



TUXEDO CATS!

The Friday before Labor Day, always a busy day at a vet hospital, two kittens came in to the hospital with the words "mauled by dog" written on their chart. When I went to the examination room to admit them, I was shocked to see two tiny babies with obvious abrasions, lacerations and bite wounds. One of the kittens had the skin peeled off his right ear, and the left ear was just hanging by a thread. The owner of the kittens reported that their labrador, normally a happy go lucky guy, had been using the kittens as living chew toys out in the barn without her knowing it. The owner actually found the dog carrying the kitten with the torn up ears in his mouth.

Naturally, the owner was worried about the kittens and their future, and she did not want to get rid of her dog, but she knew she was not going to be able to provide a safe home for them. She agreed to have surgery performed to repair the lacerations and amputate the damaged ears. The male kitten, who had the most damage, underwent over 1.5 hours of surgery to amputate his left ear and part of his right ear, as well as repair multiple bite wounds on his back and abdomen. The female, who was not as badly mauled, required about a half hour of surgery to clean and suture wounds on her back. Unfortunately, since both kittens had been chewed on more than once, they were also very sick, running fevers due to their ongoing injuries. The owner, who was genuinely remorseful, decided to board the kittens at the hospital so she could find them a new, more suitable home.

The kittens were recovering from surgery nicely by that evening, but needed intensive nursing care, IV fluids and medication throughout the weekend in order to thrive. I just couldn't bear to leave them in the hospital. The little boy looked so pitiful with his sewn up ear stubs, and a 6" long suture line down his back. I phoned my husband and told him the story of the sad little kittens, hoping to at least bring the boy home for the weekend to care for him. My dear husband replied "bring them both home! You can't separate a brother and sister!"

Well, since then Elektra, the female kitten, and VanGogh, the male, have become permanent residents of our home. The original owner was very grateful and again apologetic that she had let their injuries get so severe.

The most interesting thing is that the kittens are not afraid of dogs. They let our household dogs, (who, granted, can tell a live kitten from a chew toy) play with them, and they sometimes even sleep together. Talk about a lesson in forgiveness! Elektra and VanGogh have brought renewed joy and playfulness into our lives, too, as only kittens can do!

