

The Joy of ExPETS

By: Robin Pascoe

An expat pet was recently put on a diet by a local veterinarian. It seemed he was not getting as much exercise as he could be, and had packed on a few extra kilos since moving abroad. The vet broke the news to both the pet – a Shetland sheepdog – and his owners just as he was about to plunge a needle into the dog's rear end.

The pet looked up into his owners' eyes as if to say: "Boy, you guys really know how to stick it to a dog."

His expat owners, meanwhile, were busy commenting to the pet doctor that while they loved having their pet living overseas with them, he was the equivalent of the third child they never had. He certainly required almost as much attention.

"But aren't I worth it?" the canine eyes flashed at them again. "Think of all those repairmen who think I'm so vicious."

"You wouldn't believe what he looked like when he got here," the expat wife was telling the vet. "See all that hair on him? Most of it was in his travelling cage. He shed several pounds of it over the Pacific. From stress."

"How would you like to travel pet class with a bunch of drugged out cats and dogs," thought the canine. "And then be hauled off to some place called a quarantine instead of going to a nice hotel with the rest of the family!"

"And his culture shock!" continued the wife. "I wouldn't have believed a dog could experience such culture shock. For the first two days he used the inside of the house as a bathroom!"

"That's because you gave me those stupid worm pills too soon," thought the dog, frustrated that he had never been able to explain his behavior to the family. "And wouldn't you be in a bit of a shock if someone transplanted you from a Canadian meadow of wild flowers to....to....this?!! Maybe you should write a book about THAT, lady."

"But we could never have left him behind," his owners both said at once, cooing in that stupid way they had and rubbing his tummy just the way he liked it. "We can't imagine not having him around."

"That's more like it," thought the dog.

Just then, the door of the vet's office flew open and another dog was dragged in kicking and screaming in the arms of the maid of its expat owners.

"Don't bother resisting," the Sheltie tried to communicate with the dog, a local breed. "They win."

"But look at my paw!" the local dog tried to communicate back. "Do you know it's been three days since I hurt it and they are just finally getting around NOW to getting me medical attention?"

"Hey pal," barked the Sheltie. "Did you see where this place is? My owners had a road map and three pages of instructions just to find this place. Don't complain!"

“Easy for you to say. You’re just here for a checkup I bet.”

“How do you know that?”

“Because your woman owner is being handed a bunch of worm pills by the vet.”

The Sheltie looked back to where his owners were getting a lengthy explanation about pills, diet and exercise. They were also being handed a load of paperwork to take home to put in their dog files. Oh no, he thought, not the worm pills again!

“I’m telling you, dear,” the wife was saying to her husband. “We have less paperwork for the kids.”

“By the way,” the vet was saying, “he will need to come back soon.”

“But you just gave him a needle with every conceivable vaccination in it. And he has the worm therapy to go through.” The husband was thinking about taking more time off to drive the dog to this part of town because he knew his wife would never find it alone. “What else could he possibly need?”

“He needs to have his teeth cleaned.”

His owners just rolled their eyes at each other and then looked over at their pet.

“Hey, don’t blame me,” the Sheltie thought, barking loudly to indicate he would prefer to go home now.

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