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The Squee Diaries. Ch 8. Paint the Town Brown

Fri, 2013-07-26 17:50 — Robin Olson

The miserable heat wave has vanished, replaced with blessedly cool and drier air. The windows are open for the first time in weeks. It feels more like autumn than the middle of July. I'm grateful for the respite, even if it will just last until morning.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *The gang at 7 weeks: Confetti Joe, Yukon Stan, Lil' Gracey, Precious Pete & Jellybean Mel (front).*

Minnie's kittens continue to delight me. Even without their mother's careful tutelage, they surprise me by being willing to accept me as their surrogate—at least in as many ways as are appropriate. For a little over two weeks the kittens have been mine alone. Minnie has completely turned over her duties to me, without a look back or regret. She moved on before any of us were ready. **Her sudden apparent rejection of all her kittens, first brought on by the pain of her illness, then perhaps due to her hormones, urging her to procreate again, was rather shocking.** It was as if a switch was flipped and with it her motherhood came to a premature end. The kittens and I were lost for those first few days. Neither of us wanted to give up on her so each day I offered her one kitten. I held the kitten out to her with the door opened to her room. At first she would act out violently, hissing and growling, scaring the poor kitten badly. I'd soothe its fears and put it back with the others. Minnie would go back to her place and lay down, grooming away her anxiety over being presented with an unwelcome guest.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *Minnie between vet visits.*

I tried each day for a week to get Minnie to accept her kittens again. Minnie didn't hiss as much, but reacted by retreating further into her room. The kitten would cry to her and she would reply with a tiny almost-chirp. **Maybe she was telling the kitten that it's time to grow up and be on their own and to trust that mama knows best.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Gracey.

What I didn't expect was how the kittens immediately rallied, focusing their interest on me. When I'd previously entered the room, they would look up, maybe run past me, but now, they run over to me, try to climb up my leg or cry at my feet, hoping to be lifted into my arms for a cuddle. For seven and half week old kittens, they are all very friendly and affectionate. I realize that this will be better for them in the long run. **Bonding with a human will serve them well one day when their families come to find them.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Eating raw.

Weaning kittens is always a challenge. They make a horrendous mess by running over their plate and tracking food all over the floor. Their litter pan habits still have a few kinks to be worked out so there's "that" to be cleaned up as well. **The literal dark side of weaning is that the kittens are also getting their digestion working, or not. The result for those tender tummies were piles of mushy brown splats all over the bathroom. At first I blamed it on parasites so I checked a stool sample out and the test came back negative.** I still de-wormed the kittens with Strongid, which doesn't get all the parasites, but it's gentle enough.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *Oh Stan! Swoon!*

That didn't work so I began adding a probiotic based in dehydrated goat's milk to their food. The kittens liked it a lot, but it didn't help, at least for the few days I fed it.

It got to the point where I didn't want to enter the foster room. The poo-piles were always somewhere tough to get at, like behind the toilet and the smell could be bottled and used as a chemical weapon. I was very worried when I saw blood, some of it mucousy, in their stool. The kittens had very wet bottoms and many cried while in the pan. It's one thing to work with one sick cat, but five sick kittens is a test of how to stay calm when in your mind you imagine that the kittens have the beginnings of something terrible and not just simple loose stools.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. *After a day of raw (inset), canned food moosh-poop.*

I kept the kittens clean and I scrubbed the floors a few times a day. **I decided to take the kittens off whatever I was feeding and put them on a plain, raw chicken diet that also had proper vitamins and minerals added to it. They attacked it with such vigor that I was taken aback. Within 24 hours their stool showed signs of improvement AND they stopped using the floor for their toilet.**



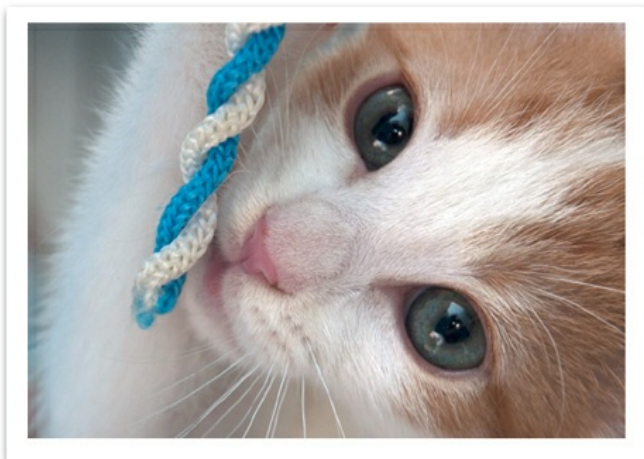
©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Poor Joey. Straining and crying in the litter pan.

On the second day, I saw less blood, but in a somewhat formed stool. The kittens behinds looked cleaner and the litter pan wasn't as loaded. I went back to a new de-wormer and started them on that to see if it would help. I knew I might have to use something more powerful if I couldn't get the blood to stop, but for now the kittens were racing around, gaining weight and having fun. No need to flip out.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. My little rock stars.

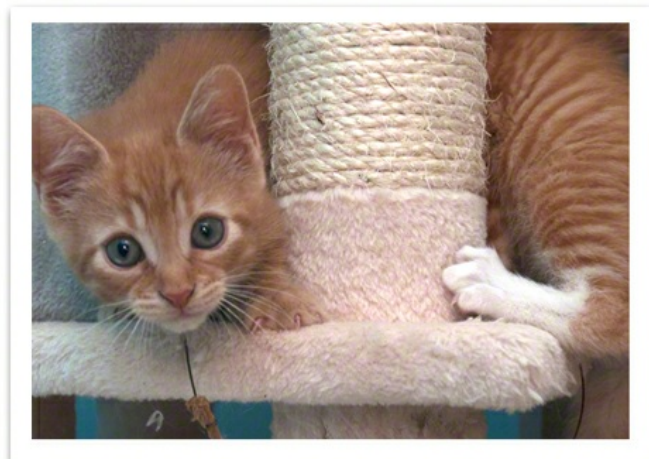
What was interesting to me was that I ran out of raw food and had to feed the kittens one meal of canned late at night. The next morning I found stool puddles all over the bathroom again. I wondered about the food being the culprit or was it just that the raw was easier on their tummies?



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Joey with mousey.

While I was trying to sort out what to feed the kittens, Minnie's health took an odd turn. She went into heat and stopped eating. I haven't seen a cat in heat since I was 9 and we were told to wait until our kitten was almost a year old before we should spay her. She went into heat and my parents thought it was amusing that she got so very friendly with my

dad-especially. What it told me was that now with Minnie on her own, I couldn't even spay her so she'd have to remain in her room without any cat-companionship for a while longer. Spaying a cat in heat is difficult because the uterus is engorged with blood and can tear easily. Since Minnie had just barely recovered from a terrible infection, I didn't want to put her into any higher risk for her spay.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. How many cats are in this photo? Hint: there is MORE than one.

I took Minnie to see Dr. Chris, who thankfully gives us an amazingly generous discount, and he told me that we could end Minnie's estrous by stimulating her ovaries. I gave Dr. Chris a funny look then said; "You're not even going to buy her dinner first?"

Then I wondered how this was going to be done. **Next I thought...I don't want to know.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Waiting for Dr. Chris.

Dr. Chris grabbed a thermometer and a cover for the tip then gestured for me to hold Minnie in place. He inserted the thermometer into Minnie's vagina and twisted it around. Minnie started to vocalize loudly, her eyes wide. I thought she was going to bite me, but then quickly realized she was too busy getting her funk on with Dr. Chris to bother with me.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Stan and Mel.

In all the years I've done rescue, this is one thing I've never had to do. **Dr. Chris told me that we had to irritate her, just as a male cat's barbed penis would and it would end the cycle and we could spay her safely sooner.**

Of course, I blurted out that if humans had barbed penises there would be three humans on Earth. He didn't make a comment and I simply blushed.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Mine! Mine! Mine!

We opted to give Minnie her Rabies and FRVCP (distemper combo) vaccinations. **I thought she'd be fine, but she had a nasty reaction to the shots. Her right front leg went lame and she didn't get up for the next 24 hours.** Worried, I called two Vets and they said to give her another day. By the second day she was up on her paws, but not eating well. **I sat down next to her to give her some reassuring pets when I noticed a big red lesion under her left front leg- nowhere near where her vaccine was given.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Mellie.

Either she was having a nasty allergic reaction or somehow Minnie had gotten the dreaded "RW" (ringworm). **Just as I thought Minnie was finally out of the woods, she was back in it again. I raced her over to Dr. Chris and he took**

a look. He thought it was an Eosinophilic plaque [1]-possibly brought on by the vaccine OR it was "RW."



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. A foreign lesion.

...but he was leaning toward the plaque to which I almost told him I would make out with him I was so happy. Ringworm means lots of fear it will spread to ALL of us..not just the cats but to me and Sam, too. No ringworm means Minnie can be with other cats much sooner and hopefully with some treatment she will feel much better, too. Fortunately for me, I kept my mouth shut and didn't embarrass myself further. We did a culture of the fur near the lesion and we'll have to wait about 10 days for results.



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Joe & Gracey.

In the meantime I will keep fumbling along, trying to right this tipping ship and hoping I can prepare myself for the kittens to be ready to go up for adoption soon. I knew I would get attached and now I have to figure out how to still love those babies to pieces without shattering my own heart.

NOTE: there were SO MANY PHOTOS I didn't have room in this post, so the next one will photos-only and please don't forget to VOTE so we can win a \$1000 donation for our kittens!



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Comments

Sat, 2013-07-27 14:52 — [jmuhj](#) (not verified)

RE: PAINT THE TOWN BROWN ^[15]

Minnie is looking splendid! and so are her babies ;) So glad you found the answer to their digestive upset problems and can keep them "regular"! You do amazing, wonderful work -- don't forget that, even when all seems "brown" ;)

Sat, 2013-07-27 14:58 — [Marlene](#) (not verified) ^[16]

The Squee Diaries ^[17]

Robin,

I loved reading this post. I also enjoy following Covered in Cat Hair on Facebook. I think a lot of us who have followed you with Minnie and her kittens have become attached to the kittens. I also enjoy watching the kittens occasionally on Squee TV. Keep up the good work. You really are devoted to cats. I can see how it would become quite difficult not to become attached to all of your charges. Thank you for your good humor too.

Sat, 2013-07-27 15:13 — [Barbara UK](#) (not verified)

Minnie and Kittens ^[18]

I've been worrying about Minnie as she was so poorly in your last blog post, I'm relieved to hear that she is better but sad to hear that she has rejected her kittens. However, she did a good job looking after them up until she was sick and look at them now! They are full of fun and cute as buttons. True they have made you a lot of mess which is very unpleasant but you have dealt with it and moved on and now they are learning that the litter pan is the place to "go".

I had to laugh at your risqué comment to your unamused vet about barbed penises - so funny! Poor Minnie and the thermometer - not what she had in mind I'm sure. Still, I hope it does the trick.

I hope Squee TV will continue for a bit longer as it lifts my spirits to see the kittens frolicking about without a care in the world.

Just voted for Dear Fred as well - good luck - you deserve to win.

Barbara UK

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[2] <http://petties.dogtime.com/finalist-voting>

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