



New Home



BLAM! Aroma bombs exploded inside my nose. Conducting a stealthy sniff-over, I detected the rich, greasy scents of barbecue ribs on a napkin stuffed in a pocket. Letting my nose linger, I could also smell earthy garden compost near some knees and cheesy toe fungus inside a shoe. These were my kind of humans.

I was at the front desk of the dog shelter, eagerly straining to leave with this couple who had chosen to adopt . . . me!

Goodbye, BARC. Goodbye, volunteers. Goodbye, kennel run. Hello, new life!

I eagerly jumped into the back seat of a fancy new car and nose-smudged the window as we drove away. This was going to be great!

“Here, Prince,” my new man-owner called when we arrived at my home. “Behold! Your kingdom.”

He wasn’t kidding.

In a fenced side yard was a doghouse that looked like a miniature castle. Inside, a puffy dog cushion awaited me like a throne for a real prince.

“We’re making the world a better place, adopting a stray like you,” my new man-owner said proudly.

“With all the comforts a dog could want, Prince,” added my new lady-owner. “You’re a lucky, lucky boy!” She patted me lightly on the head. Then the two of them closed the kennel run gate and left.

Meaty mutt meals! I thought. *This is double-dog fabulous!*

And it was—for a hot ten minutes. But we dogs are social by nature. It means we like company and that, I discovered, was the one thing missing in my new realm. Sure, I got a short walk some mornings and I was fed twice a day, but other than that it was me, myself, and I. Where was the roaring fireplace, me curled at my humans’ feet? Where were the slippers I would retrieve for them each evening?

Time to take things into my own paws, I thought after I had spent a few lonely days pacing the length and width of my run. I needed to show them what makes a dog happy. I was sure it would make them happy too.

I eyed the fence around my run. Definitely jumpable. I easily sailed over the gate and trotted out onto the manicured front yard.

Gotta dig that! I thought, diving into some gorgeous flower beds. Mmmm! They smelled like freshly laundered sheets. Plus the cool moist dirt felt so good on the paws. Much better than my concrete slab. I loped around the house, looking for a way in.

At the back, I noticed an open window, covered only by a screen.

“Easy-peasy!” I woofed, dive-bombing through it. The screen tore like a soggy Kleenex and I landed on a cool granite countertop. Sliding along, I accidentally collided with a tall glass vase filled with sun-yellow tulips. Fortunately, I came to a stop before the counter ended.

I wish I could say the same for the flowers. *CRASH!* They and their vase ended up in parts and petals on the tiled kitchen floor. Neatly arranged place mats on the breakfast table looked like a smart way to cover up the mess.

I leaped from the counter to the table, sticking the landing. *Floop, floop, floop.* I tossed the place mats onto



the floor like Frisbees. They did a nice job of hiding the incriminating evidence once known as the flower vase.

“Rowrrf! Rowrrf?” My deep barks echoed through the house. “Anybody here?”

Making myself at home, I moved down hallways, into bedrooms, and up and down staircases searching for my new family. I’d never been in a place this fancy before.

Other than the kitchen, this house was so clean specks of dust needed to ask for permission to land. I’d worked up a thirst getting inside, so I was pleased to discover a toilet bowl brimming with clear, fresh water. After a few splashy slurps, I rubbed my drippy muzzle

on the full roll of toilet paper. It popped off its holder and unwound down the hall.

I eagerly followed it like a cat after a yarn ball. It ran out of steam near an office. I stepped inside. On an ornately carved wooden desk sat a computer and a pair of glasses.

The glasses smelled like my new man-owner. Pulling them onto the floor, I tenderly licked and nibbled at them, thanking him for adopting me.

Crunch!

In my enthusiasm, I bent the frames and one lens popped out. Leaving them behind, I turned my attention to further discoveries.

I cruised into what smelled like my owners' bedroom. There were the slippers. And they were tender, tasty leather to boot. After a satisfying chew fest, I reluctantly moved on, enjoying a sniff party in the laundry room. Let me tell you, there were some great whiffs in there. The dirty T-shirts and underwear gave off meaty, salty smells. I happily flung them everywhere and even ate a sock or two. But no worries. Everything always comes out well in the end, if you know what I mean.

I stood still and barked once more. "*Rowrfff!*" But it was so quiet I could hear myself shedding. No one here but me, that was for sure. I'd just have to wait until they got home.

Trotting into the living room, I looked around for the fireplace. But there wasn't one. There would be no snoozing in front of crackling logs or glowing embers. A nap on a comfy-looking leather couch would have to do instead. As I jumped onto the deliciously soft sofa, I stepped on a small box.

Poof!

A friendly blaze appeared on the big-screen TV across from me. Not quite what I had in mind but . . . better than nothing. I slid into a satisfied slumber.

I was awakened later by voices. My new family was arriving home. I hurried to greet them, my tail wagging into a furry blur.

"Oh no!" screamed my new lady-owner, looking around at my messes.

"What the . . . !" yelled my new man-owner.

"This dog has got to go!" they both chimed in.

And so I did.

Without ever learning their names, I went back to The BARC, my home sweet dog-shelter home.