

Our Dog Chip

“This is a big decision,” my mother said, looking at me with her best mother look. “A dog is a lot of work. For this reason alone, it’s going to change your life!”

Because I could see how serious she was, I said, “I know, Mom. You’re right.” The truth is, however, I didn’t know what was ahead. As it turned out, getting our dog Chip caused us a ton of trouble, a whole load of work, and a lot of joy, too.

The trouble came first. We adopted Chip from the nearby shelter when he was two. The woman there told us Chip had had “a couple of failed adoptions.” That was code for “trouble,” but we didn’t know it. Because my sister learned that Chip didn’t care if we called him or not. Accordingly, when he got loose the first time, there was no getting him back. He ran around as long as he wanted. Worse, he found my neighbors’ pet rabbit and knocked over its cage. Then he started running down that poor bunny. Dad got there about one second before it was too late. My neighbors weren’t too happy. The first week, we

also found out how much Chip liked the taste of carpets. Actually, he didn't like the ones that cost \$4.98 at Save-a-Buck—no way! He preferred the new living-room carpet. A few days later, he also showed us another great talent he had—he could take bites out of our sofa. For these reasons, I thought Chip might have one more “failed adoption,” but somehow we kept him.

Chip caused us a lot of work, too. He has so much energy, and we have a small apartment. So Mom said he had to be walked or run three times a day. Worse, I had to carry a scoop, gloves, and bags with me. I had to take Chip out during rainstorms, in baking heat, and in the snow and ice. When it was late and I just wanted to lie on the sofa, there was still the evening walk to do.

Luckily, Chip turned out to be more than a lot of trouble and work. He actually turned out to be good for our family. In a funny kind of way, he brought my sister and me together. Because I'm all sports and guy stuff and she's all ballet and girl stuff, we used to avoid each other. With the dog, though, we had to work out plans for taking care of him. We played with him together, too. As a result, Chip helped me figure out that my sister isn't as weird as I thought she was. Also, everybody in the house loved Chip once he calmed down, because he gave us all such great greetings. He could also tell when we were upset and liked to snuggle up and help.

As it turned out, getting Chip did change my whole life. He made it harder sometimes and better many other times. Now I know that when people say that dogs are a lot of work, they're right. Still, because of the pleasure that results, having a dog is worth it.