

New Dog in the House

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Those of you who read my blog regularly have read about Flax the pit bull. Flax died earlier this year at the age of 17. His owner, Elise, was heartbroken and wasn't sure she would get another dog, but fate intervened.

When Elise went to donate Flax's beds to a shelter, she met a 1-year-old pit bull mix there who needed a home. She hadn't planned on getting another dog, but Lulabelle went home with her.

About a week after she adopted Lulabelle, she had to take a trip and called me to sit for only one night. There wasn't enough time for me to go over ahead of time and meet the new dog.

When I arrived at Elise's house, I went in the door and greeted Lulabelle. Having never met me before, Lulabelle wasn't sure who I was and barked at me. She was unsure about me being in her house and let me know it. The barking probably lasted about 30 minutes.

I knew I shouldn't force myself on her, so I calmly sat down in the living room, turned on the TV and let Lulabelle bark at me. She climbed the stairs and sat at the top. I sat where she could watch me. I threw her some treats and calmly spoke to her, giving her time to adjust to my being there and to realize I wasn't a threat. The last thing I wanted to do was antagonize her.

After an hour or so, Lulabelle came downstairs to go outside and go potty. I threw more treats to her and she eventually decided to sit closer to me. When I was ready to go upstairs and go to bed, Lulabelle decided to join me and slept next to me on her bed. She even let me pet her before the end of the evening. The next morning she licked my hand.

I prefer to always meet the pets I care for ahead of time, but sometimes it can't happen. By remaining calm and non-threatening, I was able to win over Lulabelle and do it in a way that she was comfortable. Always keep this in mind when meeting a new dog and approach it in a way that is comfortable and non-threatening for the dog.

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