

Ill-Fated Sosi and Her Litter

April 2006

Good news quickly turned into bad news. An enthusiastic adopter spotted Susi, one of Sosi's kittens and loved her immediately and wanted to adopt her. Since she had travelled a long distance to come to EMRO and after filling out the application form and convincing us she was a good potential adopter, we reluctantly let Susi go as she was a week or two younger than we had hoped to let go. The adopter promised to care for her, hand feed her if necessary, and get her vet care, neuter and spay, etc. and she said she was very good with cats. We sadly waved goodbye to Susi but hoped for the best.

Two days later, the adopter rushed back to us with a very sick kitten, worried it would die. She claimed it was sick from us, wouldn't eat; her vet administered 3 subcutaneous injections of fluids (antibiotic?) for her and Susi wasn't responding. We took Susi back, perplexed, and showed the adopter the healthy litter—the rest were fine! How could it be sickness from here?

An enthusiastic animal worker, eager to comfort Susi, put her back with her mom Sosi and the littermates. This turned out to be a fatal error which we regret tremendously now. Of course Sosi groomed her missing kitten, which she had been searching for, and Susi sat comatose amongst her littermates who rubbed against her.

The next morning, Susi the kitten died, despite our efforts to try to feed her and give her fluids and keep her warm. We had an autopsy done. The best the vet could determine was an enlarged heart (perhaps from the antibiotics) and some viral infection, due to green discharge. Within days, the sickness had spread to that litter (which of course was isolated from everyone else). We started to lose kittens. First, Sherif died. His autopsy showed viral pneumonia, perhaps due to a rhino type virus common here in Egypt. (*Note: none of the litter had been vaccinated, coming from a home that didn't vaccinate. We were waiting to do so once they were weaned.*)

We noticed Sosi was getting woosy and stared into space like the ill-fated kittens. The vet was called out at midnight and obligingly tried to give intravenous fluids. The next morning we rushed Sosi back to the vet's office the next day by taxi, but sadly she died enroute. Same cause. We were all distraught. Two kittens remained. The vet administered fluids and antibiotics to Samir and Samira, but Samir was losing the battle. He died in our arms in the evening. We knew the routine and the suspected cause; it was all too painfully familiar. This was Good Friday by the Western calendar.

Shell-shocked, we guarded Samira like a hawk, expecting the worst. Surprisingly, as Samir languished, Samira perked up and wanted to wander off to explore. We were amazed at her energy but were cautiously optimistic. She received her injections of fluids, antibiotics, and we kept her warm (like we had tried for the others) and fed her

make shift kitten formulas passed on to us by other animal workers locally, and fed her syringes of mashed baby food and canned cat food. And we prayed for the best.

The next morning, Samira was hungry, and lonely. She ate several vials of food and formula and her energy improved. She showed interest in eating and exploring. We were cheered somewhat and tried not to be too hopeful.

The next day again (Easter Sunday by Western calendar), Samira started to eat food on her own out of her plate, use her small litter box and drink a little water on her own. Can it be that she will survive? Our prayers seem to be answered as we continue to monitor this tiny creature that seems to be miraculously spared the same sad fate as the rest of her family.

We are trying to figure out what happened. Thankfully none of our other litters or cats has become infected; it was solely isolated to poor Susi and her litter. We remain convinced that somehow Susi got infected after she left EMRO. The adopter swore that her own cats remain healthy and is as perplexed as we are. We wonder that perhaps Susi was ill from the long car-ride home and didn't want to eat from that. Worried, the adopter might have taken Susi to her vet to try to force feed her. Perhaps the needles he used for antibiotics were infected or the table used at the clinic not properly sterilized so that maybe she was infected at the adopter's vet's office and then returned even sicker? We will never really know, but sadly the whole litter paid the huge price of an unfortunate series of events. We are sadder and wiser at EMRO as well and will take much stronger precautions with sick kittens in future. We really miss the little souls and the mom cat. Susi was an amazing mother: kind, quiet, gentle, watchful and sweet. She had even nursed another little kitten, "Shai" for a few days until he died. He was only 1 week old and orphaned. It is possible that Shai had brought infection with him to the litter, but unlikely since no-one got sick until after Susi returned.

Stay tuned to see what happens to Samira (should we rename her "Kismet" – i.e. lucky?) and your collective prayers will be helpful as well, for her hopeful full recovery.

The Kitten who Lived:

**Samir(ADOPTED,
US, June 06)**



May 06 Update: Samir is doing fine and awaiting his new home in America!

Below are some new updated pictures of the little fluff ball.



Lost litter-mates:

Sosi



Sherif



Susi



Samir



It would be so helpful if we could hire at least a part time veterinarian to help us keep on top of any potential disease in the shelter, rather than having infrequent visits to and from the vet office. We estimate it costs about \$500 US a month to maintain this. We are thus launching the "Sosi Fund" in an attempt to raise money to help this from happening again at the shelter. If you would like to donate to Susi or Sosi or any of the kittens, please light a candle for them on the In Memorium page or consider donating to the Sosi Fund to help us raise money to hire more regular veterinarian aid. To do so, please do a [direct deposit](#) or Paypal or any method you wish (cheque, Western Union) and put Sosi Fund on it. Thanks very much.