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Mia's Story. A Very Long Road Part 2

Fri, 2015-05-08 18:40 — Robin Olson

Before I could do a thing I got a call from my friends over at Animals in Distress about a kitten with a serious birth defect and could I just foster her for a weekend?

Continued from [Part 1](#) ⁽¹⁾

That was the day I met Freya and you know what happened after that. Freya required round-the-clock care, specialized surgery and lots and lots of vet visits. Freya is still here 8 months later and is now part of the Kitten Associates family. Sadly, once again, Mia would have to wait to be socialized and I felt terrible about that.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Freya.

Mia's offspring began to find their forever homes and so did a few of Celeste's. Whichever cats were still waiting were moved over to the big foster room. Mia was nonplussed with newcomers. **In fact I began to wonder if she had a vision problem because she didn't react to anything. Her eyes were often dilated when I thought they shouldn't be. She didn't seem to look at toys if they weren't making sounds, as if she was blind.** I did a few tests but I'm not sure if she saw me or only has shadow vision. She's too fractious to take to the vet and our vet said unless it's pretty obvious (*like cataracts*) it's tough to tell the degree of vision loss a cat has.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. The first group of Laney's kittens arrive. Jules, Jasper, Jasmine and Junipurr (are all adopted now!).

We began transporting Laney's family north from Georgia earlier this year. The oldest four came up first and were quickly adopted because they were outstanding cats. One of them, Jules, was adopted along with Wallace, the once tiny kitten we'd taken from the Danbury Fire Department after they'd pulled him out of a concrete wall. Fernando and Astro were adopted together and so were Jasper and Jasmine.

That left Mia and Woody, the kitten no one seemed to want. Because Laney and gang were set to arrive I knew I'd have to move Mia and son into the blue bathroom so Laney's group could have the bigger space. It meant no sunshine for Mia and Woody since the room faces north. It's one of the reasons I wish I had more foster homes because this really isn't an ideal room for a cat.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Woody with his mama-Mia.

With Woody vying for my attention, I could only do a little bit with Mia. I'd tempt her with treats and lightly brush her paw with my finger. I was careful to be at ease with her and not tense. I wanted her to be used to me being around but she always hid in a corner if she heard me coming. **She never climbed on the cat tree, which added to my suspicion about her vision. It might also make socializing her much harder if she couldn't see me very well, if at all.**

Laney and the gang have been here for about 2 months and I hopefully have a lead on ONE home for two of the kitties, but that's it. **Poor Woody, Mia's remaining son, who has been with us over a YEAR, has never had even one application. I don't know why we can't find him a home because he's amazing, but sadly he's also keeping me from working with his mom.**

During these past few months one of our adopters, who has become a good friend, came to visit the kitties. Her name is Kendra and she teaches art to children. She's a wonderful artist in her own right and has volunteered to create torn paper portraits for many of our donors (*she even did a big one for us of our dearly departed kitten, Fred that you can see on her [ETSY page](#) ⁽²⁾*). Kendra is adorable and when she's with our cats she her voice takes on a magical quality. It sounds a bit like a cross between a little girl and an elf. The cats love it. Even my shy boy Cricket will sit in her lap while she tells him how handsome he is.



©2015 KendyBo. One of Kendra's many awesome portraits. This is of Jayne Dog, who I wrote about [HERE](#) [3].

I spoke with Kendra about my frustrations with Mia while we were in the blue bathroom with her. Without hesitation, Kendra reached out and started petting Mia while we were talking! WHAT?????!!!!

Yeah. She was petting Mia. Mia who had been in our program for over a year and in one second Kendra is petting her.

Did Mia like it? Meh; not so much.

Did Mia bite her or swat at her or growl? **No.**

It was shortly after that when Kendra contacted me and offered to foster Mia, hopefully unlocking the key to help socialize her. I had my hands more than full and she wanted to help. Kendra's boyfriend, Brian, had been around feral cats all his life. She referred to him as the "feral cat whisperer." Once we worked out the details we set a date to begin.

Saturday, Kendra came over to pick up Mia, but first I had to get Mia into a cat carrier.

I was lucky that Mia was in the bathroom because removing hiding places is the key to getting a cat into a carrier when you can't pick them up. The first thing I did was move Woody out of the room, then move the cat tree, litter pan and anything else giving me full access to Mia. **I also knew that because fearful cats feel safer in a small dark space that if I controlled where the small dark space was, then she'd go to it sooner or later.**

I knew, too, that Mia had already had this happen to her before so even with a plan of action it might prove difficult.

As I moved things out of the way, Mia dashed across the floor and hid behind the toilet, which was the only thing I couldn't move. I put the open cat carrier to her right. It was covered with a big towel so it was nice and dark inside. Mia wouldn't budge.

I had to get the broom. I didn't want to do it, but I couldn't risk being bitten. I tried to keep Mia calm, but she shot between a small space between the toilet and the cat carrier and jumped into the bathtub. She was very scared but didn't growl or try to attack me. I kept at it, coming towards her, slowly herding her back to the cat carrier.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Freya peeks in on Mia.

She was so afraid her bladder let go. I felt so badly when I saw the pale yellow fluid run out from under her tail. I wanted to rinse her off, but it was make or break and she needed to get into the carrier. I used the broom to carefully push her towards the open cat carrier. **She wouldn't move at first, but then suddenly made a run for it, this time into the cat carrier. I closed the door behind her and made sure it was closed properly.**

I told her I was very sorry and I truly was. I opened the door to the bathroom and Woody entered. He was distressed, too. He knew his mom was leaving him, but this was her only chance to blossom and to finally enjoy the loving touch of a human. With Woody left in the room it was time for him to leave, too. I'd begin to transition him to meeting my cats since he was so easy-going and it was far less crowded than adding him to the room with Laney and family.

Kendra had a room ready for Mia, with no places to hide. I waited for her to get home and update me on how things were going. Within a few minutes of her arriving, she sent me this video.

©2015 KendyBo.

Later that night I got more images and videos. Brian was working on becoming Mia's BFF. He "*forgot*" she was feral and picked her up. She just hissed, confused by the sudden contact. Brian and Kendra are both able to pet Mia, not just on her face, but on her back and even on her paws. Even Kendra's 8-year old son could pet her! Mia is stressed, but has moments where she closes her eyes and relaxes. It seems that it's just a matter of time before we see even bigger changes. Maybe by tomorrow she'll be ready to go?

All joking aside, we can't give up on Mia. Maybe I wasn't the person who could help her overcome her fear, but I was the person who was ready to take action when an opportunity came up that would give her the chance of a lifetime. Now I have hope that maybe one day Mia will be ready to find her forever family. For now she's got a great team, working hard to help her overcome her fears.

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Comments

Sat, 2015-05-09 13:36 — [jmuhj](#) (not verified)

RE: MIA ^[16]

That was a LONG petting session for any cat -- big props to Mia for her patience ! It looks like she was a little overstimulated there at the end of the video, but she did remarkably well. Wonderful video -- wishing Mia success and a long, happy, healthy, loved life with her eventual loving forever family!

Sat, 2015-05-09 15:25 — [Lily](#) (not verified) ^[17]

Great pictures! You're cats ^[18]

Great pictures! You're cats are so precious!

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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