

Vinny and Nicky



We adopted our first Humane Society dog, Nicky, about five years ago. Not too long before that, our first dog, Sophia Margaret, had passed away at about 15 years of age. We swore we would never have another dog, but, because we have always been "dog people", that frame of mind didn't last long. We simply did not feel right living in a house without a dog. Nicky is a wonderful guy, He is smart and gentle, even though he can seem a little neurotic at times. We don't know his entire history, but I suspect that he experienced some kind of abuse, even though he was just a baby when we adopted him. His craziest thing showed up the first time I walked him down our street. He was absolutely terrified of bridges. He totally lost it, and tried to run in the street to get away from them. That little problem has long since disappeared.

My number two son and I picked Nicky out of the line up in the puppy room. We thought he was really a nice little fella. We were told that he was a beagle mix and would not be very big. He had the most beautiful face I have ever seen on a

dog. As he grew older, and grow he did, it became obvious to me that he was more likely a boxer/shepherd mix. My wife, Rachel, although she loves him, has always complained that he is too big. I kind of like that about him. I feel safe walking him at the greenway. He is the smartest dog I have ever had. Believe it or not, we did not have to potty train him. In his entire life at our house, he has only had two accidents, both of which were our fault, not his. He learns other things easily, also. for example, if he brings you a toy to play with, you can say, "Not this one, Nicky. Go get another one." He will take the first one back to his toy box, drop it in, and select something else. I wish he would learn, "Nicky, pick up all your toys," but that hasn't happened, yet.

Many times over the last few years, I have jokingly suggested that we adopt another dog. Rachel has always gotten highly annoyed at the prospect. She would rattle off her litany of reasons for not getting one. Then one evening in May, something strange occurred. Rachel called me down to where she was sitting on the couch, pointed to her laptop screen, and commanded me to take the next day off from work and go adopt a puppy she had seen on the Humane Society website. I thought she was kidding at first, but it soon became apparent that she was dead serious.

The next day, I took the afternoon off and headed to the Humane Society. I remember being a little annoyed because I had called earlier that morning and asked some questions with no response. I didn't realize until I arrived that the center doesn't open until noon. I was second through the door. I raced to the puppy room, even though we were not looking for a puppy, but Rachel's little dog was nowhere to be seen. Somebody had already taken her home the day before.

I called Rachel and told her to start checking her email because I was going to send her photos of all the eligible tiny dogs they had, for her to choose from. We had decided we wanted an older dog so it would be closer to Nick's stage of life, but wanted something small and "lap doggish".

I sent about four pictures, including one of a little black and white three-year-old guy named Nobel. I thought he was cute, but the one in the cage next to him was,

too. I asked the guy who was feeding the dogs and cleaning their cages which one of the dogs I had selected as possibilities would be the best little lap dog for Rachel. He told me that Nobel had the calmest and sweetest disposition, so I spent some time in the visitor room with him. I liked him right away. Although he was a little nervous, he seemed to be happy to see me. I called Rachel and told her I thought he was the one. She said she trusted my judgment, so I told the guy that I would take him. He told me he couldn't let me have him unless I spent 15 minutes alone with him. That was no problem at all. We went for a walk around the center, mixed in with lots of picking him up for hugs and kisses.

I learned during the adoption process that Nobel's previous owners had called him Pinto. They had loved him, but, because of their work schedules, could not devote the proper time to him. There wasn't much other information. Anyway, the two of us finally got permission to leave. We got in my car and came home together. I was nervous about introducing him to Nicky. After all, Nicky is huge, and "Pinto" only weighed 11 pounds! Miraculously, they got along instantly. It was as if they were long lost brothers. They were so excited to see each other. I will admit that there has been the occasional squabble over a toy and that, every once in awhile, Nicky seemed jealous at first. But now, a month later, they act as if they were raised together.

After introducing the dogs and showing the new guy the house, I went up to the loft to watch television. I fell asleep laying on the couch. When I woke up, "Pinto" was curled up sleeping on my chest. Fortunately, Rachel got home just about then. I wanted him to bond with her more than me, so that she could have the little lap dog she always wanted. She changed her clothes and took him downstairs with her. He was quite content to stay with her. After a short while, she called up and told me that his new name was "Vinny". That seems like a perfect name for him now.

Later that night, I was upstairs lying on the couch watching television again. Vinnie ran through the downstairs, up the stairs, jumped up on the couch, hopped up to my chest, gave me a kiss on the nose, hopped down, and ran back down to

his mom. It was the cutest thing I ever saw. He seemed to be saying, "I like you and all, and I wanted to let you know I am okay, but I really like that lady, and want to spend more time with her". I'm okay with that. As I write, big Nicky, who prefers my company to Mom's, is laying at my feet keeping my toes warm.

Everybody is happy.