that I can barely put the words down. Would anyone believe me if I told the truth? I barely believe me and I'm living this story.

Since I last wrote Freya gave me a bad scare one night. She wasn't eating much and seemed a bit limp. I wrapped her up and brought her downstairs. Feeling too worked up with fear to hold her I gave her to Sam. He's a very gentle, compassionate person and I thought maybe Freya would perk up getting some TLC from him.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *Something must be going right. Freya normally could not sleep curled up due to all the stool inside her. Surely she must be feeling better.*

It took some time but it worked. Freya began to purr, then alerted by the sound of one of the many cats in the room she looked around. Her eyes got wide as she took in our monster-sized cats. Sam comforted her and she settled back down. He got her to play with a toy as he continued to cradle her in his arms. Our cats took little interest in her because hey, they see so many foster cats another cat won't even get a second look.

I eventually brought her upstairs to her room where she finally ate. I got her cleaned up and tucked into her little strawberry hut cat bed. I hated to leave her even for a few hours, but I needed some sleep. **It was another fitful night, though, as I worried I missed something and that she'd crash while I was passed out.**

But Freya perked up. Her black tarry stool smears were turning a more healthy brown. She didn't seem quite as drippy as before, but also seemed to be moving more "material" out of her. I began to formulate a routine, one of picking up all the soiled towels on the cat beds and the base of the cat tree, putting out fresh ones, scrubbing off soiled spots on the floor, putting down food and water, getting the dirty towels into the washer then set for "sanitize," but I couldn't quite sort out what Freya's routine was quite as easily.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Freya in her strawberry shack, with her SnuggleKittie and a nice heated pad to keep her toasty on these cool autumn evenings.

Freya eats well, then doesn't, but it could be that she's just not hungry or that she feels uncomfortable from being dirty. Now I wash her before she eats and that works. I also mimic what Freya's mother would do to her as she eats and after she eats-I rub her gently but vigorously to get her blood flowing. It seems to help her appetite and gets her purr-motor going.

Freya is slowly gaining weight, but I can feel her bones around her spine and shoulders. I don't know how much nutrition she's getting and I fear the gain is just stool. That said I swear her belly does not feel as hard to me or as big as it did before, but I could be wrong. She's at 1 lb 7 oz. If I had my way I'd get her to 2 lbs, which is the smallest size we ever get kittens spayed. I have to be happy with what she achieves and hope it will be enough. It's Friday September 19th and we have 4 ½ days to get her weight up a bit more before her scheduled surgery.

This is where Freya's story begins to take a very crazy turn.

Laurie, one of our adopters, offered to check out Angell Memorial, one of the big Veterinary Specialty hospitals in the Northeast for a surgeon to get a second opinion for us and I agreed. Laurie talked to her Vet to get some suggestions and through her found "The Guy," [Dr. Michael Pavletic](#).^[2] **This Surgeon specializes in soft tissue reconstruction of small animals. He takes on unusual cases and comes up with creative solutions to repair the toughest ones.** She reached out to his assistant to ask about whether Freya's case would be one he'd be able to work on or at least be able to consult with our surgeons.

His assistant's reply was rather terse, but I understood that we'd only sent x-rays and some medical notes and he really needed to SEE Freya.

Meanwhile Laurie was pushing me to bring Freya to Boston, to Angell. The more she pushed, the more I got upset. It was one thing to get an opinion and another to move Freya to Boston where I'd have to stay in a hotel and hope she survived the trip and the surgery. Once there, then what? How long would her recovery be? What would happen if she needed follow-up care? **I can't drive nearly 3 hours each way when I don't even have bandwidth to get to the grocery store.**

My head started spinning. What would he charge? Newtown Veterinary Specialists was being SO GOOD to us that I felt like I was cheating on them. What if we went to Boston and Freya lived, but then crashed here? Do I drive her to Boston or 15 minutes down the road to NVS? The logistics just wouldn't work, but I saw the reasoning that if this surgeon was the top in his field and we could get his help, we had to try. I couldn't stomach doing it by stepping on NVS's toes or by being dismissive or rude to them. I had to find a way.

I talked to Sam about it. I thought we were OK going to NVS. The surgeons are Board Certified. NVS is a Level II Certified Emergency & Medical Care Center and the only one to get this certification in New England! This is not some backwater Specialty Vet, but now my confidence was shaken. **I didn't know what to do.** In truth, Connie and Katherine, who run Animals in Distress had to choose because Freya was THEIR cat. I was just fostering her.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *Waiting for playtime.*

Laurie kept urging me to do something. She contacted Dr. P.'s assistant a few times, asking for more information. Exhausted to the point of not being able to think clearly, upset, maybe a bit angry for feeling like I wasn't doing enough for Freya but didn't have the bandwidth to do more, I emailed Connie and Katherine and told them about this Vet. I said it was their choice what to do. I thought they'd say just to stay the course, but Connie wrote and said we should have Dr. P. do a consult.

Connie got on the phone and began making arrangements, but somewhere in between all the calls to Dr. P., to NVS and some of the Vets there, she got a bit confused about what the game plan was. I reached out to Bernadette, an affable woman who has been working behind the scenes to help Freya. She's the Office Manager at NVS. She'd been in touch with Connie and had been working on a game plan after speaking with our awesome, deliciously green-eyed surgeon Dr. Andrews and his boss, the super-talented Dr. Weisman. Bernadette wanted the best for Freya and it turns out she was not alone.

When Bernadette told Dr. Weisman about Dr. P, everything changed. Freya's case, as I've said before is rare, but I had no idea HOW rare it was. It's so rare that Dr. Weisman decided to invite Dr. P. to come to Newtown to do the surgery HERE. That Freya's is a teaching case and that MANY Vets would be in attendance to observe and learn from Dr. P.

If Dr. P. couldn't make the trip, then there was some discussion of sending two Vets with Freya to Boston to do the surgery THERE.

I'm not kidding. This is the real deal.

I spoke with Bernadette and tried not to cry as I heard the news. I was so stunned I repeated what she said to me because she called me from her car and I wasn't sure I could believe what I was hearing.

She told me that the staff only cared that Freya would get the BEST care possible. They weren't concerned about who would do the surgery, they wanted the best outcome. No one had an ego about taking this on. All they wanted was for her to have what she needed and if that meant asking a revered surgeon to travel to our town, then so be it. It also helped that one of the surgeons at NVS studied with Dr. P. when he was at Tufts and when she heard his name spoken, she bowed with respect.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Freya's new favorite hangout, my laundry basket tricked out with a new heated bed and fleece cover.

In all my years having cats-including doing rescue, I have NEVER EVER witnessed such support for the positive outcome for a tiny kitten. It gave me something inasmuch as it gave Freya. **I had hope.** I was so sure I was sending Freya to her death last week that I couldn't see any chance of the surgery working.

With Dr. P., at least being able to do a consult, I also knew that we didn't have to worry we were making the wrong choice. **The surgeons would work out their plan and I knew that it would be more than we could have dreamed of no matter what they decided (as long as they decide that she CAN have surgery)** . I could rest in knowing that however this turns out, Freya got the BEST care-period. There is no "grass is greener" or better Vet. We've got him. Freya's got him. Now it's just a matter of time.

I have to focus on doing my job keeping her stable and helping her grow. Everything else has fallen to the wayside (*other than the care of the cats of course*). I'll pick up the pieces when I can.

For now Freya is all that matters and I'm so glad to be part of an ever-growing team who feels that way.

Until this afternoon when something happened none of us saw coming...Yes, this 2-part story has a bonus third part.

[Hey, it's not my fault! I'm just the writer. Blame the surgeons for throwing a curveball that left me speechless.]



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. When will I know about my surgery?

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Comments

Thu, 2014-09-25 10:22 — margaret cary (not verified)

All this love and support for ^[5]

All this love and support for one of God's tiny creatures brought tears to my eyes. Freya has been in my prayers and hope to my heart

Thu, 2014-09-25 13:00 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

Fated to Be ^[6]

Of course she came to you. This isn't just about Freya. It's about how many other kitties down the road with similar (or worse) challenges for whom this teaching experience will help.

Freya has a mission. There was only one group of people who were the perfect conduit through which Freya could reach these vets--you, and the gals at Animals in Distress. Someone knew what S/He was doing when S/He sent Freya your way. S/He knew that you'd move heaven and earth to find the very best care for Freya--and it led to a miraculous offer.

But until I read Part 3, I won't know where the story ends. I hope it's a great outcome, for everyone, especially Freya.

Thu, 2014-09-25 13:23 — jmuwj (not verified)

RE: FREYA ^[7]

This is what medical care SHOULD be -- a reverence for each and every life, personally designed care, and an absolute commitment to making every effort to restore the patient to wellness, not the "client" to full payment. *PRAYERS* ongoing for this bravest of BIG little souls, and all who care for her. Bless the surgeon and team with sure hands and bright eyes, and success!

Thu, 2014-09-25 13:25 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

She is adorable, so thankful ^[8]

She is adorable, so thankful that she has you, and grateful to all the vets involved!

Thu, 2014-09-25 18:07 — CatzRule (not verified)

In love with Freya ^[9]

This little girl is so sweet and loved by so many in her little lifespan. We love her in Tampa, Florida and think about her so often it's hard to concentrate on work! Bless the team of loving and compassionate humans who are helping or will be helping her to get well. YOU ROCK!!!

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