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The Squee Diaries Chapter 12. All Good Things.

Thu, 2014-02-27 13:17 — Robin Olson

There are times I don't realize something profound just occurred. Looking back on the situation I see what I missed was truly amazing. A milestone was reached, a torch passed, leaving me feeling sad that I didn't honor that moment the way it deserved, so perhaps these words will serve as a testament.



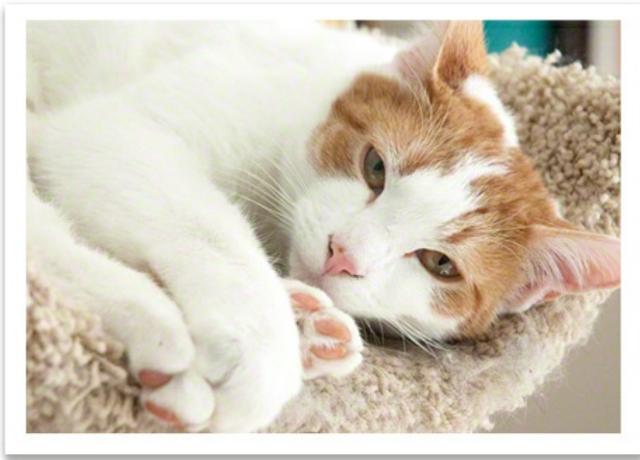
©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Gracey (left) with brother, Joey (right) watching the squirrels.

Lil' Gracey and Confetti Joe have been with us since they were 4 days old. Their brothers, Yukon Stan, Jellybean Mel and Precious Pete have long since found their forever homes and as of last week, the final papers were signed as their mom, Minnie, found her place, too (*with a couple I truly LOVE..and where Minnie is blossoming by leaps and bounds every day*).



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Joey (inset) just 11 days old and again recently.

The remaining two kittens had been living in my home up until 3 weeks ago when I was fortunate enough to meet with Jame, who offered to foster kittens for our group. Jame and her family don't currently have any pets which greatly simplifies whether or not I can have them foster. They impressed me by bending over backwards to clean and prepare their entire basement for us to use for our kittens. It's a large, bright, sunny space with windows along one side of the room. Jame's daughters, Grace and Frances were sweet-natured and had a very calm energy. When they came over to meet our cats and fosters, they were affectionate and gentle, clearly enamored with all the cats they met. **I had no concerns that any cat we placed with them wouldn't be completely happy in their care.**



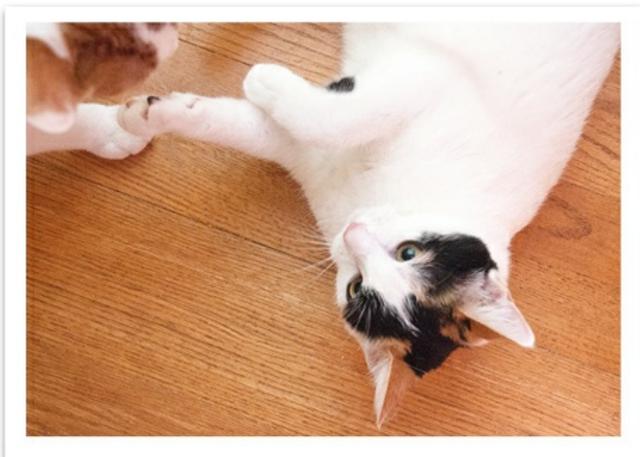
©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Sleepy time boy.

Jame had never fostered before, but she wanted to give back to her community and she wanted to show her daughters the importance of helping others in a real way. Since this was their first time, I wanted to give them kittens I considered to be healthy, stable and friendly. Ones that only needed food, a warm bed and love so that meant Joey and Gracey would be the best choice for them.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Gracey chill in' with the DOOD.

As much as I loved every second with the kittens, they were big enough to be part of the general population, instead of housed in a separate room. **With full run of our home it opened up new adventures for them, but our cats were not too thrilled. We had some issues, like inappropriate urinating and a brief spat or two.** I knew Joey and Gracey would be better off with Jame's family, not to mention reducing the stress on my own cats, but I was very sad to see them go.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Time to wrestle in 3...2...

Because we had an unpleasant situation with Minnie's last foster home, I was more careful about who fosters for us going

forward. I wrote up an agreement for fostering and had Jame sign it. The time with the kittens would be limited and monitored. **I'd let it go too long with Minnie, only to find out she was getting injured by the other cats in the home and exposed to food that ended up giving her a bad allergic reaction. I was determined to check in on the cats more often to make sure they would continue to be well cared for, but Mother Nature had a different plan.**



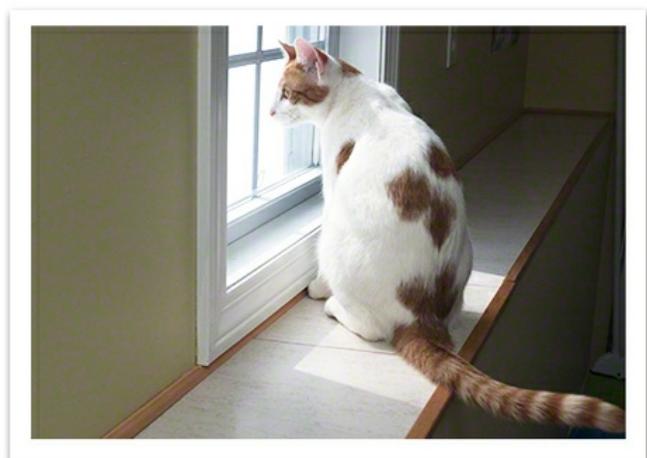
©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. In their new foster home, Gracey makes sure the other cat she sees really IS her brother.

The one-week agreement was extended another week and another. The weather was so poor and we got so much snow that I could not get out of my driveway. When I could escape, it was to get cat food or do a vet run. I just didn't have time to visit the kittens, though I did communicate with Jame often.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Joey's always had the goofiest tail. He walks around with it over his back like a carrying handle of some sort.

Jame did a great job reporting every little thing, sending photos, updating me on progress. Her daughters were having a great time getting to know the kittens and they were thrilled with each success ("Joey sat on my lap! I made Gracey jump after the toy!"). **I realized with a sinking feeling that what happens to all fosters was happening to them. They were getting attached.** Too much time had passed. Now I was worried that I would hurt them because I'd found an adopter named Dana and it was very likely that Joey and Gracey would be leaving them soon.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *Joey with heart on his rump.*

When I told Jame the news, she emailed me asking me if we could talk. I had a feeling she was going to tell me she wanted to adopt the kittens. I had mixed feelings about it because if they did, I might lose a great foster home. I knew they'd be a great home for the kittens, so I was curious to know what she wanted to talk about. Since she needed more cat food I asked her to meet me at the pet food store so I could get her more, then we ended up walking over to the little café inside our local grocery store to talk.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *With foster mom, Grace.*

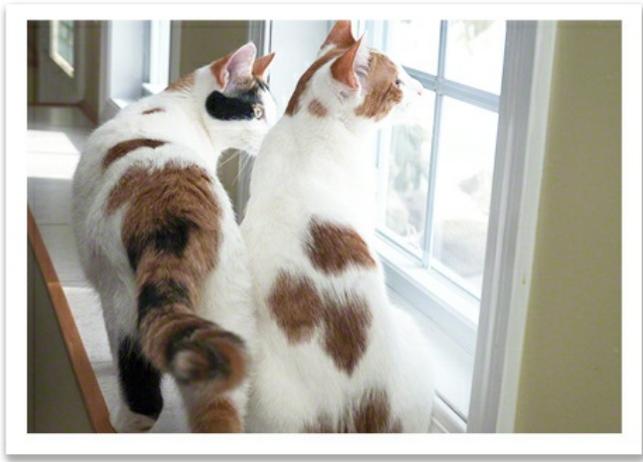
As Jame spoke, tears welled up in her eyes. It was hard not to cry along with her. She told me that she and her family had fallen in love with the kittens and were miserable at the idea of them leaving and wanted to adopt them, but...there was a problem. She didn't feel they could afford to provide for them if something happened to them and she knew that wasn't right. Jame continued to tell me that things would be changing later in the year when she expected to be able to find work, but for now they lived on her husband's salary. The problem was how could I have her wait months to make Joey and Gracey's adoption formal when the situation was in such flux? Jame was being very responsible by not letting her emotions cause her to make a choice that could end badly. I knew how she felt. I probably shouldn't have half the cats I have, but we find a way (*but I don't have two children to provide for, either*). **I didn't want her to be miserable about letting the kittens go. She was doing the right thing. I had to find a way to make this better.**



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *With foster mom, Frances.*

I gave her as many options as I could, but in the end, this is not the time for them to adopt. **In a flash of clarity, I blurted out that she hadn't even had the joy of fostering little kittens yet and to focus on knowing that by letting Joey and Gracey go, she was making space to take more kittens on.** I talked to her about the pain of letting go and...

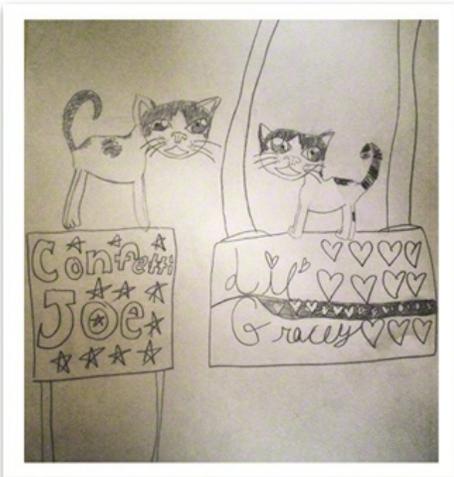
I added that although I feel sadness and heartache, that after many years of doing this, there are times I look at a photo of a foster and I can't remember that kitten's name right away. It's not that they didn't matter to me. It's that my heart is full from their love, but there isn't always room to remember their name, too.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *Checking out the view from their new foster room.*

I hoped she realized that the sharpness of letting go would soften into sweet memories. She barely knew me and I was asking her to trust me; that all she had to do was let us bring her more cats to foster and the love and happiness that gave them so much joy, would return. She had to have faith, too.

Of course, getting her children to understand and prepare for this was going to be the tricky part and I offered to do whatever I could to help them transition.



©2014 Frances R. *Frances is quite the artist and drew his adorable scene featuring her foster kittens.*

When the day came for Dana and her young sons to meet Joey & Gracey, I took one look at the girls and at Jame and knew they had all been crying. They were being brave, but their struggle to remain cheerful was percolating just beneath the surface. They were doing what needed to be done. They watched the young boys learn how to play with the kittens, how to pick them up. They gave them pointers on what the kittens liked and which toys were their favorites. We talked with Dana about how beautiful and sweet the kittens were. At one point I asked her if these were her cats. I wasn't feeling "it" from her—that glimmer I often see of love's seed taking root in an adopter's heart. I told her about our other kittens, just in case she would prefer them. They had better energy to match that of her little boys. I could see Jame and her daughters holding their breath, hoping the woman would not want Joey and Gracey.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. A hug from Frances.

Her boys looked at photos of the other kittens we have, but they only had eyes for Joey and Gracey. Dana added that Joey and Gracey were even more beautiful than she imagined from their photos and said she would love to give them a good home. I knew Jame and the girls were disappointed but the choice was made. This would be a good home. The kittens would have the boys to play with and a mom and dad to snuggle with inside a lovely home that overlooks a lake.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Lil' Gracey at 11 days old and again recently.

I gave the kittens a kiss goodbye. I thought about how they used to fit in my hand. They didn't even look like cats, more like hamsters. I'd worried, fussed, and after they were weaned, took great joy in watching them grow and thrive. The familiar pang of heartbreak and reluctance to let go returned. My eyes burned as I held back my tears. Joey and Gracey were two of our brightest stars. They'd grown into magnificent cats. It was a privilege to be part of their journey. **Their little family, who so easily could have drowned in a window well during the torrential rains last June, have only happy days ahead thanks to our generous donors and skilled Vets. Now they had their forever homes. My job was done.**



©2013 Robin A.F. Olson. Gracey with her mom, Minnie, who is very happy in her new home.

As Dana and her sons placed Joey and Gracey into their car and drove away, I stood in the kitchen with Jame and her daughters. I started to cry, but managed to not burst into tears. They offered me a tissue. Their eyes got watery and their faces pinked up. I gave them each a hug. I was SO PROUD of them-especially Frances and Grace. These girls did something tough for an adult to do and they handled themselves VERY WELL. **In that moment something happened between the four of us. I'd passed the baton of fostering over to them. They had survived the first heartbreak and were ready to do it again. They were part of a sisterhood of cat rescuers now and between the tears my heart swelled with joy.**

If you'd like to see lots more photos of Gracey, Joey and their family from the first days in foster care, you can read these posts:

The Squee Diaries

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P.S. If you've gotten this far, Jame and her family are getting 3 kittens on Saturday that were part of a bigger rescue in Georgia. Their story begins next...

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[the DOOD](#) ^[20]

Comments

Thu, 2014-02-27 14:54 — Random Felines (not verified)

fostering ^[21]

Please let Jame and the girls know that keeping pictures and remembering Joe and Gracey will make it much sweeter. It is always hard to let them go, but you are so right that it opens a spot for the next group. Kitten season is right around the corner and they sound like a wonderful foster family.

Thu, 2014-02-27 19:21 — [Connie & The Crew \(not verified\)](#) ^[22]

New kittens do heal the heart ^[23]

New kittens do heal the heart break of giving up fosters. This time off year is tough because we aren't in kitten season and they is often a delay between litters, but it will be here before you know it, and bring with it such a huge need for foster homes.

Fri, 2014-02-28 08:44 — Catnynouse (not verified)

Joey and Gracey ^[24]

Joey and Gracey are a credit to you Robin. They are beautiful, healthy happy cats and that is down to you. I really feel for Jame and her girls and they have been braver than me. I failed fostering at my first attempt. I fostered a scrawny cat recovering from a broken pelvis and tail amputation after being hit by a car.

After 6 weeks I took her back to the Rescue for adoption and sobbed for a week before returning to get her back. I expected her to run to me in slow motion with her ears flying in the wind but no, she gave me a swift glance and continued washing her paws! I adopted her and now she lives in luxury with me, rules the roost and looks beautiful.

Barbara UK

Fri, 2014-02-28 15:25 — [Robin Olson](#) ^[25]

What a great story! ^[26]

When they are so badly injured as your kitty was, I don't blame you for keeping her after she was ready to be adopted! Hugs to you! Robin

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