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Hi Kari,

This is what we know about Samantha's tumor. It is a poorly differentiated, triple negative tumor. That means that it is not fed by female hormones like estrogen or progesterone, and that an ovariectomy would not have helped her. It is also not being fed by human epidermal growth factors, and the herceptin treatment would also not work.

So what do we know? We have done a lumpectomy, not a mastectomy and there are 2 new lumps already, which means this cancer is most definitely aggressive. With the presence of the new lumps, Dr. Abrams said the life expectancy could be less than a year for her, and maybe even as short as 6 months.

Except for some human only clinical trials, treatment for triple negative breast cancers includes aggressive therapy that includes a double mastectomy, chemotherapy, and radiation. For a human being, that is a difficult choice, as it involves months of pain and discomfort, in hopes of extending life and many choose not to undergo it.

This cancer can metastasize to the liver, lungs, brain, and bones. If symptoms dictate, a non-invasive xray or cat scan should be able to locate any metastatic lesions, to give you a better idea as to how close to the end she is.

You are right Kari. It is time to introduce a new friend to soften the blow of the loss for Sam's roommates.

I'm sorry to have to share such sad news. Knowing this, sad as it is however, has spared her unnecessary pain and treatments so there's at least that. Also, I can think of no luckier capuchin in the world; to be loved for almost 30 years and not know anything but kindness until the end. My heart is with you, dear friend.

With hugs and tears from across the gulf,

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