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Gutted. I've Lost My Best Friend.

Thu, 2019-09-05 17:53 — Robin Olson

Gutted.

I'm tempted to leave it at that, but I need to write about what happened a few hours ago. Writing keeps everyone away from me. I don't need their awkward attempts to comfort me. No one knows what to say other than; "I'm so sorry." or the line that makes my blood boil: "He's in a better place."

He is **NOT** in a better place. **His place is with ME.** If he can't be with me he is **NOT** in a better place.

This morning Spencer was in lovely spirits. He was happy, purring so loudly you could hear him across the room. He was still weak when he walked, but otherwise he was up and being pure-Spencer. It was such a lovely morning, too. Just the right temperature; not too hot or too cold. There was lots of seed out for the birds to eat and I could hear them chirping away through the open windows, as Spencer laid down on the floor by the doorway to the kitchen. That's where he sat every morning while he waited for me to bring him his first meal of the day. He'd wait there while I fussed with his freeze-dried raw food, I'd add something to it, depending on what he needed. Today would have been pro-biotics because Spencer had been on antibiotics for his dreadfully infected teeth. The meds did wonders. He was truly at his peak of wellness, considering he's an old fella.



©2019 Robin A.F. Olson. *Waiting for his breakfast just this morning.*

Between the birds singing, the sunshine and Spencer looking so fine, I felt hopeful that today's dental would not only help him feel better, but add years to his life. I had two vets agree we could go ahead with this. No one felt the risks outweighed the need. Instead of giving Spencer his morning meal, I gently placed him into his cat carrier and let him settle before touching his paw and telling him he was a "Good boy" as I closed and locked the crate door.

I was terrified today would be Spencer's last day. I told myself to focus on being gentle, on having a nice trip to Dr. Larry's. I'd take the back road, the one that follows along the river. It was a longer trip and slower. No highway. Everything I could do to keep Spencer from stressing out, I was going to do.

I sang.

I sang a stupid made-up song to Spencer. I've done it before, but today I really ramped it up. I sang to keep myself from crying...from obsessing with "what ifs"...I would see him again. It would be okay. I kept singing so I wouldn't think. Spencer purred along with me. It was a good trip.

We hung out in the waiting room once we got to Dr. Larry's. Someone would come fetch Spencer and take him into the back of the building where he'd wait until his procedure. Until then I had his cage door open. He was calm. Purring. I forgot my phone. I wanted to take a video of him so I could hear him purring. I told myself I could do it later. It was going to be okay. I told Spencer for the millionth time that I loved him.

"You're a good boy. Mama loves you."

One of the techs came to get him. I told her to stop doing the procedure if he started to flip out. I told her to do whatever it took to help keep Spencer relaxed. Going into the red zone today was more than dangerous for him. She said she would. I know she heard me. That was it. She took him away and that was the last time I saw him until a few hours ago.

The next time I saw him, Spencer was dead, his lifeless body on an exam table.

At 1:41 PM, EST, Dr. Larry called me. He sounded bad. All I heard was; *"Robin...I'm so sorry. He had a heart attack. He didn't make it."* All I could say was; *"No. No. No."*

Dr. Larry began to describe what happened, how they tried so hard to save him, as I slid down onto the cold tile floor of my laundry room. My chest constricting, hard, my ears started to ring. My mind was going blank. The washing machine is broken. It's finally getting fixed after a few weeks. I was clearing the stuff off the machine so the tech would have a way to access the top of the washer. I was trying to keep busy so I wouldn't obsess about what time it was or if I thought I should hear from someone yet.

But the words started to flow together...they'd done the dental as far as they could. His mouth was really bad. They were trying to wake him up but he wouldn't wake up. They did heroic efforts to save him..chest compressions...injections...they kept trying. It wasn't just Dr. Larry. Dr. Mary was called in, Super-Deb was there, Judy, the tech who's done Spencer's laser for months was there, too. In all 5 people were desperately trying to save Spencer's life.

But they couldn't get Spencer back. **He died.** He was sedated when they lost him. He wasn't in pain. He wasn't suffering. I wasn't there with him, but people who also loved him were there.

I drove to Dr. Larry's in a trance. I was tempted to drive into oncoming traffic or just let the car drift off the road, into the river. I was angry at myself. I wondered if I had been too arrogant. I should have left Spencer alone. What was I thinking? He was SO HAPPY. He was doing so well the past few weeks. Why did I ruin it? Why did I risk it? WHAT HAVE I DONE!

I tried to rationalize with myself. I did the best I could. Spencer was tough to handle at the vet. He hated being messed with. His teeth were hurting him, really killing him. They had to come out. It was cruel to leave him like that. But he possibly had something else going on that we didn't know about. The leg weakness made me wonder if his heart wasn't so great, but we couldn't know without sedating him to do the exam and x-rays that could have given us some clues.

As I fumbled with my wallet and keys, I started to open my car door. Super-Deb was standing there in the parking lot. She must have been watching for me to arrive. She didn't say a word. She just grabbed me hard and hugged me tight. She said she had no words. I totally understood.

Deb never touches anyone, ever. She just hugged me. I told her now I would have two reasons to remember this day for the rest of my life. It was a lame joke. She was shaken up. She felt so badly. She'd known Spencer for most of his life. **This just wasn't my loss. It was hurting her, too.**

Deb escorted me to Exam Room 1. They had Spencer waiting for me. We'd been in the same room so many times before, but this time was different. The overhead lights were off. Just the under cabinet lights were on. It was the same way I asked to light the room every time I brought Spencer there. He was much calmer in low light and we could get more done if he was calmer. Now he was laying on his side, covered with the fleece cat bed I'd brought with me that morning. His eyes were still open. His paws were still a little warm. He'd been brushed and was clean. There was a box of tissues by his body left for me.

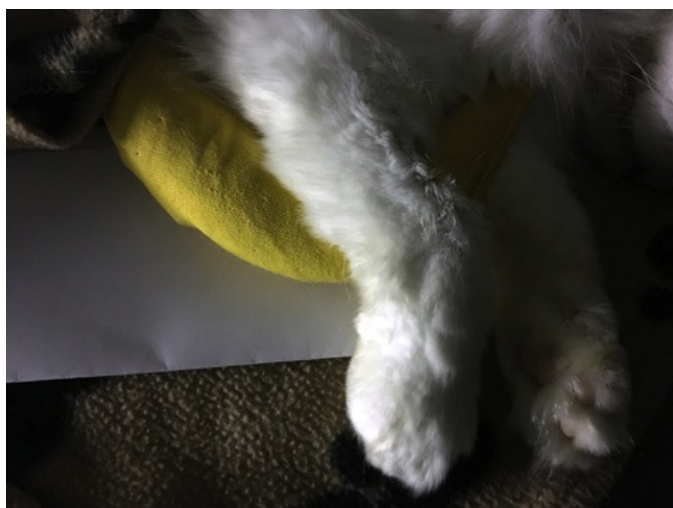
I stayed with Spencer's body for a few hours. Sam had to drive up from New York City where he was still caring for his aged mother. I didn't mind staying there so long. I had time to say goodbye. I spoke with most of the staff. One by one they came into the exam room and told me what happened, how much they cared and were sorry. I got a lot of hugs. It was comforting to know they cared so much about Spencer, about me, too. I even spoke with Betsy, who runs the front desk. We've become

close over the years. She told me she lost two of her beloved pets in the past year. She is so distraught about it she hasn't even told some people it happened. I won't say more to respect her privacy, but I've been down this road so many times, I think I said a few things to help comfort her. At least I hope it helped.

We're all hurting. It just may not be apparent, but scratch at the surface and most people have broken hearts.

In a final act of kindness, Dr. Larry called Mark. He owns the pet cremation service. He asked Mark to come today and take Spencer to be cremated so Spencer's body would not have to be stored in a freezer for another week. I may even have Spencer's ashes back as soon as tomorrow.

It's over. I can't do anything about it. My love. My sweet boy is gone forever. I will never see him again. I will never hear his purr. I don't have to fuss over how much he ate today (*I've kept a diary every day for two years tracking every meal he has eaten, how he was doing, what meds I gave him*). I don't have to give him fluids every day. I don't have to hold his plate while he eats. I don't have to come up with a new food or treat to tempt him, but I would do it every day for the rest of my life if it meant he would be here with me.



©2019 Robin A.F. Olson. Farewell my beloved. I sent Spencer off with his catnip banana and a letter I wrote to him, along with a photo of us. Sam slipped his own message to Spencer in along with mine a bit after this was taken.

I'm going to write a proper memorial about Spencer one day, but it needs to be separate from this heartbreaking tale.

I am gutted. I am done. I took a chance and lost. I really tried with everything I have to give. I'm so sorry Spencer. I will miss you for the rest of my life.

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Comments

Thu, 2019-09-05 18:19 — Cheryl (not verified)

I've got tears running down ^[7]

I've got tears running down my face for Spencer & for you. I've loved that boy ever since I've discovered your FB page. I'm so glad the day was peaceful for him & that he was asleep. You know it will be a long time for the worst of this pain to go away. And know he is in Heaven with his friends, all playing together.

Thu, 2019-09-05 18:38 — JaneA Kelley (not verified) ^[8]

Oh my God ... ^[9]

Robin, I'm so, so sorry! My heart breaks with you. Spencer was an amazing cat, and I'm glad I had the chance to meet him--twice!

Gaté, gaté, paragaté, parasamgate ... Bodhi svaha!

Thu, 2019-09-05 19:40 — Robert Vigeant (not verified)

Spencer ^[10]

I am so very sorry Robin.

Thu, 2019-09-05 20:50 — Ellen Pilch (not verified)

I am so sorry for the loss of ^[11]

I am so sorry for the loss of your beautiful boy. XO

Thu, 2019-09-05 21:46 — Connie Tails fr... (not verified)

Sending deep rumbly purrs of ^[12]

Sending deep rumbly purrs of comfort and condolence

Thu, 2019-09-05 21:55 — Kim Clark (not verified)

I never had the pleasure to ^[13]

I never had the pleasure to meet or touch Spencer, but I have been in your place. Your saying "gutted" is so accurate. Take time to mourn him and let those other babies give you some comfort. My tears don't do you any good but you and Spencer have touched my soul.

Fri, 2019-09-06 07:32 — Dee (not verified)

Spencer ^[14]

I just read this and although I did not know Spencer or you ,I read and cried like I did. My heart totally hurts for you

Fri, 2019-09-06 11:19 — Barbara Sagal (not verified)

Spencer ^[15]

I am so sorry for your loss. Empty words I know but Spender's death really affected me. I had an 18 year old cat that needed a dental and I was so worried about her. The vet assured me that the anesthetic they were using was used on "pregnant women." My beloved cat Kady stroked out on the table. Instead of telling me she was not responsive, was blind and would probably die, they wanted to keep her overnight. I asked if someone would be with her and they said no. I put her in her carrier and took her to Shoreline. For two days they tried. On the third day I made the decision to euthanize her. I understand your pain. Again, I am so so sorry.

Fri, 2019-09-06 13:52 — Robin Olson ^[16]

OMG!!!! ^[17]

That is despicable!!!! I'm so terribly sorry for your loss. HUGS TO YOU Barbara!

Fri, 2019-09-06 11:40 — Eastside Cats (not verified) ^[18]

Gutted ^[19]

Such heartbreak. How could anyone know?

He didn't die in pain; his wee soul just floated free.

I am so sorry.

Sun, 2019-09-08 12:47 — Laura (not verified)

I'm gutted for you Robin. I ^[20]

I'm gutted for you Robin. I have followed you for years and admire all you do for your cats. I recently lost my 8 year old cat Russell to a saddle thrombosis. It struck out of the blue in the middle of the night. He was so young. We should have had many more years together. He was sweet and silly and I miss him terribly. I understand how you are feeling, memories and pictures just aren't enough. Rest in peace Spencer. Hugs to you.

Mon, 2019-09-09 09:53 — Robin Olson ^[16]

I'm So Sorry, Laura ^[21]

Oh what a nightmare. I lost a cat to misdiagnosed heart problems, too. HCM is terrifying. I'm so very sorry for your loss. Hugs to you, too.

Mon, 2019-09-09 09:42 — [Lynda](#) [22]

Spencer [23]

Tears are streaming down my face. Spencer is so special and I'm so terribly heartbroken for you and Sam. When you made Spencer the mascot for your blog, you let all of us into his life. It sucks, Robin. There is no way around it. It *sucks*. Please know that love and hugs are flooding to you and Sam from across the country and, when all words fail, may you find peace in the silence.

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