

To Hell and Back

by Allison Kozak, Kelsey Kendrick & Karen Oliver

When Yogi O was evaluated at the Oakland shelter in the Fall of 2018, he was a happy, playful and loving boy. This 2-year-old was also handsome and all-black. He looked like a dog that would easily find his forever home. Things didn't work out that way.

After a short time in our program, Yogi started having skin problems. They got worse and soon he had bright red, oozing sores on his whole underbelly and even sometimes inside his ears and on the sides of his mouth. The sores would crust over, fall off (and take chunks of hair with it) and then the cycle would start over again. His fosters, Kelsey & Vidhur, would spend evenings combing and cutting out the hardened gunk, but they got used to finding furry chunks all over their home. Kelsey recalls, "Yogi was a champ considering what he was dealing with."

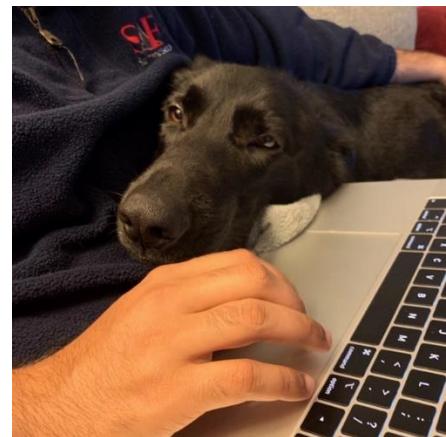


It was tough just getting a diagnosis. He went to vet after vet but they were never able to figure out his problem. They even thought he might have orthopedic issues because he would cry out when he assumed the poop position. Eventually a veterinary dermatologist developed a treatment plan - antibiotics, vitamins, anti-inflammatories and medicated baths *every other day*. Yogi also had medicated ear drops for when the infection would pop up in his ears.

Kelsey & Vidhur kept this up for months and Yogi slowly got better. The vets finally determined that Yogi has an underlying auto-immune condition that will never go away. He will always need oral medication, though the doses may get smaller over time.

Once his skin was mostly healed this past summer, Yogi went to stay with Karen O to learn manners around other dogs. He went to doggie daycare with her Monday - Friday and spent a lot of the day in a crate watching the other dogs. With time Yogi got used to doggie chaos and relaxed a little. He was able to be out with Karen's dogs and took a verbal correction not to chomp on them. He loved toys and balls and things to chew on.

Yogi could still be a bit reactive at Adoption Days. At a Blossom Hill AD in October, a couple with a young daughter noticed him, after he got growly at another dog. They were



curiously unperturbed by his behavior and chatted with Karen for a little while, calmly meeting Yogi through the fence. A week or two went by and Karen got an e-mail from Steve B. that a family was interested in Yogi. It was Steve & Kristina K, the same folks who met Yogi at the AD!

Steve B explained that Steve & Kristina were experienced and thoughtful dog owners, who understood how much time and patience a rescue dog can take. They trained their last dog obedience, agility and eventually did protection training. After a move from Minnesota, Kristina was taking time off from work and planned to be between jobs for several months, giving them an opportunity to get a new dog settled and adjusted to house rules.



Yogi knows tricks!



Yogi loves spinach!

Karen had a good feeling about this family, so she and Yogi met Steve B at their house and spent time letting Yogi meet the resident cats and check out the house. They were patient and kind to him at every turn. Karen explains, "Everything they did and said made me feel that they were the home for Yogi. We signed papers and I left without him."