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Thu, 2014-05-08 11:44 — Robin Olson

Four years ago it was rare to see an online plea to help a pet find a home. I'd been cranking away at my blog, wondering if anyone read it when a woman contacted me about her dire situation. She had an 18 pound orange maine coon and she was losing her home in a week. She'd tried asking friends and family to help, but no one stepped forward. She didn't want to turn him into a shelter because in her heart she hoped her financial situation would improve enough so she could take her cat back. She just needed a long-term foster home.

Could I help her find a placement in Virginia for her beloved Cheese?



Our first glimpse of Cheese.

I'm in Connecticut. What could I do? I wrote a [blog post](#) ^[1] and hoped for the best. What shocked all of us is that the very next day, Amy Sikes stepped up to take Cheese as a foster with the hope of returning him to his mom one day. It was a joyous time, knowing even from afar, a few words inspired someone enough to help save a cat's life.

Cheese had a safe, loving home, but as the months passed it was clear that his mom could not take him back. Her hopes of her situation improving were dashed. She asked Amy to find a new forever home for the big sweetheart.

Amy contacted me for help and again [I wrote another post](#). ^[2] Kelly saw the story and reached out to me. **Kelly understood that 10 year old cats just don't magically find a home. She loved maine coons and felt she could give the kitty what he needed.**

Kelly lives in New Hampshire, a far drive from Virginia. If the adoption didn't work out it would make a big mess. We had to hope for the best.

Amy and Kelly worked out the details and in good time Cheese found himself in a new forever home with growing boys and 2 squeaky papillons. It wasn't a love match at first with the dogs, but Kelly knew to give it time and sure enough Cheese found his place. He even began to "chat" with everyone and quickly become the center of attention.

Kelly wasn't done adding to her family. She ended up adopting our foster kitten, [Buttons](#) ^[3], then a year later a friend for Buttons named Penelope Possum because the youngsters vexed the big orange senior (*it wasn't a bad situation, but out of respect Kelly felt Cheese needed more chill time and less chasing-kitten time*).



©Kelly Keating. Used with permission. Sweet Cheese.

I've become friends with Kelly over this time and she's kept me posted about Cheese. It was always comforting to know he'd escaped being euthanized at a shelter and had been so loved and cared for.

Yesterday afternoon while Kelly was at the gym, her son called her and said he thought that Cheese had just died. Kelly raced home. Cheese was only 12 and had been recently vetted. He'd been doing just fine, seemingly not in any distress. How could this have happened?

When she got home she found Cheese laying still on the floor, that horrible kind of stillness that alerts one to the fact that there is no life left. Her son relayed that Cheese had stood up, cried out loudly, then died. Shocked and horrified, Kelly called me with the heartbreaking news.

We tried to make sense of what had happened. I knew from experience that cats with heart conditions, which are common in Maine Coons, can cause them to throw a clot and very quickly die. [HCM](#) ^[4], hypertrophic cardiomyopathy had claimed the life of my cat Stanley and our dear cat, Jackson Galaxy just a few months ago. HCM is very tough to detect without doing an echocardiogram. An x-ray or EKG can only tell so much and Kelly's vet hadn't had any suspicions.

We'll never really know what happened to Cheese. We will try to find comfort knowing his passing was quick, but he was still so young and beautiful, with seemingly so many more years to look forward to, that it just feels grossly unfair that he's gone.



©Kelly Keating. Used with permission. The most handsome boy, Cheese.

To Kelly and her son, Liam, who I am told is devastated, to Kelly's other sons and partner Dana, we join you in mourning the loss of a kitty who just wanted a forever home and was lucky enough to find it with all of you. I wish it had been for 10 more years.

To all of you who read this post, please visit our [Facebook page](#) ^[5] and leave a message for Kelly and her family. She needs our support so very much.

Fly free sweet Cheese. You will be missed always.

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Thu, 2014-05-08 20:34 — [purpie](#) ^[8]

HCM ^[9]

My sweet Tuxie, Missy, died the same way. It was after breakfast on a Sunday and she had been perfectly normal all morning. Then she made a sound I'd never heard before. She was at my feet so I scooped her up into my arms like a baby. I was on oxygen at the time and even took that off and put it to her nose, but she was already gone. HCM just comes out of nowhere and there's no time to get to a vet. My deepest sympathy to Kelly and family, especially your son. Please reassure him that there is nothing anyone could have done. I hope Cheese meets Missy over the Rainbow Bridge. I know she would comfort him as he certainly misses his loving family.

Fri, 2014-05-09 14:54 — [jmuwj](#) (not verified)

RE: CHEESE (And HC) ^[10]

We have had this terrible experience in our family, too, when Kinoko-chan, who was Himalayan mix, passed away very suddenly. She'd been diagnosed with HC as well. Gone too soon, and much, much loved. But she had a good life, some of it spent with a dear friend who also left too soon, and much of it with her paramour, a big chocolate point meezer man we loved very much. My thoughts and prayers are with Cheese and all of his loved ones, who will certainly be reunited with him in due time. What a handsome big boy!

Fri, 2014-05-09 15:22 — [Barbara UK](#) (not verified)

My cat died this way too ^[11]

My big fluffy ginger boy died the same way years ago. He had spent the evening with my elderly neighbours who he loved dearly, before making his way home again. I was in the bath when my husband called me to come quick. I raced downstairs to see my gorgeous big boy keeled over and light already fading from his eyes. I screamed at him to hang on until I could get him to the vet but I knew it was too late. My husband said he had come into the kitchen, made a strange yelp and fallen down.

I had to go tell my neighbours and we sobbed together. The old lady was distraught that she had had to almost push my cat out that night as he hadn't wanted to go and she said that as he walked down her path he had looked back at her as if for the last time. She wished she had let him stay but I told her that if she had, she would have been the one coming to tell me the bad news.

My heart goes out to Cheese's family

Barbara UK

Fri, 2014-05-09 17:55 — [Felissa \(not verified\)](#) [12]

So very sad to hear about [13]

So very sad to hear about Cheese. It was wonderful to read that someone stepped up to take him into their family for his short time he had left and that he was loved while there!

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[Robin @ Google+](#)

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[3] <http://coveredincathair.com/content/unbearable-cuteness-little-beings>

[4] <http://www.winnfelinehealth.org/health/hcm.html>

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