



THE SHOGUN CHRONICLES

The life and
times of the
newest member
of the Marks
family

IT'S A WHITE CHRISTMAS!

Snow has blanketed Virginia's scenic Shenandoah Valley, and here in Winchester we have settled in for what will definitely be a White Christmas.

While the sight of a couple feet of powder snow around the house brings sighs of contentment -- or groans of dread for those who must shovel the stuff -- for Shogun it is pure magic. His Saturday was marked in two repeating phases: one spent romping and leaping in often shoulder-deep snow until he was ready to collapse, followed by stretches of deep slumber in front of the fireplace. Lather, rinse, repeat. He could not be having any more fun!

Adding to the mix is the flock of kids outside who greet him with excited cries of "Shooooogun!" He has become something of a celebrity in the neighborhood, much I think for his great demeanor with kids and to some for the awe of a 5 month old puppy who is so big and so demonstrably smart. He is awesome with the kids, excited and bouncy but very gentle. He chases them like animated squeaky toys.

It has been terrific to see how well Shogun takes to new people. He almost never barks, nor does he do the "bouncing psycho dog" when strangers come to the door. He is attentive, and lets us know people are coming well in advance, but aside from an alert body posture and the occasional chuff, he is a real gentleman.



Let it snow, let it snow let it snow...!

Here Shogun sits amid the still-falling snow, still early on in the snowfall that ultimately left drifts that piled up near the underside of the mailbox.



ANOTHER GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE.

In the vein of Dicken’s Ghost of Christmas to Come, the heavy snow has brought with it another peek into the dog that Shogun is becoming. While much of his playtime is spent “puppy bouncing” the effort to plow through deep snow is considerable. That’s when we see Shogun throw a different gear and explode into this beautiful, long-stride lope as he bounds over and plows through the snow with an athlete’s focus. It can be funny when he unexpectedly hits a deep spot and disappears, only to pop up a moment later like a prairie dog with a fresh cap of snow and wild enthusiasm. Despite the effort, Shogun seems to embrace any chance to get back out in the cold.

THE COLD WAR LINGERS

Of the many things that seem to be falling into place with Shogun, his relations with the cat have yet to approach “peaceful co-existence.” It seems pretty clear that he views the cat as an object to be chased, whereas the cat seems very much to want to be friends if Shogun would just throttle back about 80%. The cat continues to sneak out of his reserved space when Shogun is sleeping, often to sit and stare at the dog from just feet away. But as Shogun’s size now dwarfs the cat, we have little hope that Feline Sovereignty can be exerted. We are looking into an oversized cat-tree to make sure that Ninja has a place of refuge far above his beefy younger brother.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

We spend a lot of time focused on what we will teach our dog, and yet I am so often reminded of the many things my dog has to teach me; daily lessons on the value of a good nap, or of playing with abandon no matter how silly you look. Some people call that the inner child, but I am thinking now it is more our inner puppy. So from Shogun and the rest of the Marks family to all of you, we want to wish a Christmas filled with joy and exuberance, with discovery and awe, and the quiet happiness of curling up warm and snug with the ones you love.

