

## Take a Closer Look at That Doggie in the Window

You see me in a pet store, on a fancy website, or in a newspaper ad—and you think I’m adorable. How can you resist? I mean, goodness gracious, look at me.

But don’t fall in love too quickly. Behind my cuteness there’s a not-so-pretty story.

I come from a puppy mill, a gigantic dog-breeding facility run by people who are out to make as much money as they can, without caring about how they treat their dogs.

Some dogs—like my mom—spend their whole lives there. They’re treated like they’re good for nothing but producing puppies. They never get out of their cages, so their paws don’t even know what it feels like to touch solid ground. They don’t get to visit the vet, sleep in a bed, enjoy a treat, or play with a toy. Worst of all, they don’t get to hang out with people. They’ll never become part of a family.

And the puppies they produce—like me—often have behavior or health problems. But the employees at the pet store won’t tell you that, and neither will the people who sell puppies over the Internet or through newspaper ads.

You know what else they won’t tell you? Where I came from. They’ll say I was raised on a farm, or by a legitimate breeder, or at a U.S. Department of Agriculture-licensed facility. They’ll promise you they’d never sell you a puppy mill dog.

Don’t fall for it! Responsible breeders don’t sell their dogs through pet stores—they want to meet you in person. As for a government stamp of approval, it’s not worth much: Many federally licensed facilities have long histories of violations and problems, but they’re still in business.

Don’t be swayed by Internet promises of “family-raised” puppies. Puppy mills can easily create cute websites to pose as family breeders.

And don’t think you’ll “rescue” me by buying me from a pet store or an online site. My cage in the store or my slot on the website will just be filled by another puppy mill dog. Your purchase supports the whole dirty business.

So what can you do?

Well, if you’re in a shelter, you’ve come to the right place. Adopting a shelter or rescue animal is the best way to help. Or you can find a responsible breeder who’ll let you visit their premises and see how their dogs are raised.

So as cute as I am, please don’t feed the puppy mill industry by buying me from a pet store, website, or newspaper ad.

My mom would sure appreciate it.

*For more information, go to [stoppupmills.org](http://stoppupmills.org).*

