

From Cage to Companionship  
Fantasy screenplay short by Wytemi

**LOGLINE:**

*When a disheveled young man is tricked into buying a magical talking dog, must learn to make a friend with his new companion or else continue to be alone in his misery.*

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**INT. PET SHOP - DAY**

A run-down pet shop filled with all sorts of animals. The shop is lined with cages and aquariums.

JACK(20) disheveled, and clearly having a rough day, enters. He's carrying a ripped sack of groceries with small items spilling out.

JACK

Just another tranquil day.

Jack steps into a puddle of water leaking from a tank.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh, splendid.

As he bends down to gather his things, CORNELIUS; a small, odd-looking Corgi with a fancy collar, is sitting in a plush, velvet bed, within a rusty, disheveled cage.

JACK (CONT'D)

Well, aren't you fancy?

CORNELIUS

(posh British accent)

I do try to maintain a certain minimum standard, yes.

JACK jumps back, knocking over a display of cat toys.

JACK

Holy dog feces! You can talk?!

CORNELIUS

Indeed, I can. Though there's nothing about the excrement that I excrete to be even remotely holy. Now, would you mind purchasing me so I can be free of this filth?

JACK looks around. The shopkeeper, MRS. WHITTLE(75); an elderly lady with tiny glasses, is knitting behind the desk.

JACK

I must be imagining things. I'm certainly not on a grand adventure. Talking dogs aren't a thing.

CORNELIUS

(sighs)

I'm Cornelius, and I'm in a bit of a pickle.

JACK

A pickle? Like, a "magic spell gone wrong" kind of pickle?

CORNELIUS

Quite. You see, I'm a Duke. Or I was—until a mischievous wizard thought it would be amusing to trap me in this canine form.

JACK

I think I need a change of scenery. Perhaps the white happy home where they let me live in a comfortable, padded room.

CORNELIUS

I need your help to break the spell.

JACK

I'm going to check into an asylum.

CORNELIUS

I can't afford to be picky, young man, and I need your pathetic aperture to be my beacon of hope.

JACK

...huh?

CORNELIUS

You're not very bright...ok. What talks to commoners light you...Oh, right. Free me from this cell and help me break a curse and I'll pay you handsomely.

JACK

Alright...Let's hope this is a journey worth embarking on. You better not be screwing with me.

CORNELIUS

I believe if I were to do that, you'd be fined for breaking animal rights laws as...

JACK

OKAY! Shut up...that's not what I meant.

Jack picks up the Cornelius' cage and takes him to the register

MRS. WHITTLE  
That'll be 7,583¢. No refunds.  
Sales final.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY**

JACK sits down on his couch and CORNELIUS stares at him from the floor.

JACK  
Okay...now what?

CORNELIUS  
Well, first, you feed me, fluff my pillow, take me on walkies, and ensure you treat me regularly while calling me cute names.

JACK  
Did you lie to me to get me to buy you?!

CORNELIUS  
Well, of course, I did, my young and spritely chap. No one else wanted a talking dog, so I tried something.

Cornelius rolls over along the floor.

JACK  
I'm taking you back to the pet store.

CORNELIUS  
Ah, Ah, Ah! Remember? No refunds...

JACK groans and sinks onto the couch, rubbing his face.  
CORNELIUS wags his tail, clearly enjoying himself.

JACK  
(sighs)  
So, there's no curse, no wizard, and no treasure?

CORNELIUS  
Well...actually...eh, no not really. But consider this, Jack: life is a series of small treasures. A sunny day, a good meal, and the companionship of a dashing Corgi, for example.

JACK

Right. I'm swimming in riches.

CORNELIUS

Oh, don't be such a grump! Think of all the fun we'll have together. Adventures, mischief, maybe even a little romance!

JACK

Yeah, well, I'm not exactly in the romance market.

CORNELIUS

But you could be! Picture it: you, a confident, handsome fellow, strolling through the park with your adorable, witty Corgi. The ladies will swoon!

JACK

You're full of it.

CORNELIUS

Just full of good ideas.

Jack slumps deeper. Cornelius jumps up and whimpers.

CORNELIUS (CONT'D)

...What is it, chap?

JACK

It's Jack...Not Chap...not Sprite...Jack.

CORNELIUS

I'm sorry, Jack. Tell me your woes.

JACK

My bang mate reassigned her relationship, my bar mate went and drank himself to the unalive realm, and my parent downgraded our in-person chats to limited minutes...

CORNELIUS

If I may. It seems since I met you, I've noticed you use a lot of euphemisms to mask how pathetic your life is.

JACK

...the heck is a Euph..eh..mess...

CORNELIUS

*You-fuh-mih-sum.* You're making your life seem better than it is. Your girlfriend left you and now you're single, your best friend drank himself to the afterlife, and most likely your mother refuses to talk to you.

Jack tears up.

CORNELIUS (CONT'D)

Perhaps, you just need to not be lonely, and accept that life is harsh, but also find beauty in the world

JACK

How can a dog possibly replace human intimacy? Or the feeling of brotherhood? Or the soft tone of a mother?

CORNELIUS

Have you ever heard of the concept of Man's best friend?

JACK

It hasn't come to mind...

Cornelius sits on Jack's lap and curls up.

JACK (CONT'D)

I didn't volunteer for this...

CORNELIUS

Perhaps not now, but I think you'll come around.

JACK

Alright...I'll give it a try.

Jack pets Cornelius and turns on the TV.

CORNELIUS

Woof.

**THE END**