

'IT TURNED OUT BETTER THAN I HAD EXPECTED!'

Write about a time when you felt like this.

Student's Essay

A few days ago, Dad barged into my room, waving a newspaper article, saying, "Charlotte, I think it's time you got a dog." I blinked in shock. Thinking it was another dream, a product of my hyperactive mind, I pinched my cheeks. However, the sudden warmth rushing to my painful cheek told me otherwise. Dad had read an article on 'The Animal Lodge' and thinking that I was too stressed over academic woes, decided that it was time to fulfil my childhood wish of keeping a dog. He had already persuaded Mum to 'give her blessings'. I let out a tremendous whoop of joy, punching my fists into the air and upsetting my stack of textbooks. However, after snatching the article and drinking in every word printed in black, I was **dismayed** to discover that it would not be a trip to the pet shop to get a puppy that I could place on my lap and cuddle. Instead, it was a shelter which usually housed senior dogs with little time left on this earth. There would be no puppies. I was a bit **disappointed**.

When we entered The Animal Lodge shelter, I was appalled. It was the **noisiest and smelliest place** I had ever been to. Dogs were **barking, growling and even snarling**. The **revolting stench** seemed to be a mix of disinfectant, ammonia and possibly stale dog poo. Dogs of all sizes appraised us as we walked past rows and rows of dog cages. I scanned the canines like a seasoned detective but none seemed to be 'the one'. While contemplating if I should continue with this seemingly pointless tour, a tiny Maltese suddenly dashed to the front of its cage and **barked furiously** at me. I jumped in **fright** and turned to face the little dog. Its eyes caught my attention. They were filled with **hatred**. Yet, I noticed a tinge of fear beneath this hostility. Sympathy overwhelmed my fear as I silently wondered what had caused him to have such ill feelings towards humans. I realised that this was a place with a collection of **tragic stories**; each and every boarder had a **heart-rending** past. Owners who had cuddled them in their youth, turned their backs on them as they entered their twilight years. Loving a soul is to see his imperfections perfectly. Would I live up to that challenge in my quest, in a shelter no less?

Tracy, one of the staff working there, had stopped in front of a cage and beckoned to me to join her. I glanced inside and saw a **medium-sized dog**, white all over with patches of brown. His **brown floppy ears** drooped beside his handsome head and I was immediately reminded of the character Sirius Black from



Editor's Comments

This personal recount is well structured with the elements of a narrative – setting, complication, climax and resolution.

Content

Usually writers focus on the main subject of their story. This writer, however, introduced an incident when she saw an aggressive Maltese. This gave her the opportunity to reflect on the sad stories of the abandoned dogs in the shelter, lending sophistication to her writing. It was clever of the writer to refer to a character that many people would be familiar with – Sirius Black of the Harry Potter series of books, thus engaging the interest of Harry Potter fans!

Language

- the topic suggests that the essay should describe contrary thoughts and feelings. The writer has clearly conveyed this through her writing. Initially, she thought that she would not find the dog that she wanted at the shelter. Furthermore, her experiences at the shelter were negative. However, later she was glad to find a new friend. (Some examples in **red**).

- the use of apt descriptions, especially the use of sensory words, vividly convey the state of the shelter and the dogs in it. (Some examples in **green**).



the popular Harry Potter series. Its ears resembled the trademark **v** sitting atop Sirius Black's head. I met his eyes and before I knew it, he got up on all fours with a **whine** and padded over to the edge of his cage, pressing his nose through the bars in an attempt to reach me. I bent down and offered my hand for him to sniff while asking Tracy, "How old is he? He doesn't seem like the others."

The response I received was appalling. Tracy said, "He's actually still a puppy although he has grown to his full size. His previous owner had bought him from a pet shop but dumped him at the shelter two weeks later, muttering something about having two young children and being too busy. We believe the real reason is that this dog's tongue is lopsided. Some find this ugly, maybe even unlucky."

"I will take him," I announced. Dad looked at me with surprise and pointed out that he was already full grown so I would not be able to cuddle him. "He's the one. He is **gorgeous** and that is enough. I will give him as much attention as he needs." I confidently told my father. Tracy nodded while Dad just shrugged.

While Dad followed Tracy to the counter to fill up some paperwork, I bonded with my new-found best friend. Greeting each other with equally overwhelming exuberance, I gave him a **big hug** which was returned with a **slobbery lick** on my face. "Hey fluffy, I think I will call you Sirius." Sirius gave a little whine and gave me another big **lick** on my face, sending me into **fits of laughter**. I gazed at him **fondly** and **scratched him behind the ears**. This was certainly an unexpected turn of events. I had a new friend and it did not matter if he was deemed ugly by others. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder after all. This 'treasure hunt' was a success, and it turned out better than I had expected!