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ACCEPTED 2/24/12
SIGNED CONTRACT RECEIVED 3/9/12

#88 Arizona, November 2012, Dog Visit

Dear Arizona,

My parents won't let us get a dog because we already have a rabbit. But I think a well-trained dog could get along fine with a rabbit – don't you?

Adding Animals in Atlanta.

Dear Adding Animals,

My favorite book to look at lately has the world's cutest pictures of different kinds of animals playing and cuddling together. That book, combined with the fact that I'd just gotten a camera for my birthday, and couldn't wait to try taking my own animal portraits, made me extra excited when my mom told us the big news:

"Guess what! My friend Elizabeth has to go out of town on an emergency, so I said her Labradoodle Gloria could stay with us for a few days."

"Cool!" Said Tex.

"What's a Labradoodle?" Asked Indi.

"She's half Labradore, half poodle," my mom answered. "Now let's hurry up and dog-proof this house so it's all ready for Gloria. Elizabeth will be dropping her off in a couple of hours."

We picked up all the thises and that's on the floor that could possibly get gobbled up or choked on, and we cleared away anything that Gloria could knock over and break, like lamps and things.

Then, once everything was all good and dog-proofed, Tex and Indi and I decided to make a welcome sign for our house guest. But here's the weird part - the minute we started working on the sign, our silly cat named Cow started acting even sillier than usual.

"You're not allowed to lie down in the middle of Gloria's welcome sign!" Tex said, giving Cow a scoot.

But just as soon as Cow got scooted off, he jumped right back up.

"Maybe he's trying to help," suggested Indi.

When Cow gently put his paw on a marker, we all stopped and stared in amazement. You probably won't be all that surprised to find out that he didn't actually

pick up that marker and help with our sign. Instead he gave it a little push and happily watched it roll across the table and plop onto the floor.

“Hmm,” I said. “Knocking our markers onto the floor doesn’t exactly seem like helping.”

“Yeah,” said Tex. “It kind of seems more like *un*-helping. Maybe he’s feeling jealous that another animal’s coming to stay with us.”

“Or maybe he’s feeling scared,” said Indi.

“How can he be feeling any of those things?” I said. “The only way Cow could possibly even know about Gloria is if he could read our minds.”

“Well,” said Indi. “Cat’s are pretty smart.”

And right about then is when Cow jumped back up, knocked over the sparkle jar, and rolled around and around until his fur was so full of sparkles he looked like a big, fuzzy disco ball.

It took at least five times longer to get Cow de-sparkled then it did to make our whole entire welcome sign – which we finished about two seconds before the doorbell rang.

“Welcome Gloria!” Said my Dad.

“Please come in and make yourself at home,” smiled my mom.

“Oh!” She’s the cutest!” Said Indi.

“I wish she could stay forever!” Said Tex.

We were all giving Gloria tons of head pats and ear scratches and belly rubs and she didn’t seem to mind one bit.

But someone else minded a lot! I don’t know if Cow was scared or jealous or both. What I do know is he was not nearly as happy about this particular houseguest as the rest of us. His claws were stretched out, his back was arched, his still slightly sparkly fur was standing up like it was all full of static electricity like how your hair gets if you’ve ever tried rubbing it with a balloon, and he was hissing in an extremely *unwelcoming* way!

“Oh, you poor little scaredy-cat,” my mom said, gently scooping him up and handing him to me. “Here Zona, how about you go and make an extra cozy, quiet spot for Cow in your room.”

And that's exactly what I did. By the way, it wasn't just any old cozy, quiet spot. It was a cozy, quiet spot fit for a king. The most magnificent, royal throne in all of San Francisco – possibly in all of California – possibly in all of the United States – possibly the entire world! Okay, I might be getting just a little carried away, but you get the point. For a homemade cat bed constructed from pillows, blankets and random trinkets in my room – it really wasn't too bad.

Most importantly, Cow liked it. Before long he was a snuggly, purring fluff ball who wasn't giving a second thought to the big, scary Labradoodle in the living room.

As far as my dream about taking all those happy pictures of Cow and Gloria being adorable together went – I pretty much had to let that go. Cow chose to stay in my room for Gloria's entire visit. On the flipside, I did get lots of good pictures of Cow on his royal throne, and of Gloria doing all kinds of cute and funny Labradoodle things.

So Dear Adding Animals, if I were you I think I'd think twice about getting a dog as a playmate for your rabbit. If your parents agree to consider it, you should ask if your family can visit the Humane Society in your town. Those guys know a lot about which kinds of animals are most likely to get along and bunches of other helpful pet stuff like that.

Ciao for Now,
Arizona

