

The Story of

“Shady Lady”

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Those of you not familiar with Southern Nevada might not know that the “Shady Lady” is a name of a legal brothel not far from us who advertises themselves as “Nevada’s Friendliest brothel.”

Just to clarify, this story is not about legal cathouses. It is about the wolfdog we named Shady Lady, because (in our opinion) she is Nevada’s friendliest wolfdog! In fact her friendliness and personality is exactly what saved her life from a scheduled euthanasia at the local Pahrump shelter.

Two years ago we already were sharing our lives with 11 canines (having just lost our twelfth one to old age). These family members were mostly pre-owned Dobermans and wolf dogs, so we were definitely not looking for another one. In addition, we have many reptiles and big cats as pets (tigers, cougar, lion...). Because of our big multi-species family, we are well known in our small town as animal lovers.

One day I got a phone call from my local animal shelter informing me that they had a beautiful, sweet, wolf-y looking dog available for adoption. She had been picked up as stray, and was estimated to be about 1 year old, un-spayed and because no one had claimed her, was scheduled to be euthanized in one day.

I really didn’t feel like we should get another mouth to feed, but something was telling me to go to the shelter to check her out. I reassured my fiancée Scott that there would not be another pet joining our family. I was just going to the shelter to show good will. There was no way in this world I would bring her home!

Fifteen minutes later, I arrived at the shelter and was taken to the dog area. For me this can be very depressing, with the knowledge that many of these dogs might not be alive the next week.

Some of them were aggressive, unfriendly, scared, and most were barking. Displaying these behaviors is never a good adoptable trait. And then there was the still unnamed Shady Lady; sweet, happy, jumpy and not barking. I went inside the small kennel with her, and she was greeting me as if we were the old friends reuniting after not seeing each other for years! She was jumping with joy and looking at me with her incredible golden eyes. I knew right then there was no way I was leaving her at the shelter to die.

It was a pleasure to find that she was already leash trained, plus--she walked right outside and jumped into the dog crate we always carried in the truck for our other dogs! I must admit, I was terrified that my fiancée would be really annoyed, but since our five year old Doberman Jerry Lee had just lost his friend Misha, a twelve and a half year old Doberman, I was

hoping this new girl could keep him company and lift his spirits. We had just adopted Jerry Lee a year earlier, when both of his owners died, one from a heart attack and one from cancer. He was a very social dog who had lost many companions in his life, and he needed a friend.

When I arrived home I got out of the car and went in alone, so that I could explain to Scott first how this was going to be all right. I then let Shady Lady out on leash. She and Jerry Lee were instant friends! All of our canines are vaccinated, so the ever present threat of a possible parvo exposure was not a concern. Even Scott couldn’t find anything bad to say! Shady Lady became an instant family member and adopted Scott without reservations. She was following us everywhere like a shadow, and because of her bubbly, friendly nature, we officially named her Shady Lady.

This whole time I couldn’t understand why no one was looking for this adorable creature! Why would she be a stray? She was sweet, well socialized, loving, and obviously had some basic training. She was full of energy and loved



Jerry Lee and Shady Lady



Shady Lady try's out the washing machine

to jump. I spent time asking in the area to see if anyone had lost a wolf dog, but still couldn't find her original owner. After few days I stopped asking. We had already become so attached to her, it would have been difficult to let her go.

She turned out to be somewhat destructive though. If in the regular 11 gauge chain link dog kennel, she would disassemble the door! We found it necessary to keep her in welded wire panels or

in 9 gauge enclosures. Most of the time though, Shady Lady has a free run of a fenced 10 acres, with 8 foot tall barbed/ hot wire. For the longest time was chewing and destroying all water hoses she could find, thereby flooding the desert. Eventually we managed to stop this behavior by regularly coating the water hoses with the hottest habaneras sauce on earth called "Dave's Ultimate Insanity Sauce."

This hose fetish almost cost Shady Lady her life before she got trained away from it. We live in the Nevada desert which is full of rattlesnakes. And what do you think a rattlesnake looks like to a hose-destroying wolfdog? A hose, of course! One day we found Shady Lady with a bloody leg and swollen snout and neck, with a fang wound. It was obvious she was playing rough with a venomous snake. Fortunately, it was hemotoxic (affects blood system) and not a neurotoxin (affects nerves) rattlesnake. Neurotoxin venom affects nerves, which stops the breathing, and might have killed her within an hour without



Moms dressing me up again!

some anti-venom. With a hemotoxic venom, many times an anti-venom isn't necessary. Simple supportive therapy can be utilized to save the life of the animal. We instantly removed her collar since her neck had swollen badly. The veterinarian prescribed steroids to reduce the swelling plus pain killers and antibiotics for the wound management. It took few weeks for Shady to fully recover, but I honestly don't think she learned her lesson. That girl looks for trouble wherever she goes!

Shady and Jerry Lee can't count, so no matter how many food dishes we leave out, Jerry Lee gets very possessive and wants them all, thinking that somehow he won't get any dinner. To her credit, Shady is smart girl and observant. She knows that Jerry Lee doesn't like to walk on the rocks and that he usually stays on the concrete walkways due to his Wobblers syndrome. So Shady Lady drags one of the food feeders into the desert and eats there in peace. Some spilling of the kibbles occurs in the process, which attracts local wildlife such as birds and chipmunks, which in turn attracts the snakes...never a good thing when you have a dog with a hose fixation in the family!

Does Shady Lady have some kind of a death wish when it comes to snakes? We'll never know for sure, but just like her CAT-house related name, we hope that she might also have NINE lives! We look forward to her being with us for many more years...snakes or not... maybe causing a bit of trouble...but surviving in one piece and bringing us joy! 🐾