



TANNER'S TALE

For the 100th Hard Luck Hound, a Forever Family Lies at the End of a Long Journey

Looking at this little pistol, you would never imagine that any dog so cute, so smart, and so loving would have trouble being welcomed into someone's home.

But for the past nine months, this Australian Cattle Dog mix has bounced in and out of the shelter. Twice, he has inched perilously close to euthanasia.

His adoption marks the end of a long journey.

Tanner first arrived at the old Town Lake Animal Center on August 25, 2011, picked up as a stray. He was friendly from the start, but the seeds of his troubles quickly became apparent. By nature, dogs like Tanner are smart, excitable, and have tons of energy. They crave engagement and interaction. They are not the type of dogs that can be left alone for long days in the backyard, or locked up with nothing to do.

Being locked in a kennel for 23-plus hours a day, with little exercise or mental stimulation, is just about the worst thing that can happen to a dog like Tanner. But that's where he ended up. His bottled up energy made him jumpy and unruly in his kennel, and scared away most adopters. He got in small scrapes with other dogs – one of whom broke out of his kennel and attacked Tanner.

Tanner became trapped in a downward spiral common to long-stay shelter dogs. The longer he stayed, the worse his behavior became. The worse his behavior, the slimmer his chances of being adopted.

After several months, volunteers became concerned that Tanner would soon be deemed unadoptable and put down. Volunteer Amie Tacka, who has spearheaded efforts to train Hard Luck Hounds, arranged for Tanner to leave the shelter and go to The Canine Center for Training and Behavior. For several weeks, professional trainers there taught Tanner basic obedience, and engaged his sharp mind in tasks and games that not only calmed him down, but made him happy.

By early January, Tanner was a new dog, and what a delight he was. On February 11, 2012, he was adopted for the first time.

Tanner's new forever family clearly meant well, but they were not fully prepared for his energy, nor did they have the time needed to keep him engaged. Left alone, he began escaping from their backyard and getting pushy with other dogs. The benefits of his training receded, and by the end of April Tanner was returned to the shelter.

Volunteers knew immediately that Tanner would begin slipping into the same downward spiral we had seen before. Quickly, it was arranged to send him out again to Triple Crown Dog Academy, where trainer Kevin Coombs spent a month rehabilitating Tanner.

That's where he was when adopter David White saw his picture online and knew he had to meet this special dog. David met Tanner at Triple Crown and watched Kevin put this proud, content little dog through his paces. He decided that Tanner should come home with him. Tanner, it seems, has finally found a loving home with a dedicated adopter who sees just what a wonderful dog Tanner is.

