

A Dog's Life

Steve Raby

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View more screenplays written by Steve Raby at his
homepage: www.SceneToScreen.com

Email: Steve@SceneToScreen.com

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A Dog's Life

FADE IN ON:

A grainy camcorder image of a boy in his mid teens.
He sits at a table staring downward.

FADE INTO:

1 INT. BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

1

The same boy sits on the edge of his bed.

Rain pounds heavily against a large window which is covered with condensation.

LEO

(V.O.)

It was much the same as every other Sunday afternoon. That day the sky was grey and I had spent most of the time moping around in my room as usual. The only difference was that two days earlier we had buried my brother Scott. He had Leukaemia and everybody knew he was going to die, including him. Once he even told me that he was fed up with all of the attention and that sometimes he wished everyone would just leave him alone. I don't think he meant it though. I remember this big clap of thunder. It was so loud that it made me look up. And that's when I first saw him.

Leaning forward Leo wipes a clean area on the window with his sleeve.

Through the storm there appears to be a small figure standing motionless in the garden.

LEO

(V.O.)

I swear to you that at that very moment I was looking at my little brother standing outside in the rain. Only I knew that it couldn't be. At least I didn't I think it could. I mean, it's not possible is it? Anyway, that's when my Step dad Joe walked in. We hate each other.

(CONTINUED)

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1 CONTINUED (2)

The bedroom door opens and Joe, a stocky somewhat menacing looking man in his late thirties, enters the room.

JOE

For Christ's sake Leo, your dog is driving me insane. It's been whining at the door for at least an hour. Can't you hear it? Take it out for a walk or something will you? Just shut it up. I swear if I have to listen to that noise much more I'll...

Joe hesitates and without finishing off his sentence he leaves the room, slamming the door shut behind him.

Leo turns to the window once more. The figure is no longer there but he continues to stare out into the rain.

LEO

(V.O)

Six years and I still can't even hold a conversation with Joe. He never wanted kids. We were just part of the package when he married my Mum. In the beginning he played happy families just like all the rest of us but as time went on everything began to drift apart. First of all it was just little quarrels. You know, the kind that every family has but then things started to turn nasty. He would snap at the tiniest little thing. It became so bad that everybody was frightened to speak in case they started an argument. That's when Mum decided that she'd had enough. One morning I woke up and she was just gone. It took me a while to stop hating her but eventually I realised that she had only done what I would have done given the opportunity. She had escaped.

Slowly Leo swings his legs over the side of the bed.

Bending down he pulls on his trainers.

LEO

(V.O.)

I think that somehow Joe blamed that
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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1 CONTINUED (3)

LEO (CONT'D)

on my brother and me. Scott took it the hardest though, especially when he started to get really sick. He wanted his Mum, just like any other ten year old would, only nobody knew where she was. In fourteen months she never wrote, she never even telephoned. I was sure she had her reasons but it didn't take away the pain.

2 INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

2

Leo comes down the stairs and opens the hall cupboard. He takes out his jacket and a dog lead. The dog sits by the front door, anxious to go out. Bending down, Leo pets his dog.

LEO

Hey Wisdom. What is it boy? What's wrong? This isn't like you. I thought you were petrified of thunder.

He puts the lead around the dog's neck and then pulls on his jacket.

As Leo opens the front door the dog immediately begins to bark.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. COUNTRY LANE - AFTERNOON

3

The rain is getting harder by the second.

Leo pulls the collar of his jacket up around his neck, trying desperately to keep warm. The dog is whining and pulling on the lead.

LEO

Okay, okay. Give me a second will you?

(V.O)

Wisdom isn't just my dog, he's my best friend. At first I thought that it was just the sound of the storm
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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3 CONTINUED (2)

LEO (CONT'D)

getting to him but once that door was open he couldn't wait to get outside. It didn't make any sense to me at the time because he'd always been so afraid of thunder and lightening. He was pulling at the lead, almost as if it was me that was being taken for a walk by him instead of it being the other way around. Up until then nothing had seemed too out of the ordinary. I mean yeah Wisdom was acting a little strange but all dogs have a mad half hour now and then don't they? So we started our walk.

As Leo and his dog walk together along the lane the rain literally bounces off the ground. In seconds both of them are wet through.

LEO

(V.O.)

I remember thinking about Scott as I walked. Everyone thought that Scott's death would really tear me apart. I mean, don't get me wrong I loved him more than anything else in my life but in a way I kind of envied him. He was free. In fact, to be honest I think I was more upset that Mum didn't make it to the funeral.

There is a really bright flash of lightening. So intense that for a second everything in sight turns to negative.

LEO

(V.O.)

That's when I heard it for the first time. Loud enough to hear but quiet enough to almost be a whisper.

VOICE

Leo. Leo.

LEO

(V.O.)

I stopped in my tracks, looking from left to right in search of the person behind the voice. I thought I had imagined it until I looked down at

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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3 CONTINUED (3)

LEO (CONT'D)

Wisdom. His head was cocked to one side and his ears were standing straight up, listening for something. I knew then that he had heard it too.

LEO

You heard it too didn't you boy?

The dog whines and starts pulling on the lead again.

Suddenly he lurches forward and breaks free of Leo's grasp.

Barking, the dog runs off ahead.

LEO

Wisdom! Come back here. Great. Just what I am in the mood for today. Chasing a dog in the rain.

In the distance the dog is just about visible through the pouring rain. He has stopped running and a figure that can barely be seen appears to be bending down, stroking the dog's head.

Leo quickens his step.

When he reaches the dog there is nobody there with him.

The dog seems happy. His tongue is hanging from his mouth and he is wagging his tail vigorously.

Bending down Leo makes a fuss of him.

LEO

Who was that giving you a fuss eh? Didn't your Mother ever tell you not to talk to strangers? And don't you go giving me those innocent puppy eyes. I saw you. I dunno, you'll never make a good guard dog will you? Someone shows you a bit of affection and suddenly you're their best friend. Come on, I'm not standing in the rain all day.

The dog barks once.

LEO

(V.O.)

And then we heard it again.

(CONTINUED)

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3 CONTINUED (4)

VOICE

Leo. I'm over here Leo.

LEO

(V.O.)

Again it was almost a whisper, only this time I knew where it was coming from. I looked up and saw someone standing about thirty to forty feet ahead, staring straight at me. It was only there for a second, just long enough for me to see it but it sent a shiver down my spine. Not because I was frightened but because I had just stared into the face of my little brother. I know, you're thinking that it's impossible because he's dead but don't you think that I thought the same? I can't explain to you how I felt. I can only tell you what I saw and I'm telling you that I saw my brother. At first I thought I was losing my mind. I don't believe in ghosts. I still don't but what happened next was more than just a figment of my imagination. Something was catching the light in the corner of my eye.

CUT TO:

4 EXT. COUNTRY LANE - AFTERNOON

4

A small metallic object lies in the gutter at the side of the road.

Leo walks into shot and picks it up.

LEO

(V.O.)

It was a pendant. A small silver cross. Exactly like the one that I gave to Scott for his last birthday.

He stares at the cross for a while, puzzled.

His stare becomes a day dream until the dog barks, snapping him out of it.

(CONTINUED)

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4 CONTINUED (2)

LEO
(to the dog)
Am I going crazy?

The dog barks again and playfully wags his tail.

LEO
You didn't have to agree with me you
know, you could've lied.

Smiling he bends down and rubs behind the dogs ears.

LEO
Maybe I am crazy. How many people
have a conversation with a dog?
(V.O)
Suddenly I felt as if I was being
watched. I don't know why. Something
made me look into the trees. You know
the way that sometimes you feel like
somebody is looking at you and when
you look up they really are. Well
that's what it was like. When I
looked up I saw a figure run between
two trees in the distance. It was too
far away to see clearly but near
enough to recognise that it was a
young boy. There was a part of me
that wanted to believe that it really
was Scott, that somehow he had
returned from the grave for whatever
reason just so that we could spend
one more day together. Then there was
the part of me that was infuriated at
someone who was obviously playing
some sort of sick game. That was the
part that I chose to believe.

Bending down Leo removes the lead from the dog's collar.

The dog licks the side of his face.

LEO
Thanks pal, I needed a wash.

He stands.

LEO
Okay then. If they want to play games
then let's play. Go get 'em boy!

(CONTINUED)

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4 CONTINUED (3)

The dog barks and lays down on the ground, resting his head on his front paws.

LEO

Remind me again why I put up with you?

(V.O.)

And that's when we heard the voice again.

VOICE

Leo. Come and find me Leo.

The dog lifts his head and looks in the direction of the voice.

His ears are pricked and he leaps up on all fours. Suddenly he dashes off into the trees.

LEO

Hey! Wait up!

Leo runs after the dog.

He can barely keep up the pace and soon has to stop and rest.

He bends forward, resting his hands on his knees while he catches his breath.

When he looks up again the dog is nowhere to be seen.

He walks slowly ahead constantly looking from left to right as he goes.

LEO

Here boy. Wisdom? Where are you?

Putting two fingers between his lips he whistles loudly.

He soon becomes aware of a sound that he can't quite distinguish.

He stands there listening for a few moments and then he spots movement.

CUT TO:

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5 EXT. COUNTRY LANE - AFTERNOON

5

Only the back half of the dog is visible as it digs frantically at the ground beneath a small cluster of trees.

Footsteps can be heard rustling through the twigs and leaves on the ground and Leo appears.

LEO

What is it boy? What have you found?

He leans in and grabs hold of the dog's collar.

LEO

Come on. You won't find any bones in there.

The dog refuses to budge and continues its frantic search, clawing at the earth, whining.

LEO

Just what is it that's so interesting down there Wisdom?

Craning his neck Leo tries to see what the dog has discovered.

Slowly, his face turns to sheer horror.

LEO

(under his breath)

Oh my God.

(V.O.)

Poking through the soil was a woman's decaying hand. I froze, not quite able to take in what I had seen but unable to turn away. My eyes were drawn to a ring on one of the fingers. It was a small, distinctive ring, gold with the word 'love' engraved across the top. It was my Mother's.

FADE INTO:

6 INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM.

6

Leo sits at one end of a table.

A W.P.C. sits at the other end with a camcorder positioned on a tripod behind her.

(CONTINUED)

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6 CONTINUED (2)

W.P.C.

I'm so sorry Leo. I know this must be hard for you right now.

LEO

It's not so bad. I'm just glad that I know the truth now. I never did like Joe anyway. You do believe me though don't you? I mean about Scott and everything. It's the truth.

He takes a small silver cross from his pocket and places it around his neck.

LEO

I swear.

FADE TO BLACK: