

It's Women's Equality Day & National Dog Day, So Where Are The "A Girl And Her Dog" Movies?



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One has to wonder, what came first, obscure national holidays or social media? It's because of social media that more and more of us are aware when the time has to come to celebrate everything from donuts to National Parks. Sometimes two celebrations fall on the same day, which is how we get a day like August 26 which weirdly marks the intersection of gender equality and "man's best friend."

As both Women's Equality Day and National Dog Day on August 26 one has to wince slightly at the juxtaposition of a major social rights movement with the honor bestowed on a most beloved pet species. In considering the pop culture connectedness of both days, it's nice to know there are a number of movies and television shows one can recommend to those seeking a little female empowerment and equity, and plenty of films showcasing the relationship between human and dog as well.



Jake the Dog and Finn the Human

So it might stand to reason that if the two holidays could be mixed, perhaps there might be some media mash-up that also showcases both assertive females and also dogs? (I know, thought patterns take us interesting places, best just to follow along.) A peremptory search provides plenty of [examples of movies featuring awesome women](#) and there are every number of [movies focused on dogs](#) but there is a rather strange lack of overlap between the two.

Granted, the world hasn't necessarily been begging and pleading for a female empowerment movie featuring a dog, but considering that quite a few dog movies showcase the relationship between a dog and its male owner, this particular female started wondering why there wasn't more representation of girls and dogs in movies.



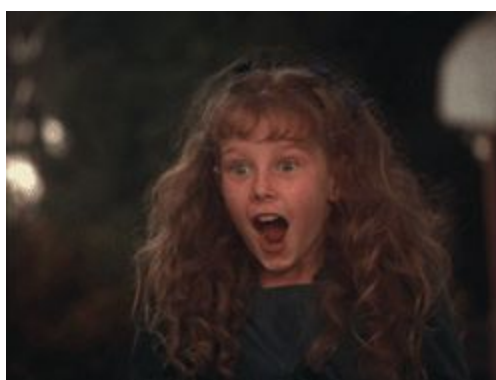
"The Present" is a great short film, but again with a boy and dog?

Of course, there are the age-old tropes of dogs being man's best friend and cats being the ideal feminine companion, but surely we've thrown off such ridiculous concepts. Most animal-related films are family and children films, so how could we be missing representation of a gender in such films aimed intended for such formative years? If equality includes representation in the media, especially in engendering normalcy, surely a little girl should find her love for her pet represented on screen and not be made to feel that she's abnormal for being a "dog person.'

And considering most dogs, if animated or made anthropomorphic, are gendered male, one can't help but follow this (albeit random) bit of a thinking toward a greater problem in male-female friendship representations in media? Ok, so this soap box is getting a bit tall, but the numbers do paint an interesting picture.

In considering the dog-centered films of my youth I had a hard time coming up with many tales of "a girl and her dog." There are plenty boy/man-with-his-dog type tales:

- *Old Yeller*
- *My Dog Skip*
- *Frankenweenie*
- *Lassie Come Home*
- *My Dog Tulip*
- *White Fang*
- *Iron Will*
- *Air Bud*
- *Eight Below*
- *Never Cry Wolf*
- *Turner & Hooch*
- *Shiloh*



Hardly any human interaction in this film, but time for a girl and cat moment.

There are also plenty of stories not focused on the humans, mostly just the dogs, like:

- *101 Dalmatians*
- *Homeward Bound*
- *Lady and the Tramp*
- *Balto*
- *Benji*
- *Oliver & Co.*
- *The Secret Life of Pets*

And a few that mostly show a couple with their dog like *Marley and Me* or a whole family's relationship with their dog like *Beethoven*.



A girls and her dogs!

The ones most definitely showing a girl loving her dog?

- *All Dogs Go To Heaven*
- *Bolt*
- *Because of Winn-Dixie*
- *The Courage of Lassie*
- *Must Love Dogs*

Of these, *Must Love Dogs* is a bit of a stretch considering it's much more firmly a rom-com than an animal lovers movie. And *Bolt* focuses its story on the arc of the dog Bolt who believes he has abilities and needs to save his owner Penny. They don't spend a lot of time together in the film.



All Dogs Go To Heaven is certainly the one that resonated with me most as a kid. A girl with an unabashed love for her dog. He saves her, she saves him, it's Don Bluth animated perfection. It never occurred to me she should like kitties instead. I never thought her dog, Charlie, ought to be female to make their friendship better.

With yet, [even more, dog-bromance films](#) coming our way, is it so much to ask for a bit more equality when it comes to pet and owner representation? Pet relationships are formational in many children's lives and men have already entrenched gender identity on far too many cultural norms. Must we continue the silly notion of "boys and their dogs"? Introducing more stories about girls and their dogs would be among the simplest ways to spread a little equality.

Especially since, in real life, we ladies are unabashedly best friends with our dogs.

Let's think on this suggestion a bit and just be glad I didn't decide to get this critical on Go Topless Day. Which is Sunday, August 28, by the way.



Puppies are a girl's best friend.

Do you think media teaches us girls and dogs can't be friends? Comment below!

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