

How a cat person became a dog lover, and other miracles of nature

called him, because his behavior was at first more wolf-like than dog-like.

Charlie needed time to accept new people into his life, and we had a set of 'Charlie Rules' for visitors, both to keep *them* safe, and to help our feral boy feel comfortable. When Kac and Marlene arrived, however, Charlie's reaction was extraordinary! He danced around them with his tail whirling like a helicopter rotor. He sat in front of Kac and offered a paw, over and over again. He rubbed up against her for smooches. He licked her hands. He made it clear that he really would like to sit on her lap (and Charlie was certainly not a lap dog, except with me). Charm wafted around the room like a magic spell, and we were all entranced by this uncharacteristic behaviour.

When I heard that Kac had adopted Talulah, somehow, I wasn't too surprised, though I was thrilled. I had a sneaking feeling that somehow Charlie had been involved in this!

The adoption process may seem arduous for first-time adopters, but there are good reasons for all of the checks. Sadly, sometimes adoptions fail: either because love at first sight turned out to

How's that one working out for you, Talulah?



Talulah experimented with different locations in the house, and different beds until she found the perfect one. This is it.

be not what it seemed, and infatuation doesn't last; sometimes because the match is all wrong, and often because it can be hard to accurately assess dogs in kennels (that's why fostering is so important), and it can take at least a few weeks – sometimes months – for a dog to properly settle and unpack his or her baggage from the past to reveal their true personality.

Questionnaires need to be filled in so that the rescue centre can gain some insight into the adopter's circumstances and lifestyle, and a home check is carried out to ascertain whether boundaries are safe, and if the prospective adopter is going to get antsy about dog hair on the rug, or the occasional accident during toilet-training. Some rescues ask for references, to ensure an individual has what it takes to properly provide for a dog's physical, mental, and emotional needs, and also to ensure there's no intention to sell-on the dog, or use her as a breeding machine if she hasn't been spayed.

All of this is also for the adopter's benefit. It's heartbreaking to adopt a dog and then find that it's not working out, and the dog has to be returned to



2 Tu-Rah-Lu- Tah-Lu-Lah

Kac

I couldn't help myself. I was so excited about being able to take my new baby girl with me on outings, I bought a pet screen partition for the back of the Jeep, a new, gold-colored doggie bed, and special no-tip traveling water and food dishes for Talulah. I wanted her to feel safe and comfortable when I took her with me on excursions and errands. I had read that it is much safer if an animal is restrained and placed in a safe compartment while traveling.

18

The first day I was very excited to show Talulah her 'traveling quarters.' She took one look and wanted none of it. "No, I, Princess Talulah, want to sit on your lap while we go in the car," she seemed to tell me with her big brown eyes, and the way she cocked her head to the right. I reasoned with her in our driveway, until she reluctantly agreed to do it 'my way.' We headed out and she began to fuss. All the way to the store and back she cried, shivered, and wailed. I stopped the car twice to see what was going on, and although she appeared to be safe and fine, the whining did not stop. I was frustrated because I felt I had done all the right things for her, and yet she was miserable.



Talulah can watch the world go by from her dog seat in the back of the Jeep.



Talulah, exhausted after spending a few nights at the kennel. Her report card indicated she was the Class Clown.

children to ensure their little ones will be in safe, loving hands. We need to do the same for our dogs when we plan to be away from them.

Like Kac, I would have chosen

the facility that was outwardly a little messier, but where the people working there clearly cared about the dogs, and put their needs first. Our dogs don't know whether we've abandoned them forever,



A common candy bar turns into a designer treat



Truffle settled in and nesting in a pile of yarn that matches his winter sweater.

- Ask yourself some questions when considering adding to your family
- Relaxed introductions in a neutral environment help both dogs get off to a good start
- Observe both dogs' body language during introductions
- When you adopt one dog, you're actually saving two!





... whilst Truffle was completely unfazed, and slept right through them!

panting and scared. I quickly opened their crates, and they leapt into my lap: we sat cuddling for a few moments until they calmed a little. They were both wound up so tight – wiggly and twitchy – circling me twenty times like I was a maypole. I gave them some water. Still, they were wired.

I was beginning to become anxious myself, worried they would never calm themselves. There seemed to be a big difference in how the wind sounded downstairs, where the dogs slept, compared to upstairs, where we slept, so I decided to take them upstairs with me to see if they would settle and relax. I placed them on the bed. The sleeping cats scattered to their usual hiding places – sorry, kitties! Truffle immediately found a soft corner on the big bed and settled down. He was happy and comforted upstairs. Talulah was still wired, though, and it took much petting and cooing in her ear to get her to settle between the big pillows. Eventually, she relaxed and went to sleep. I was so grateful they had

both found peace that I didn't mind the snorting and snoring in my ear. We were huddled together, and protected from the storm.

The next morning, Truffle was calmer than Talulah, and took his usual nap, whilst the winds continued to howl. I wrote to Lisa and asked her what to do for the long haul.

Lisa

Back in 1981, the *New York Times* published a piece about the emotional and physical effects of high winds; in particular, winds such as the Santa Ana that Kac and her household were experiencing. A series of experiments at New York University demonstrated that the electrification of the atmosphere during these displays of nature's extraordinary power creates positive ions. In brief, the molecules in the air, such as oxygen and nitrogen, are usually electrically neutral. However, in certain conditions, such as storms and high winds, an electron may be knocked off a molecule, giving it a