

## The Dog Log: An Accidental Memoir of Yapping Yorkies, Quarreling Neighbors, and the Unlikely Friendships That Saved My Life

**Richard Lucas**

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Comedian Richard Lucas's George Carlin-esque memoir, *The Dog Log*, begins with his "impotent fury" toward a neighbor with a yapping Yorkie; his initial frustration leads to a meaningful record of friendship and love.

Jokes and humorous storytelling create a thin veneer over Lucas's more gut-wrenching experiences. Although the book starts out in a lighthearted way, documenting the Yorkie, Sophie's, barking sprees in fifteen-minute intervals for the purpose of filing a thorough noise complaint, it takes a dark turn when Lucas is abandoned by his girlfriend. He turns to binge-drinking, morbid fantasies, and emotional wallowing, and his accounts of these are disturbing. Lucas's relationships with his neighbors also change, and laughter becomes his only antidote.

Its movements high stakes and its descriptions periodically pornographic, this is a stylized work that moves beyond the reportage of its log. Lucas contends with barking dogs, an elderly neighbor, long-unaddressed trauma, and substance abuse, his descent manifest in visceral descriptions of his deterioration. Here, a "bounteously threadbare" rug that was once a "fancy Asian carpet—ornate blue base with exotic florals woven in pink and white with vines" becomes "a crapestry, a huge biomass obstruction like so much used Charmin."

Lucas's delivery is sharp, even as, in the log, he struggles to articulate his misery. He deploys plenty of stand-up techniques, including sudden reveals, punch lines, and reported dialogue that make the log of Sophie's barking a slapstick account of the worst imaginable time in his life. Life-lesson asides to an imaginary sheriff are a humorous reminder that this story is a formal document, not a diary of personal ruin.

Naughty dogs and neighborly drama abound in *The Dog Log*, a darkly comic, suburban take on *I Hope They Serve Beer In Hell* in which humor is used to filter an account of the bleak aftermath of a devastating breakup.

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