

Only the Noble Could Own This Pet During the Middle Ages

And if anyone was responsible for one dying, they could be executed. That's how treasured they were, and still are. They've been referred to in the Bible and depicted with the goddess of wildlife in Roman mythology. One even lived in the White House in 1876.

Analysis by [Dr. Karen Shaw Becker](#)

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Greyhounds were an integral part of ancient Egyptian life, as depicted in art dating back to 3,000 B.C. This breed was even mentioned in the Bible
- Greyhounds are widely known for having sleek, racing-form bodies and an ability to run as fast as 45 miles per hour (mph). One famous greyhound in England won 19 races in a row
- Gentle and peaceful, greyhounds make wonderful family pets. One of them even lived in the White House in the mid-1800s

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People who love dogs know there are a great number and variety of breeds, each with its own unique history, personality traits and physical characteristics. Some are great protectors while others are avid hunters.

While every dog is fascinating, it's always good to learn the fine points of individual breeds, such as the greyhound. This breed may bring a few surprises regarding its uncommon characteristics, all of which make them a great pet.

10 Cool Facts About Greyhounds

1. **Greyhounds are an ancient Egyptian breed**



There aren't many dogs whose breed can be traced back to 3,000 B.C, but the greyhound can be. Stone relief sculptures, statues and paintings often depicted the slender canines with exaggeratedly pointed faces and ears.

Greyhounds were closely linked with the jackal god, Anubis. When domesticated, they were often buried with solemn pageantry and were said to pass into an afterlife known as the Field of Reeds and thereby live forever.¹

2. **Greyhounds are the fastest dogs in the world**



From the earliest accounts, greyhounds made a name for themselves by their speed. Clocked against other breeds, this canine will nearly always be the victor because they can run as fast as 45 miles per hour (mph).²

In fact, they're built for speed, having long legs, a smooth coat, a slender, streamlined form and a lean, lightweight build.

3. **The Greyhound's nickname is "40 Mph Couch Potato"**



Yes, greyhounds run incredibly fast, but when they're not running they like to lounge as much as the next guy. Rather than being the canine that will spring into action at every opportunity, this pup would rather rest and relax quietly.

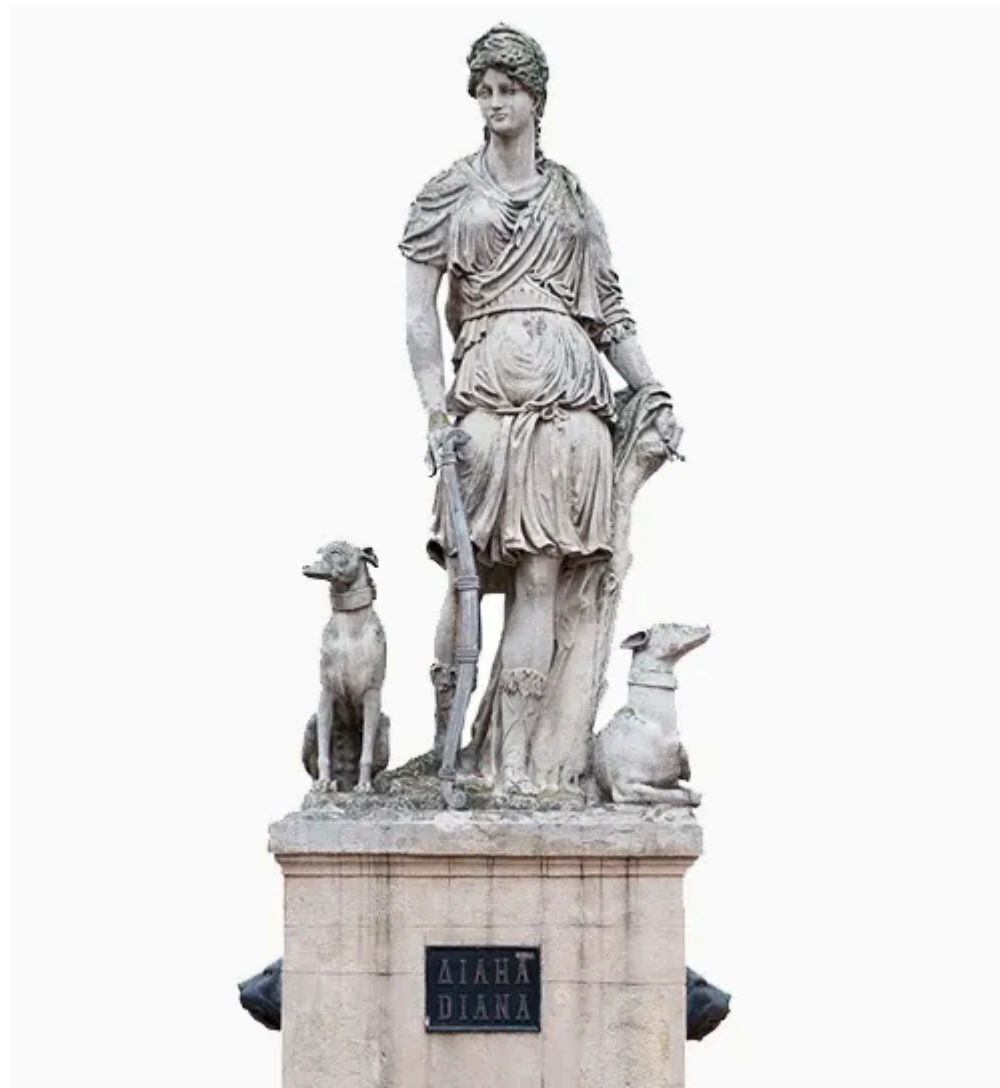
4. **In the Middle Ages, only nobles were allowed to own Greyhounds**



History has it that greyhounds came close to extinction in the Middle Ages. The clergy of the period is said to have been instrumental in their preservation.

Mentioned in England's Canute Laws, circa 1014, only nobles were allowed to own greyhounds, and if anyone was responsible for its death, they could be executed.³

5. **Greyhounds often accompany the Goddess Diana in mythological art**



Diana, the goddess of wildlife in Roman mythology, is often associated with the hunt, an ancient noble pastime, as well as with wildlife. You'll often see her pictured with a greyhound, ostensibly for her protection as well as companionship.

6. **They're one of the dogs mentioned in the Bible**



References in the Bible, especially the Old Testament, offer clues to how old things are. Such is the case with the greyhound reference in Proverbs 30:29-31, depending on the scripture version, which sometimes substitutes a "strutting rooster." In the King James Version, the text reads:

"There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going: a lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any; a greyhound; and the goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up."

7. **Greyhounds are a little awkward when sitting**



Greyhounds can sit, but their muscle structure makes it difficult for them to appear comfortable.⁴ It's possible to train your greyhound to sit properly, especially if he's trained early, but it's an endeavor that, reportedly, he may balk at. Most greyhounds would rather lie down or stand than sit.

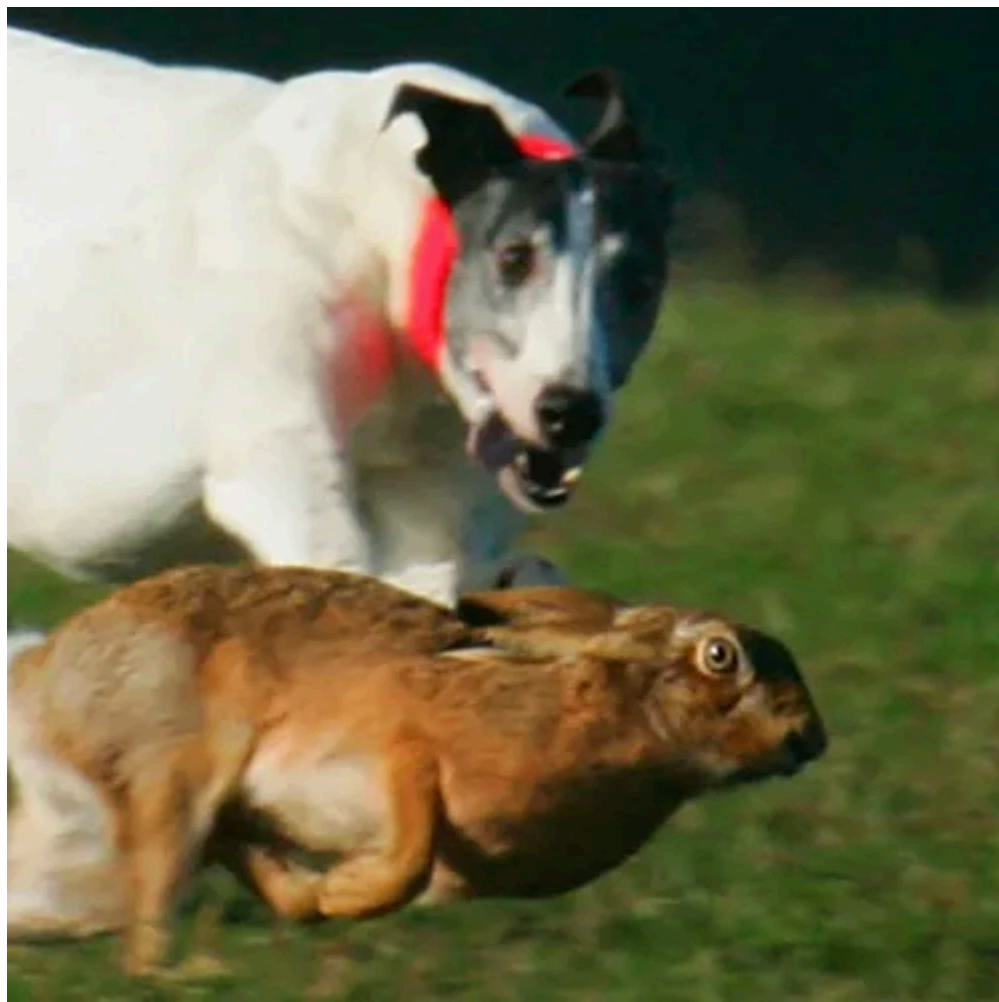
8. **President Hayes owned a Greyhound**



A greyhound named Grim lived in the White House with the president when he took office in 1876. This presidential pet, known as a crooner, is famous for being the first dog adopted by President Hayes when he was in office, when Grim was 2 years old.

The president once wrote, "He is good-natured and neat in his habits ... and took all our hearts at once." But sadly, this beloved dog was hit and killed by a train soon after his master left office.⁵

9. **A Greyhound was known as one of England's greatest athletes**



A racing legend known as Mick the Miller was born in 1926. This notable greyhound had a prestigious, three-year career that included a winning streak of 19 races in a row. In his heyday, his was a household name that was as revered as any other athlete from England.⁶

10. **Several colleges have adopted the Greyhound as mascot**



With a calm demeanor as well as elegance and grace, this breed is the mascot behind many colleges all across the U.S., including the University of Indianapolis in Indianapolis, Indiana, Loyola University Maryland in Baltimore, Maryland and Yankton College in Yankton, South Dakota.

More Greyhound college mascots include Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts and Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, New Mexico.

Greyhounds Make Wonderful Family Pets

One of the best things about owning a greyhound is how easygoing and sweet they are, enjoying nothing better than having someone hang out with them and be a tummy scratcher! You may be surprised at how long this breed enjoys this particular activity, especially since it would seem he was born to run!

Other winsome traits include natural cleanliness and good manners. This breed naturally exhibits patience and gentleness, even though they can weigh between 50 to 80 pounds as adult dogs. If you adopt a greyhound puppy, you'll find they need a lot of exercise and gentle guidance — the sooner the better, so they don't start bad habits that are difficult to break later.

Older dogs of this breed who have been used to the racing circuit with lots of noise and traveling may need patience to transition into a household. Choose an adoption group who understands each individual dog's needs, and you'll find yourself the loving owner of a very happy pup.

Sources and References

[Mom.me](#) May 7, 2015

¹ [Ancient History Encyclopedia](#) June 24, 2014

² [Vet Street](#) August 6, 2012

³ [History of the Greyhound Through the Ages](#) Aug. 2003

⁴ [Greyhound Crossroads 2004-2016](#)

⁵ [Presidential Pet Museum](#) November 15, 2013
