



## Meli 346913: What to Expect

**Meli is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home.** Meli is a sweet, quiet, and calm little girl looking for a calm and low traffic forever home. Previously Meli had lived her entire life on a property with over a dozen of her canine relatives. When rehoming was needed for an unfortunate family event, Meli and canine family found their way into our shelter. Meli was very loved in her previous home, but her move to the shelter was very overwhelming and completely different from everything she had known before. In Meli's frightened state, she shied away from unknown people, did not walk on leash, and only found comfort in other dogs from her previous home. Moving Meli to a quieter and calmer area of the shelter – the Behavior and Rescue Center – Meli was able to become more familiar and trusting with staff. We saw her confidence boost and her personality start to shine!

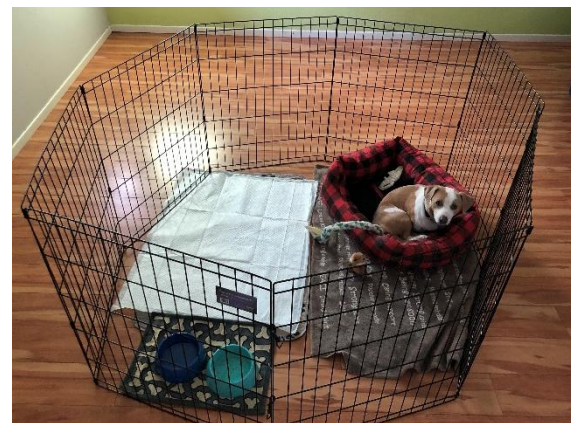
Meli is a reserved little girl who would love to follow you around on quiet leisurely walks, sit next to you on the couch, and curl up into your lap during those quiet hours at home. When overwhelmed Meli defaults to attempting to flee whatever is frightening by darting for bushes, under furniture, or out of open doors. We expect that Meli will be overwhelmed by everything they encounter at first. During the critical first months in a new home, their safety will depend on your good judgment and forethought. **A frightened dog will look for any occasion to bolt when startled: out of vehicles, out the front door, or slipping out of the leash. Keep a very tight grip of that leash!**

It's important her new family allow Meli to approach on her terms when she's comfortable. Low pressure hang outs, allowing Meli to decide if she wants to interact will build a long lasting trusting bond. Once comfortable Meli will crawl into your lap for gentle pets and leisurely hangs. Attempts to grab, pick up, or pet Meli before she's ready frighten her and can cause her to flee, hide, or snap to create space.

### Here's how to help Meli settle in during your first months together:

**Use an exercise pen** to confine Meli to a small area when you are not home or able to supervise them (see picture). Give them a bed, water, and a potty pad. This "safe spot" will also be a great place to put them when you have visitors to your home, so they don't have to worry about interacting with everyone if they're not comfortable.

**Be your dog's advocate.** It's okay to ask someone to stop or prevent a person from letting their dog come up to say hi to your dog. Watch their body language and help your dog out of situations if they appear stressed. Explain that Meli is not comfortable with people and doesn't enjoy meeting strangers while on their walk. Tossing a treat on the ground is more effective for your dog to make positive associations with new people. Distance is calming.



*Meli's "safe spot" when no one is home.*

**Let them drag a leash attached to their collar** for the first week or two inside and outside the home. Fast movements are startling, and it will take time for them to be okay with you approaching and removing the leash. If you go slow at the beginning, you'll build a trusting relationship. Treats always help!

**Allow for time to build trust.** Always let Meli decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Meli decide that they enjoy spending time with you by coming closer for pets, jumping next to you on the couch, and following your resident dog around.

**Supervise your dog outside.** Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Meli out alone. They are small and could easily hide under your deck or a bush - or slip through a gap in your fence! They do like to go for short walks and go outside to potty but need some time to build confidence to go on longer excursions in even the quietest of neighborhoods.

**Use treats and toys to build trust.** Maintaining and continuing Meli's training will create a bond and a form of communication between two species who don't understand each other. The more positive experiences Meli has with their owners, the more valuable you will become in high distracting situations.

**Don't take Meli to busy places** where they will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people/dogs (such as Saturday Market, off-leash dog parks, coffee shops, walks down Hawthorne St., Home Depot, etc.).

**Visiting the Vet:** Unless it's an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Start with positive visits just for treats. Vet visits will more than likely be scary, but if your dog already trusts you, your presence may help them feel more comfortable.

Try using **Adaptil (Dog Appeasing Pheromone)** or **Rescue Remedy by Bach Flower Essences**. These products may help dogs settle in new environments by easing the stress associated with change.

### **We're here to help!**

We want Meli to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Meli, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact us at **(503) 285-1145** or [BMODTrainers@oregonhumane.org](mailto:BMODTrainers@oregonhumane.org).

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you now and in the future. Reach out if you have questions or concerns, or just to give an update. We love to see photos and hear how our friends are doing! Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new dog!

