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The Wonderful World of Gracie

Mon, 2015-11-09 10:19 — Robin Olson

Gracie aka, “Beanie,” or “Miss Bubbles” is gone, but instead of making all of you cry, yet again, I wanted to share some stories about her life and why she was so very special to us. Although you might not guess it from looking at her, Gracie was a very funny cat. She was also magnificent in her youth, truly a spectacle of fine flowing fluff. She was fearful, but lion-hearted. She was kind. I do not believe she ever hissed or growled at anyone. Super-Deb, our friend and Vet Tech at Dr. Larry’s called her, “A Lady” and remarked that you could do whatever you needed to do to her and she wouldn’t cause a fuss.



©2003 Robin A.F. Olson. *Mama-Gracie with Petunia.*

Gracie was my first “*unwed mama-cat.*” I’d only fostered one cat before she arrived and he was a foster fail named Spencer who became the mascot of *Covered in Cat Hair*. I didn’t quite know what to do with Gracie or her three kittens: Scooterpie, Annabelle and Petunia. Gracie was very skittish and didn’t exactly welcome my presence, so I gave her plenty of space and focused on socializing the kittens. I can’t say I really got to know Gracie very well during those days, but when it seemed as though she was never going to be adopted and I only had a cat or two at the time, I decided that she and her daughter Petunia could stay with me.



©2006 Robin A.F. Olson. *Ladies nap.*

Gracie was a great mama and when it was time for her to leave the confines of the foster room, Gracie hid a lot or ran off if Sam or I tried to come to her. Again, we gave her space to acclimate and in time she began to appear on our bed in the morning or sleep a bit closer to us when we watched TV in the living room.

The one thing Gracie loved was to be brushed. I used to call her a “*Brush Whore*” because she would probably have sold her soul to get brushed. All I had to do was ask Gracie; “*Brush?*” and she’d run over to me excited and ready to be groomed. She’d sit still as I got the clumps out of her thick ruff. She’d purr, but she had a very soft purr I could barely hear. Maybe she was too shy to let it rip. I didn’t care. I was just glad that I found something she enjoyed. Brushing Gracie was something we did every single day, over the last few months of her life. We did it after she had to be pilled or syringe-fed, so our encounter would always end pleasantly.



©2006 Robin A.F. Olson. *Will work for brushing.*

Gracie loved toy mice. She’d grab one, then sit motionless holding it in her mouth for what seemed to be an hour. I don’t know why she did that, but after a time she’d start to yeowl while continuing to hold onto the mouse. Maybe she was announcing her latest victory over the toy mouse population? I know she lived outdoors before she came to us so maybe she was reliving the good old days?



©2007 Robin A.F. Olson. *Just plain weird.*

One night Sam and I were in bed reading. We heard Gracie’s familiar yeowl and saw her running down the hallway into our bedroom with a toy mouse in her mouth. I looked up at her, amused at her silly antics, then went back to reading.

Gracie ran around the bed to Sam’s side. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Gracie throw the mouse up into the air. Sam, glued to his book didn’t pay any attention. Gracie was making odd sounds, really getting frantic over this toy.

Once again I saw the mouse fly up into the air but this time it landed on the bed between Sam’s legs. My primitive brain reacted to the sight first. Suddenly I found myself out of bed and halfway down the hallway as my modern brain caught up with the visual. I screamed:

“That’s NOT A TOY!!!!”

There, in Sam’s lap was a dead mouse; **A REAL MOUSE**. There, was Gracie looking up at him as if to say; *“What? What’s the matter? Can I get that back?”*



©2008 Robin A.F. Olson. One morning I bent down with a plate full of food for Gracie and saw (right center belly up) she'd already had an appetizer!

Something happened to Gracie after she had a dental about eight years ago. She started to drool when she got brushed or petted for a long period of time. I nicknamed her Miss Bubbles because the drool always came out in perfect crystalline beads. Somehow they always ended up on my arm even though I tried to avoid the onslaught of saliva.

Sadly, it seems that her daughter Petunia also does this now and she drools so much it’s like turning on a faucet. As much as I love her it’s kinda gross to pet her for very long.



©2007 Robin A.F. Olson. aka, Miss Bubbles.

Something else also appeared after Gracie’s dental, milliary dermatitis. I wrote about my struggles with her ([HERE](#) ^[1] and [HERE](#) ^[2]). I don’t know what caused it or why she had it. I know we could not get it to go away even with a clean, raw diet, even with two years of going to see dermatologists here and in New York, giving Gracie shots, pills, tests, biopsies. I couldn’t give her steroids because I knew at only 7 years of age she’d have a significantly shorter life. I was, however, able to stop her from barbering off her fur and vomiting the fur back up every day. She seemed comfortable and her skin improved enough so she stopped feeling itchy.



©2009 Robin A.F. Olson. Noooooo!

Part of helping Gracie feel comfortable required giving her a bath a few times a week. Though she was not a fan of her bath time, she was a pretty good sport. I even took her to Dr. Larry's because Super-Deb could give Gracie a "spa day" of grooming and bathing to help soothe her crusty skin. I was always so proud of Gracie because Super-Deb always said she was a good girl and easy to bathe.

I never learned the root cause of Gracie's condition, but I do know that it led to one cancerous lesion that we had removed many years ago. Looking back I believe that was the culprit in what eventually caused Gracie's premature demise. And yes, I do believe 14 years is too young for a cat to pass away, especially because not three months ago Gracie seemed to be in such fine form. But I promised happy stories so let me think of another.

In the past few years Gracie overcame a lot. She stopped being so shy and began to seek out attention. It was marvelous to see her blossom, but it also unleashed a bit of a devil. You see, if we didn't get up early enough to get her breakfast started she would quietly enter our bedroom, then stand up on her hind legs and drag her front paws, claws out, down the bedroom door. This would not only damage the door (*because it's a cheap piece of crap*), but she would push the door shut which would flip out the cats who were on either side of the door.



©2007 Robin A.F. Olson. Sunny days.

I knew if I got up I was training her that I'd react to her antics, but if I didn't get up one of the other cats might flip out or need to get out to use the litter pan and there isn't one in our bedroom.

Gracie often made me grumble as she sat defiantly near the door. If she was Simon's Cat ^[3] I'd expect her to point at her open mouth wanting to be fed. I guess I should be glad that unlike Simon's Cat, Gracie couldn't manage to bring a baseball bat into the bedroom.

Gracie always had her way.

Gracie's latest crazy thing was to sit on the kitchen table every morning and cry to get her goat milk/pro biotic drink. Her meow was very raspy and, well, not very delightful. She sounded like a really old cantankerous lady who only knew how to complain. I'd tell Gracie to shush and that I'd get her her drink right away. I think that looking back on this, too, I should have realized she might have been self-soothing her belly. If she had cancer back then it might have been starting to bleed and perhaps the cool drink and the goat milk comforted her. I know that cats hide illness very well and I'd say she did a really good job keeping the wool over my eyes for way too long.

She loved that drink. It gave her a milk moustache.



©2006 Robin A.F. Olson. *Belly good belly.*

Gracie had a feather-fetish. If there were feathers attached to a toy instead of chasing them she would lick them. She'd lick and lick and lick as if she was grooming herself after a meal. I never let her have the feathers for too long for fear she'd ingest them. Even on her last days I gave her a catnip carrot that was crowned with green feathers instead of leaves. I knew she was still Gracie because she still licked the feathers.



©2007 Robin A.F. Olson. *Fluff fantasy, the Princess of Pouff.*

After Gracie passed away and before we had her privately cremated, Sam and I wrapped her in a gorgeous new turquoise blue fleece blanket. I added a photo of us, to which we each wrote Gracie a special message. The final piece was Gracie's catnip carrot. I slipped it between her front paws so she would always have it with her. I didn't want Gracie to be wanting for anything even as she embarked on her next journey to the Rainbow Bridge.

Gracie brought us a lot of joy over the twelve years we had together. When I think of her I try not to think of the dark days. It's not easy, but I know that in time I'll only smile when I hear her name or look at a photo of her. **Right now my heart is still raw from grief, but I'd do it all over again if it meant having those sunny days back, too.**



©2008 Robin A.F. Olson. Petunia and Gracie watching the birdies.

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Comments

Mon, 2015-11-09 10:51 — [Lynda](#) ^[13]

sad smiling for a while ^[14]

What a sweet post for a sweet feline, Robin. Thank you for sharing some of Gracie's personality. She's a beauty for sure. I thought Dave and I were nuts, sending a photo of ourselves with Jack when he crossed to the Bridge. It made ME feel better! We wrote messages on it, too. I guess I thought I didn't want Jack to forget us, because we will catch up with him someday.

Mon, 2015-11-09 12:24 — chris a (not verified)

Gracie Girl ^[15]

She had to have been one special kitty. She was very smart -manipulate that human.....Funny stuff you shared with us and that does help to bring levity to such a tragic situation. I know she will never be forgotten in hearts and minds and glad she is over that bridge looking for mice!!

Thanks Robin.. Awesome stories.

Mon, 2015-11-09 15:31 — Catnonymouse (not verified)

What lovely memories ^[16]

Sad as it was, I really loved reading your memories of Gracie and her funny ways. How lovely that she overcame her shyness and came to you for fuss and brushings. I also had a sweet natured cat who was a real lady just like Gracie, so sweet and gentle who never bit, scratched or clawed furniture.

Thank you for posting - it helps to remember the good things :)

Barbara UK

Mon, 2015-11-09 16:25 — jmuwj (not verified)

RE: Wonderful Gracie ^[17]

Very moved by your "tales" and "pawtraits" of Gracie and Petunia. All the more so because yesterday evening, we lost our "Maine man", Sammi. He was 21 years young, and like Gracie, he loved his brushing. In fact, many mornings he would not enter the kitchen to eat his breakfast until I brushed him. He loved his food, too. His favorite treat was "deli" turkey. He came to us at 14 from an elderly couple in Beverly Hills, so his nickname was "The Birdman of Beverly Hills". HOW we miss our man.

Mon, 2015-11-09 17:47 — Wendy (not verified)

Gracie ^[18]

Thanks Robin for sharing some of Gracie's antics! They will sustain you in dark moments, and eventually, you are right you will only remember her with love and fondness, not heartache. God Bless you and Sam for all you did for Gracie, and for all of the cats you rescue, foster and are able to adopt to furever homes!

Tue, 2015-11-10 01:37 — Maria Romano (not verified)

Gracie ^[19]

Thank you for sharing your beautiful, funny memories of Gracie. You took such good care of her, and she flourished because of your attention to her diet, health and hair maintenance. She reminds me of my long-haired grey female cat named Molly whom I adopted when she was five. Molly lived to be fifteen years. You were lucky that Gracie liked to be groomed. All of the cats that I have had over years never liked to be groomed (even though I made sure to groom them). God bless you for all you do for cats and sharing your knowledge, humor, photos and wisdom with fellow cat lovers.

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