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The  
Misanthropic  
SHIBA

**I'm a Shiba and I can do what I want!**



**So you think you want a Shiba Inu**

This is adapted from a response to a bulletin board posting asking about Shibas...

*I want a Shiba Inu!*

If you have absolutely no acquaintance with the breed, I would suggest the adoption of a 3-year-old. Keep it for a month. Then ask yourself if you want to deal with this sort of

behaviour and responsibility for 12 to 15 years.

*They are cute! They are cuddly! They are adorable!*

They are manipulative. They are cunning. They enjoy your suffering.

They will tear off into highways at rush hour. They will dance around on the yellow lines as you dodge Fords and Mack trucks. You will fling yourself across intersections in an effort to return their leash to your clutching hands. You'll do it over and over again. After all, she could get **KILLED** out there. *So could you.*

Because, of course you're crazy enough to want a Shiba in the first place. In fact you're completely freakin' NUTS.

*I'm crazy for wanting a Shiba? That's MEAN!*

Of course I'm mean. This is The Misanthropic Shiba. Like, duh.

Did you think it's a sign of *intelligence* to want a dog who considers obedience to be an amusement for the "lower classes"? A dog who thinks that you're one of the help? A dog who views you with little more than tolerant affection ("Aren't they sweet? I've had them since I was eight weeks old!")? *Scary.*

*I STILL want a Shiba!*

Masochist.

Get therapy. You'll need it for...

...the times your Shiba stands 5 feet away, daring you to leap for the leash that she pulled out of your hand. When you do, she jumps just out of reach. This can go on for hours - Shibas are easy to amuse.

...the times she decides to take off down the street, deaf and blind to anything but what her dear little heart desires (which is never coming when called).

... the times she screams and hollers when being given a gentle bath and then starts playing in a mud puddle as soon as you take her for a post-bath walk...

... just before a sanction match. Or a dog show.

It is virtually guaranteed by the hand of God that at some point in your Shiba's lifetime, you will be chasing her down a busy street, screaming her name, to the varying amusement of spectators.

Of course *she* will be having the time of her life and would not do anything so stupid as let you catch her. You're *funny*. After you being such a stick-in-the-mud about keeping her on

a lead and insisting that she *not* roll in that fascinating pile of rotting fish, she feels that she deserves a break.

(She may vary this amusement by ignoring your increasingly hysterical commands for three hours, and then marching merrily up to the first stranger who says "What a beautiful Pomeranian!")



And you can't even torture her. She's just so damn cute.

### *Are Shibas hard to train?*

A Shiba can learn all the basic obedience commands (Come! Sit! Stay! Down! Heel!) in a couple of casual lessons. They're smart. And they'll get smarter if you feed them bits of bacon when they do something right.

A problem with these little psychos is that while they learn commands, they also have figured out A) how a lead works, B) how it *doesn't* work when you're not attached to it, C) how long it is (to the last inch), D) how fast you can run, and E) how fast they have to run to keep the lead skittering three feet ahead of you.

With frequent, consistent training, you may be rewarded with a Shiba who just might, if the weather is right and there is nothing to chase or destroy in the surrounding area, come when called. *Don't count on it.*

Bribe your Shiba readily and often for obeying commands with food and praise and you have the best chance of tipping Her Majesty's whims in your favor. Maybe. After all the Queen does not readily obey the commands of her ladies-in-waiting.

You want to train your Shiba by screaming her name and jerking her head-over-paws? Be prepared to enjoy sudden deafness, the refusal to move AT ALL, ear-splitting screams that send the neighbours racing to call the SPCA, or lamblike obedience followed by a dash for freedom that jerks the lead out of one's hand and sends one on another three-hour chase. Unhappy Shibas may be timid, sullen, or aggressive and may repay you with many entertaining behaviour problems that you will pay dearly to fix. Don't bully your Shiba.

It's YOUR fault you didn't get a quiet, compliant Collie or Lab-type dog that simply lives to throw itself at your feet. Do not expect a Shiba to make you her life's focus. She is very much her own dog and will not hesitate to correct you if you step out of line.

Do not trust your Shiba off-lead unless you are certain that she will come when called *immediately*. Most Shibas won't. In this case, unless you wish to join the statistics of owners who say "Well she was always well behaved until...[insert tragedy here]" do not let your Shiba run free in an uncontained area.

### *How are Shibas with other pets?*

I don't know, can they catch it and eat it?

## *Dogs*

Shassi gets along extremely well with my other dogs, my friends' dogs, and a few other dogs she knows. All other dogs on the planet are Not Worthy. She may sniff them; they can't sniff her. If they have the temerity to try, she endeavours to liberate their noses from their muzzles. Male, female, spayed, neutered - it's all the same to her. One has not lived



until one has held a 20 pound Shiba Inu who is raging at the end of a lead because a now bemused Rottweiler or American Pit Bull Terrier has sniffed her tail.

Beware. Shassi's mother has a split ear from a kennel fight with another Shiba. They don't call 'em bitches for nothing. Apparently Shibas, especially the females, are bad for this. The males of this breed are surprisingly less likely to cause mayhem in the canine community. Many Shiba males are very good with other dogs. But be prepared to handle and, more importantly, prevent dog-to-dog aggression.

## *Cats*



If the pet in question can catch and eat them, your Shiba may decide to compromise. When I got Shassi, our cats towered over her. When she got big enough to tower over the cats, they had already informed her that she would be nicknamed Ol' One-Eye if she ever messed with them. She got the message and lives in harmony with the family cats to this day. Shibas can get along very well with cats if introduced at a young age and all predatory aggression is strictly discouraged.



### *Small pets*

Shibas have an extremely high prey drive. If it's small enough and runs away, your Shiba will kill it and eat it. If your hobby is raising canaries, garter snakes, and field mice, you may want to invest in another breed. Do not obtain a Shiba Inu if your passion is watching lemmings run free in your living room. Do not trust your Shiba with vulnerable livestock. You may see your chickens as an investment in egg money; your Shiba will see them as Outdoor Buffet.

### *How are Shibas with children?*

How are the children with the Shiba? How responsible is the parent of said children?

Any breed of dog can live harmoniously and safely with children if it is raised and trained to respect children and also is respected by them. *This is the owner's FULL responsibility.*

*Never* trust any dog alone and unsupervised with very young or strange children. If something BAD happens, it happens because YOU were stupid enough to leave a creature whose instincts and reactions are completely different from your species' alone with a completely clueless pre-adult human.

Dogs are NOT furry people, they do NOT share our cultural and moral values and they should NOT be expected to reason out our social mores.

A Shiba that is mauled and tormented by brats will grow to hate children. Those small jaws are very strong. A Shiba could conceivably kill a toddler if motivated to do so. This is not to say that they are likely to do so or are prone to leaping on and attacking small infants. This is a realistic view of a species different from us, which must be understood and handled properly in order to live safely in our society.

I never leave Shassi alone with strange or very young children. Yes, she is good with kids. No, it doesn't matter how good she is. I will not take the risk of something happening to satisfy a Disney-eye view of how dogs are 'supposed' to behave. Accidents happen, kids do funny things, or Shassi could suddenly decide to take a chunk out of the ice-cream cone Junior is munching on. I don't know what would happen and I certainly don't care to find out.

Smart owners socialize early. They bring big bags of treats to playgrounds and get children of all ages to feed the puppy (with associated lessons on no biting and no snatching food). They encourage children to pet the puppy and play supervised, non-aggressive games like fetch. They condition the dog to sit when a child approaches (in anticipation of a treat) and never to jump up. They strictly discourage all forms of aggression from mouthing to mounting with immediate correction.

Now, years after the initial child socialization, Shassi still thinks that children are hot dog dispensers. This means that she associates children with positive things and is less likely to behave aggressively or fearfully. Should a child somehow get past my guard and rush up to Shassi, her first impulse is not to bite, but to see what treat she is getting. She is aloof with adults but very friendly with young children and is not bothered by children running or screaming around her.

Never let your Shiba view kids in any other way.

*What about grooming? Do Shibas shed much?*



Shibas don't shed.

They explode.

No, your Shiba has not gained weight or been the victim of a freak body perm experiment. It is admittedly disconcerting to find your sleek little dog resembling a Brillo Pad. Your house is filled with downy little mats that strain your coffee and add substance to your food. People start smiling condescendingly at you and ask if you happen to have a dog. *No, the underfur thing is all the rage and it's terribly comfortable.*

The underfur that comes from one Shiba during one shedding season would do credit to a dog four times its size. They don't think like small dogs and they certainly don't shed like small dogs. Slicker brushes and pin brushes are invaluable tools in dealing with the choking clouds of fur and should be part of any Shiba owner's grooming tools. A grooming rake is also a very good tool to have.

It must be noted that Shiba undercoat comes out most efficiently when adhered to formal dress, any sort of food, or dog-hating visitors.

Don't leap off the fourth floor of your apartment just yet. It does end... really.

*Do they chew? Bark lots? Dig?*



Do they chew?  
More properly,  
what DON'T  
they chew?  
Shassi has  
destroyed  
library books,  
my mother's

Bingo markers (on top of the ruins of Mom's favorite pillow), my Tetris Gameboy cartridge (am I dating myself or what?), and many other previously valuable objects that now resemble recycled cat vomit. She's gotten better now that she's grown, but every so often finds it amusing to remind us of our complacency.

Do they bark lots? Only if you let them. If you are one of those owners the rest of us love to hate, you'll leave your Shiba out on the deck to bark her head off at dogs, people, birds, insects, leaves...

Shibas miss their country of origin and most if not all have dedicated some portion of their day, if possible, to digging back to Japan. Failing this, digging under the fence or in the garden will serve as an acceptable alternative. Supervise your Shiba in the yard or resign yourself to craters everywhere.

Fenced yards are not a substitute for walking and training your Shiba. If you don't want to do these regularly and frequently, please, please, please invest in a goldfish. Dogs need stimulation and believe you me, if your Shiba doesn't get enough stuff to do, she will find

her own entertainment. Providing different amusements and proper confinement for your Shiba is what you do if you wish to keep her from chewing your computer cords, tunnelling to the neighbour's chicken coop, or keeping the neighbourhood aware of every movement within one kilometre of your house.

Your neighbours will thank you and the death threats will eventually cease.

If you want to be really secure, bury the fencing four feet underground and cement it in. While you're at it, put a roof on the fence or at least an insert that extends inward or you'll look out the window one day to see your Shiba fly off seven feet of chain-link.

Too much work for such a little dog? I suppose dodging cars and crawling through other people's back yards are *hobbies* of yours?

*During Shassi's puppyhood, was there anything that stands out?*

"Where's Shassi?"



Bravewolf (and Shassi)

## FANMAIL!

I just found your "I want a shiba" article and have never laughed so hard. We have a 10 month old and until I read your story felt I must have committed some horrible crime in a previous life to deserve this dog. We love him but he is every bit shiba and then some. My husband reminds me it is in their nature and I need to be accepting, I should not refer to him as the "devil dog". It is hard not to.

He is a thief, a clown, a dog on springs when choosing to evade capture and for a quiet dog the loudest I have ever heard. Last month he began a screaming episode that brought out concerned neighbors and sent me to the ER at \$150 to discover that he had not broken his leg that was outstretched and stiff, he had been stung by a bee. Shibas tend to overreact. Understatement. Neighbors are still asking what happened to him that day.

Anyway, reading your article gave me a sense of what my life will continue to be like and the reassurance that I am not alone! I wish I had been given that advice prior to bringing this small man syndrome dog into my life, but then I think of all the exercise I would miss when the kids leave the door open...racing down the steps, out the door, down the street and around the block in pursuit of him! Where's Kitsu? The most common comment in our home!

Thanks for the great web page!

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**SHIBA INU LINKS**



**The Shiba Inu Home Page**

LOTS of info.



**Sunojo Kennels**

Shassi's breeder's website



**Shiba Inu Profile**

This guy knows what he's talking about!



**Colorado Shiba Rescue**

Available Shibas



I also have a couple of Shiba boards linked at:

**Breed BBS**



Try the general links at:

**Dognet**



PROPERTY OF TMS

**EMAIL**

**PISSING TREE**

**BULLETIN BOARD**



CURIOSITY

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