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Wed, 2016-09-14 14:58 — Robin Olson

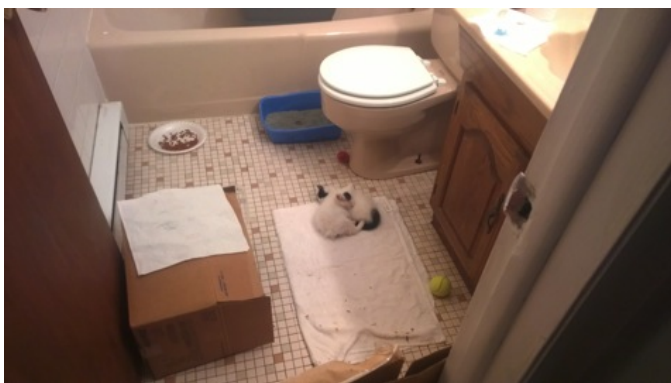
Two years ago, a tiny kitten was born outside, part of a litter, to a feral cat. There was nothing particularly unusual about the occurrence. It happens anywhere there are intact male and female cats, but this one kitten was different than the others. Her embryo didn't mature inside the womb in the same way her siblings did. Sometimes differences can be good things, but her differences made survival unlikely, especially if her mother chose to abandon her. Mothers know when something is wrong and will let their offspring die. Only the strong survive.



©2014 Randy S. Used with permission. Our first sighting of little Freya.

Forty percent (or more) of kittens don't make it into adulthood, whether they've been rescued or are facing life on the streets. It's a very sad fact, one that often pushes cat rescuers into retirement because they just can't take the heartbreak of losing another precious life no matter how hard they fight to save them.

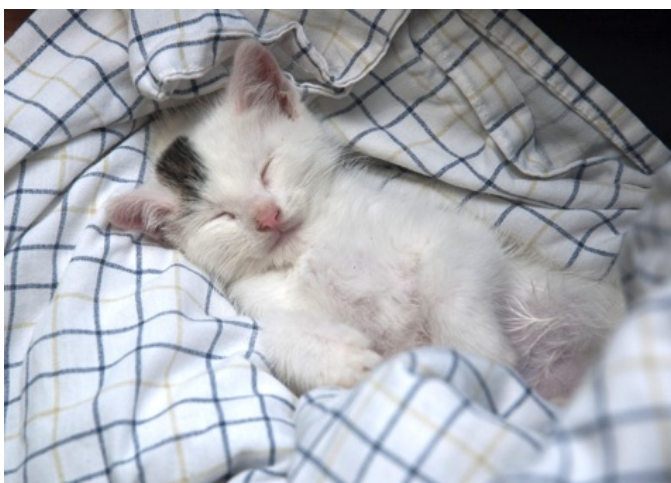
But once in a great while, a kitten who has the odds stacked against her, survives a little longer than expected, and it's one such kitten we celebrate today.



©2014 Randy S. Used with permission. Freya with her brother, Pascal.

Her name is *Freya*, though in truth it should have been spelled *Freyja*.^[1] Freyja is the Norse goddess of love, sex, beauty, fertility, gold, war and death. She rides a chariot pulled by two cats. She's one cool babe.

When I met her I didn't know any of that, or even how to spell her name correctly. I just knew her as a 1-pound, 4-week old kitten who had a rare birth defect called *atresia ani with recto-vaginal fistula*. She also had no tail, bowed, too-long back legs, crossed eyes, vision and hearing impairments, and vertebrae shaped like butterflies. It kept her from jumping very high, but other than that, nothing kept her from being a typical kitten.



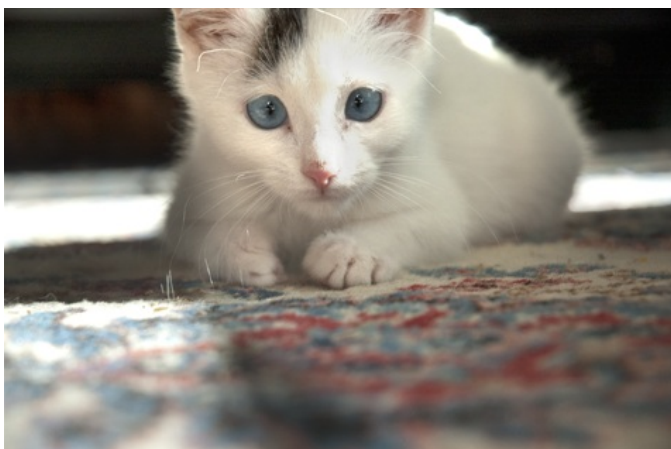
©2014 Robin AF Olson. I meet Freya for the first time.

Her vets and surgeons first warned us she was too tiny for corrective surgery and that she only had a 10% chance to survive. Her very rare condition was only seen, if at all, once in any general practitioner's career. Our Board Certified Surgeon had never repaired a birth defect such as Freya's, but had seen it done. The question of whether or not we could do the surgery was very sobering. Odds are it would be a waste of resources to even try. They gently suggested it would be more humane to euthanize her instead of let her go on with dangerous amounts of stool building up inside her with barely any way to even leak out of her.



©2014 Robin AF Olson. Next to her *Snuggle Kitty* (2), I did everything I could to help Freya feel loved and safe.

But Freya was not your average kitten and, not to brag or be arrogant, I was not about to let her die. I've always felt that as long as I put a lot of effort into our foster cat's care, that at least I'd increase the odds we'd have a "win" and not have another kitten perish. It was foolish of me to think I could control the outcome and during our journey there were many times I didn't think she'd make it. It meant me shutting down my rescue efforts while she required round-the-clock care. It meant many sleepless nights, getting up to make sure she was fed every five hours and hundreds of quick baths, rinsing off her filth-covered behind. It meant a kind of stress parents go through when their kid is in the hospital at death's door, but I had to try.



©2014 Robin AF Olson. Look at that face. That's why I'd slay dragons for this kitten.

I've written at great length about Freya's early days. There are links at the end of this post if you'd like to catch up. Today's focus is about celebrating a milestone. **The year where Freya reached her second birthday**. Where a kitten who could not pass stool, had corrective surgery that gave her a chance to live comfortably. Though the diet I created for her, also stunted her growth for good, it kept her alive until she was old enough for surgery and today we can look back and feel great joy in our accomplishment.



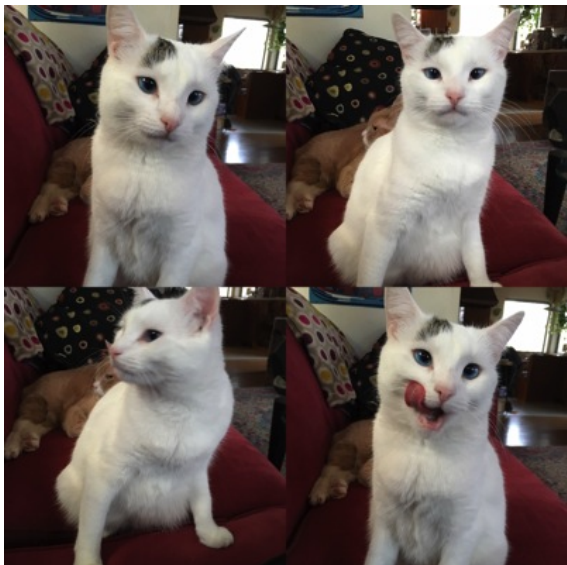
©2014 Robin AF Olson. X-rays before surgery showing how impacted with stool Freya was becoming.

Now healed, we joke that Freya is visited by The Poop Fairy ⁽³⁾, every time I find a poo-bean on the floor because Freya can't hold her stool very well so it does fall out. Trust me, I'd rather they fall out than be stuck inside her, causing her to cross her back legs and fall over in her litter pan simply from straining so hard. That's what she used to do. Those days are gone. Freya can lead a full life, well not "full."



©2014 Robin AF Olson. Freya vs the DOOD.

Over the past year, Freya has found her place with my ten, then nine, and sadly now, eight cats. She's easily the boss of every single one of them, even 24-pound DOOD ^[4]. In fact, she and DOODIE are BFFs. They often wrestle. She'll charge at him, then turn, pushing her butt right into his face. DOOD will hold her in place and try to clean her behind, but she hates being fussed with and will scream. She'll pull herself out of his grasp then jump on him again, screaming all the while. DOOD, as usual, is completely unfazed by this. They both seem to be having fun, but I can't figure out why she shoves her butt in his face AND that he likes it so much. *Weird*.



©2016 Robin AF Olson. A very goofy cat, indeed.

Freya still fetches. She only fetches large circumference spring toys, not the *skinny* ones. I think she sees the color blue best because if the toy is red or green she often can't find it. Her new trick is to load spring toys into our bedroom closet at night. There's a big gap under the closet door and Freya will put her stash into the closet, meowing until she lets the spring go, pushing it under the door. She does this around 1 AM. By morning there are usually 4 springs in the closet so my job, as I'm getting dressed, is to stop between figuring out what to wear and toss a spring over the banister and down the stairs into the living room. Freya will run half way across the house, then back up the stairs, proudly dropping the spring at my feet, she meows, asking me to *throw it again*.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Freya helps with the dishes.

Freya is as chatty as ever. I have a feeling she has some siamese in her gene pool. Each night as I get ready for bed, she joins me in the master bathroom, meowing frantically. I sit on the floor and turn on the video feature on my phone. I ask Freya questions and she often answers. I call these sessions, "*Chat with Freya*," and if you visit her [Facebook page](#) ^[5] you'll see many of our evening chats.

©2016 Robin AF Olson. Freya fetches.

Freya will always be kitten-sized. Though she weighs eight pounds and, yes, is a bit chubby, Freya's brother, Pascal is twelve pounds in comparison. Freya will always be small, but her personality is tiger-sized.



©2016 Chelsea LaManna. Used with permission. Freya's brother, Pascal.

In my 2015 post, [Dreams Really Do Come True Pt 17](#),^[6] I wrote that it was time to put Freya up for adoption. She was healthy and strong and my job as a foster cat mom who runs Kitten Associates meant that Freya should be adopted. The reaction from all of you was strong and immediate: **"No! You MUST KEEP FREYA! She belongs with YOU!"**

The problem in keeping Freya meant added costs that I wasn't able to take on. Though Freya will most likely only need food and regular vet visits for the next few years, it's more than I can handle. But then I had an idea. I created the [Freya & Friends Fund](#).^[7] It would allow my non-profit, [Kitten Associates](#)^[8], to provide long-term care for cats like Freya, and Mia, who probably will never be social enough to be adopted, and Lady Saturday, who is quite old and has many health ailments.

Our heart's desire is to find enough people to sign up for a tax-deductible, monthly "subscription" donation^[7] of \$15.00 or more. Sadly, though we did get a few wonderful people willing to help, we need more. We need about 20 more dedicated Freya-lovers to make a commitment to helping us provide for her so she CAN stay with us. We're fully funded by donations and none of us get paid for our work. It's a labor of love, but that doesn't pay for cat food or a trip to the vet. We really need YOU to make it possible for Freya to stay with us.



©2014 Robin AF Olson. *The night before Freya's surgery, exhausted and heartsick, I pray my little girl will make it. Now I need you to help us so she can stay with our family.*



I never expected I'd be writing this story or that Freya would impact my life so deeply. When I first saw her little face, I was completely charmed. When I found out about her birth defects, I was completely terrified, yet...here we are. **Freya made it to her second birthday and, with any luck, we'll be celebrating her birthday for many years to come.**

Here's a lineup of all our stories about Freya in chronological order from the beginning:

[For Freya's Sake](#) ^[9]

[Dear Freya](#) ^[10]

[For Freya. Part 1 of 2](#) ^[11]

[For Freya. Part 2 of 2.](#) ^[12]

[For Freya. Bonus Part 3.](#) ^[13]

[Please. For Freya.](#) ^[14]

[The Unexpected Turn. For Freya. Part 6.](#) ^[15]

[Antics of a 12-Week Old Kitten](#) ^[16]

[On the Eve of the Birth of Freya 2.0](#) ^[16]

[Freya 2.0. Neither Snow, Nor Rain, Nor Gloom of Night.](#) ^[17]

[Freya 2.0. In Search of Peace.](#) ^[18]

[Freya 2.0. 12 Little Words.](#) ^[19]

[Freya 2.0. 12 Little Words. Part 2.](#) ^[19]

[Freya 2.0. The End and the New Beginning.](#) ^[20]

[Freya 2.0. The Price and the Curse of the Pink Underpants.](#) ^[21]

[Freya 2.0. Dreams Really Do Come True.](#) ^[6]

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Links

[1] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freyja>

[2] https://smile.amazon.com/dp/B001V7UHG8/ref=wl_it_dp_o_pC_nS_ttl?_encoding=UTF8&colid=3ECC09OQNNJ08&coliid=I3ADJ5QQZ8II5N

[3] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/freya-20-little-girl-no-more-part-16>

[4] <https://www.facebook.com/HisRoyalDOODness/>

[5] <https://www.facebook.com/forFreya/videos>

[6] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/freya-20-dreams-really-do-come-true-part-17>

[7] <http://kittenassociates.org/specialprograms>

[8] <http://kittenassociates.org/>

[9] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/freyas-sake>

[10] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/dear-freya>

[11] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/freya-part-1-2>

[12] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/freya-part-2-2>

[13] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/freya-bonus-part-3>

[14] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/please-freya>

[15] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/unexpected-turn-freya-part-6>

[16] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/antics-12-week-old-kitten-freya>

[17] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/freya-20-neither-snow-nor-rain-nor-gloom-night-part-8>

[18] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/freya-20-search-peace-part-9>

[19] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/freya-20-12-little-words-part-10>

[20] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/freya-20-end-and-new-beginning-part-11>

[21] <https://coveredincathair.com/content/freya-20-price-and-curse-pink-underpants-part-12>

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