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## The Mysterious Case of What Ails Bandit

Fri, 2012-12-07 12:09 — Robin Olson

*I was finally well enough to sit at my desk and try to string together a few cohesive thoughts. Three days of a cliché cold: sore throat, stuffy head, lungs loaded and tight were in the rear view mirror now. The only thing remaining was the kind of headache that makes you wish you didn't have a head. I couldn't spend another day in bed watching episodes of Upstairs, Downstairs <sup>[1]</sup> on my small iPad screen. I would muddle along.*

*I tried to catch up on e-mails and sort out what I needed to get done. I didn't want to do too much right away because relapse is not an option, especially this time of year. As I sat at my desk, the late morning sun was bright and warmed my feet. Cats came and went, searching for the prime spot to nap away the afternoon. I heard Bandit and Honeydew running around the house, chasing each other, wrestling, but eventually they, too, couldn't resist my warm office full of soft cat beds.*



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Bandit keeps me company while I'm in bed with a cold.

I happened to glance down to my left. **Bandit was belly up, apparently asleep. She was trembling. Amused, I thought she was dreaming, but her movements weren't the quirky-jerky shifts I've seen other cats do.** I shot a video of her, at first trying not to wake her, then worried something was wrong. I woke her up and she was still shaking. **I wondered if she was cold so I cradled her in my arms as her body continued to quake.**

I petted her and talked to her. For a second or two she'd stop, then start up again. She seemed sleepy so I sat back in my chair and held her, falling ever deeper in love with this tiny little kitten. She's half the size of her brother and light as a feather. **She would wake slightly, but the shaking didn't stop. I called the Vet and they said to watch her, keep her warm, let them know if it keeps going on.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *If you're not in love with Bandit there's something wrong with you.*

I called out to Sam and the two of us began to set up a heated bed for her. **I worried she was feverish so I took her temperature. It was 100.6°F which is normal.**

**Bandit seemed to be perfectly all right, except for the fact that her entire body was shaking.**

After fifteen minutes passed, with Bandit still shaking, I called my Vet again. They could see her at 5pm. It was barely 12:30pm. Something in my gut said not to wait. **I asked if I could bring her and leave her in case they could see her sooner and they agreed, offering I could see Dr. Mary right away if I didn't want to wait to see Dr. Larry.**

As I raced to the Vet, I started to run through what could be troubling Bandit. **Was she fighting off an infection? Was a toxin coursing through her? Did she get hurt?** I said a silent prayer for Bandit to please be all right. Not Bandit. Not this sweet angel of a kitten. I also hoped this wouldn't cost too much. Our finances aren't the best and I knew too well how one Vet visit could easily break the bank.

Thankfully it was quiet at my Vet's office. They immediately took Bandit in the back room to check her temperature. **It had gone up to 101.4°F which is still normal, but on the rise. I felt panicked and weak.** I realized I hadn't eaten anything and my stomach growled loudly. I didn't care about eating, but the stress and low blood sugar was making me feel faint.

©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *Bandit appeared to be dreaming, but then I realized she was awake and shaking badly. I rushed her to the Vet shortly after this was shot.*

Dr. Mary and Super Deb began a careful examination. Dr. Mary talked about everything she was doing and what she was or wasn't finding. *"Her heart and lungs sound normal. I'm palpating her abdomen and she's not complaining so there's no pain there. I don't feel anything abnormal."* Dr. Mary continued on as Super Deb comforted Bandit and kept her from wiggling off the table. She put Bandit on the floor and we watched her walk. I called to her and she ran over to me with her tail up high.

**We were all confused by how well she seemed until she was at rest, then the tremors would start again. First, her feet would shake, then her abdomen. Her head would shake because the rest of her body was shaking. She looked up at us with the most innocent expression-one of complete helplessness. It was heartbreaking.**



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They ran a complete blood panel and re-did her snap test. I sat in the waiting room with my heart pounding. **Every time a door opened I jumped-wondering what the news would reveal. Those fifteen minutes passed, taking a few years off my life as I worried.** When Dr. Mary came to discuss the results I almost jumped out of my skin.

**The results had minor “blips” of outside the normal range, but Dr. Mary said it was nothing to worry about and something she'd expect to see on a growing kitten's blood work. Bandit's snap test was negative (again) for Feline Leukemia and FIV.**

## So what was going on?



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Super Deb comforts Bandit.

**Dr. Mary began researching toxins.** The only thing I could think of were a few plants-none were an issue and an open (empty) bottle of Dayquil that I remembered I'd left on the counter. Dr. Mary was very worried about that and said that the blood work wouldn't show if Bandit had been poisoned, depending on what she ingested and when. My heart sank. **Surely this kitten wasn't going to DIE?!**

**We discussed everything from epilepsy to birth defects to the dry form of FIP.** Red-faced, I told her that earlier that morning Bandit almost jumped into an open toilet and I'd had no other choice but to pin her against the vanity with my leg to keep her from falling in. I felt terrible. **Did I cause her internal damage?** What the HELL was going on?

I had to leave Bandit with Dr. Mary. They gave her pain meds and sub q fluids. **Dr. Mary felt if she could calm Bandit down and soothe her pain she would stop shaking, then hopefully it would not resume once the pain meds wore off. If not, Bandit would have to see a neurologist and get a CT scan.** I knew if that happened we were done for-the costs-\$1200 to \$1400 just for the scan. Bandit had to get better.

It was a long afternoon. I kept running things over in my head. What did I do? What did she get into? Facebook friends gave

suggestions or left supportive comments, praying for Bandit to be ok.

I had the difficult task of calling Donna, Bandit's rescuer and first foster mama to tell her the news. I knew she'd be just as upset as I was and I struggled, trying to be calm and not burst into tears. She took the news well, but I knew it was killing her, too.

**Dr. Mary called shortly before 6pm. She said that Bandit responded well and she'd seen Bandit shake only once as she was re-taking her temperature. It was time to bring Bandit home and see how she did.**

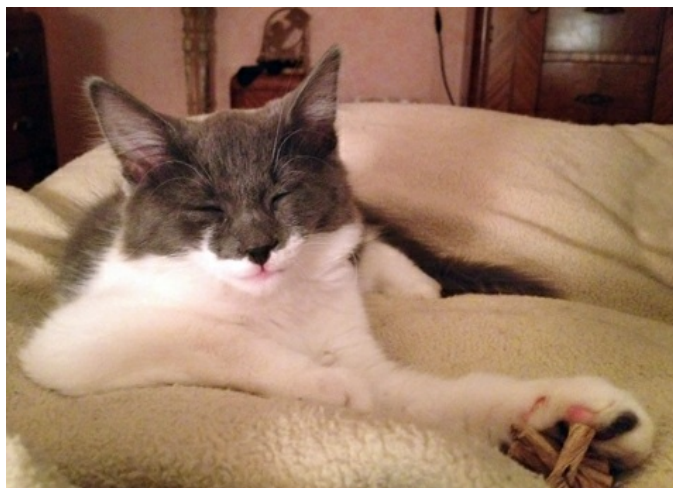


©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Bandit says goodbye to the staff at Dr. Larry's.

I felt so happy and light, not bothered by anything as I drove along the crowded highway, a journey I've probably taken a thousand times over the years. This was a good trip. I couldn't wait to see Bandit. I got to the Clinic, smiling and anxious. **One of the staff told me that Dr. Mary wanted to talk to me. I said I'd just spoken to her on the phone and she said she knew that, but that the doctor still wanted to talk about something. My heart sank.**

**I went in the back room where only staff were usually allowed.** The walls are lined with varying sizes of stainless steel cages. It's brightly lit and spotlessly clean. I zeroed in on Bandit. She was far off to the left, curled up on a heated pad in the back of her 2' x 2' cage.

**Dr. Mary's face said it all-Bandit had started shaking again and was no better. I could still take her home, but if she didn't get better by morning, she'd have to see a neurologist. Something was terribly wrong with Bandit. We just didn't know what it was.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. After a long, difficult day, finally some rest.

**Whatever joy I may have felt evaporated into the frosty night air. The drive home in the darkness did nothing to soothe either myself or Bandit, who cried, desperate to get out of her carrier. We set up a dog crate for her, hoping**



she would rest and do nothing else. I offered her a litter pan and she peed away all the sub q fluids. I gave her something to eat and she didn't hesitate to enjoy her dinner. I shut the door to the crate and she sat there, mild tremors coursing through her body. **I resigned myself to it being a long night and began my hyper-vigilant watch of her every move.**

Over the next hour or two it was clear that Bandit was not happy being confined. Each time I opened the crate door she'd slip past me and dash around the living room. I decided to bring her to my bedroom and close the door so I could watch her and she'd have space to move around and not feel stressed. **I offered her toys and she wanted to play. She jumped on the bed. She chased her brother, then her brother chased her. She wouldn't sit still long enough for me to see if she was shaking. She seemed like her old self, yet I couldn't believe she was suddenly just fine.**

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**Somewhere near midnight Bandit jumped on the bed and laid down, finally tired. As she began to doze off, I shot another video. It's not very exciting, but to me it was worthy of an Oscar [2]. Bandit wasn't shaking-not even a toe.**

I didn't want to believe it, but she seemed fine. This morning she was playful, hungry and just as loving as ever. As I sat at my desk, trying to put this story together, **she climbed into my arms, fussing about until she found a comfortable position. I cradled her just as I had a day before, but this time the only vibration I felt was from her deep, blissful purr.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. This morning with Bandit in my arms.

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[Not On My Watch](#) <sup>[21]</sup>

## Comments

Fri, 2012-12-07 13:01 — Jynx macTavish (not verified)

### **Shaking Bandit** <sup>[22]</sup>

Robin, I am so relieved to hear Bandit is better! I didn't want to say anything last night because you were dealing with more than enough speculation, but when I first brought Speaker home, at about 9 weeks (when he first started climbing things, now that I think of it), when he would lie down, sometimes his entire hind end would start trembling. I had no idea what to think of it - he didn't seem to be in pain, but he was shaking like a leaf back there. Then it would stop after a while. I took Speaker's temperature and it was fine. I talked to my vet (who just retired, damn it!) and he asked if Speaker was eating (he was) and moving around comfortably when he wasn't lying down (he was, and he was playful), and if he was pooping OK (he was.) So he suggested it might be a pinched nerve in his spine, and to keep an eye on it, and if it was a pinched nerve, it should clear up on it's own as long as it didn't become more irritated.

Sure enough, over the course of a week the trembling faded, although he would occasionally still shake a little, depending on his sleep posture, for about a week after that.

So when you said on FB the Bandit was playing and eating, I thought that perhaps that was what was up with her - she'd gotten too rambunctious, or maybe the toilet incident, pinched a nerve in her back. I guess we'll never really know, about either of them, but I am so happy to hear that Bandit is doing fine now. She really is excruciatingly adorable! Hugs to you, scratches to the gang!

Jynx

Fri, 2012-12-07 16:26 — jmuwj (not verified)

### **RE: BANDIT** <sup>[23]</sup>

Oh, but that second video IS exciting, Robin! She looks FINE! ;)

It's a mystery to me as well; and it doesn't look like CH to me. Just to be on the safe side with all cats at all times, it's good to cat-proof the house like one would proof it for a toddler, though; keep the seat down, keep the cap on the medicine bottle and put the bottle in the medicine cabinet, keep plants out unless they are harmless to cats, opt out of any holiday decorations such as tinsel that could possibly be harmful, stuff like that. A little prevention is always better (and easier on the credit card) than any alternative, yes?

Fri, 2012-12-07 23:40 — [Connie & The Crew](#) (not verified) <sup>[24]</sup>

### **that truly is a WTF?!** <sup>[25]</sup>

Part of me expected it to just end as quickly as it came... maybe growing pains?? but man I was so hoping you would find SOMETHING..

I am so happy she is doing better, and i hope it never comes back

Sat, 2012-12-08 00:07 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

### **Bandit's shaking** <sup>[26]</sup>

Bandit's shaking made me think of the chills people get. I hope whatever it was ran its course and right out the door without bothering any other cat.

Sat, 2012-12-08 10:11 — [Deb Barnes - Ze...](#) (not verified) <sup>[27]</sup>

### **Didn't want to read the end...** <sup>[28]</sup>

Oh... I fell in love with little Bandit's face when you posted about her on facebook.... Now I am reading your post and did not want to get to the end, for fear something bad would happen. SO, SO relieved that she seems okay now!! What a sweetheart she is!

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

## Links

- [1] <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0066722/>
- [2] <http://oscar.go.com/>
- [3] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/33>
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