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## What the Heart Knows: The Fire Dept asks Us for Help. Ch 1.

Wed, 2014-06-11 17:51 — Robin Olson

*I've come to the understanding that doing cat rescue is more often based on gut instinct than rational thought. Is one better than the other; one more appropriate to doing rescue? I suppose being rational would leave less to chance, but I also think that something gets lost in being so very careful. Mistakes are made, but lessons follow. Perhaps that's how I make sense of this next story about a fearless little kitten whose accidental separation from his mother may have also been his saving grace.*

My back has been killing me over the past week. So much so that the pain flares up to the point where I have to catch my breath and to sit down after standing for a short time. I blame it on no exercise, sitting here at the computer for hours without getting up, and having too small of a bed with too many cats vying for the same small space. Waking up with pretzeled limbs is okay some days, but after chronic repetition, my body had to revolt.

After lots of ice, heat, ice came some small relief. **I had a bad health scare two weeks ago, heading to Urgent Care, certain I was having a heart attack.** Fortunately, it was a confluence of issues, one being a possible ulcer from taking too much naproxen to counteract constant headaches-again from sitting down at the computer, eye strain, poor position at the keys. The other was from lifting too many heavy objects (aka taking cats to the vet) which pulled on the joints on either side of my sternum. The resulting double-whammy caused severe chest pain.

### Something had to give.

I made big sweeping changes. I quit gluten and sugar. I don't sit at the keyboard for long periods of time. I had to stop pain killers, for now, to let my gut heal. When my back started to go out, I decided to treat it with ice and heat, no meds...some rest...go easy...hope for the best.

With all that I did start to feel quite a bit better, other than missing having cake or a big fat croissant.

My back was improving. I figured another day or two and I'd be okay. That's when the phone rang. **It was after 6pm and usually I don't pick up calls on the Kitten Associates line that late in the day.** I need to have time for myself and I have to make boundaries, but I did look at the Google Voice transcript of the call. Even though the transcription leaves a lot to be desired (e.g., "police station" is transcribed to "please state one"), I did see three words that caught my eye: **Kitten and Fire Department.**

There were two messages one right after the other. I listened to them both. One was from an associate who does wildlife rehabilitation. She told me that I'd be getting a call from the local 24/7 Vet hospital about a kitten that had been trapped in a wall and needed help.

**Alarmed, I listened to the next message from the Vet. It said that a Lieutenant from the Danbury Fire Department <sup>[1]</sup> had brought in a kitten that needed help and though they were sorry, since the "finances" couldn't be provided, that they could not provide care and that I should call them to arrange to help this kitten since they turned it away.**

**I've had a problem with this Vet hospital for a long time.** They've taken advantage of us before, having people call us when they can't afford care, putting the burden of the life or death of that animal on whether or not we can pay the bill. I've had words with them about this. We're a small rescue. We paid \$1200.00 for one cat that did not even belong to us AND they called us at 10 PM the night of the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting to put that life or death burden on us! What would we say-especially on THAT night? It wiped us out.

Here they are calling yet again, but this time for a tiny kitten they easily could have helped. **At least they could have shown the Firemen how to feed and void the kitten. What would that have cost?** The Fireman didn't have to save the kitten. They did what they felt was the right thing to do. They pitched in. They didn't charge anyone for their efforts. Why couldn't this Vet give this kitten some support? No. They sent it away. Now it was on my rescue, with few resources, to take care of this fragile creature. Who know how many hours had passed since the kitten had been found? When did it eat last? Little ones need to be fed every few hours or even more often if they are neonatal. Every second wasted put the kitten at higher risk of dying.

Perhaps I was fueled by anger as well as the need to help this kitten. I didn't know how old it was or when the last time it had been fed. I knew we had Celeste, our mama cat, who might accept a fifth kitten, especially since Fiorello, her third-born had died. I also knew it was a **BIG RISK** to put an orphan with another family. Without testing the mother, we'd never know if the kitten carried Feline Leukemia, FIV or something else. Potentially, he could sicken or even kill our entire litter of foster kittens **OR** Celeste might carry something that would sicken and kill the orphan.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. *Little Star looks on as her mom, Celeste feeds the rest of the family. Would Celeste accept a fifth kitten?*

Did I really want to try bottle-feeding again so close to just losing and failing another? What if this one died, too? Could I stand the heartbreak; the shame of failure?

**It's just one kitten. Surely I could find a place for him.**

I called Lieutenant Katherine and spoke to her about the kitten. My heart was racing. What was I getting myself into? Time was of the essence. I couldn't back out. My instincts told me to hurry along and not worry about the consequences.

Lt. K. told me the shift before hers had been on a call to a property where there were people living illegally. They reported hearing cries coming out of the inside of a wall. Since calling for help also meant they would be kicked out of their illegal squat, they weren't particularly happy about calling the Fire Department. I'm not sure why they called. They could have opened up the wall on their own, but then what would they do? They might not have realized it was a tiny kitten crying. Perhaps they thought it was something wilder?

**What I know is that the mother and siblings were nowhere to be seen. The firemen looked for them but were told she had probably left the crawl space she'd been hiding the kittens.** One kitten was left behind-the one that was in the wall. He was very thin and crying for his mother. They discussed leaving him there to be found by his mother, but they felt the people living at the location could possibly harm the kitten. It was decided to remove the kitten and find him some help. They had no idea what to do for the kitten, other than keep it warm. They weren't sure they should give it cow's milk, which was all they had, so they opted not to give him anything.

I asked Lt. K. to tell me how big the kitten was. Was it's umbilical cord still attached? From what I was told, that's what I expected. Her reply surprised me. She said, no, that he was walking a little bit, that his eyes were open, but were blue. I asked if his ears were straight up and down and she replied no. **From what she told me I figured we had a 2 to 3 week old kitten. Okay. I can do this. Bottle-feeding an older kitten isn't so tough. I thought I could manage his care.**

**I surprised myself by saying I'd be there as soon as I could. Here I am jumping in with both feet. I didn't ask if the kitten has fleas, if he was sickly, what he even looked like, if it WAS a "he." It's a kitten. It needs help. Case closed.**

Chapter 2 is up next, where we finally meet the little kitten and try not to drool on the sexy firefighters.



[2]

### **CICH Content Categories:**

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## **Comments**

Thu, 2014-06-12 13:00 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

### **Robin, thank you so much for** [9]

Robin, thank you so much for saving this kitten. I would like to have a few words with that vet; obviously not an animal lover!

Gastric ulcers are caused by bacteria (Oz scientists won a Nobel Prize for this) which can lay dormant and be triggered by stress. A course of the right antibiotics will fix it up.

<http://discovermagazine.com/2010/mar/07-dr-drunk-broth-gave-ulcer-solved-medical-mystery> [10]

Jen

Thu, 2014-06-12 17:10 — jmuuhj (not verified)

### **RE: KITTEN RESCUE** [11]

What a roller-coaster ride! So grateful to you for being there for this baby. My deepest condolences for the loss of little Fiorello. May THIS kitten grow strong and thrive in tribute to him.

Sure hope you feel better soon. SO many in rescue have health issues to deal with (as do many others, but there isn't as much on the line there, IMHO). Be good to yourself when you can. You know you'r not just doing it for you ;)

Fri, 2014-06-13 15:45 — MysteryMadchen (not verified)

### **How do I get to chapter 2?** [12]

Hello, very much interested in both the fireman and they kitten to see how he's doing and what came after you were on your way to the firedept to pick up the baby but I don't know how to get to the next chapter I can't seem to find an easy way to the link. Thanks so much!!!

Fri, 2014-06-13 18:04 — [Robin Olson](#) [13]

### **Chap 2** [14]

<http://coveredincathair.com/content/what-heart-knows-kitten-named-wallace-ch-2>

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**Source URL (modified on 2014-06-11 17:59):** <https://coveredincathair.com/content/what-heart-knows-fire-dept-asks-us-help-ch-1>

### **Links**

[1] <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Danbury-CT-Fire-Department/140632582782706>

[2] <http://petties.dogtime.com/nominations>

[3] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/33>

[4] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/48>

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[7] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/102>

[8] <https://coveredincathair.com/category/cich-content-categories/sam>

[9] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/9064#comment-9064>

- [10] <http://discovermagazine.com/2010/mar/07-dr-drunk-broth-gave-ulcer-solved-medical-mystery>
- [11] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/9068#comment-9068>
- [12] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/9070#comment-9070>
- [13] <https://coveredincathair.com/users/robin-olson>
- [14] <https://coveredincathair.com/comment/9072#comment-9072>