

Alice's Rescue

by Caroline Besner



November 10, 2020. The phone rings; it's Huguette Rainforth. Mmmmm... an IW for adoption, would it be possible? Ms. Rainforth doesn't know much. She was only alerted the day before that an Irish Wolfhound was up for adoption at a shelter in Boucherville, QC.

My husband and I discuss it: we are expecting an Irish Wolfhound puppy in mid-February. A second dog, is it a good idea? Is it necessary? When there is for one, there is for two! Alice is already five years old; her passage among us will depend on her longevity. I immediately contact the shelter; they call back. I have an appointment for the next day.

At the shelter, after a few additional questions, someone brings me to Alice. As soon as we enter her room, she comes to greet us after painfully and very slowly getting up. I am stunned. Overweight??? OMG, she's HUGE !!! She is 30" at the shoulder and weighs 197 pounds, excluding the 5 pounds she lost

in her last week at the shelter. The first image that comes to mind is that of a bear: she is round like a bear, a big barrel on 4 legs. Her coat was shaven, which gives her a funny look. Her head is also round and her haircut gives the impression that she has just come out of a 60's hairdresser: special sheep thanks to the curlers under the dryer!

Frankly, she's looks nothing like a hound. She is so big and heavy, entangled by her extra weight that it is painful to see. As she sits down, her skin is so tight I feel that it will split in the groin area. Her thighs spread to make room for the lower part of her stomach. It's incredible, an absolute disaster.



Alice has her share of minor health problems: urinary tract infection, lipomas, ear infections, dermatitis, you-name-it. She has more medication to take than my elderly mother! You need a memory aid to remember when to administer her daily doses! Never mind, nothing turns me off: what I want is for this poor sweet, and friendly bitch to have her chance for better health and a better life. Alice is so fat she can't get into the car from the side. After I back the rear of the car over higher ground two shelter workers help me hoist her into the back and

Alice and I take the road home together.

At home, seeing Alice's size, my husband is astounded. He seriously doubts we made a good choice. In the afternoon, we surprise the children at the park after school. They are overjoyed! They are also amazed and very proud of the size of the dog!

Today Alice is doing very well she has lost 35 pounds and has an excellent appetite that we, of course, supervise! We are working on the remaining 15 pounds to make Alice the beautiful Irish princess that she is. She loves spending as much time as possible outdoors. We take walks every day, following her rhythm. She LOVES people and other animals, and every meeting is a great joy for her. It's nice to see that humans make her so happy. I wish I could take her to visit seniors or children in schools: she would make a great therapy dog and make many people happy. I plan to organize this once the COVID situation calms down a bit.

With a friendly greeting from Alice on February 20, Saoirse, our Irish Wolfhound puppy, joined our family. They get along very well. Saoirse is 18 weeks old: she is sparkly and sympathetic and tries to get Alice to play, who instead thinks that all her acrobatics are too much. Saoirse sees her as indispensable, and when she does not invite Alice to play, she curls up next to her and finds comfort in her gentleness and patience.



We thank Huguette Rainforth and Guylaine Gagnon for their support, their time, and their commitment. Thank you especially for allowing us to contribute to the well-being of Alice and for giving her the possibility of the last few worthy years in an environment more suited to her needs.

