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The Rock Star's Fifth Daughter. The Perplexing Case of Holly Kellogg. Part 4

Mon, 2017-06-05 14:12 — Robin Olson

(continued from [Part 1](#) ^[1], [2](#), ^[2] and [3](#) ^[3])

I have to say it again, the Kelloggs are some of the nicest folks you'll ever meet. Kirsten is sweet and lovely. The girls are all so polite and well-mannered, smart and outgoing (*except for little Greta, but even she is starting to open up around me*). Their warmth opened me up, giving me insight into the other side of cat behavior and cat rescue—that of the family who is dealing with the possibility of giving up their cat. Reluctantly, I admit I tend to vilify people who don't do the work to keep their cat. I try so hard not to do that, but in the back of my mind, I often find that I'm not too thrilled, and often frustrated when it comes to the human part of doing rescue, but this was different.

Holly wasn't being given up for good, she was being given up for now. Stephen was really shaken up about it. It made me want to help him all the more to see him fight off tears when he put Holly's cat carrier on the bed in the foster room. I rattled off how things were going to go next, to give him time to take a breath. I quickly started to talk about what to expect from Holly in a new environment to help distract Stephen from his heartache.

I wanted the whole family to see for that it would be okay, and moreso that leaving Holly with me wasn't a failure of any kind. *It was about love.* The love this family has for their kitten meant giving her up for a few weeks to give her every chance to learn appropriate behavior in a situation that might be better for her. I honestly think they would do anything to help Holly and because of that I was inspired to take her on.

I hooked up our old web cam so the family could check in on Holly, silently praying that they'd never see her getting beat up by the other cats—a *possibility-or they might see worse*, me in my jammies scooping the litter pan! I promised to keep them updated and assured them that if there were any health issues I'd advise them immediately.

We said our farewells and Kirsten and I decided that a weekly visit would be a good idea to help the kids stay connected and help Holly know she was loved. With Stephen being on the road, it would be strange not to have his late night texts, but he gave me the ok to update him. Once again I was so glad to know how much this guy cared about his family, even the furry kind.

Fostering Holly Begins with a Bite

Holly was not happy. She was angry about being with other cats. The first twelve hours she hunkered down in her cat carrier. I wondered if she was peeing inside the carrier, but she was so upset **I didn't want to try to handle her after my first failed attempt ended in being nipped.**

My foster cats were upset, too. Mia, was effected the most negatively. She hid. She wouldn't eat dinner. That night while I was trying to sleep in the room she cried every hour or so. Her meow is hoarse and ragged and pitiful. I felt terrible upsetting her so much.

Annie and Andy were staying away from Holly, too, because for a little “punk” she is an alpha cat, *really a full-blooded tortie full of tude.* **During times like this it's difficult to imagine that it will ever change for the better.** In all my years fostering, I'd seen kitten after kitten behave the same way until they felt safe. With Holly doing things outside the norm in her

home, would she be unpredictable in mine, too and NOT settle down?



©2017 Robin AF Olson. Holly arrives and the rest of us hide.

That first night was rough. Holly came out of her carrier around 11 PM. I'd moved her litter pan close to her spot on the floor below the bed where her carrier was located. She was acting fussy. I lifted her into the pan and stood guard, while Annie and Andy stared at her. I blocked their line of sight the best I could so Holly was able to feel safe enough to urinate in the pan. I checked her cat carrier while she was doing her thing and it was dry.

There wasn't much room on the bed. Holly returned to her cat carrier. I was exhausted and wanted to sleep, stretch out and relax. It wasn't possible, but I managed to slide my feet behind Holly's cat carrier. As I laid there trying to get comfortable, **I thought about how Stephen had told me he spent his last night with Holly laying on the floor of his bathroom with Holly's cat bed as his pillow. She laid next to her daddy, a sweet final night together.** Now Holly was slowly creeping out of her cat carrier to snuggle up against my ankles. Unlike most kittens, she didn't attack my feet. She was also probably exhausted from stress. As she slept, I laid there and listened to Mia crying. She was scared and wanted to get out of the room, something she's never tried to do. I dozed off for a short time until Mia began again, always sitting next to the door, anxiously trying to get out, get away from the "interloper."

The next day was Easter Sunday and Sam and I had to leave early to drive to NYC to take Sam's mother to Easter service at her church. I was scared to leave Holly alone. I'd gotten about three hours of sleep and was barely coherent. I had to go. I had to hope the room wouldn't be soaked with urine or sprayed with blood when I returned.

Holly hadn't been inappropriate so far. I was keeping a journal so I'd know if she was peeing 8 times a day as the Kelloggs had noted. Things in the room were a bit calmer, too. I knew they'd have to work out their hierarchy and since there hadn't been any violent fights that maybe by the time I got home they'd be buddies.

I kept checking the web cam while I was on the road. I saw Annie and Holly smacking each other, but that was it. I also saw Holly use her litter pan. So far, so good, but Mia was still hiding and miserable.

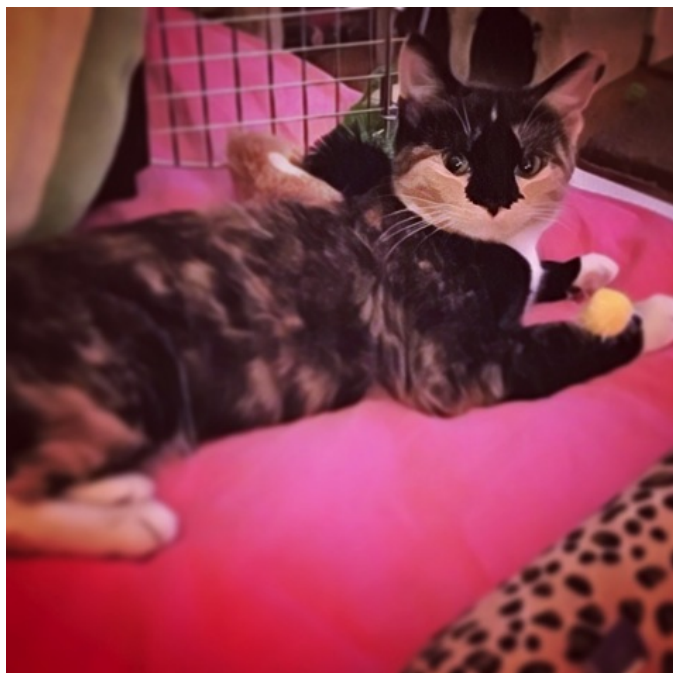


©2017 Robin AF Olson. Via our web cam I saw Andy sneaking a look at the newcomer.

I observed that Holly began to take ownership of the bed. It was the prime position in the room and I couldn't allow her to do

that. She had to share it with everyone. Mia's favorite cat bed was in the back corner on the mattress and she hadn't been in it for days. I kept moving things around in the room, trying to gauge whether a cat bed here would make Holly pee on it or block others from using it. I finally settled on repositioning items so Holly didn't have the main location of her scent on the bed.

I knew every time I made a change, she could react by urinating or it causing a fight if I didn't sort out how to position everything from the litter pan to her cat carrier (*she needed it to hide in for the short term*) into locations that were workable for the cats. **Was the litter pan too exposed? Too protected? If I moved the cat carrier would Holly flip out?** It was a slow process that had to be refined again and again.



©2017 Robin AF Olson. Out of her cat carrier, but still not so sure of her surroundings.

Then, a breakthrough. The following night I was watching tv in the foster room. Holly chirped to Andy and he sat up and ran over to her. They began chasing each other around the room in a playful manner. Holly slapped at him a few times and he slapped back. It wasn't vicious, it was simple roughhousing. Somehow they'd worked things out enough to begin playing together.

Holly continued to use her litter pan, then used the main pan the fosters used, too. It was interesting they were not using hers, but I was glad they were not using the bed either.



©2017 Robin AF Olson. Making friends.

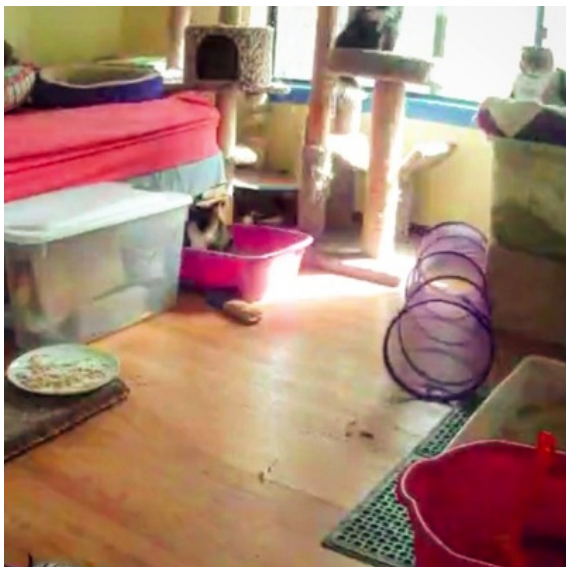
Today is Day 6 of Holly being with us. She is using her litter pan faithfully. There were two incidents where I thought she might be showing a possible medical issue, but it hasn't happened recently. She's eating well, playing, still a bit hissy, but she's also

fearless and has a huge personality. Annie and Mia are coming around. **Mia is eating and finally went back to her spot on the bed.**



©2017 Robin AF Olson. Relaxing enough to sleep soundly-at last.

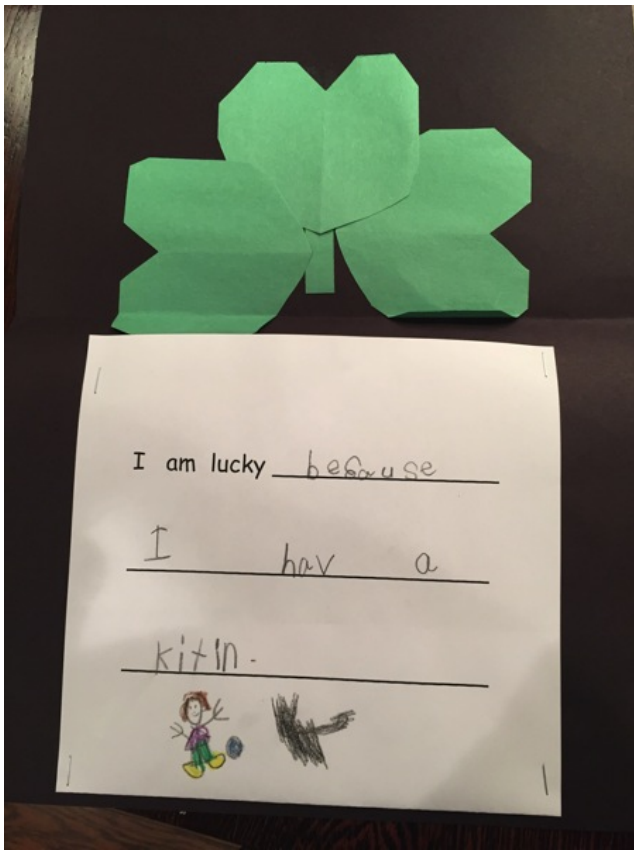
Holly is very chatty and lets me know if she's hungry and dinner is late. She loves her pom poms and spring toys and will fetch them on occasion. She likes to sit behind me or will pass out on my lap completely stretched out and limp. I'm grateful she trusts me. Making friends with her is important. She has silly markings on her face. It looks like she doesn't have a nose at all but it's just her coloring. **I can see why her family loves her so much. She's pretty darn cute.**



©2017 Robin AF Olson. The web cam shows me Holly IS using her litter pan.

Kirsten and the girls are coming over to visit in a few days. She was kind enough to share a photo of something her daughter Noelle created. When I saw it I cried.

Here's a little girl who feels she is lucky because she has a kitten. I remember feeling like that, too, when I was a kid. I have to make this work with Holly. I have to find a way for Holly to be happy and appropriate in her home with humans. I got a glimmer of why Stephen is so passionate about helping Holly because of the impact this little tortie has on his family. This is not just a kitten who can easily be replaced. This is a kitten who will break her family's heart if they can't find a way to live with her.



©2017 The Kellogg Family.

Now I want to know how this is going to end because I finally have a measure of hope that perhaps there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Maybe that light is actually furry and has oddly shaped paws and is named Andy? **Maybe Holly just needs a friend?** All I know is I've got to get this right for Holly's sake and for the Kelloggs.

[to be...yes, you guessed it...]

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Comments

Tue, 2017-06-06 13:35 — jmuhj (not verified)

RE: HOLLY ^[16]

"...Maybe that light is actually furry and has oddly shaped paws and is named Andy? **Maybe Holly just needs a friend?**" MAYBE you are very wise?! 😊

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