



THE DOG

You Destroyed Everything I Ever Cared For

by John D. Wicinas

Preface

It all started when a copy of the story I wrote, “The Dog”, somehow made it from the halls of Winword High to the Sociology Department at Penn State McKeesport. It got the attention of Dr, Savitski who contacted me. She told me that she wanted to use it in a paper she was writing.

To be honest, this has been very difficult for me and I’ve never felt so vulnerable. I wrote these sentences, re-wrote them several times over, and even handed them out to important people for suggestions (like Jack D. Winsome). I think that my story and this introduction turned out pretty good considering the stress it caused me. I am really looking forward to seeing, “Amanda Vogel” in print though.

When I first wrote The Dog it was just for fun. I never thought anyone would take it seriously. I simply jotted it down on some yellow notebook paper with a No. 2 pencil. On a side note, I think everyone should use pencils more often than they do these days. It would really save a lot of sorrow in the world. When you write stuff with a pen it is a permanent mark that you can’t take back. Sure, you can cross out something you wrote in ink with more ink, but it is still there under fresh indigo blue or black. Take my word for it, I had a bad experience with ink one time and learned my lesson. With that said, I’ll get back to The Dog.

I got the idea for The Dog from some case studies we were learning about in Psychology class. The Dog is the “personal interview” part of a case study about a boy who witnesses a traumatic event. That is why I wrote it in the past tense; the subject is telling his story. I don’t know a whole lot about Psychology, I just wrote about how I thought The Dog would affect someone. Dr. Savitski says that a lot of what the main character in The Dog experiences is similar to symptoms of people in the real world. She thinks it is valuable because it shows how an adolescent thinks. This is the reason why she made a big deal about The Dog.

These next two things may not make sense to you at first. I guess that is why I’m carefully writing all of this down to try to explain it. Anyway, one weird part about all of this is the attention the story got from people who read it (besides Dr. Savitski). It is a good story, but not great. I think the reason it is that people are shocked that a teen-age girl wrote it. I guess people don’t normally think of high-school girls writing horror stories like The Dog. The other thing is that I kind of feel like I’m part of the story because everyone who reads it says stuff like “Whoa, you wrote this?” It makes me think that they are thinking of me while they are reading the story. That is important to me for some reason.

This is the end of my official discussion of The Dog. I'm glad that Dr. Savitski thought it was fine to keep it informal. I can only hope all of this makes enough sense that you think it was worth the time I put into it.

Agnes Vogel

The Dog

It was a pretty May afternoon the day I met the dog. It was really pleasant to be out of our house and in the patch of woods behind our home. I enjoyed being alone as I walked through the woods. I was happy that my parents finally realized I was old enough to be trusted without their constant supervision. My parents have always been pretty nervous people, but I guess they let me go because they were spending pretty much all of their time worrying about Mom having the baby. I didn't see what all the fuss was about; you didn't see me worrying about becoming a big brother. Anyway, it felt great to be alone.

I was practically in the dead center of the woods, between the housing plans, when I first heard what I thought was barking. As I walked up the nearby hill, it became clear that the sound *was* a dog. The barking made my hair stand up all over my body. It did not sound natural; it sounded more like someone trying to imitate a dog yelping in a high pitch, without pause. As I reached the top of the hill, the sound was clear; it was the scream of a frantic and desperate animal. It was the sound of death.

I ran up the hill and heard another sound: laughter. The woods were thick, but I was now close enough to hear laughter between the barking. I made it over the hill and saw the whole thing. There were two boys and the

dog. The boys were older than me or any of my oldest buddies. I didn't recognize them as kids from my school or from the neighborhood. They both had red faces and the smaller of the two boys was holding a BB gun. Then there was the dog helplessly tied to a tree.

The dog killers did not notice me as I came down the hill. I watched the smaller boy prime the BB gun and shoot the dog. The dog intensified its death song in high-pitched yelps as the boys laughed harder. The two of them did not see me, but the dog did.

The older boy grabbed the BB gun and shot the dog. He hit the dog in the eye and a stream of blood immediately sprayed from the wound. The dog fell to the ground and stopped barking for a second. Then it lifted its head and started screaming. It was awful. Even though the boys were cruel and sadistic, this scared them. The boys were silent, I was crying, and the dog was screaming. I swear to God that the dog was really screaming.

The smaller boy began to cry desperately. The older boy shoved the BB gun into the chest of the smaller boy and picked up a large rock. I was so afraid that I couldn't close my eyes fast enough. The older boy lifted the rock above his head and brought it down on the dog's skull. The dog no longer screamed and I started to vomit. After what seemed like forever, I

finally got over being violently sick and somehow managed to make it home. I told no one about what I witnessed.

I thought the first couple of nights would be the worst times and it would get better. It didn't. The nightmares were horrible, when I actually fell asleep, but at least I was getting a little bit of tortured rest. Lying awake night after night was much worse than my bad dreams. Sweating and nervous I would lie in bed and watch the same scene play out in my head every night. Actually, I shouldn't say the scene was exactly the same every time because each one became more vivid than the last.

Although it seemed hard for me to keep track of time for some reason, I know that this went on for a couple of months. Mom was due in July and my baby sister, Amanda, arrived on schedule. I was so happy that Mom and Dad were so pre-occupied with Amanda that they didn't notice me. I was able to successfully avoid all of my friends without them becoming concerned. The only thing I had to watch was my "jumpiness" around the house. This was tough because Amanda's loud crying often startled me. Her cries were so loud at night that they actually drowned out the barking at times. It didn't matter though; the dog was always with me.

Initially, when Mom came across some of the pictures I had drawn, she was pretty upset. They didn't ground me or anything, but she and Dad

had a long talk with me. They asked me questions about how I felt now that I was no longer an only child; they reassured me that they still loved me as much as ever. They didn't ask me anything important and never mentioned the dog. That came later after they discovered my hiding place. When they found the hundred or so sketches of the mutilated dog in the box where I kept my comic books, they finally asked me about the dog: "Where did I get the image? Why did I draw the same horrible picture over and over again? When did this start?" I didn't really get what they were saying because it didn't feel like this was really happening. It felt like I was in a movie and watching it at the same time. After they asked each question, I watched myself answer them in kind: "I don't know where I got it from. I don't know why. I can't remember when." Then they got even more upset and told me how the images should make me feel as they felt. I didn't feel very emotional about any of this as I looked at Mom and Dad. I thought the drawings were beautiful, but I told them I felt bad about them and promised not to draw them anymore.

I wasn't scared of the dog anymore or made ill by her. The dog remained constantly with me, but now it was different, now it was exciting. I wondered how it would feel to kill a living, breathing dog. I decided I would do it.

On one particular night, I thought I had the strangest of dreams (since the dog no longer terrified me, I now slept in peace). On that night, I remember hearing Amanda crying, but that did not disturb me as I coasted into a dream.

My dream started with my Mom coming into my room to tell me how the thought of the dog should haunt me. Having said her peace, she wished me pleasant dreams and left my room. That's when the barking started. The barking continued, without rest, for what seemed like forever. I dreamed that I couldn't fall asleep as I listened to the barking. The sound did not fill me with fear; the barking kept me awake out of pure excitement. As I listened to it attentively, I realized that the sound was coming from the hallway outside of my room. This seemed strange to me at first. I was used to the dog barking in my head. The thought of a dog in the house was so thrilling that I ignored the fact that it didn't make sense. Although I choose to ignore this fact, such non-sense was enough to remind me that I was dreaming. Then it crossed my mind that I might not remember this fantasy upon waking. I felt sad for a fleeting moment, but only a moment.

I leapt from my bed and took a deep breath before I walked through my bedroom doorway. I crept down the hallway so not to startle the dog. As I got closer to the barking, it was clear that it was coming from my parent's

old office, i.e. Amanda's new nursery. My heart was pounding as I opened the door. All of my senses were extremely intense; the sound of the barking echoed in my ears and I looked into the room with wide eyes. I was surprised to see the dog sitting in Amanda's crib. I did not move as I stared at the dog very hard. It met my gaze and quit barking. I was very confused but ecstatic at the same time.

I entered the room and it felt strange to me. As familiar as I was with these surroundings, the room and its contents seemed vague. Once again, I was reminded that I was dreaming since things are not always quite right in dreams. I walked over to the desk that yet remained part of the old office. I was glad the desk was there; that much was right with this world. I picked up the large paperweight that I hoped would be on the desk.

With the rock in hand, I found myself standing in front of the dog. I never felt so calm. I smashed the dog on the head with the paperweight. It screamed loudly as I split its skull. Warm blood baptized my body in silence. I immediately felt relieved that the dog was dead and I was now free. For a brief moment, everything was right in the world. Then the wailing started.

My mother, screaming hysterically, rushed into the room followed by my father. I meant to relieve her angst as I turned to her and exclaimed, "I killed the dog! It can never haunt my dreams again!" I looked at them and

waves of emotions overwhelmed me. I was terrified as I suddenly became conscious of how real they appeared. It certainly did not feel like I was in a movie and I wasn't watching myself act out the scene this time. This was really happening to me. This was no dream but the beginning of a nightmare.