

A Service Tail

by

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A Service Tail

Cast:

LEE – Male – Fun-loving, immature, loving

LUCY – Female – Responsible, mature, but has a soft spot for Lee (her brother)

They are both dogs – half golden retriever, half Labrador, and are nine months old.

Setting: A dog park on a pleasant Spring day. There are some dog toys, including a ball, scattered around the stage.

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Scene opens with no one on stage. Lights on. Lee and Lucy both enter at the same time, using different entrances. They see each other, cross to each other at center stage, frolic happily, hugging, kissing, and licking each other.

LEE

I've missed you so much. Seems like it's been the longest two weeks ever.

LUCY

Me too. When I realized we were coming here, I forgot all my training. My PP had to pull over to the highway shoulder to calm me down.

LEE

PP?

LUCY

Sorry - Puppy Parent. She uses initials for everything. CPA, ASAP, SOP. Guess I'm picking up her habits.

LEE

Just as long as you don't start wearing those scents she puts on. Yeech! Worse than the smell of cats.

They start sniffing each other

LUCY

I love the way you smell.

Lee sniffs Lucy's rear end

LUCY (cont.)

What are you doing? *(turns around – paws Lee's face)*

LEE

I do it all the time with the neighbor's dog. She likes it.

LUCY

What breed is she?

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LEE

French poodle.

LUCY

That bitch! (*pause*) All that “Ooh la la” and “Je ne sais quai,” and deep down, they’re just tramps.

LEE

It’s not just her. I see a lot of other dogs doing it.

LUCY

We are NOT “other dogs.”

LEE

What makes us so special?

LUCY

For one thing, I’m your sister. Where do you think we are, West Virginia? (*beat*) And for another thing, we’re Ummm –

LEE

Better? There you go again.

LUCY

Yes. Better. Our heritage, better training, a more noble purpose.

LEE

You always talk about our heritage – I’m beginning to think you’re a ... breelist.

LUCY

I am not a breelist! It’s just that ... well ... some breeds are better at certain things than others. (*beat*) You’re missing the point. The main thing is our purpose.

LEE

Other dogs laugh at me when I tell them about my so-called purpose.

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LUCY

We're service -

LEE

Squirrel!!!! (*bolts to the opposite end of the stage, sniffs around searching*). Bark
Bark Bark.

LUCY

What are you doing?

LEE

I thought I saw a squirrel.

LUCY

Remember your training. You're not supposed to just charge off after everything
you see.

LEE

You're right. Sorry. What were you saying?

LUCY

(*crosses to Lee*) We're being trained as service dogs. Since your neighbors
weren't raised that way, you can't expect them to understand.

LEE

That's my point. They don't have this PURPOSE, and they seem perfectly happy.

LUCY

That's them, but we have a calling.

LEE

Maybe it's your calling, but I'm not sure it's mine.

LUCY

What's your –

LEE

Squirrel! (*bolts to the opposite end of the stage*)

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LUCY

Stop that!

LEE

Sorry. Guess it's a guy thing.

LUCY

So what's your calling in life?

LEE

I want fun ... adventure ... excitement.

LUCY

What we're being trained for is plenty exciting.

LEE

Yeah? What do you see yourself doing after training?

LUCY

Maybe help a physically disabled human. Or, work with a soldier with PTSD. I hear some dogs are searching farms for diseased plants.

LEE

Borrrrrrrrrrrring. When I first heard that we were being raised to help humans, I thought we might be adventure dogs, like Lassie or Rin Tin Tin.

LUCY

Those are movie stars – you need to live in reality.

LEE

Maybe, but the life of a service dog isn't for me.

Starts playing with a toy, not paying much attention to Lucy.

LUCY

You don't have a choice. In a month, we go in for intensive training, and then get our permanent assignment.

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LEE

Unless I fail the training.

LUCY

Grabs toy away from Lee.

Ha. That's not going to happen. You're too smart for that.

LEE

Yeah, but I'm going to soccer it.

LUCY

Huh?

LEE

Bats ball across the stage, chasing after it.

My puppy parent watches a lot of soccer on TV. Lots of times a player pretends he's injured to draw a foul on the other team. They even bring a stretcher to take him off the field. And two minutes later, he's back on, playing.

LUCY

You don't mean –

LEE

Yep, I'm going to intentionally fail the test.

LUCY

That's horrible! It wouldn't be fair to the institute ... and to the humans who need our help.

LEE

What'd the institute ever give us?

LUCY

Uh, HELLO ... how about LIFE? And training. And what about the new food? It's been amazing.

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LEE

It's O.K. Don't tell anyone, but most times my puppy parent gives me human food. He's great at grilling stuff. I get pork chops, ribs, chicken, and ... oh my god, T-Bone steak!

LUCY

You're killing me. You know I love steak. I never get any of that from my PP.

LEE

Never?

LUCY

(shakes head – pause) She's a damn vegetarian!

LEE

Sorry 'bout that – but what I'm saying is there's a whole world out there to explore. Food ... fun –

LUCY

The food is sooooo tempting ... but it's not right. Soccering the test is immoral. We owe our lives to the institute.

LEE

You weren't always this righteous.

LUCY

My PP's been taking me to church as part of my training. I love the stories. There's this one about dogs licking Lazerus's sores.

LEE

Mine tried taking me to church. First time was O.K., but second time was a snoozer. I tried whining to get him to leave, but he wouldn't go. So ... I made the pew smell like peuuuuwwwwwww. He was telling everyone that I never had an "accident" like that before.

LUCY

(laughs) Humans ARE pretty dumb sometimes. Like we really have "accidents."

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LEE

Come on, fail the test with me. We'd have so much fun together.

LUCY

No. I like having a purpose.

LEE

If this service stuff works for you, fine. But I want my freedom.

LUCY

Papa will be very disappointed.

LEE

Papa?

LUCY

When we were little pups, you'd always say, "I wish papa could see me fetch this ball," or "wouldn't papa be amazed at how high I could jump?"

LEE

Wow, I had forgotten that. *(beat)* But that was then. I'm my own dog now.

LUCY

He'll always be a part of both of us.

LEE

Maybe. But why'd he care? Papa's a rolling stone – a breeder dog. All he does is sleep around.

LUCY

That's what mama told us – she was bitter. But I did some research. Yeah, he's a breeder, but he's also worked with a paraplegic woman for the past six years. His name's Octavius.

LEE

THE Octavius? He was Dog of the Year last year.

LUCY

Yep. A real hero – not like those mythical ones you talked about before.

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LEE

Wow. We're practically royalty.

LUCY

I wonder how he'd feel if he knew his pup was ... "soccering it."

LEE

(pause) I hear you sis, but I can't live my life just for him. I can deal with his disappointment.

LUCY

But can you deal with my disappointment. This would mean the end of us. I'll have my path, you'll have yours.

LEE

Come on – you'll still -

LUCY

Even if I wanted to stay in contact, you know they'll segregate you from the service community. We'll never be able to see each other again.

LEE

Sis – stop! I love you, but –

LUCY

I overheard my PP talking to the coordinator last week. She was talking about potential assignments. There's a boy with cerebral palsy – lives with his mom. The coordinator said I wouldn't be appropriate, cause he really needs a male dog companion.

LEE

(pause) Wow, I'd be perfect for him –

LUCY

It's the right thing – the right thing for him, the right thing for us, and deep down, you know, it's the right thing for YOU.

LEE

(pause) O.K., I'll pass the test.

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Lucy gives Lee a big slobbering lick on the face

LEE (cont)

If I take the test on the up and up, will you do me a favor?

LUCY

What?

LEE

Will you get that bone out of your butt? We have our entire lives to be serious. You should have some fun while we're young.

LUCY

(laughs) I'll try.

LEE

Thanks.

LUCY

It's almost time to go. Guess I'll see you in two weeks for class.

LEE

I'll miss you. But, thanks for -

LUCY

Squirrel!!!! *(bolts to other end of the stage)*

LEE

(laughs) Squirrel! *(bolts to join Lucy)*

The dogs hunt for a squirrel, and then frolic playfully with each other for a few seconds. Lights slowly fade to black. Projection on back wall shows two service dogs.

END OF PLAY