

# RUSTY

DOB: 01/2011—Male (neutered)—FIV+ (not symptomatic)



Rusty is now such a competent house cat! Not bad for a wary neighborhood stray who had been in a lot of fights. In fostercare, Rusty became a very playful, loving cat, although he remains shy with new people.

He enjoys being on laps and lying on whatever paper his caregiver is trying to read! Rusty can even get silly over toys. It has been delightful watching him figure them out, toss them in the air, and bat them around. He still seems to be more interested in humans than he is in other cats.



## Here's His Story

Lois had been feeding him outdoors for several years, and was just recently able to approach and pet him, but not pick him up. She thought there was a possibility he might become a good companion. But he had been on his own for so long. She wondered if he could ever be a completely indoor cat.

In February, 2013, he was getting in fights and coming back wounded. She was able to coax him into the house but he still wouldn't let her handle him.

His injured paw was swollen and painful looking. Lois didn't think she could adopt him, but also couldn't just let him suffer. The plan was to feed him a tranquilizer, urge him into a carrier, and take him to the Iowa City Animal Adoption Center, knowing that he may have to be euthanized.



At the Shelter, Misha decided his paw was not that badly damaged and that he showed potential for being tamed. She called me. "Hey Jan, I have a big ole orange tomcat here who needs some vet care. He reminds me of you." The funny thing was, I knew exactly what Misha meant.

Rusty lived up to Misha's description. My kinda cat. Huge jowls, thick neck pads, large frame, orange. He had shredded ears and visible wounds from several fights.

He needed antibiotics right away, so I took him to the Coralville Animal Clinic. By this time Rusty was so worn out he allowed Dennis to probe his mangled paw in the exam room! Dennis decided to anesthetize him, work on his paw, neuter him, and give him some antibiotics.



After applying plenty of artificial tears in his eyes, I groomed Rusty while he was anesthetized and counted more than 100 scabbed-over puncture wounds. Most of them were in the forequarters, so he really must have stood his ground. Rusty's paw looked gnawed upon...many sets of repeated bites.

The worst abscess, though was an innocent enough looking puncture wound that had walled off at the top of his tail.

Rusty cleaned up well after his surgery! And his eyes finally closed. I doubt he remembers his day at the “spa.”

Not surprisingly, Rusty tested positive for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV). This is the feline analog of HIV Aids in humans. Spread only through deep bites, FIV is not nearly as contagious as other killer viruses, but it still tends to shorten lives.



FIV weakens the immune system. Rusty's temp had been spiking to 106.7 (101 is normal for cats) for about a week after having surgery.

He was incubating the mother of all upper-respiratory viruses. But he slogged through it, blowing snot for days. His wounds healed and his hair grew back.

Rusty's feline social skills did need some work. And he refined them. Our guess is that he didn't get to spend enough time with siblings to learn how to play nicely.

He has such a large frame that his advances probably scare other cats at first. We find it interesting that he accepts rude behavior from others without reacting. He just walks away.

There were times when Rusty became “predatory” toward other cats: his eyes got dilated and he rose up on his hindquarters like a bear. You could tell he was in a different state.

A loud command or a sudden hand clap would distract him every time. Since then, he has become a playin' machine, and no longer engages in inappropriate predation.

Rusty likes—being around people, especially board-game night at Lois' when friends would come over for the evening; being touched; being a lap log; playing in his red cat house; soccer; reading, monitoring Lois' backyard wildlife from the picture window.

He dislikes—restraint; loud anything



## Rusty's Characteristics

Confidence—very much  
Adaptable to change—quite a bit  
Plays well with others—somewhat  
Activity level—somewhat  
General Temperament—loyal

Rusty is affectionate and eager to please. Don't be misled about how somber he appears to be. I believe he's just focusing on us.

Because of his size (he's a large cat) and background, Rusty will not be placed with young children.

He has been introduced to two other cats. Both were females and his response was playful and curious. We've not seen him with dogs.

The only reason Rusty needs to be re-homed is because his caregiver is selling her house and moving to into independant-living quarters. He is a wonderful companion.



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