

Nobody Adopts Nine Year Olds!

Brutus had been originally adopted as a two year old by a lovely older couple. Time had been kinder to him than them; they had to move into Assisted Living; there is no place for a one hundred pound Doberman in Assisted Living. Through no fault of his own, Brutus was homeless.

As I read the notice of a nine year old being returned to DAR&E, the thought that went through my head was nobody adopts nine year olds. I had been drawn to the notice because I had just lost a nine year old to a particularly nasty form of cancer, and if I was still suffering from that, my eleven year old natural grey lady Sky was suffering more. She had retired to the bedroom and was uninterested in food. A nice older gentleman might help her - so I arranged to foster the nine year old.

Brutus had been, in his owner's words, "king of the castle." He was used to living the single life and was quite "demanding." He was also extremely strong and more than they had really been able to handle on a leash. In fact, he hadn't had many walks in the last year. He was also extremely leash aggressive. All this I knew as I went into this arrangement.



He was delivered to my home and he met Sky outside in the garden; she preened and greeted him with interest. When his owners and I walked inside the house, Brutus and Sky walked shoulder to shoulder. When I released Sky inside the house, she immediately went and lay on her mattress and looked expectantly at me. Brutus's owner released him and he walked over to the mattress and climbed up on it and lay beside Sky. Both looked at me; the expectations were obvious--treats were "required."



Inside the house, and around Sky, I never had a single worry about Brutus. He was kind, loving and very generous. They didn't roughhouse like young dogs; they played "mind games." I would give them both identical treats; he would hold it in his paws and she would "slide" over to him and remove it. He would "notice" and stalk over to her, but he never snatched it back; he would turn, stare at me, and whine. It was obvious he was

telling me she had taken his bone. Sky would then release the bone and he would gently take it back and return to the starting point. They played variations on that game for two years and both seemed to be totally happy with it. Inside he was a jewel! Outside he was a Hellion!!!! His previous foster father remembered him and contacted me! Now...to remember one pup, after seven years, meant that pup was either an absolute angel or an absolute devil. "Has he mellowed" was the question. "Not hardly" was the response!

He was leash aggressive to everything that moved or breathed. Squirrels were particularly despised. He would duck his head (as if trying to get out of his collar) and spin in a tight circle (with his head as the center of the circle) all the while deafening the neighborhood with sound effects. He was extremely strong, but he never pulled me over, I don't think he even meant to try, it was all a "display." Sky would retreat to the end of her leash and turn towards the display; her huge "grin" showed no fear, only pure enjoyment.

I had just over two wonderful years with Brutus as part of my family. Two years filled with



long "interesting" walks, evenings filled with watching them "play" with their bones and steal each others blankets. Nights filled with trying to find room in the bed for myself, and not being able to move because of a large head anchoring me down. Sky

returned to her bouncing self and enjoyed life again.

The end, when it came, was horribly quick and final. Something had been growing in his chest; in the space of a week, he went from happy, healthy, and full of life, to me holding him in my arms while he died.

Several friends have asked, "Was it worthwhile taking him on?" "Yes," I replied, "he gave me two years of wonderful memories, two years of kisses and an extra two years plus with Sky. He didn't even have a cold while he was with me and that horrible thing that grew in his tummy could have grown inside a two-year-old with the same horrible results. Yes, it was worth it."

Oh, by the way, no one outside the group ever did adopt Brutus; I didn't give anyone a chance; he was never listed on the "Available for Adoption" lists - he was MINE!!!!!!

Penny and Sky Classic (now 14)