

Walnuts the Dog

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

"I'm ready for the responsibility." Adam had said last week. Today, that meant they were choosing a new dog.

As they drove up to the place, Adam was filled with excitement. He'd wanted a dog for years, but his parents had always said, "You'll love it for a few months, and then we'll have to take care of your dog." Finally, at age ten, he was getting his dog.

They entered the animal shelter and were greeted by a friendly blonde woman who explained the rules: they could go in the back, they could take a look at dogs, and then they could request to meet one in a small room where they could introduce themselves to the dog. She, like his parents, also explained how important it was to choose a dog for life, not just for a short time.

Adam hardly heard what she said. He was all geared up to choose his new puppy. Once she was done speaking, she smiled tiredly and led them to the back. Dogs were yipping and barking in their cages. A lot of them sounded lonely. Some didn't even get up to greet them when they walked by.

Adam's father walked beside him, sending a critical eye at the papers hanging on the cages that explained the breeds, the medical issues with the dogs, and the ages of the dogs. He shook his head when he saw a few of them.

"It's heartbreaking. Someone got these dogs, loved them, and then moved on without them. People get divorced, lose their houses, move away, or just get too busy for them. The dogs suffer for people's mistakes." His father sighed.

"We won't make that mistake." Adam promised.

"No, we won't. Once we choose one, it's part of our family. Family doesn't throw away family. We didn't toss grandpa out when he was sick. We took care of him until the end."

Adam nodded. He remembered helping grandpa a lot, just little things mostly, but he had been part of their family. Thinking about grandpa, he saw a small dog with sad brown eyes and big whiskers that reminded him of his grandfather.

"How about that one?" Adam suggested, reading the name tag. It said, "Walnuts."

His father read the papers hanging on the clipboard next to the nametag. "He's three years old, healthy, and housetrained. Your mother will be pleased about that last part. It says that he likes to chew stuff, so we'll have to train him what's off limits."

"He looks like grandpa."

Adam's father laughed. "I can see that. Your grandpa would have probably been yelling if he heard us say that, but I can see that."

They met with the dog in the private room, and it was love at first sight and at first play. Adam took Walnuts home that afternoon. Mom loved him right away, too. Adam was responsible for Walnuts for the rest of the dog's life. He took care of his dog and even took him off to college with him.



Walnuts the Dog

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What is Adam going to get today?
 - A. A cat
 - B. A dog
 - C. A hamster
 - D. A horse

2. Where are they going to get their dog?
 - A. At a pet store
 - B. From a private seller
 - C. An animal shelter
 - D. From a friend

3. How does father feel when he sees all the abandoned dogs?
 - A. He feels angry about the owners leaving the dogs behind.
 - B. He feels sad that they can only have one.
 - C. He feels happy that they are rescuing a dog.
 - D. None of the above

4. Who does Walnuts the Dog remind Adam of?
 - A. His friend
 - B. His mom
 - C. His grandma
 - D. His grandpa

5. What does Adam learn he'll need when he gets a dog?
 - A. Responsibility
 - B. Honesty
 - C. Hard-Work
 - D. None of the above

Walnuts the Dog – Answer Key

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What is Adam going to get today?
 - A. A cat
 - B. A dog**
 - C. A hamster
 - D. A horse
2. Where are they going to get their dog?
 - A. At a pet store
 - B. From a private seller
 - C. An animal shelter**
 - D. From a friend
3. How does father feel when he sees all the abandoned dogs?
 - A. He feels angry about the owners leaving the dogs behind.**
 - B. He feels sad that they can only have one.
 - C. He feels happy that they are rescuing a dog.
 - D. None of the above
4. Who does Walnuts the Dog remind Adam of?
 - A. His friend
 - B. His mom
 - C. His grandma
 - D. His grandpa**
5. What does Adam learn he'll need when he gets a dog?
 - A. Responsibility**
 - B. Honesty
 - C. Hard-Work
 - D. None of the above