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The Rock Star's Fifth Daughter. The Perplexing Case of Holly Kellogg. Part 2.

Fri, 2017-06-02 15:16 — Robin Olson

(continued from [Part 1](#) ⁽¹⁾)

After my first visit, I put together a written game plan of steps to take next. I didn't want to over-complicate things by telling them **EVERY SINGLE THING** we could do to change Holly's behavior. It can be overwhelming, so I started simply: **add another litter pan, slightly move the one they had away from a drafty doorway and add two sessions of play time to Holly's day.**

The second litter pan was a hit. Holly used it right away, but she continued to pee on a bed every so often and clearly even one time would be too many times. I knew that Holly could be reacting to old stains that were not cleaned up so I urged Stephen to get a black light (*because urine and some other bodily fluid stains glow under black light*), cleaning supplies (like vinegar and a CO2 enzymatic cleaner). We set another date to tour the entire house.

I tried to make it sound fun; like we were detectives on a mission. Stephen was all for it. He wanted to do whatever it took to get Holly to be happy and not feel like she had to pee on anyone's bed. Many other people I've worked with push back about doing the work to solve the behavior problem but Stephen was intrigued. He'd never really considered how a cat thinks or feels about their environment before. He wanted to dive in, get it right, and return to a happy home life.

I felt like Mary Poppins. I arrived with a stash of items in my shoulder bag. I had my own black light and cleaning supplies, too, plus a few other goodies for Holly. Stephen, Kirsten and I began checking every single bed, carefully going over each one with the lights. It was then I discovered a surprising fact. Two of the younger daughters either had or have a bit of a problem wetting the bed or having a diaper leak. Then it hit me. They didn't have one cat, they essentially had two (*one was human*) who were staining some of the beds. Maybe Holly was reacting to human urine stains?

The answer was clear right away. First bed we checked had sparkling clean sheets and blankets, but the mattress had a butt-shaped urine mark on it. Of the three of us only Stephen had a decent sense of smell. I think mine died from cleaning one too many ammonia-scented litter pans over the years. **He dove in. He didn't get fussy about it. He sniffed away and acknowledged that the mattress did have some scent. We got to cleaning it, while Holly ran into the room, jumped on the bed and was completely uninterested in peeing on it.** She played in the corner on a fuzzy pillow and promptly fell asleep while we continued to scan the beds.

We didn't find much more, but one of the girl's bed was going to be an issue so that room was going to be closed off from Holly, period. The last room we did was the master bedroom. Okay now this was a bit weird for me. Rock star bedroom? The inner sanctum!

I tried to be respectful and not have any thoughts about what I know about black lights, but my God, I had to say out loud that the black light picks up ALL sorts of STAINS, not just cat urine (*wink, wink, nudge, nudge*). Thank GOD the bed was very clean other than one small area that had to have been from Holly.

Okay, so we had a clean space. The bedrooms would be shut down for now. We'd see how it went with Holly. The Kelloggs

looked relieved. Maybe this would do the trick?

Being a singer/songwriter means traveling to events or going on tour from time to time. The Kelloggs went out of town for the weekend, leaving the kids and Holly with grandpa. I didn't hear anything for a few days but when they came back I got a long text late at night from Stephen. **Holly had peed on the sofa, passed stool on it and on a sleeping bag that was on the floor and I think peed on a bed, too.** I tried to soothe Stephen's concerns. Firstly, Holly was accidentally locked in a room that had no litter pan in it so a few of the issues weren't her fault. I didn't know if the schedule was completely in turmoil or if the girls were acting up because the parents were gone. Maybe Holly was upset by the change. Maybe this would not continue to happen?

But it did.

Holly stopped passing stool inappropriately, but began peeing more often in places she shouldn't. I decided we needed to get her to the vet to be certain she wasn't sick. They hadn't looked for infection or other issues and being so young she could have something going on that a urinalysis wouldn't show.

So we took Holly to the vet.

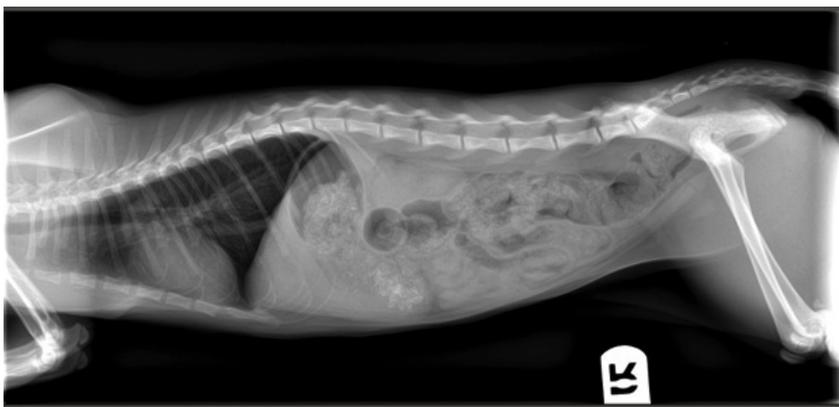
I've been to many vets over the years. I was not a big fan of this person. He didn't want to listen to me but clearly was focusing on Stephen and the fact that they both had four kids. The vet was almost proud to say he was split from his wife and only had the kids on weekends as if it was a relief. I was horrified. Stephen and Kirsten smiled and were polite, listening attentively, adding their take on the situation. I wondered what they thought of the vet and if they shared my disdain. They certainly had far a better poker-face than I do.



©2017 Robin AF Olson. Stephen with Holly-girl at their vet.

The vet did a quick exam and suggested tests. Stephen was not used to seeing gnarly vet estimates and the \$1000 price tag seemed a bit high to me as well. I worked it out with the vet to cut the bill down by more than half. I felt we could get away with a full CBC and Chemistry Panel, an x-ray, but to not do urinalysis again since they'd just done it a month prior. What we ended up with wasn't what I expected. It was blood work but it didn't have a Chem Panel and the x-ray showed Holly had a lot of stool in her but it obscured seeing her kidneys or bladder-so it was almost a wasted test. The results we got were normal so the vet suggested putting Holly on a prescription dry food to solve her problem.

I had warned the Kelloggs ahead of time that this might happen and to NOT buy the food. The vet gave a compelling pitch about why the food would help her, telling them it had helped other cats because it had "*soothing proteins*" in it. **Excuse me? What the HELL are "*soothing*" proteins? I almost popped my lid when I heard that line of BS.** I could see Stephen was tempted. Heck, I'd be tempted, too if I didn't know any better, and if I believed just feeding my cat would stop her deeply rooted behavior issue. Thankfully he listened to me and didn't buy high-carb, grain-loaded junk.



All we learned from Holly's x-ray...she needs to poop.

Once I got home, I looked up the food on the internet and was completely horrified that it had literally EVERY SINGLE type of GRAIN in it you can imagine. What was soothing about that? Nothing. The supposed "soothing" part was listed near the bottom of the ingredient panel- which also meant the amount of it was far less than any other ingredient. It had .08 L-tryptophan in it, which is an amino acid that is found in turkey. It's the stuff that makes you sleepy after a big Thanksgiving meal. If you really wanted to dope up your cat you'd have to feed them a heck of a lot more of it to get an adequate dose...oh and this stuff was ungodly expensive to boot.

So now what? I really wanted to take Holly to see MY vet, [Dr. Larry](#).^[2] He's a great diagnostician and he knows not to try junk foods on any of my cats, but I'd just encouraged Stephen to drop a lot of money on Holly. I couldn't ask him to do it again.

Meanwhile, I reached out to a few of my cat behaviorist friends. I ran Holly's history by them to make sure I hadn't forgotten something. They all agreed there was nothing more to do other than confine Holly to a smaller space, which was next on my "to do" list.

So we confined Holly to the master bathroom. Perhaps the house was too much for her and the quiet of the bathroom would keep her away from the kids a bit more, in case they were stressing her out. Holly had her own litter pan that was kept perfectly clean, her new diet (*which she liked very much*) and some comfy beds. This was going to work, right?

Nope.

Well, it *did* work for almost a full week. Holly used the litter pan every day. She had play time and lovey-dovey time. The girls were instructed to let Holly come to them and not grab at her. Things were going great until one morning they let Holly out early in the morning while Stephen and Kirsten went back to bed. Holly peed on the bed while they dozed.

Then everything fell apart.

Holly began to urinate in the sink, then the second sink in the master bath room. She used the litter pan, then she'd pee on the bed even if it was right after using the litter pan. I had Stephen track how many times Holly was peeing. It was 4 times a day, then 6, then up to 8. Something was STILL WRONG. We had to see Dr. Larry and the next day we did just that.



©2017 Stephen Kellogg. Two litter pans in the master bathroom: one with the litter Holly used at the rescue and one with *World's Best*. (3)

I was also toying with the notion that Holly maybe needed a cat-buddy. Maybe her being the only pet in such a large home was too much for her and that a friend would help her adjust. Stephen and Kirsten were open to the idea, but I didn't want to, again, do too many things at once, plus they'd have to introduce the new cat to Holly and that was just going to add more stress to the situation. No. We had to get Holly's health issues resolved-IF she had any.

Since the first days I'd begun this case Stephen and Kirsten kept returning to the fact that Holly began peeing on things AFTER she was spayed. I called the clinic who did the procedure and they spoke with their vet who does the spays. I spoke with two of my vets, a handful of vet techs, did research online and found that there ARE incidents where there are post-surgical complications or there are genetic deformities that can't be visualized on x-ray which could be the culprit. It was rare that this happened and Holly would have shown incontinence issues, along with inappropriate elimination. I knew we'd have to do an ultrasound to get this resolved, but I also knew that there was only so much money we could spend without the Kellogg's pushing back. In truth, they have to balance the vet costs with the costs for caring for their family. It didn't make them villains. *Everyone deals with this balance who has a pet.*

I had high hopes we'd find SOMETHING wrong. In a way it would be a great relief. I felt terrible wishing she was sick, but at least we could probably cure whatever it was and having to deal with cat pee in your bed is very high up on the "sucks!" list.



©2017 Robin AF Olson. Holly waiting for Dr. Larry. While I wonder what the heck is going on with this kitten.

Dr. Larry was great. He even suggested maybe Holly needed a friend. He also said that some cats do better going outside-for

which he knew I was going to flip out over. He sees this situation over and over again and how people deal with it is as different as are the cats who have the problem. He's had people want to euthanize their otherwise healthy cats. They don't want to spend money doing tests. They want the peeing to stop but they won't do what it takes to really SOLVE the problem.

I was SO grateful to the Kelloggs that they were in it for the long haul. Stephen surprised me by digging in, asking question after question, offering his hypothesis; fascinated by the process, the detective work, the documenting, the study needed, to sort out what was going on. He even told me he was fascinated by ME. What? No! Yes!

We finally did a full blood panel and the results were normal. Urinalysis and culture were normal, too. Fecal test was normal. IF something was wrong with Holly the only thing we could do was ultrasound and they'd already spent a lot of money. It would have to wait...if the Kelloggs could keep the faith.

By now a month had passed. We'd had good and bad days but trending towards worse days. Maybe Holly was upset from being confined. **Stephen had the added pressure of leaving for 3 weeks to go on tour soon.** If Holly wasn't improving how could he leave his wife to care for the family AND deal with Holly's urinary mishaps?

I returned to the Kelloggs' home to assess Holly again. I felt like I was losing my mind. I told them new things to try and they had failed. What was so bizarre was that Holly wasn't peeing on the lovely pure white very soft and fluffy rug in the bedroom. She only peed on Kirsten's side of the bed. I'd asked her about laundry detergents, perfume, makeup, hair spray, anything that had a scent that could set Holly off, but there was nothing that made sense to cause the peeing.

I contacted one of my mentors and we spoke again about this case and again I was told I had done the right things and that we could continue to tweak how we dealt with Holly, IF the Kelloggs were okay with it.

I also had more detective work to do. **I spoke with the lady who runs the rescue where Holly came from. What I found out made me change my opinion again that this wasn't a health issue. It had to be a behavior issue.**



©2017 [Stephen Kellogg](#). [4] Holly home from the vet, but when will we find out if she's sick or if it's a behavior problem?

Holly was rescued from a kill-shelter in North Carolina with her siblings where she lived in a cage. She was only 5-weeks old and had no mother with her. She was transported to Connecticut and went into another cage on arrival. **Holly spent her life in a cage up until she was adopted at 11-weeks of age** . What had gone on with her social skills? She couldn't learn as much without her mom. Maybe she never had proper experience with a litter pan? What did the stress of being confined, then removed from her siblings, do to her?

I imagined her going from a small cage into a HUGE home with 4 kids. Wow. That would make ME pee on the bed, too. I felt really sad for Holly because if she didn't make a positive change she would lose her home and have to go back into a cage at the rescue until she found another home...and what if she peed in that home, too? Holly could end up being euthanized.

[to be continued]

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Comments

Sat, 2017-06-03 13:18 — jmuhj (not verified)

RE: HOLLY ^[22]

It definitely sounds like a stress issue, and is related to Kristen. Also, 6-8 times a day for a cat to urinate is abnormal. From her X-rays, too, she sounds very stressed and "bottled-up". Is the household very noisy and chaotic? Most cats don't like that type of environment at all. Poor little girl -- such a beauty, too!

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[2] <http://www.mapleridgeanimalclinic.com/>

[3] <http://www.worldsbestcatlitter.com/>

[4] https://twitter.com/Stephen_Kellogg

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