

The House Pet

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It's hard for a forced shut-in to refuse to have a puppy in the house. It is not that he wants to have a pet, in fact, he does not want to have any, let alone a dog, which smells and has to be taken out several times a day to pee and poop. If he lived in the countryside or in a house with a garden, still, but in a flat in the city, no way. It's hard for a forced shut-in to refuse to have a dog in the house because his daughter asks him so insistently, in the morning, at noon, in the afternoon, at night, in the early morning.

"Oh, with a little animal in the house this confinement would be more fun," cries his daughter. The forced shut-in doesn't answer, but wonders if she's right and if a dog would be more fun. The forced shut-in does his calculations. With a pet, he will have to go out at least twice a day for the animal to relieve itself, and he will be able to stretch his legs in the meantime. Because it is clear that it will not be his daughter, who is a girl, nor his son, who will be busy building bridges and aqueducts, who will take the little animal out into the street; he will be the one to walk the puppy, willingly or not, first thing in the morning and last thing in the afternoon, maybe even at noon, and it will be he who will have to take care of pouring water with detergent over the pee-pee, picking up the poop with a glove and throwing it away.

The forced shut-in would like to get out, but with the purpose to wander around aimlessly, to run around the mountain freely, to water the papaya, fig and medlar trees, to swim to the reef and back, not to clear pee-pees or to collect the poop of an animal that has not asked for it. Perhaps inside the house, the doggie will be able to entertain the children while the forced shut-in works and carries out projects. But that's only one possibility, the best of possibilities, because it's likely that the dog will become attached to him (the one that will take him out for a walk and pee and poop) and start moaning inconsolably in front of his studio door demanding his attention. And, of course, he, who is kind, will not be able to bear the crying and will let it in and interrupt his work and end up playing with the dog and rolling on the floor like a child.

This image of playful abandonment is so touching to the forced shut-in that he is about to give in to his daughter's wishes, but then he remembers that, although clean, dogs smell, that they sometimes bite shoes, doors, mattresses and armchairs, leaving everything full of hair, hairs that can make their way into the bathrooms, the bedrooms, the kitchen, the living room, the terrace, the study, maybe even through the cracks in his computer to end up spoiling and ruining the memory, the feelings and the works that the forced shut-in holds inside his hard drive.

Thus the forced shut-in concludes that not even in his dreams will he bring home a puppy, and he is very sorry for his daughter, who wants it so badly. The forced shut-in makes this decision just as his daughter interrupts him: "Careful, Dad! What's that black dot moving across the floor?" The forced shut-in looks and sees a spider, one of the little ones that jumps around. In the corridor the spider's life is in danger and the forced shut-in springs to its aid: " Watch out, don't step on it, I like it a lot!" "Why?" asks his daughter. "I don't know," replies the forced shut-in, "I've always liked jumpy spiders. So, from now on, this will be the house pet."