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This Precious Life. Chapstick the Kitten.

Tue, 2014-03-25 12:40 — Robin Olson

Life is precious and should be revered in all its forms, whether it be a plant, or bug, a whale or amoeba. It's also natural and expected that all forms of life draw to an end at some point, whether it be after only a few moments or many years. Death must occur to make way for new life to emerge in an endless cycle.

When a life comes to an end we may not even notice. We might step on a bug on a walk to the bus, while the end of another life form might break our hearts, making living our own life difficult, if not impossible.

When faced with losing our own precious life, we fight, we take medication, we have a surgery, we ask for prayers. We may also do the same thing in honor of a life we want to protect that's in the balance. It might be our child or our friend or in this case that of a tiny newborn kitten who was found inside a dumpster with his sibling.

Someone who did not consider life to be precious had a pregnant cat. The cat gave birth far too soon. Perhaps she was highly stressed or sick. She may have even died due to complications from the delivery. Her kittens were smaller than normal by more than an ounce, when a birth weight of a newborn kitten should be at least 3 1/2 ounces. Being down 1/3 of normal weight meant those kittens had a high probability that they would be robbed of having a normal life span.

The person, for whatever reason, chose to take the kittens away from their mother and put the two of them into a small box. The person then brought the box to a dumpster near a gas station and hide it under more trash knowing full well that the unusually cold early spring weather in Connecticut would end the life of these kittens very soon. The person left them there to die on purpose.

I want to know what sort of monster would do such a thing. Why was throwing away a precious life was the answer to their problem. What other things was this person capable of? What excuses did this person give himself or herself so that person could feel like their choice was acceptable and they would remain blameless for their heartless actions?

But what the person didn't expect was that a man named Sal went to the gas station some time later. While he was getting gas he heard crying. He thought the high-pitched sound was made by birds at first. **He went to investigate, and to his surprise, he unearthed the box of kittens, who were so small their umbilical cords were still attached.**

He has a dog and cat at home. Life is precious to him. He brought the kittens home and called a Vet who gave him some idea of what to do and what to feed the kittens, not understanding that these kittens were newborns, called neonates, and that they needed more care than a kind-hearted soul could give them.

I got a call about Sal needing help so I called him, concerned about what I'd heard. I had no idea how serious the situation was either, but I asked, truly urged Sal to let my rescue, [Kitten Associates](#) ^[1], have the kittens. I'd called Jeannie, one of our foster moms who has a lot of experience with kittens, far more than I do, and she was on standby to take them.

Sal wanted to try to provide care. His girlfriend was home all day and would stay up and watch over the kittens. **Less than a day later, I got a call that the kittens weren't doing so well. I rushed to reach Jeannie and she changed plans to take the kittens as soon as possible.** I worried we were too late.

Within an hour of Jeannie getting the kittens, one of them died in her arms. A little black and white kitten who didn't have a name, who didn't live more than a day. That life was over before it began and we were all heartbroken.

The prognosis for the other kitten wasn't so good either. This little black kitten was very thin and not very lively. **Jeannie took a photo of him for me. She put a Chapstick next to the kitten to show me just how tiny he was. It was a shocking sight.**

Jeannie stayed up all night with him, trying to get him to take nourishment, trying to get him to warm up, but he wasn't responding very well and seemed depressed. We all knew about Failure to Thrive or [Fading Kitten Syndrome](#) ^[2]-when due to illness, gestational issues (*born too soon or developmental issues*) or some times it's not even known why, some kittens just don't make it. **They are too weak, too fragile and once that process starts they usually die very quickly.**



©2014 Jeannie G. *The lone survivor moments after entering our rescue.*

By morning I got the call that the second kitten was dying, too. I fell into a long crying jag. I'd never even met the kittens, yet my anguish in losing them was not diminished. I was told the kitten was struggling to breathe and that it was just a matter of time.

I wanted to hurt someone, specifically I wanted to hurt whoever robbed these innocents of their life. They didn't ask to be born, but they were here, so let us respect that. Ask for help from a local rescue. Reach out to SOMEONE. There are many resources where you can get help. **Why would anyone THROW THESE KITTENS AWAY?** I don't understand. I don't understand how cruel this person could be and I worried about the mom cat. What became of her? But I could do nothing other than sob for what will never be—two kittens having a chance to grow and thrive and live a wonderful life. Now it would not happen and as bad as this was, I worried about what this heartache would do to Jeannie, too.

Early that afternoon I texted Jeannie. I hadn't heard from her that the kitten had died so I wanted to check in. I asked if he was gone and she answered, "no." I asked; "is that good?" and she replied, "no." I knew it meant the end was near. I hung my head and cried some more. That was all I heard for a few more hours, until my phone rang. It was Jeannie.



©2014 Jeannie G. *First look at Midnight after surviving the second night.*

"Well you're never going to believe this." she said. "The guy who found the kittens, well he put an ad on craigslist looking for a mom-cat to put the kittens with and he found one. He gave me their info so I called them and I brought the kitten over to them. This couple really knows about kitten care and the guy is like some sort of crazy cat whisperer. He's got the kitten and he is going to do everything he can to keep him going."

"Wait...so the kitten is not **DEAD?**"

"Right. He's alive, but I have to tell you I don't think he's going to make it."



©2014 Jeannie G. Little Man.

I didn't want to shoot off fireworks and proclaim all was well with the world, but I had a glimmer of hope that somehow he would make it. Jeannie told me that she had stayed up all night and tried to get the little kitten to eat every hour or so. By morning he was doing so poorly and she was so tired, she finally gave up. She let herself sleep for a few hours, leaving the kitten in a warmed up blanket in a box next to her bed. **She knew when she woke up that he would be gone, but when she woke up and touched him he cried. He was hungry. She fed him, but he was still very weak and probably fading away.**

With nothing to lose, Jeannie brought the kitten to Jonathan and his wife Christal. Over that night we heard no updates. In fact I was wondering if it was some crazy tall tale and that this guy didn't even exist. I couldn't get his contact info, but I knew Jeannie was exhausted so I didn't bother her to get it. **I called Sal and asked for the info but he never called me back. Almost a day later I got the number from Jeannie, but she said the number was disconnected. I called it and sure enough, the phone was off! What happened to the kitten?** I had to know.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Unable to right himself, Midnight wobbles. I assure you we quickly helped him adjust his position (see below), but I include it so you can see how TINY his legs and paws are.

Jeannie said she was going to go back to the home. I asked to go with her but she said it wasn't necessary and that these folks were very private. I was jumping out of my skin, but there was nothing I could do. I had to keep waiting and wondering what I'd find out.

Not long after I got another message and a new phone number. The couple had recently moved here and had coincidentally just gotten a new phone number. Not only that, but Jeannie had just been to the home and believe it or not, **the kitten was STILL ALIVE. She said in 15 years of being a nurse, of working with little kittens, she was impressed with what this guy did to keep the kitten going.** She said the kitten looked a little better, still very weak, still far too tiny; **that he was put with a mama-cat who accepted him and 4 new sisters who crowded around him to keep him warm.** I was thrilled and anxious to offer support. I couldn't let this good deed go unrewarded.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson.

I was finally able to get in touch with Christal while Jonathan tended to the kitten. I offered them food, goat's milk, whatever they needed. I offered to help them with placing and vetting the kittens and getting mom spayed one day. I couldn't do enough to help them, but they were probably shocked that a stranger would want to do so much, so it took a few emails and calls and finally we set it up so that the next day I could bring them supplies as a gesture of thanks and of support.

Thanks to some donations we already received, I was able to buy a few cases of cat food, some hybrid grain-free dry/raw food and some goat's milk with probiotics in it. I bought the kitten and his family a very soft, flat bed, no sides for him to get hung up on. I had some toys that were donated to us so I grabbed a bunch for the adult cats and the kittens for when they got bigger. I knew the couple had children so I packed up a donation of plush cats so the kids weren't left out.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. My trunk loaded with goodies.

My rescue has been very lucky to be on the receiving end of many acts of generosity, but it was nice to be able to pay it forward. It had only been 2 days since the kittens were found and here I was in a part of a nearby town I'd never been to, hoping what I'd heard was really true and that this kitten was still with us.

I expected that when I met Jonathan he'd be tired, but this poor guy was loopy from being exhausted. He came out and met me after Christal had welcomed me into their home. He's a young man, wearing a t-shirt and jeans, barefoot, with his hair askew. He apologized for just waking up even though it was mid-afternoon. I told him not to be sorry and that I truly appreciated what he was doing. I couldn't wait to find out how the kitten was doing when he quickly left the room and returned, holding the little guy out to me in his hands.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Literally and figuratively-Midnight is in good hands now.

What I saw didn't make sense. I've seen plenty of little kittens in my day, but this one was so tiny I didn't know how it was alive. This little guy was born VERY EARLY. He had to be premature. He was weak, but feisty. We put him on the cat bed and he wobbled around. His paw was maybe $\frac{1}{4}$ the width of my finger, but he had tiny claws just like a grown up. I couldn't make out much of his face because he was all black. Then I saw it—a white locket of fur on his chest. It was barely the size of a pencil tip but it was there. It made me gasp as my own cat, Cricket, bears the same mark. I had only a moment to see him before he was put back with his mom to keep warm, but in that moment I was completely in awe.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Fussy feeding time while Cupcake looks on.

Jonathan spoke at a rapid fire pace. I asked him how he got this far and he told me so much that it made my head spin. He said he'd lived on a farm and had raised hundreds of kittens over the years. He knew about fading kitten syndrome but he was not about to let that beat him. He told me how he slowly but carefully got the kitten's core temp to rise, how he made up some homemade Karyo syrup to get his blood sugar up. He gave the kitten, who he calls Midnight, an extremely minute dose of amoxycylin and something that helped perk up his electrolytes. I was aghast. **Whatever he was doing resulted in this little guy latching on to his new mom for a moment. It caused this little guy to allow being syringe fed a tiny amount of milk. This kitten was reacting to the world around him even though he was far too weak to do much more than wiggle against sensations like being held or being syringe fed that he didn't understand yet.**

Jonathan felt the kitten had been depressed from being alone, but now had become more energized now that he was with his new family. **The fight was back in his heart.** This little kitten wanted to live again and Jonathan was going to do whatever it took to keep him going.

I wished I could take Jonathan home with me so we could write everything down—so this information would not be lost, but I also had to wonder if there was just something about him and his wife, too, that was something more than just knowledge—maybe it was their faith? I told them that I'd posted the photo of the kitten on Facebook and asked for good wishes and prayers and that almost 30,000 people had been rooting for this little guy to live, but the news didn't effect them. **They were so focused on this one fragile life that that was all that mattered.** I also knew they were both exhausted.



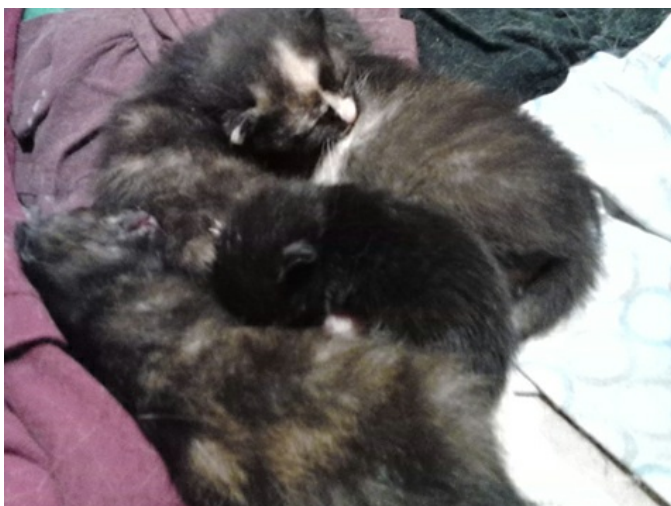
©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. So very tiny!

I thanked them again. I didn't stay long. Jonathan needed rest and the kitten needed more meals. **I promised to help them cover the costs of the vetting, spay/neutering of their current litter of cats AND the second litter** (yes there's a second pregnant cat in the home-they assumed the cat was a boy because it was an orange tabby and it's less common for the orangies to be female). I will help them find good homes. I offered to take some of the kittens into our program but right now they want to see the kittens placed themselves. **I honestly am so indebted to them I would move mountains for what they've done. I know it may not last. I know this kitten is far from being out of the woods, but I am trying to have faith that he will be okay.**



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Ready for more nourishment.

Day four, I get news. The kitten is still with us. Not only that, but they sent me a photo that says it all-there is little Midnight, front legs stretched out, attached with all he's got on his new mom's nipple, drinking in mouthfuls of life. In his joy, I was told he purred. I can't believe it was possible, but after what has transpired over the past few days, I better learn to believe that at this point, anything can happen.



©2014 Christal P. Midnight surrounded by his new siblings.

Day six. Guess who is still with us? Midnight eats more from his new mama now and is a little bit bigger. Christal estimates he's the size of a 2-day old kitten. She feels he can go the distance and frankly nothing would make me happier if that truly came to be.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. I was honored to have a moment to be able to meet Midnight's sisters who are all adorable torties. They are almost the same age as Midnight, but so much bigger.

Midnight, his new mom, his 4 new sisters, a dad and another mom and her as-yet-to-be-born kittens will all need to be spayed or neutered, vetted and have proper food and care. I would like to be able to provide that care for these families, which I estimate to cost over \$1000.00 as long as no one gets sick or needs critical care. I'm passing around the hat in the hopes that in honor of this precious life we all are blessed to have, that you will consider sharing your love with this family.

And as for little "Chapstick," you go boy. You get big and strong and have a wonderful, precious life.



©2014 Christal P. I love this photo. Midnight stretching out on his mom while her sister (who is also going to give birth soon) reaches out to comfort the little guy .

March 26, 2014 UPDATE

A GENEROUS FRIEND OF KITTEN ASSOCIATES IS OFFERING TO MATCH YOUR DONATION DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR UP TO \$500.00! So far we've raised \$200.00 so our target is just \$300.00 more!

March 27, 2014 UPDATE

WE MADE OUR GOAL!!! THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR HELPING LITTLE MIDNIGHT and his new family!

Fundraising services either ask for a donation towards their service to direct your funds to PayPal or they take a percentage of your funds before it goes to PayPal. PayPal also takes a cut.

To maximize every contribution, we're asking you simply go to our web site and press the [Donate button](#) ^[3] which will take you directly to PayPal. Once we reach our target, I will update this post and end the fundraiser.



DONATE TODAY!
Every dollar helps save lives.
[Donate](#)

THANK YOU!

Your donation can be for any amount and provides food, litter, toys, vet care and other supplies that help us keep the doors open at Kitten Associates.
Your Donation is Tax Deductible.*
We're a Non-Profit 501(c)3
Our EIN is 27-3597692

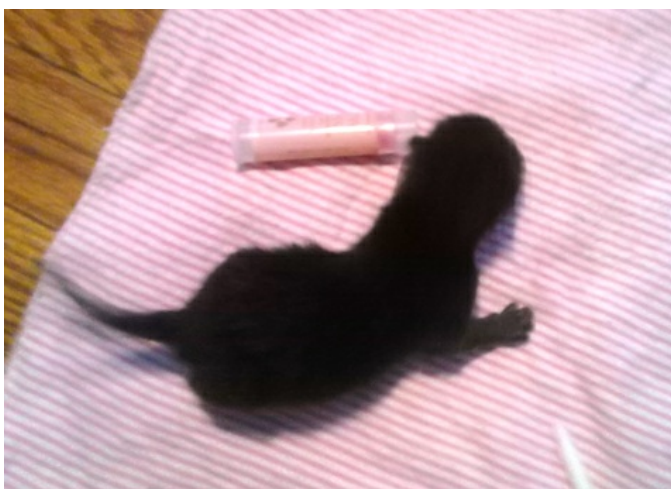
*depending on your tax situation. Please seek advice from your tax preparer or the IRS for more details.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. One of Midnight's sisters.

March 26 UPDATE ON MIDNIGHT, "Chapstick"

HAPPY ONE WEEK BIRTHDAY little one! Midnight has lived a week, is growing and eating much better. He also doesn't sit still for photos.



©2014 Christal P. I will never stop being amazed to know that Midnight lived another day. Look at how much bigger he is today!

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Comments

Tue, 2014-03-25 16:32 — [Connie & The Crew \(not verified\)](#) [13]

Yup, Jonathan and Christal [14]

Yup, Jonathan and Christal are good people :) way to go little 'chapstick'.. I have faith you will do just fine.

Tue, 2014-03-25 17:34 — Celia Girard (not verified)

Dammit, I wasn't going to cry! [15]

But I did. With lots of joy. Little Chapstick/Midnight is wonderful, strong and so very lucky.

Sal, Kitten Associates, the first foster and these wonderful folks are such a blessing. Thanks for all you guys do, every day, and for doing it with your whole heart.

Tue, 2014-03-25 19:54 — Stephanie Heitner (not verified)

I will be dontating towards [16]

I will be dontating towards this great cause as soon as I get paid. Oh my goodness, I have tears!!

Go Midnight, GO!!

Wed, 2014-03-26 08:47 — Catnynouse (not verified)

Go Midnight! [17]

Grow up big and strong! (And I hope his foster family - or Sal his rescuer- keep him!)

Wed, 2014-03-26 18:05 — Barbara UK (not verified)

Such a sad story [18]

I'm so sad after reading about little ChapStick, his poor dead brother and his lost Mama. Where is she and is she OK? Will she ever be found?

I have never seen such a tiny scrap of kitten before. I'm so pleased he has a new family to keep him warm and fed and is being cared for by such good people. Please God let him live and be well.

Thank goodness for Sal finding him and wanting to give him a chance to live.

As for whoever can dump living creatures like rubbish, well some people are just born with no heart and are cold as ice inside.

Barbara UK

Mon, 2014-03-31 08:15 — Danielle (not verified)

Update please!! [19]

How is Chapstick/Midnight doing today?

CICH @ [Google+](#)
Robin @ [Google+](#)

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Links

- [1] <http://kittenassociates.org/>
- [2] <http://cats.about.com/od/kittencare/g/Fading-Kitten-Syndrome.htm>
- [3] <http://kittenassociates.org/donate>
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