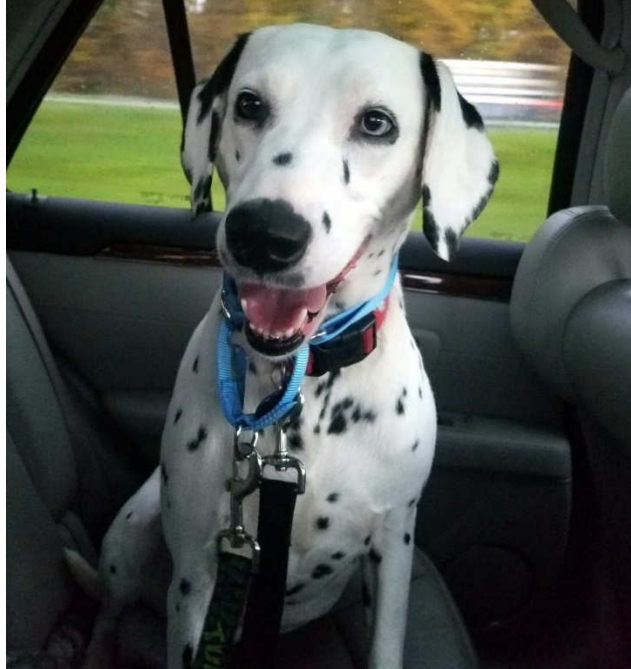


Leonardo

(aka Shadow)



My “Happy Beginnings Story” begins two and a half years before bringing Leonardo (formally known as Shadow) home. In May 2014, I found myself without a dog after 16 years. Grover, my Chihuahua, my best friend, had passed away as a result of kidney failure. I was thirteen when I brought him home. He grew up with me, was a part of all life’s changes, always by my side. And now he was gone.

About six months after he died, I was ready to have another dog. I had always known since I was a child at some point in my life I would have a Dalmatian. This was the time. I began my search not realizing it was going to be a two year endeavor.

I have always believed in the idea of rescuing/saving/adopting. I have always been the type of person that has the desire to help an animal in need. My goal was to find a Dalmatian who needed a home. I diligently checked many rescues all over Michigan over many months. No luck. Curiosity led me to search up Dalmatian breeders in my state. I discovered there are very few in Michigan. This led me to the conclusion this was why the breed was not common in the shelters or rescues.

While still searching within my state, I began reaching out to shelters and breeders outside of my state. Typically because of distance or availability, or even specific rescue and breeder guidelines, it was just not in my favor to bring one of their pups home. I do not know how it happened, but randomly searching for a Dalmatian online one day led me to a pup who needed a home through Dalmatian Rescue of Colorado. At this point I had invested many hours a week searching online and wondered why the DRC had never presented itself to me in the last two years of searching.

Like several times before, I contacted the rescue, specifically Beth White, inquiring about giving one of their dogs a home. By now, I was not hopeful due to many disappointments in the past. Apparently, I just had not found the right rescue. Beth White was the first person to make me feel like getting a Dalmatian was actually a possibility. It was just a matter of time now - I just had to wait for the dog who’s picture and story gave me “that feeling.” Oh my gosh, how quickly it happened. In about five weeks after discovering DRC, I had brought home my new best friend.

Around November 5, 2016 Leonardo (Shadow) was looking for a home through the rescue. Everything about him seemed just right except for his age. I looked at him and thought about him every day for a week. Then I inquired about him. Another week later, I got an email saying he was nearly ready to be adopted. I was bummed but was prepared for it. I had been disappointed a few times in the last two years of looking. Plus, I hem-hawed about him for too long.

The next day, I got another email about him. This one said he was up for adoption again and he was available for me. I cried. He was mine. I had not realized it but in my heart I had already made a connection to him. Three days later I brought him home. After searching and waiting for so long, it was very surreal for about a week to see him in my home. It was weird to turn around and he be right behind me, looking right at me.

He bonded to me right away. Stays by my side or keeps his eye on me. Makes me feel bad when I have to leave his side. I am very lucky to be able to take him to work with me if I desire. He goes on lots of car rides. Unfortunately, the Michigan snow and cold is keeping us from being able to spend a lot of time outdoors. I am looking forward to the warmer months-long walks, trips to the lake, camping, or simply going outback to play and run!

ADVICE FOR FUTURE ADOPTERS: Leonardo has had many good days and some trying moments. Not only has he had to learn me but I have had to learn him. Week one felt like the “Honey Moon Week.” You are both willing to please each other. You tend to let things slide as not to upset this new dog in your home after everything they have been through. Week two and three is now learning each other’s boundaries. It is now time for your dog to start learning your rules and expectations. After week four, it is reinforcing daily. Have lots of patience and give lots of love. They have been through a lot. In addition, I recommend a vet visit-the time to do this would be done with your best judgment. Leonardo needed some attention even though he appeared healthy in the beginning and had been to the vet previously with his foster family. It took a couple weeks for me to notice a pattern in behavior that yielded a vets attention and care.

I appreciate and thank everyone who has had a part in his life. I thank his first family for raising and training him to be the wonderful dog he is today. I thank his foster family for caring for him when he had nowhere to go. I thank Sandy Fuller for bringing us together. My biggest thanks goes to Beth White for giving me the opportunity to be a part of the DRC family. Leonardo has brought me so much happiness.

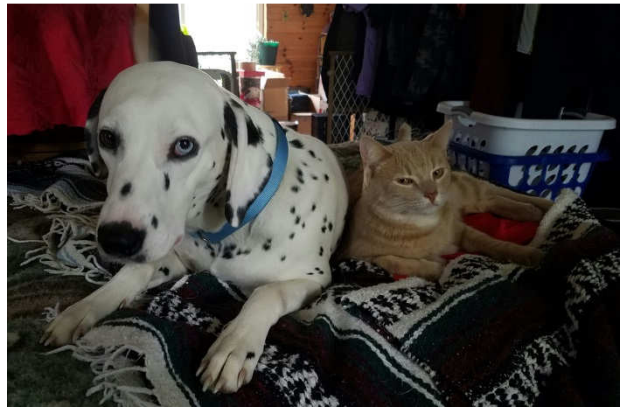
– Holly B.
Mancelona, MI



Aren't I so handsome? I could look at me all day!!



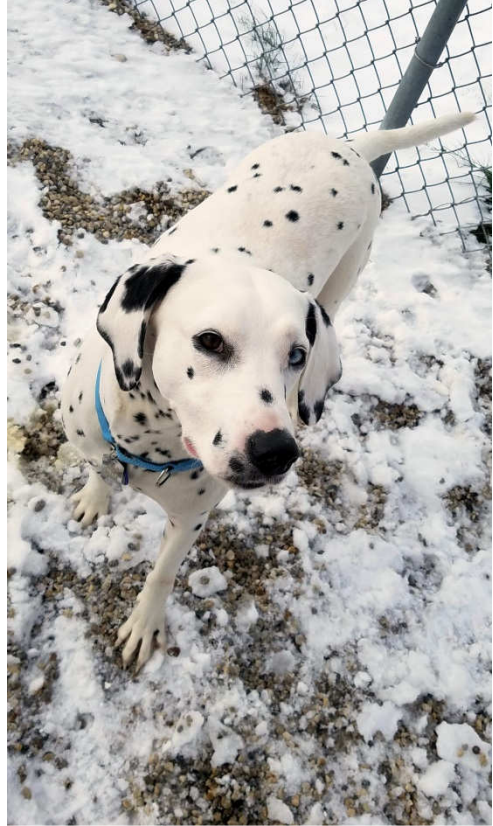
Let's play ball!!! Come on, come on, come on!!!



How'd that CAT get here???



Nap time!!



What's this white stuff all over the yard? It's cold!



Life is finally GREAT!!!

