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Staying Strong for Gracie. Part 7. Between a Rock.

Wed, 2015-10-07 16:17 — Robin Olson

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Both of my parents were scientists. I think that's why when one of my cat's gets sick I spend a great deal of time trying to sort out what is going on if we don't have a clear cut answer. I'd been keeping a diary of when Gracie should have her meds, which meds she should get, what time I tried to get her to eat, if she ate and how much she ate. I also added other notes about her, like "Perky today" or "Kinda limp."

When she'd do badly for a few days I'd look back over my notes for clues. Nothing added up. I also never knew if "this was it"-sort of decline or if she could rebound. We had no idea which, if any, of her medications were helping her. She'd go through periods of not eating for a day or a bit longer. I'd syringe-feed her and she'd perk up and eat again, getting her energy back, too. Though she didn't return to her "old self" she'd sit up and meow at me when I came near or she'd, at least, walk over to the kitchen, far beyond her regular spot in the living room where she spends a majority of her day. One day I gave her a rainbow shaped catnip toy and she loved it. She even fell asleep with her head on it. **She was still a cat by all definitions.**



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Although the catnip toy didn't make Gracie get frisky, she did really enjoy it and even nibbled on it with the few teeth she has left.

Monday arrived. Test result day. Once again my gut was in a knot. I had my phone ringer turned on and turned up. I carried my phone wherever I went. Every time someone else called me I jumped out of my skin. **Would this be the day I find out my cat has a deadly cancer or would it be treatable?** We'd been down this road before but truly this time we'd KNOW.

Or would we?

Dr. Carolyn called early that evening and told me that the test didn't tell us much. There was, once again, no sign of cancer in the spleen. Gracie didn't have hemolytic anemia. Gracie didn't have a portal shunt in her liver. What DID Gracie have?

"We don't know just yet."

Dr. Carolyn went on to describe our next options. We had three:

1. Do a Tru-cut ultrasound guided biopsy of Gracie's liver because most of the Vets on this case agreed that the culprit still is her liver. Yes, she has benign cysts there that we know of but there's a chance there's more going on than we realize. A needle aspirate can't get enough tissue to give us a more complete picture, which is why we only found out there were cysts when we had that done a month ago. The Tru-cut would tell us what's happening in the surrounding liver tissue. Doing this type of biopsy, while gets good results, isn't as accurate as doing a "wedge" biopsy (see below).

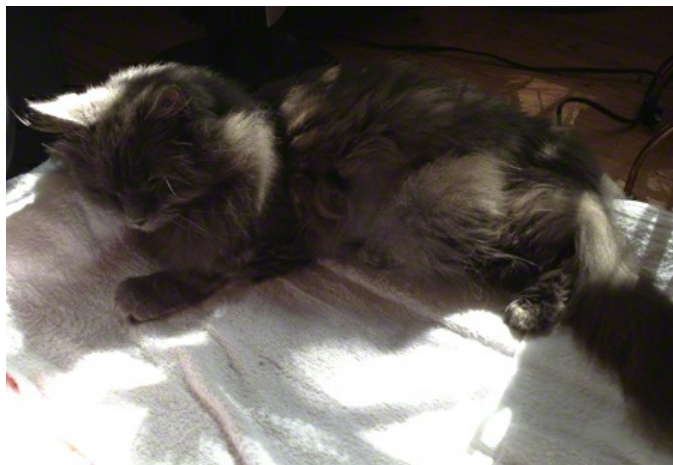
With this procedure there's a risk Gracie could bleed more and possibly not recover. It's a quick procedure and the least invasive. **There isn't even a suture needed, the opening created is so tiny.** They'd also do another transfusion, this time doing it **FIRST** to give Gracie the best chance to survive and feel good after the procedure is done. If she starts to decline they would do a **SECOND** transfusion, which of course adds to costs and is no guarantee she will come out of it.

Dr. Carolyn felt that this test WOULD tell us once and for all what is going on and if we knew, then there would be a chance for some sort of treatment, though a cure is very unlikely. It would buy us more quality time and we could treat her with appropriate medications and stop giving her ones she didn't need in the first place. It would cost another \$1500.00 or so.

2. Do nothing. Keep Gracie comfortable and she may become so anemic she'll die. We could try to up her dose of steroids, but that's not a fix and we'll never know what happened or if we could have done something about it. She'll have much less time with us and potentially be much more uncomfortable.

3. Do a wedge biopsy of her liver. This way a surgeon would SEE her liver and be able to take a sample that was big enough to test, as well as suture closed any bleeding issues. It would cost about \$5,000.00. It would likely **KILL** Gracie before she was even out of sedation.

It was pretty clear we really only had two options, numbers 1 and 2. I wouldn't cut Gracie open like that. Sure, they could see what's going on, but that's no way to die. The problem was...what DO we choose to do next?



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Laying on a pet-safe heated bed and some sunshine helps soothe Gracie's discomfort.

I've had a number of conversations with all the major players in our story. **Two of the three said YES, do the Tru-cut. Dr. Carolyn feels there's a very good chance Gracie WILL survive the procedure. Gracie's 13, not 18.** We would finally know what's going on and know if there is more to be done to help Gracie feel comfortable.

Not knowing would be a continuation of the painful roller coaster we've endured for months. Gracie would take a turn and we'd wonder if "this is it" yet again. If we knew this was part of her disease, it would be easier on us, too. I could ride out the lows and I'd know better when Gracie was in trouble instead of being terrified all the time. We could treat her more appropriately instead of throwing everything we've got at her. She would respond better, too...but there are risks and the price could be her life.

One of the Vets said not to do it because it was too risky and that some times you just don't know and that we could come in to see him and he'd discuss treatment options. For what? **What are we treating if we DON'T KNOW what it is?!** Frankly, I think he was back-peddling because he should have caught something worse was going on with Gracie over a month ago and he didn't.

Sam and I have discussed this a few times. I've asked questions and still have more to ask. Three days ago Gracie was not eating and I wouldn't have done a thing to her. Today she she's on her third day of feeling perky and eating again, **but how long will that last?**

I want to know what's killing my cat, but to find out she may die anyway. There's a very decent chance she'll make it and we'll have answers, but I have to be willing to let my cat pay the price if I'm wrong.

So now I find myself like a deer caught in the headlights. I don't know what to do. I think we should do the Tru-cut biopsy since Gracie is stable. The costs are an issue. In truth, we need help to make this happen.

If you'd like to take Gracie under your wing and help with a small donation toward her care, it could mean a world of difference to her and would honor our hard work helping others.

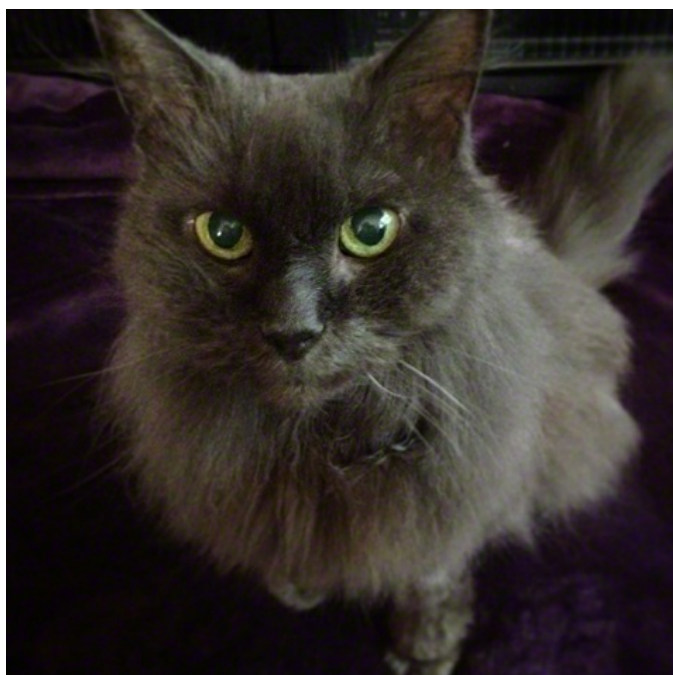
We get more of your donation if you donate directly using our PayPal address: info@kittenassociates.org ⁽⁷⁾ or if you go through our **DONATE ⁽⁸⁾ page on our web site.**

You can **mail a check to Kitten Associates**, P.O. Box 354, Newtown, CT 06470-0354. Put a note "for Gracie" it so we can direct the funds to her.

Just SHARE this with your friends who have kind hearts and love cats. That helps Gracie, too.

Your donation is Tax Deductible. [K.A.](#) ^[9] is a non-profit rescue and our IRS EIN is 27-3 597692.

We will stop our fundraiser as soon as we've raised \$2000.00, which we hope will cover Gracie's care and allow some funds to be banked in case she needs a second transfusion. Any funds we don't use for Gracie, we'll set aside for other kitties in our program who need help like our recently rescued big guy, Barry.



©2015 Robin AF Olson. Gracie.

Thank you to everyone who has been so kind to share their love, prayers and good wishes for Gracie. We can't do this without you. #ComeOnGracie #LoveYouGracie

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Comments

Thu, 2015-10-08 14:01 — jmuhj (not verified)

Continuing *PRAYERS* and ^[18]

Continuing *PRAYERS* and thoughts of wellbeing for Gracie. May she, and you, receive the necessary help and the answers needed, hopefully good ones, of course.

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