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## Will the Real Jackson Galaxy Please Stand Up?

Mon, 2012-09-24 15:22 — Robin Olson

The fur is growing back on Jackson's front legs from where he was shaved to insert an IV needle. The fur is growing back on Jackson's chest where he was shaved so the cardiologist could get a better echocardiogram of his malfunctioning heart. In some ways, **Jackson appears the same as he did when we rescued him from a kill shelter nine months ago, but in some ways Jackson is being transformed and the results have been surprising and shocking.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *Beginning to feel better.*

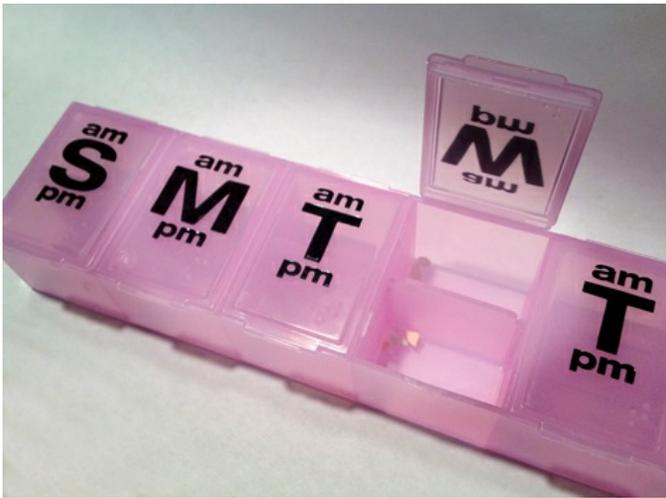
It's been about ten days since we discovered Jackson was suffering from Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy—a thickness of the lining of the walls of Jackson's heart. Twice each day Jackson needs to be medicated with two tiny pills. Every third day, Jackson gets a quarter portion of a baby aspirin to prevent clots from forming.

At first I worried if I'd be able to keep to the schedule of medicating Jackson. **I feared he'd be resistant and grow to challenge my attempts. Luckily, Jackson's been surprisingly easy to pill-so far-knock wood.** I can hide Jackson's pills in minute amount of Flavor DOH along with a little bit of his favorite canned food.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *Is Jackson a good egg?*

The only difficult thing about treating Jackson has been keeping his pills organized and making sure each Sunday I prep his pills by cutting them into halves and placing them in a pill box. I went a bit overbid and got his prescriptions compounded into liquid in case I couldn't give Jax a pill. It was expensive and turns out, unnecessary. At least I have more meds should I run out without having a refill on hand.



**Before the “incident” Jackson was either very quiet or cried at night. He mostly kept to himself and slept. Once in awhile he'd play with the laser pointer. Now that he's been on his medication, a new Jackson is emerging. One I'm not sure I like very much.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *Petunia, Nicky and Jackson (in egg).*

Don't get me wrong, Jackson is a sweet cat, friendly and affectionate, but as soon as his energy level increased, his behavior changed. **I caught Jackson spritzing urine near the kitchen, then again in a few other places.** I deal with cat pee every day, but adding **ANOTHER** cat to the “who did the peeing” list is a nightmare.

I do the best I can to clean it up and sort out why they feel the need to do that. **Sam and I are always looking for more ways to make them feel more comfortable and at ease. We want them to be happy, but we need some sense of autonomy over our own living conditions, too.**

Yesterday something happened that could be the beginning of the end **the one thing I cannot tolerate and I can tolerate a lot.** Without provocation Jackson charged after Petunia, scaring her badly. That's not the end of the world, but what he did next shocked me.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. *Poor Cricket is still stressed after being attacked.*

Jackson jumped up to the top of a cat tree where Cricket was sleeping. **Cricket is our "former feral" cat. He keeps to himself and he doesn't bother with any of the other cats.** He's probably the most submissive cat in the house and one of the sweetest.

**Jackson jumped onto Cricket, BIT him on the back of the neck, then grabbed him and literally threw him off the cat tree! Cricket fell to the floor, screaming. Clumps of his fur scattered around the living room. He ran off and hid, terrified at what had just happened.**

**What the HELL was going on? This is NOT acceptable.** My cat-mother-protectivness came out with a vengeance. **My cats are not going to fall victim to attacks like this.** I don't care what is going on with Jackson. **If he's injuring my cats that's it. He's out.** It's not fair that my cats are subjected to new cats from time to time or have to suffer upper respiratory because I have sick kittens in another part of the house.



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson. Jackson just wants to be understood and loved for who he is.

But how am I going to talk about this? I'm going to get judged for what I do or think about this situation? Perhaps knowing that gave me pause and kept me from kicking Jackson out of the house.

**I sat and thought about it and something clicked. Hyperthyroidism [1]. It would explain his late night howling and eagerness to eat. It would also explain this sudden irrational behavior and it can be the root cause of heart problems/HCM.**



©2012 Robin A.F. Olson.

Tomorrow Jackson returns to the Vet. **This is his first Vet visit since he almost died.** He's no longer in pain and feeling better. **We're repeating his x-rays to see how his heart is responding to medication. We're running a FreeT4 blood test to look at his thyroid levels and we're checking his kidney function** because he can have kidney problems due to the fluids he has to move to keep his heart and lungs clear.

Perhaps we'll find out that all these issues are caused by his thyroid, which can be treated. Perhaps it will make it a lot easier to forgive Jackson for his mis-behaviors. **I realize he's not a man in a cat suit and he's behaving as a cat does, but who IS this cat?** Is he as sweet as sugar or the devil in disguise? Is he just bored? **What am I doing to contribute to the problem or am I the problem?**

**I can't say today, but fairly soon we'll know more and hopefully be able to get a better understanding of just who Jackson Galaxy really is.**

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## **Comments**

Mon, 2012-09-24 15:53 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

### **Thyroid!!!** <sup>[20]</sup>

My money is on the thyroid. I had that situation in my house, and with methimazole 2x/day, I've had a normal cat for the last eight years. Vetri-Lysine Plus soft chews and the PetNaturals line of chewy supplements work for hiding pills if he gets burned out on the FlavorDoh. Sometimes I crumble the dehydrated chicken breast treats and roll it around the soft chews too! It works for 5 out of 8 cats. GOOD LUCK!!!

Mon, 2012-09-24 16:07 — Lisa (not verified)

### **My heart goes out to you and Jackson** <sup>[21]</sup>

He does not sound like himself. I hope it is the thyroid or something that a simple medication can fix. Poor Crickett and Petunia, too!

Mon, 2012-09-24 16:28 — [Connie & The Crew \(not verified\)](#) <sup>[22]</sup>

### **I'm with you. I will put up** <sup>[23]</sup>

I'm with you. I will put up with a lot, but the health and happiness of The Crew is non-negotiable.

Hopeful it is thyroid and he settles right back down, and if not there is another workable solution for him.

Mon, 2012-09-24 17:22 — Lyric (not verified)

### **Sounds like you need a visit** <sup>[24]</sup>

Sounds like you need a visit from the Real Jackson Galaxy.

Mon, 2012-09-24 22:28 — Cattails5 (not verified)

### **Poor Cricket, Poor Jackson** <sup>[25]</sup>

Poor Cricket, I hope he feels safe again soon. That sort of thing is very scary. My 3 year old attacked one of my 6 year olds last year. In his case it was massive jealousy (of another cat, not the one he attacked) and redirected aggression. HE's better with a lot of play therapy and love - but my other poor baby has never been the same. A year later he's starting to trust again.

Poor Jackson, I hope he can be treated and feels better so the aggression stops. Could it be a side effect of the medication he's on perhaps? I hope it is an easy fix so he can find a good life for himself too.

Mon, 2012-09-24 22:42 — [acninee](#) <sup>[26]</sup>

### **I'm thinking Jackson may just** <sup>[27]</sup>

I'm thinking Jackson may just be one of those cats who needs a one-cat home. I have one of those. He's very sweet to me and my husband, but beats up on the other cats far more than I'd like. I can't turn him out, I love him and I know he was turned out of his first home as a kitten for aggressive behavior. I just keep working with him, loving, and making sure everyone gets some time away from him.

Jackson.... may have a better shot since he's got you to help him find a new home. He is gorgeous, that will be much in his favor.

But you're right! You can't toss him! I think you might have to call him godfather in for help!

Tue, 2012-09-25 05:09 — Rosanne Govea (not verified)

### **Jackson the cat** [28]

Hi Robin,

I am really hoping that the tests you are going to have done on Jackson come up with a solution to his problems. Poor baby. I, myself, suffer from Hyperthyroidism and I can tell you it is no picnic. I am tired, listless, have no energy, sleep longer than I should, have a terrible time getting up, can't walk too far, can't stand on my own two feet too long without feeling like I will fall down. I have lost a lot of my hair. I finally got the diagnosis I needed to finally be able to figure out what is going on. I first got diagnosed with AFib. My heart beats like a machine gun at times. Pound, pound, pound. Without warning and without even trying I dropped (literally) 130 lbs. I was obese anyway, so it was nice to get rid of the weight. But, it's not supposed to happen like that. My appetite is funny. Sometimes I don't care if I eat or not, which is unusual for someone who had been obese. I love food. Then there are times when I am so hungry I can't stand it. I shake violently until I can stuff something in my mouth. It's a rollercoaster. My thyroid is full of nodules. The next step is to have it removed and be on medication for the rest of my life. That's what I need, but I have no insurance at this point and have to wait until I do. End of that story.

Jackson is lucky he has you to take care of him. I do hope it is hyperthyroidism, only because it is treatable. He'll be happier once he's on medication. He's such a pretty boy.

Looking forward to updates. Keep calm and remember that he needs you.

Rosanne

Tue, 2012-09-25 11:27 — mk (not verified)

### **hcm** [29]

I adopted one of my cats because he was diagnosed with HCM..I didnt think he had a chance of finding another home. When he got his second echo, the specialist found nothing wrong with his heart...so he is fine. But now I have this big lug that likes to jump on half of my cats and make then scream. He is still young so he is probably just playing, but he doesnt really know how to play right. Sometimes I want to toss him out the door...but I think he came to me for a reason. Havent figured out what yet.

Tue, 2012-09-25 19:59 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

### **Hang in there! Among my 9** [30]

Hang in there! Among my 9 senior cats, I have a sprayer who has it in for one of the other cats.

She has a "cat flat" because he sometimes becomes obsessed with her and charges her. Everyone generally tolerates each other but there are flare ups and sometimes I wonder if the shelter will take trade-ins :-)) I have the sprayer on Clomicalm which has really helped with the peeing.

I think the Hyperthyroidism is a good hunch to check out. And don't worry, I've have had many thoughts like yours and mine are all still here.

Wed, 2012-09-26 17:11 — Janet Vandenabeele (not verified)

### **Hyperthyroidism** [31]

It really can make those kinds of changes ... pee or poo randomly, get grumpy, and the howling is a big clue. I've had two with it now and one had the heart problem, only he developed it after we had him diagnosed with the hyperthyroidism, and that's what eventually caused his death.

My first cat had it and we dismissed it at first as part of her IBD she'd had most of her life as well as always having been a hyper cat, then when her weight dropped drastically she was diagnosed. She was the howler. She got a little snippy but not much. She would have random bouts of being unable to control her bowels (a liquid nightmare) and was secretly drinking so much water to try to fill her belly that she would puke gallons seemingly at a time! She didn't respond to the meds (she would simply puke them up), but we managed to control her with eating in a large dog cage, changing her diet (which is eventually what killed her, tainted expensive "healthy" food) and dealing with her hyper-ness.

When the second one lost weight, we figured right away it was HT. He managed to live about a year on the meds, but it eventually started to affect his heart and he had a fatal heart attack the night before he was to go to the vet for a full cardiac exam. He'd had a checkup about 2 mos prior and his heart was fine. We think he was tired of being sick. But he had no behavioral changes other than the occasional oops, as he, too couldn't quite make it to the litter box.

After reading that HT can be caused by seafood from our toxic oceans, I have banned virtually all seafood in the cat food. Every now and then they can have a can of it, or a sprinkling of bonito flakes, or a cat treat. But the vast majority of the diet of my remaining brood (one is nearly 20, one is 12 and the other 6) is land based.

Fri, 2012-09-28 20:58 — jmuwj (not verified)

### **Our eldest, adopted at 14 and** <sup>[32]</sup>

Our eldest, adopted at 14 and now 18, lived his whole life as an "only" until joining us, and is VERY territorial. He's aggressed on several different cats, for no reason, and it's taken him about a year to really fit in (and he still occasionally goes after someone, but nothing like he used to). What Jackson did to Cricket is horrible, but I do hope and pray you are committed to keeping Jackson and possibly giving him "time-outs" in a separate room when/if he does something aggro again. Though what he did is obviously uncalled for, I really believe adoption is a life commitment except in very extreme circumstances -- and this doesn't sound like it's unsolvable at all. Wishing you and all of your beloved ones all the best. :)

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Robin @ [Google+](#)

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#### **Links**

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