



Barley

Driving through the misty gray of a Sunday morning in early December, I knew that this day would be different. The drab skies did nothing to dampen my spirit and I was confident (if not confident, then exceedingly optimistic!) that the meeting with Barley, Kipper and me would be a success. Armed with towels, blankets, treats, a half-dozen doughnuts and enough girl talk to fill the hours, my friend, Kris, (a dog rescue expert) and I set out to meet and hopefully bring home my family's new girl.

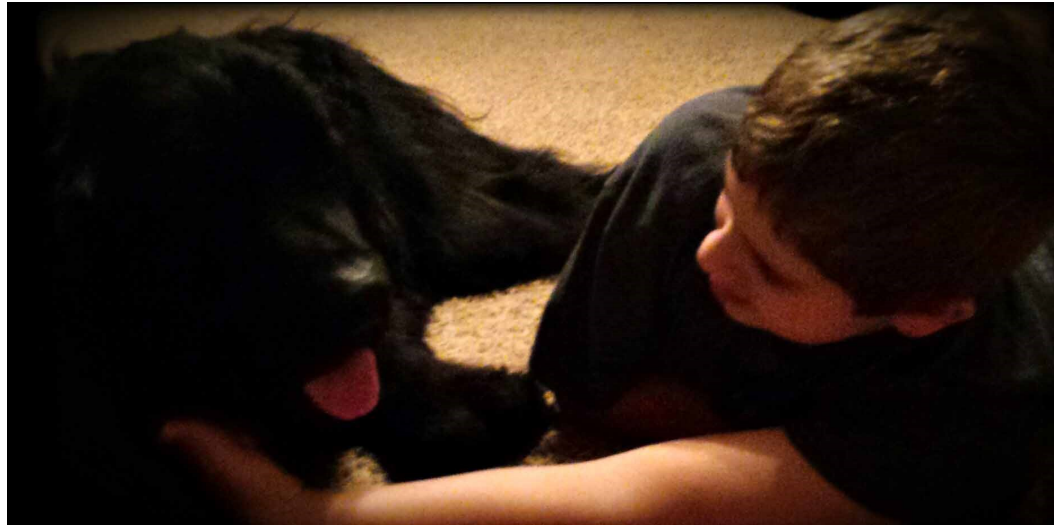
Crossing out of Kansas into Nebraska, we journeyed to Beatrice to meet Barley, a three-year old Newfie girl in need of a forever home. My heart longed for a companion to Kipper and Spot, a hairy guardian for Molly and Landen, a fishing partner for my husband Rodney, and a walking partner for myself. Having just moved back to the area from which we had grown up that would afford the room and lakeside trails for a larger-than-life friend, I cashed in on a fifteen year old promise that my husband had made in our dating years to add a large dog to our home. Hopeful that Barley would be coming home to Kansas in the back of my SUV, I was as excited as bringing home one of our children from the hospital.

Meeting Barley was, at first, a tad...overwhelming...she was a jumper and I had my tiny Kipper in my arms. My feisty mutt (also a rescue) was not sure what we were doing and seemingly skeptical of my motive to introduce her to this very big dog. After all...Kipper WAS

the big dog (only 12 pounds big!) and who was this giant, hairy creature licking my people? More on that later...

Bringing Barley home was nothing short of awesome. As a parent, it has been one of my more treasured memories of something I've done for our children. Keeping Barley a surprise (to ward off any emotions of disappointment that would have potentially come with a last-minute owner/dog mismatch), I was able to arrive home with more than a rug from Nebraska Furniture Mart...which was my alibi to the kids to explain my day's absence. Well, I did sort of bring home a rug...from Nebraska!!

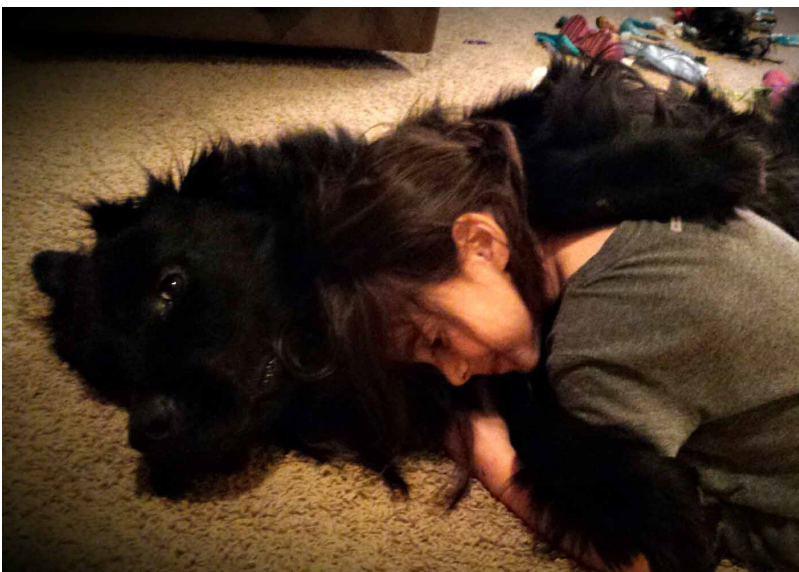
Pulling into the drive, I opened the hatch to release Barley into the yard to which she was met with jubilant shrieks from the kids. That day, December 7th, was our son's twelfth birthday. He proclaimed it to be the 'best birthday ever,' and Molly said, 'You DID bring home a rug!' We discussed



the responsibility of having a larger, hairier friend, but knowing our kids, it would not prove difficult to gain their cooperation. With all hands on deck, we were ready.

Newfie owner tip #1: Buy a Dyson, or similarly powerful, vacuum.*

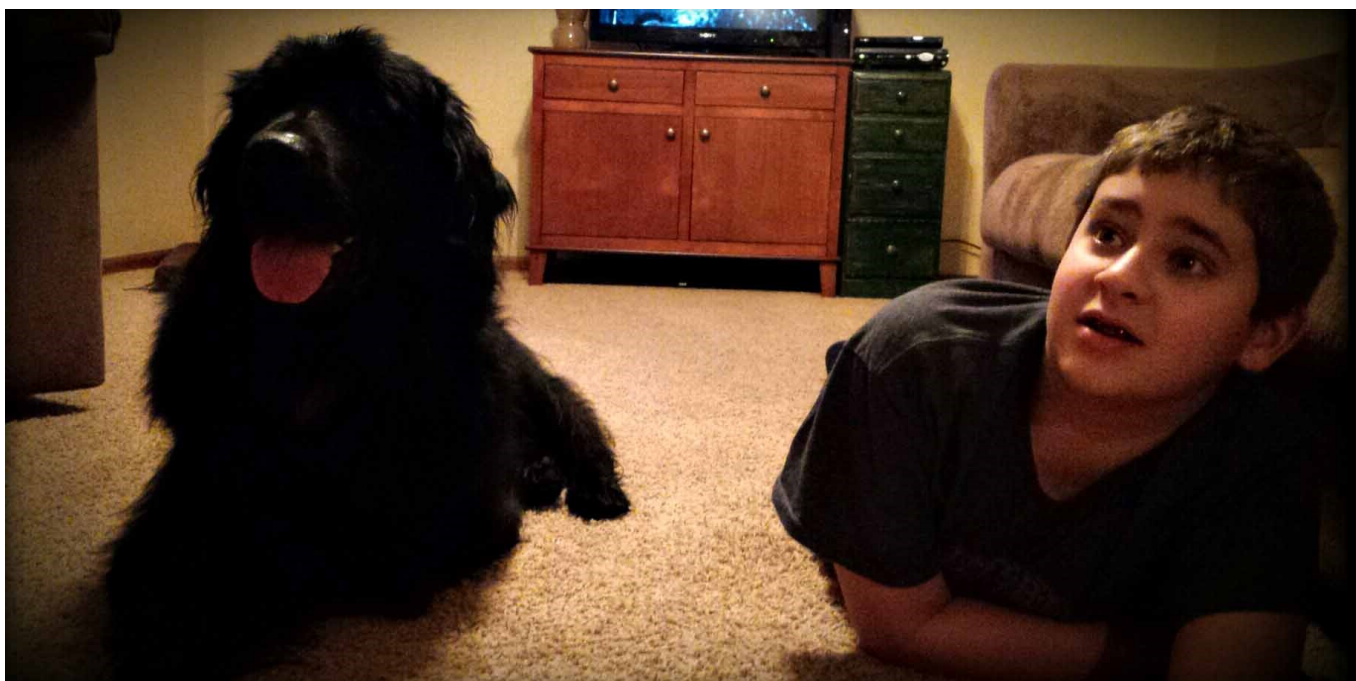
Fast-forward a month later...there are so many stories to tell and endless advantages to having brought Barley home. She's as big as a person, has as much humor as any clown, and incredible devotion as deep as a river is wide. We have lovingly extended her given name. Our family is a tad quirky...and we give our dogs full names. Barley is: Barlinda Jacobs



Doty. We call her Barley. Barley Girl is so much more than a pet. Truly, she is a friend and a welcomed piece of our family's puzzle. It is difficult to say to whom Barley's affinity is most loyal...but I'd say she divides her love evenly. She takes turns sleeping at the foot of our beds, but definitely has taken to the kids. Each morning she wakes with me for coffee, but settles back in until she nudges Molly and Landen awake. A good sport, she wore antlers as the reindeer from the movie Frozen for Molly's birthday party. There's been very little we've done without her at

our side or passenger seat. Barley's heart is larger than her body...and larger than the piles and piles of hair we gather each and every day.

Speaking of hair...we have joked about how our daughter has found hair in her lunchbox at school. How does that happen? There is no way to describe the mysterious hair that floats...but nevertheless we do so with a bit of humor. At our daughter's birthday this weekend, I issued the disclaimer: if you find black hair in the frosting, pick it out. It was as simple as that! Newfie owner tip #2: if you don't like hair, consider another breed. Owning a Newfie like Barley has been adventurous. She has had one professional grooming to help us get a fresh

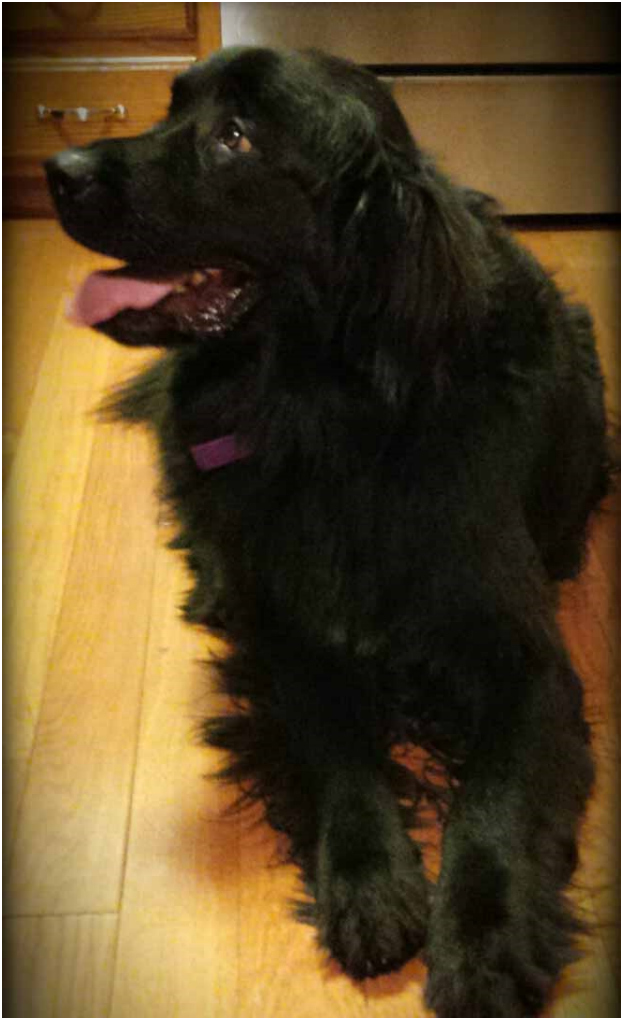


start with brushing.

Newfie owner tip #3: Invest in quality brushes. And be prepared to brush. A lot. We are learning how to read Barley's body language with brushing and how to make it more comfortable for her. After walking has been the best time to brush her, as she seems more relaxed and ready to rest. Gather your brushes, a grocery sack to collect hair, and pop in a good movie; you'll be there for a while. J

Now, going back to walking...Barley loves it! At first, tackling this chore was reminiscent of Miss Ouisa from Steel Magnolias trying to walk her dog Rex. I'm sure the neighbors thought 'who is this five-foot woman trying to wrangle...what kind of dog IS that? Is it a horse?'

Newfie owner tip #4: be prepared for cars to slow down, roll down the window to shout inquiries about your giant breed...and invest in a decent harness to work with your friend and a clicker! It will end the question of who is walking whom...and begin a daily habit that turns out to be beneficial to you both. Seriously...a good walk with her is cheaper than therapy and more rewarding at the end of a busy day! Ha! Barley's empathetic eyes and nudging nose is incredibly soothing and it is definitely something to look forward to. Also, once the walk is under control, you can strut with pride as cars slow down, roll down the window and shout inquiries about your giant breed! Finally, because understandably almost any rescue dog may have a few areas to work on, it must be shared that Miss Barley is working on her manners.



Newfie *rescue* owner tip #5: Be prepared to invest in some basic obedience coursework to train or retrain!! We weren't entirely sure how she would take to Kipper, or conversely, how Kipper would take to her. Sizably different in all ways, it has been a slow and steady process. We had a fabulous in-home guy (shout out to Rick Riggs of Happy Training, LLC) come to work with Barley's needs, how to incorporate the family into the process, but most importantly, how to make both dogs feel comfortable in their home. It will continue to be an intensive, deliberate effort, but it is coming along and shows great promise. He even said Barley would be a great therapy dog and to please consider having her assessed after she completes her obedience classes! (Shout out to obedience classes that start Tuesday with Camo Cross Training!) And because my yammering on could continue on beyond the scope of a day...a picture truly says a thousand words...you can see from the photos that we are probably benefiting more from her than she is us. We are happy she chose us to be 'her people.'

Many thanks to the hands that facilitated the process that brought Barley to us, the safe journey in our travels to bring her home, and the patience of those who are helping integrate her into our lives. There is undoubtedly an immeasurable amount of love from Barley that I lack the words to explain, but we feel wholly blessed to receive, and hope to provide her and our other dogs a lifetime in a loving home.

