

= Lad , A Dog (film) =

Lad : A Dog is a 1962 American dramatic film based on the 1919 novel Lad : A Dog written by Albert Payson Terhune . Starring Peter Breck , Peggy McCay , Carroll O 'Connor , and Angela Cartwright , the film blends several of the short stories featured in the novel , with the heroic Lad winning a rigged dog show , saving a handicapped girl from a snake , and capturing a poacher who killed his pups and injured one of his owners . Warner Brothers purchased the film rights for the novel from Vanguard Productions , and acquired the film rights for the other two Lad novels from the late Terhune 's wife .

Aram Avakian was initially selected to be the film 's director , but when he continually refused to do a sentimental @-@ type dog story , he was replaced by Leslie H. Martinson . Lillie Hayward and Roberta Hodes wrote the screenplay for the film , adapting several of the short stories from the novel to create a single narrative , and adding in an all @-@ purpose villain . The film was released on June 6 , 1962 . The studio hoped it would be successful enough to be followed by a second film and a television series . Though praised by fans and modern reviewers , contemporary critiques felt Terhune 's work did not translate well to film and it was considered a low budget , B @-@ movie . It was released to home video in 1995 .

= = Plot = =

Purebred rough collie Lad and his owners , Stephen (Peter Breck) and Elizabeth Tremayne (Peggy McCay) , are visited by their wealthy neighbor Hamilcar Q. Glure (Carroll O 'Connor) and his 8 @-@ year @-@ old daughter Angela (Angela Cartwright) , who is crippled from polio . While Lad befriends the girl , Glure invites the Tremaynes to show the prize @-@ winning Lad at his upcoming dog show . However , Glure is jealous of Lad 's success and has rigged one event to have such specialized rules that he believes only his recently purchased high @-@ priced , English @-@ trained collie can win . During the competition , which involves directing the dogs through a tricky set of a maneuvers , Lad is able to complete the course , while Glure 's champion does not recognize the hand signals Glure makes while holding a cigar .

Later , Lad saves Glure 's daughter Angela from a poisonous snake by knocking her backwards to get her out of harm 's way , then fighting and killing the snake , getting bitten in the process . Her nurse (Alice Pearce) initially does not see the snake , and begins beating Lad for " attacking " the little girl . Distraught , Angela stands and walks for the first time since her illness to stop the nurse 's abuse of her friend . Lad disappears for three days , reappearing covered in mud but cured of the poison .

After his return , Lad is bred with another prize @-@ winning collie , Lady , and they have two male puppies which are named Little Lad & Wolf . Angela is allowed her choice of one as a present to her when they are old enough to leave their mother & she chooses Little Lad . However , Jackson White (Jack Daly) , a poacher Lad fought and chased off the property before , sets fire to barn out of vengeance . Elizabeth is injured and Little Lad is killed but not Wolf . Lad later aids in capturing White when he breaks into the house to try to steal Lad 's gold trophy from the dog show . Angela is initially inconsolable over the loss of her puppy Little Lad , and refuses to have anything to do with Wolf . After he is nearly lost in another accident , she changes her mind and accepts Wolf as her new dog .

= = Production = =

Max J. Rosenberg , of Vanguard Productions , purchased the film rights for Albert Payson Terhune 's Lad : A Dog from publisher E.P. Dutton , then later sold the rights to Warner Brothers . When the studio learned of the other two Lad novels , Further Adventures of Lad and Lad of Sunnybank , they were concerned to learn that Dutton had the rights to only the first novel , as they were hoping the film would be successful enough to develop a sequel and possibly a television series . Executive Bruce Chapman negotiated for the film rights for the other two novels with Anice Terhune , the late

wife of the author . She set up a foundation , Terhune Lad Stories , Inc , to negotiate the rights for other two novels . All told , Warner paid \$ 25 @, @ 000 for the rights to all three books , though the bulk of the funds went to Dutton .

Warner Brothers initially hired Aram Avakian , a " talented , aggressive young ex @-@ film editor " known for his avant @-@ garde tendencies , to direct the film . The studio wanted a sentimental dog story that played true to the novel , which Avakian opposed . In a 1969 Life interview , Avakian stated that he " wanted to make a kind of pop , camp thing that wouldn 't be a complete ordeal for parents " while everyone else involved in the production wanted " Dick , Jane and Doggie " . Jack Warner , then head of the studio , eventually fired him , bringing the more conventional Leslie H. Martinson to complete the film . Peter Breck and Peggy McCay were cast as Lad 's owners , renamed to Stephen and Elizabeth Tremayne . Veteran actor Carroll O 'Connor was hired to play the pompous and newly wealthy Hamilcar Q. Glure , with the role of his daughter played by Angela Cartwright , a noted young actress who had starred in The Danny Thomas Show . To cast the role of Lad , a talent search was conducted , eventually resulting in the selection of a collie from the San Fernando Valley who was credited simply as " Lad " . The film is set in a modified version of the Place , with Pompton Lake reduced to a river with a large dock . The house , though similar to the real Terhune home , even including duplicates of the stone lions on the veranda , was built on a scale three times larger than the original .

Well @-@ known screenwriter Lillie Hayward , and newcomer Roberta Hodes , were hired to adapt the novel for film . They combined several of the stories from the novel , modifying characters to create a single flowing narrative . For example , the crippled girl who was a neighbor girl in the original novel became Glure 's daughter . Noting Terhune 's frequent disdain for the Ramapough Mountain Indians , they named the film 's villain Jackson White , a play on the nickname used to refer to those people . White became the catch all villain of the film , who poaches deer , sets fire to the Tremayne barn , and break into the house to try to steal a gold trophy won by Lad .

Lad : A Dog was released to theaters on June 6 , 1962 . The 98 minute film was released to VHS format on January 31 , 1995 .

= = Reception = =

The film was considered to be a " B @-@ movie " with its low production budget . Terhune biographer Irving Litvag praised O 'Connor 's performance as Glure , feeling his talent made him " seem human " and " a person of dignity and love " versus Terhune 's " overdrawn and exaggerated " silly character . He felt the setting and cinematography was " typical Hollywood overstatement " , and that as a whole found that Terhune 's " sentimental writing " did not do well in film form , calling the resulting film " cloying " and a " minor , unsung film . " However , he noted that fans of the novels seemed to thoroughly enjoy the film , suspecting part of it was the " handsome collie " found to play the titular role , and seeing the names of the beloved collies they knew on the screen . A New York Times reviewer called it a " bucolic drama of no discernible merit " . The Monthly Film Bulletin praised the dog actors , but felt the film was " stultifyingly mawkish , with a touch of supposed humor contributed by an allegedly English chauffeur " . Bob Ross , of the Tampa Tribune , considered it to be an " earnest , well @-@ acted story " . Leonard Maltin felt it was a " genuine if schmaltzy " adaptation of the novel .