Bailey

* Age ~3 ½
  + We got her from the Boulder SPCA on October 4, 2014
  + They said she was about 8 weeks old at that point
* Breed/mix: German Shepherd mix
  + Humane Society of Boulder Valley (Boulder, CO) said her mother was a German Shepherd
* Sex: Female
* Spayed/neutered? YES. Spayed before we got her.
* Dog's personality (likes and dislikes)
  + LIKES:
  + Bailey is a sweet and playful dog. She loves to play with squeaky toys (the hedgehog is her favorite)
  + She loves to go for walks, and will run with you if you jog
  + She seems to like riding in the car—she was a great travel companion on our road trip from CO to CA in 2016
  + She loves running after tennis balls at the dog park
    - She is a fast runner
    - She is still getting the hang of dropping the ball so I can throw it again
  + She seems to love having her cheeks scratched and the openings of her ears
  + She loves bacon and other treats
  + She will sometimes help herself to unattended meat on the counter
  + She has been known to steal chocolate from unattended places, too
  + She has been in the habit of jumping on people and trying to lick their faces
    - We are still working on that, and she seems to be getting better.
  + DISLIKES:
  + Bailey dislikes singing, or violin practice—she leaves the room
  + She dislikes being squeezed or pressed on
    - Although she tolerates hugs and kisses on the head

Brief Biography

We brought Bailey home from the Humane Society of Boulder Valley on October 1st, 2014. She had been spayed in the days before that. They estimated that she was 8 weeks old, and told us that she’d been rescued from a kill shelter in Texas, and that her mother was a German Shepherd, and the father was unknown. Apparently, someone had taken her home and returned her. Which is confusing, because she was spayed after we visited her.

We picked her because she and two sisters were available. We visited with each of them, and Bailey was the most friendly and active and eager to sniff and lick us all. I think they called her Dot, or Daisy. We had been on a search for a dog over 2 years old, but the dogs there of that age were not suited for kids. We considered taking the other sister that was available, but they told us that littermates that young would likely become more a pack unto themselves and be less receptive to training. I regret that now, as I think Bailey would benefit from a dog pal.

She was crate trained for the first year or so. She was house broken pretty easily. Although, in the Colorado winter, she had to be carried down the steep, snowy stairs outside and have a place swept where she could see the grass to do her thing. She likes playing in the snow only briefly, and once took off for home after begging to come sledding with us. She made a bee line for the front door. Now that we’re in CA, she seems to be a happier dog, and she’ll lay in the sun even on hot days.

She was always a bit wary of men. When she got a little older, she would growl at them when they came into the house, but would calm down when we told her it was OK. Because she jumped on people, we would usually put her in our room, or in her crate (which was in our room). From 1-2 years old, if we left her more than 4 hours alone in the house, she would often spread poop around the landing with a window that looked out on the cul-de-sac. We don’t know if the neighbor kids were taunting her (she was on the second story), or if she figured she’d been abandoned forever. That stopped completely when we moved to California in July 2016.

Bailey rode in the front passenger seat of the minivan, and was a good passenger. She sat with us at a few meals on outdoor patios along the way and seemed more scared than aggressive. She will growl at other dogs sometimes, but stops when I tell her it’s OK. She used to go to a dog park in CO, and plays well with other dogs. She’s not very submissive. She growls at dogs if they sniff too aggressively, and she does get territorial over the water at dog parks, if she’s drinking. At home, she can be handled, or her food and water can, and she doesn’t object.

She loves to run after a ball, and she’s fast. She’s fun to watch run. She brings it almost back, then trots off like she’s annoyed I’ll just throw it if I get it. But she’s happy when I do and runs again. We’re working on that. She doesn’t growl when I take the ball, but she’s not super cooperative.

On one or two occasions, she’s barked in a scary way at adult males. Once at the dog park, although that guy was taunting her. He thought it was funny that she was barking, and made some mock lunges. When my wife took her to the dog park, she was more protective—so much so, that Ana stopped.

She did a few weeks of training with Sit Means Sit in CO. They’re a franchise, and have offices in CA as well. This used a shock collar. We did not keep up with the at home training much, and so she retained her improvements, but didn’t really expand on them.

Her routine here is to sleep on the foot of the master bed. Eat a cup of dry food. It must be said that bacon and eggs make their way into her bowl most mornings, too. She lays around on the couch, looking out the window, or near one of us when we’re working at home, and plays with toys and chewies. Dinner is a can of wet food. She gets a lot of pets and attention during the day from all of us. She gets a walk at night (usually after 9). And then there’s bed. The dog parks here are further away, and she hasn’t gotten many trips to either.

And then, Wednesday, January 17th, my youngest daughter went into the master bedroom to talk to her. She had her face about 9” away from Bailey’s and was not touching her. Bailey was on the foot of the bed. Apparently, Bailey lifted her lip at Lila, and then lunged and bit her right cheek. She made 2 large punctures (3 stitches on the bottom and one on the top) and a smaller one along with some bruised scrapes.

When I went to put her outside before taking Lila to the ER, she was sitting there like nothing had happened. She does like to wrestle, and when she was a puppy, I used to wrestle with her (her pawing at my arm, and mouthing it sometimes, but mostly a game of each trying to get their forelimb over the other’s). She had never bitten anyone before. In the days since the bite, she has turned and put her teeth on my hand when I was reaching to pull her away from the daughter she bit (she had jumped up on the couch and was going to sit by her like she used to). And she has opened and closed her mouth near both my daughters.

We are heartbroken. I don’t understand what happened. She had a vet checkup on the 18th, and seems to be in perfect health.

She’s been a good dog, and a sweet companion. We hate to let her go, but it seems like she needs more active attention, and we are not up to doing that. She gets a lot of love and pets, but maybe she needs more play and running. Because of what happened, we are also uncomfortable keeping her and trying to retrain her. She’s a smart dog, and I’m hopeful someone with a more active dog schedule and a change of pace for her can enjoy her sweet demeanor and playfulness for the rest of her natural life.