

# Reading Street Sleuth

## Unit 1

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### Alano Español: A Dying Breed?

More than 1,600 years ago, the country we now call Spain was invaded by the Alans. The Alans came from thousands of miles away, near what is now the country of Iran. Invaders from other countries were driving them out of their homeland. The Alans traveled across Europe, bringing their dogs with them. As Spanish explorers traveled to new lands, they also took these dogs with them.

This ancient dog breed is known as Alano Español, which means “Spanish bulldog.” These dogs are very large. They have big, square heads, like the head of a bulldog. The dogs’ front legs are very strong, and they have large paws. Their fur is short and thick, allowing them to live outside in any kind of weather. They do not drool or slobber, and they rarely bark. These dogs follow commands by their owners and are loyal, protecting their owners and their property.

The Alans found these big, strong dogs very useful. The dogs could run for long periods of time without getting tired. This helped them herd wild cattle. They also helped their owners hunt and fight in wars.

Because Spanish bulldogs had strong jaws and could hold on to wild animals, they were invaluable for hunting. These dogs were fierce around strangers but very loving with the people who owned them.

Although the Alano Español could be found in many parts of Europe at one time, this breed seemed to have died out everywhere except in Spain. Today, however, these bulldogs have found their way to North America. Dog breeders have imported these unusual dogs for dog owners who are looking for a rare breed. Spanish bulldogs continue to be hard-working dogs for their owners. These are loyal dogs that still herd cattle and hunt with their owners.