

Dog Adoption

Paloma is a runner. She loves to run. She doesn't run anywhere in particular, mind you, she just enjoys the experience. Sometimes she gets to run in wide open spaces, like at the park, sometimes she runs alongside her mom's bike, and sometimes she just runs back and forth through the house. To her, it doesn't much matter, just as long as she gets to run. The way her life started out, however, it was possible that she might never have gotten the chance.

Paloma is a one-year-old half English setter/half English pointer mix. Her name, which is Spanish for "dove," was bestowed upon her because as a very young puppy, she was entirely white. The result of an accidental breeding between two show dogs, Paloma and her six sisters were unexpected and unwanted by the owners of both parent dogs. Fortunately, all seven dogs made their way to a pointer rescue shelter, and have since all found happy homes.

Paloma's story is not a unique. Thousands of dogs across the country are in need of rescuing and go unadopted. Often these animals spend the rest of their lives in shelters, colloquially known as "the pound." Those that are not cannot be adopted are euthanized. The reasons these dogs wind up in shelters vary. Some of them were bought as Christmas presents for a child, but soon the parents had second thoughts as it became clear that the puppy might be more trouble than they anticipated. Others ran away and were picked up by animal control or the local human society, but went unclaimed by their owners. Still others had to be given up due to their owner's allergies or other health problems. Yet most of these dogs still have plenty of years of companionship and affection left in them, and would love nothing more than to be taken in by someone who will love and care for them.

Some people may be hesitant to adopt a shelter dog, for fear of health or behavior problems. While some dogs may have behavior problems as a result of being abused or neglected by their previous owners, not all shelter dogs are like this, and those that are can usually be re-trained by someone who happens to be particularly patient. Dog lovers are encouraged to ask questions about a dog's background before adopting, in order to avoid potential problems and frustrations. Nearly all shelters will not allow a dog to be adopted until any health problems have been successfully treated. Any information on treatment of chronic conditions or other special needs will be passed on to the new owner.

If you or someone you know is in search of a new best friend, consider a trip to the local shelter instead of the pet store. Adoption is often cheaper than buying a puppy, and the dogs are just as friendly and loving, if not more so. Plus, most are already housebroken! To get started on the search a new best

friend, call your local humane society or search online at PetFinder.com.