



ODIE LIVES

Odie, a gorgeous, energetic Border Collie, was surrendered to ARK as "too exuberant" to keep. He'd been found wandering the streets and a family took him in for about a year. When found he was loaded with fleas and starving. Naturally he had some issues with food especially since he'd not received much during the time he was on his own. But with other dogs and kids he was friendly, just please stay away from his bowl.

ARK placed him at an upscale pet spa in Lake Mary FL hoping he'd be adopted quickly. As time wasted away he became anxious waiting for a new family. He waited patiently for almost a year but no one came to adopt him.

Depressed and lonely, when an employee removed his food bowl he tried to nip her. The owner of the spa hired a dog trainer to assess him. The trainer moved his bowl with her foot and Odie nipped her. The spa owner called ARK: "Come get him."

Odie had been caged for months. His depression caused him to claim ownership of his toys and his bowl. That's all he had. So back to ARK in DeLand FL. Sadly there were no outside kennels available so Odie was placed in a small kennel inside until a large outdoor one opened.

The owner of the spa loved Odie so she raised \$300 to send him to boot camp in Altamonte Springs FL; yet another change for Odie. But alas, the trainer the woman who'd tested him days earlier.

ARK was sent awesome Odie videos: obeying, walking, leashing, sitting; but no lessons addressing his issues - food and toy aggression. The day he was leaving boot camp the trainer leashed him and walked out, passing a kennel with an aggressive dog Odie didn't like. The dog barked, Odie jumped on the kennel, growling. The trainer yanked on Odie's leash, choking him. Protectively, Odie turned and bit her.

The trainer called ARK, "Come get this dog. Now." Yet another move for a totally confused dog; but at least ARK had an outdoor kennel available.

ARK's dog behaviorist said possession aggression was learned and could be unlearned. For three weeks volunteers worked with Odie as he accepted slowly, very slowly, that someone touching his food bowl or toys was a friend; not someone to take his possessions from him. Odie finally let volunteers move the bowl, move his toys, take his food away. Odie was healed! And he was so happy because he was outside in a run. He loved stretching out in the rain and mud. Free!! And loved.

A trainer of this breed called ARK from Ocala FL wanting to see how Odie would do herding sheep. ARK approved of the adventure. He was driven to his new home but Odie wasn't about to herd sheep. He saw that woman's swimming pool and all he wanted was to swim or play with the goats and cats and dogs. Her husband was furious Odie got in the pool and wanted him gone.

After a week the woman found a lady in Virginia who wanted to adopt Odie sight unseen. The couple had children, loved camping, and hiking. ARK was told he would be flown to Virginia. Unknown to ARK he was driven, 14 hours, caged in the back of a station wagon, arriving late at night. He was ushered into his new home and placed in the utility room. It was dark, he was tired and frightened. He'd shown no aggressive issues living at the farm. But the following morning Odie's new parents allowed their five year old to wander into the utility room, unchaperoned, to meet him. Confused and frightened, Odie bit her on the check.

Animal control took Odie away. Odie's owner didn't call ARK for almost week. When ARK's president received the horrifying news that Odie had only five days to live, she was hysterical. The following morning at 8am she sent an emergency email alert to over a hundred animal lovers throughout the southeast: "ARK needs a rescue group in or near Hanover Co, VA and/or Richmond VA to pull an impounded ARK dog."

Fifteen minutes later she received a reply. A woman living an hour from the kill shelter had grown children in DeLand and she'd visited ARK! Deborah was Odie's savior. But there were problems. Two rescue groups near the shelter emailed ARK that the officer at the shelter tested aggression by hitting dogs in the face with a leather glove. If they bit, they were killed. Odie would bite. ARK volunteers went crazy calling the

shelter; calling the police; even trying to call the mayor of the town. Deborah left immediately and drove the hour to the shelter to make sure Odie was alive. She found him living in poop and pee. When he saw her, not knowing who she was, he was so happy as if he knew a friend was going to save him. He stood up and started wagging his tail as the cops told Deborah that this was an "aggressive" dog.

Debra called ARK to report Odie knew he'd be saved and that he showed no aggression when Deborah arrived, just wagged his tail. The cops wouldn't allow her to take photos. Of course not! His kennel was filled with poop and pee.

In the meantime ARK's president called the sheriff who oversaw the shelter. Serendipitously he'd just taken the job and knew nothing about the glove test. He demanded the protocol book, discovering the aggression test wasn't in the book.

A member of a VA rescue group called the sheriff and amazingly found out her father and he were friends. She was the one who'd told ARK about the aggression test and that she'd seen it personally. The sheriff called ARK promising Odie would be allowed to leave VA.

Odie fulfilled his ten days in quarantine then Deborah drove him to DeLand and the arms of those who loved him. Thirteen hours on the road Odie sat close to Deborah; his head in her lap or his paw on her arm. She gave him a huge bone then moved it away. No aggression. Odie arrived in DeLand at midnight, greeted with joy and smothered with affection. He was safe.

Less than two weeks later Odie found his forever home. A woman in Gainesville FL called to say she wanted to adopt a dog. ARK's president told her about Odie. The woman had recently lost her husband and she and her son needed joy in their life. They met Odie, it was love at first sight for all three. Away they drove. Odie never looked back.

Odie went back and forth from one facility or family for two years until finally God's choice found him. Odie's journey continues as he fills a void in his mom's life while she spoils him rotten. Beneath Odie's first Christmas tree toys were piled high. He walks 2 miles a day with her; sleeps snuggled in her bed. Odie rules.