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A Little Love Goes a Long Way for Chloe

Tue, 2013-05-28 13:06 — Robin Olson

Chloe's been living with foster mom, Angi for six weeks. The fact that she's in the same home is in and of itself a wonderful thing. With her aggression issues, Chloe could easily have been sent back to Animals in Distress and possibly been deemed unadoptable, leaving her to possibly face a grim future. Her former "guardian" had called around to the local Vets asking for a house call to euthanize the cat. Thankfully, though they are not bound by law to do so, all the Vets he contacted would not do a "convenience-euthansia," especially for a cat they had never seen before. How did they know the cat wasn't aggressive due to an underlying illness? I was dismayed to learn that my own Vet said there are some Vets who will do anything for a buck. Sadly, cats are still considered personal property, which means that said property can be disposed of at the owner's discretion. Luckily for Chloe she has a few Guardian Angels looking out for her, especially her foster mom, Angi who has stuck by Chloe through thick (and we're working on thin).

Since this is Angi's story, then some of the words should be her own. Here are some excerpts from emails discussing Chloe's ever-improving progress. **We last left off with Chloe starting her life at Angi's house and Angi having to protect herself from Chloe's attacks as she entered the room.** Angi had to have a cardboard shield in front of her just to get near Chloe. She could have become fearful and given up, but Angi kept at it, slowly gaining Chloe's trust. After two weeks, I got this email:



©2013 Angi Shearstone. *Chloe, relaxed and enjoying her toys.*

April 21

"Chloe let me pet her, brush her, and play with her a bit with her catnip carrot. She purred throughout nearly the entire exchange, rolled around playfully, even, and I think I have identified her "pay attention to me" meow over the "I'm gonna get you!" war-cry yowl.

She's still a bit nippy, I utilized the catnip carrot & brush a lot to give my fingers a little distance, but she's not as determined with the nipping as she was when she took that chunk out of my foot!"

April 25

"Baby gate is going well. Rudie's popped in to be a minor nuisance a few times, but only minor. Some hissing, but everyone's keeping their distance. I have to pick up Chloe's food to prevent the oranges [note from Robin: two of Angi's cats are called "the oranges"] from scarfing everything up (they're sort of garbage disposals!).



©2013 Angi Shearstone. Rudie checking out Chloe's room. Should he jump the baby gate or not?

Chloe meowed around mid-morning, and I decided to try something. I put the baby gate in the hallway, and closed off the other bedroom. If she got up to the gate, she'd just about be able to see me working at the desk but not able to come in, and would have access to about half the hallway, and the bathroom. She roamed the bathroom a bit, and then there was a bit of hissing with Rudie and she retreated back into the guest room. Figuring it might be just a bit too much too soon, I put the baby gate back in that doorway."

May 6

"I'm actually starting to suspect she'll love anyone that plays with her a few times a day, as well as offers scratches. I really do think that being able to interact via some cat toys was key to her getting her "frustrations" out. Really, I think she was starved for quality interaction for a long time.



©2013 Angi Shearstone. Bring on the skritches.

I've been opening up the "baby gate" area to include the hallway and my office, but she's not really taking me up on it that much, not after the initial interest. The other day she wandered out, spent a little time in the office with me (I put a pillow out for her, but she left after spending a few minutes hissing at Smudge (who was up in the cat-basket at desk-top level) and retreated to her room - I've been trying to put some of "her stuff" in the hallway to help her explorations, but it hasn't helped so much so far."

The next morning

"hah! I wrote this this morning & didn't send it immediately because I got distracted, and Chloe just wandered into the office while I was talking on the phone! She's on a cushion behind me! Rosie is in the basket, and they're both minding their own business...."



©2013 Angi Shearstone. A happy kitty thanks to foster mom-Angi.

May 14

“Chloe is doing even more amazingly awesomely. So much so that I'm not taking so many pics & video anymore because it's losing the "OMG!" factor.



©2013 Angi Shearstone. While working, Angi looks down and sees Chloe, reaching up to get her attention!

I've opened up her room during the day and while I'm awake & around, she has the run of the house. She's stayed upstairs except for the one time she chased Rudie halfway down the stairs (I'm sorry, but it's crazy how fast she can move when she wants to), and will sometimes follow me around the house, if I leave the office to go make lunch or something. I can even "call her" and she'll come. I've got some low-laying cushions on the floor in my office, and she'll hang out while I work, just like the other cats (who tend to stay up high, on my desk, shelves, etc...). She's found some peace with Rudie & Rosie, which is good, but also not so good, as she no longer chases Rudie away from her food when he goes into her room (really, she scared the bejesus out of him on a few occasions early on, even leaping off the bed to chase him out of the room!). I'm tapering off leaving food out for her because of that.

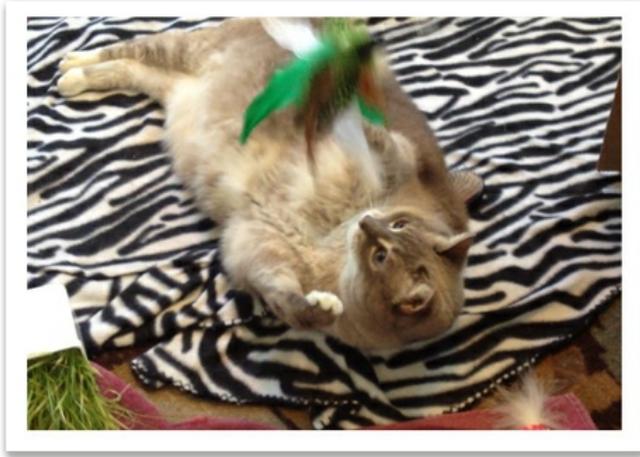


©2013 Angi Shearstone. Completely vulnerable with her belly up, Chloe lays on the sofa and watches TV with Angi. Is this love?

"...Chloe's even come up on the couch while I watch TV, or gone up there while I'm working in the office. The Oranges will keep some distance if I'm watching TV, but will sit on the back of the couch or on the other side of me. Even the nibbles are fading, and are even more "affectionate" than ever, and not mean. I can pick her up (slowly and supportively, as she's still so big!), pet her without worrying about my approach. She even lets me pet her kinda "roughly," I really don't feel like I have to be careful around her at all."

May 25

"... the landmarks are getting smaller now that she's so much more normalized, but I thought this was worth mentioning:



©2013 Angi Shearstone. She's just a cat, doing regular cat things. That this happened is far from regular.

Today, very briefly, I caught Chloe playing by herself. She was in the office with me while I was drawing. There's a cushion I have on the floor that she likes, I keep it near my computer chair. There was one of those furry mousies half underneath it. She pawed at it to get it from under the cushion, and then played with it for a bit. It was only for maybe 30 seconds, and she stopped by the time I got to the camera. But still. A sign of a much happier cat."

Looking Back

When I met Chloe back in March I couldn't even touch her. She was ready to attack me with whatever she had, claws or no claws. If I hadn't seen her behave normally and confidently before she went into defense mode, I would have been hard pressed to even consider giving her a chance. In that glimmer of sweetness, I saw hope and we had to try to help her. I'm so very glad I stepped in to assess Chloe because if her former "owner" had his way, Chloe would have been dead by now. Instead, Chloe is finding out what it's like to live a life without abuse or neglect, a life that has richness, love and companionship.



©2013 Angi Shearstone. Friends at last. Way to go Angi & Chloe!

Chloe was willing to give us a chance, too, even if perhaps we didn't show well when we first met her. It just goes to prove that with patience and a lot of work, every cat can blossom in time.

Go Team Chloe!

[swf file="sites/coveredincathair.com/files/May_lovey_dovey.MOV"] **If you'd like to catch up on Chloe's story from the beginning you can check out these posts:**

1. <http://coveredincathair.com/content/we-owe-it-chloe> [1]
2. <http://coveredincathair.com/content/what-we-live-chloe-update> [2]
3. <http://coveredincathair.com/content/baby-steps-chloe> [3]
4. <http://coveredincathair.com/content/chloes-big-adventure> [4]

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Comments

Tue, 2013-05-28 15:10 — jmuwj (not verified)

RE: CHLOE [12]

Awww, she looks SO wonderful! She's always been a beautiful cat, but look at her now, slimming down, with a well-groomed coat, luminous eyes, interested, alert expression, and PLAYFUL -- Chloe is going to be someone's forever love, I just know it! <3

Tue, 2013-10-01 11:31 — Chari (not verified)

This is such a sweet and [13]

This is such a sweet and motivating story! Every cat should be given another chance!

Tue, 2013-10-01 11:56 — Gus's roommate (not verified)

thanks [14]

This gives me hope. I adopted my first-ever cat, a 9-year-old who I named Gus, 6 months ago. He plays rough and nips/bites when he wants attention. He's been learning a lot and settling down, but I do still get the occasional bite, and every time, I wonder if I'm an idiot for keeping a cat that's drawn blood and doesn't yet keep his teeth to himself.

This tells me that having patience even with extreme behavior isn't foolish or crazy. If I think back, I can see that my boy really came to me quite good to start with, and his biting is mostly play-oriented and really has improved. When I get upset with him, I just need to keep working through it and remember that what I'm doing is worthwhile.

Thanks.

Tue, 2013-10-01 17:37 — Catnymouse (not verified)

Hope [15]

Chloe's story gives me hope. We have 3 cats & a pit bull mix, all rescues. One of our cats, Frank, whom we've had since he was 8 weeks old, and is now 7 years old, has become more and more aggressive as the years go on. He had always been an indoor cat but began beating up on the other "babies". He's also rather seriously bitten me (3 times) and my husband once. He has focused on our 10 year old cat as his main target and I believe would kill her if he was allowed. We actually have him on three meds to calm him down and have had to resort to keeping him outside during daylight hours and the 10 year old locked in a separate bedroom at night. I really don't think he will improve and we did consider having him put to sleep, but as long as this separation is working we can keep on. He was always hyper and dominant but it wasn't until recent years that he got so bad.

Wed, 2013-10-02 00:18 — [Robin Olson](#) [16]

Please get Frank to the Vet [17]

I don't know if you'll see my comment, but please get Frank to the vet for blood work and an exam. He may have an underlying illness. If the 10 yr old is a female, get her anal glands expressed. Some times they get clogged up and it makes the cat smell bad to other cats. one of our cats gets beat on when her glands get full... I hope you can get this worked out. You should speak with a cat behaviorist. They can understand cats on a level better than many vets can. If you do a search online I'm sure you will find one in your area.

Sun, 2013-10-06 15:33 — Nick J (not verified)

Other ideas [18]

A couple other ideas. Is he neutered? If not, get him neutered. Also, do you play with him using wand toys. Doing so until he is exhausted will burn off some aggression. And NEVER use hands as toys or to tease a cat. It just teaches the cat that hands are a threat and that it is OK to bite and scratch them

Tue, 2013-10-01 18:35 — Catnynouse (not verified)

Chloe [19]

What a beautiful, heart warming story!!! So glad Chloe got a second opportunity, LOVE a happy ending!!! (Way too few of them in animal rescue:(

Wed, 2013-10-02 00:03 — Cathy Blessing (not verified)

RE: Chloe [20]

What a beautiful girl! She's thriving with the attention you have given her. How wonderful to see this!! Thank you!!

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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