

Spotlight On ... Emma

by Kristen Doherty

Occasionally a rabbit will come to us who presents a challenge. Emma is one of those rabbits. Eccentric, fickle, moody, playful, charming, endearing, and smart – she's all of those things.

Emma has been in our foster home long enough for us to study and understand her puzzling personality. Well, we think we understand her. Just when we're sure she's turned a corner by letting us pet her for a long period, we'll get growled at or lunged at because we petted her a little too long. We have given Emma everything a rabbit could want – a pen the size of a small mansion, free run of an entire floor for most of the day, good hay, toys, a regular routine, and lots of positive attention.

We've tried a variety of techniques for dealing with a crabby rabbit – everything from pushing her head down when she bats us (so she knows we are the dominant rabbits), to moving slowly around her so she is not startled by our sudden movements. We've provided lots of reinforcement of good behavior, and usually respond to her antics by using a calm, sweet voice to tell her how much we love her, even though she just batted her bowl full of pellets out of our hand and onto the floor. Still, Emma maintains her same feisty attitude and mercurial moods.



Don't get me wrong, she can charm your socks off at times. Like when she runs around the first floor at full speed and finishes with a series of high binkies, a flop, and a roll. Or when she innocently hops up to me, bats me in the face, then flails herself against the nearest wall, flopping and rolling on her back in sheer delight as if to say "I got you this time."

So what are her good qualities? She knows what she can chew on and what she can't -- she chews only her own toys, and is very neat about it I might add. She leaves not a stray poop on the entire first



floor outside of her litterbox. She keeps herself entertained, while providing us with hours of theatrical performances. She keeps the household on a regular feeding schedule by throwing her bowl against her pen if we take a few minutes too long to cut up the apple or distribute the pellets. Got wilted greens? No problem. She seems to prefer them that way, letting them sit until just before the next meal to eat them. She's figured out that eating her greens, wilted or not, is the key to getting her apple and pellets.

I wouldn't rule out the possibility that Emma will find Mr. Right, that special somebun who accepts her with all of her foibles. There is still a hope that Emma may find true companionship one day with the right bun, or maybe just a human.

So what kind of person might want to adopt Emma? Someone who enjoys a good challenge. Someone who doesn't take things too personally when Emma decides to charge you for no reason, then storm off for a good nap. And probably someone without young children, who tend to be unappreciative of Emma's unpredictable mood swings. **If you are ready for a good challenge and think you can accept Emma as she is, unconditionally, then contact Kristen Doherty at kristen@ohare.org or call 440-543-4959.** ♡