



## I LIKE BIG MUTTS

Let me tell you about my dog.  
Hey, where are you going?

**A** couple months ago, Heather and I decided to further our foray into domesticity by getting a dog. I've always dreamt of being the second-hairiest life-form in my apartment, and we both had dogs growing up. Sure, the female Samoyeds of my childhood, Lucy and Chopper, both contracted horrible skin conditions that made them look like pink aliens, but at least Lucy produced a litter of beautiful puppies. Well, except for Stubby. But that little pup and her club foot taught me a lot about perseverance, as well as the dangers of inbreeding.

We figured we'd go for whatever was available at the shelter, as long as it had most of its limbs and wasn't named Cujo. The only dogs we really didn't consider were pit bulls, rat dogs and greyhounds—we don't mind adopting a dog, but there's a limit to our altruism. (If you've got a greyhound, more power to you. I just have a hard enough time dressing myself without owning a dog that needs clothes too. If I owned a greyhound he'd probably be the only dog in the city wearing Zubaz pants and a sleeveless Hypercolor shirt instead of a Burberry coat.)

We started with a visit to an animal shelter on the North Shore, where we found a 6-month-old female lab mix fresh off the streets of Puerto Rico. But when we went to fill out an adoption form, the woman at the desk asked, "And what's your work situation?" When we replied that we both work full time, she shot back, "You can't have a puppy if you work full-time," the words dripping with revulsion, as if we'd said we intended to use the puppy as soup stock. You know you've been dissed at the dog shelter when you're told that you rank somewhere below the gutters of San Juan on the dog-owning pecking order. We went back to look at the puppy again anyway and apologize for the fact that she had to stay in her cage because the harpy out front would rather she live with an unemployed dog-beating crackhead who'd be home all the time.

On to plan B: If you can find a Russian bride online, surely you can find a dog, and so we perused Labs4Rescue.com. A few days after dog diva reprimand, we decided she was right and we shouldn't get a puppy. Older dogs often have the benefit of being house-trained, while puppies are no better off in that respect than Najeh Davenport.

We filled out an adoption form and one week later, Deuce, a 10-month-old lab/flat-coated retriever mix, arrived from a shelter in Tennessee. The first priority was changing his name. I understand he was named after

the New Orleans Saints' Deuce McAllister, but I think you can only get away with the name Deuce if you're an enormous NFL player. Otherwise, the connotation of "dropping a deuce" doesn't improve your first impression at the dog park. You may as well be named Mr. Poops. I'd already formed the opinion that Deuce's former owners were bayou-dwelling dog-abandoning cretins—call me an Eastern elitist, but it's telling that he had no idea how to use stairs—so their poor choice of names was unsurprising.

Soon Deuce was rechristened Manny, partly after Mr. Ramirez and partly because the name, even when divorced from its famous local owner, seems to fit the dog's gregarious personality. It's an added bonus, though, that if he chews up a bunch of tampons or pees on my PlayStation—two crimes of which he's been convicted—you can say, "That's just Manny being Manny."

So far, the pros of having a dog definitely outweigh the cons. An editor I worked for once told me that nobody wants to hear about your baby or your pets, so I'll just say

**YOU KNOW YOU'VE  
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that I recommend the dog-adoption thing. The only real problem with Manny has come when I've taken him into the office. There, he's been kind of like the fun drunk guy at a party—cool and amusing up until the point that he goes over the edge and does something that makes everybody cringe, like throwing an empty keg through the TV or, in Manny's case, pooping in someone's office. This is a problem he only has when I bring him to work, so I recently tried to acclimate him by keeping him confined to my office. Soon he was pawing at the door and making it clear the clock was ticking. I hustled him outside, where he proceeded to set a new personal best by going to the bathroom four times in one block. Maybe he had the right name after all. **IB**

**YOU THINK THAT'S FUNNY?**

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