

## The Sandfly and Me

I used to have a home but my humans moved away and left me behind, all alone.

I was very frightened and confused, why would anyone do that to me?

When I realised no one was going to feed me I went to the streets to look for food.

People weren't very nice to me, they shouted at me and shooed me away. Some people even threw stones. It was so frightening; I was scared and all alone. I was starving hungry and I was getting very thin and weak. I used to have a good body and a very glossy coat, and if I say so myself, I was quite a looker! As I grew weaker and thinner I found myself dreaming of what I once had and a little Sandfly landed on me and bit me. I was ok though; it didn't hurt, well not then anyway!

Day after day I searched for scraps of food and lived on what ever I could find. My lovely coat was getting bad and I had always been so proud of my appearance.

I had nowhere to go and no one to turn to. I stopped wagging my tail. Was this my destiny? I was abandoned and unwanted. I had never felt so alone.

Then one day a lady saw me, she spoke to me. I felt quite frightened as I was expecting her to shout at me just like all the others. But she was different, she didn't shout! She gave me water and a little bit of food. I ate the food but kept an eye on her, just in case! I was confused; I didn't understand why she was being so nice. No one else had. She spoke quietly and gently to me and tried to get me to her car. I was scared but this was all very different. Something told me it was safe so eventually I went with her. I was so weak I struggled to get in her car but she helped me.

She took me to a vet but I got very anxious and frightened all over again, my tail firmly tucked between my legs. The lady talked to me and stroked me and I got this feeling that all was ok.

The vet checked me over and said I was malnourished. He took some of my blood to test it, to be honest I was too weak to argue. The vet gave me special shampoo for my coat and something to get rid of fleas. I was horrified, I had fleas!! He said he thought I would be ok with regular food, water and rest and that I would regain my strength in a few weeks.

The lady who found me couldn't take me home with her because she had other animals so she took me to some kennels where I would be safe.

I was frightened at first but the people there were friendly towards me so I was ok. I heard someone say I would have to stay in the kennels until I got stronger again and then I would be adopted (that means when I get my very own human family who would take me home with them). Well, I remember thinking "when my coat is all shiny again these adopter people wouldn't be able to resist me". My future was set, when I was fit and healthy again I would be adopted.

While I've been in the kennels other dogs have been adopted and each time I think, "My turn soon". Then, one day, that Sandfly came back to haunt me. The vet phoned the

kennels and said they had my blood test results. Apparently I have something called Leish (proper name Leishmaniasis, but I can't say that). I heard them say the Sandfly had given it to me when it bit me. Anyway, I wasn't worried because I felt better than I had in a long time and I was going to being adopted soon wasn't I?

The vet said they can't actually cure Leish but they can easily control it. I would have to take a special pill every day and apparently it is very cheap to buy, so that's good. I was so happy, how my life had changed. I now had shelter, food, water, playtimes and my own very special pills. The only thing I don't have is my very own home, but I will soon, won't I?

Time has gone by and other dogs from the kennels have been adopted, but not me. I just don't get it. I'm a good dog, I am now healthy again. I have a lovely shiny coat just like it used to be. I am very loving, and I always take my special pill.

Apparently no one wants to adopt me ..... Why? Because I have Leish!  
Because of the little Sandfly that bit me when I was homeless.

I get very sad every time I see one of the other dogs get adopted and I get left behind. Its just not fair, I am fit and healthy; I'm not on death row. I don't want to spend the rest of my days in kennels.

All I need is exactly the same as any other dog with the addition of one very cheap pill.

Won't somebody buy that cheap pill, just for me? I think I'm worth it.

*There are many dogs that have contracted Leishmaniasis, living in kennels or foster homes throughout Spain. They are overlooked by potential adopters because of the Leishmaniasis. Most of these dogs have already gone through very bad times from being abandoned just like the one in this story. There really is no reason why these dogs shouldn't lead a normal, healthy life. All they need is an annual blood test and a very cheap pill to control the disease. Please don't discard them because of something they had no control over. They will repay you with unconditional love and endless joy.*

*If you would like more information about Leishmaniasis please visit our website: [www.axarquiaanimalrescue.com](http://www.axarquiaanimalrescue.com) where you will also find a wealth of other information and helpful advice on animal care. While you're there, why not check out the animals currently in our care. Take a look at their pictures and read their stories. These animals really do need you!!*