**The Adventures of Annabelle and Bones**

**Genre:** Family Animation

**Logline:** Having been protected from monsters intent on devouring her childhood by her faithful dog Bones, eight year old Annabelle must now protect him when he grows too old to keep her safe.

**Pitch:**

The Adventures of Annabelle and Bones follows in the tradition of “Toy Story” by exploring the vivid yet secret lives of apparently mundane objects, in this case household pets. While adults are unaware of their pets’ adventures each night, the precocious child Annabelle watches this secret world come alive much like the protagonist of “The Nutcracker,” able to converse with both her pets and toys. Inspiration also comes from Neil Gaiman’s short story “The Price” in which a household cat keeps the unaware family safe from the Devil every night. Since the most memorable children’s stories contain the tang of tragedy, The Adventures of Annabelle and Bones continues the bittersweet tradition of “Old Yeller” and “Where the Red Fern Grows” by not sugarcoating the concept of losing those we love.

**Setting:**

Much of the story revolves around the existence of GRENDLERS, goblin-like creatures embodying childhood fears that sneak into homes each night to draw sustenance by devouring the kids’ CHILDHOOD itself. Grendlers take only a bite each night, returning for years until the child is drained and enters adolescence. Having lost all but a trace of their childhood, adults are unable to see the Grendlers, telling their kids to just go back to bed when these apparent nightmares disturb their sleep.

Not to worry though, the faithful family dog is a talisman against these creatures, the dogs doing battle each night with the Grendlers to keep their families’ children safe. Even a small dog is more than a physical match for a Grendler, dispatching the creatures and covering themselves with their sooty blood that thankfully washes away in sunlight.

Alas, no dog is perfect and Grendlers invariable slip past their children’s protectors to siphon away every kid’s childhood eventually. Adolescence is inevitable, the dog simply trying to stem the tide of the loss. Every child must eventually grow up after all…

…Every child but Annabelle that is. Having been perfectly protected by her guardian Bones each night, she retains the entirety of her childhood, allowing her to still be able to speak with both her pets and toys. Her state of innocence may not last much longer though, Bones growing older every day and facing his greatest challenge in the newly appointed GRENDLER KING…

**Synopsis**

A hyperactive puppy, BONES annoys his cat companion NEIL as they wait for their owners to return home. But to Bones’ surprise, they appear with the baby ANNABELLE, the newest addition to their family. Though Bones fears being replaced as an object of affection by the baby, this does not dissuade him that night from intercepting a GRENDLER, a goblin-like creature intent on stealing a bit of Annabelle’s CHILDHOOD. Even though the Grendler assures Bones that the sooner the child grows up the sooner his family’s attention will return to him, Bones does battle with the beast. Though Bones overpowers the creature, his body betrays him, losing a BABY TOOTH that remains embedded in the Grendler as it makes its escape.

Though Annabelle’s MOTHER fears the dog’s reaction to their daughter, her FATHER assures them “Dogs look after their families; that’s what they do.” And Bones takes these words to heart, becoming his motto as he swears that no Grendler will ever feast on Annabelle’s innocence.

The years roll by, Annabelle and Bones constant companions and the best of friends due to the fact Annabelle can CONVERSE with not only Bones and Neil, but her toys as well, the inanimate objects coming to life when she’s near. The stuffed lionfish MS. BOOTS soon joins their troop, always at Annabelle’s side to provide never-heeded advice as her EIGHTH BIRTHDAY looms.

Over the years Bones has kept a nightly watch, defeating Grendlers right and left, collapsing into his dogbed each morning to rest and let the sunlight wash their sooty blood away. This leads his owners to believe he’s lazy as he sleeps the days away, only Annabelle knowing the truth as she slips into bed with him each morning to have him regale her with his feats the night before. Though she wants to go with him on his nightly adventures, Bones refuses, his only goal to keep her safe and forcing Annabelle to recreate his adventures each day, her in Bones’ role as protector while he sleeps. But Grendlers do not come to Annabelle’s house much these days, scared away by the legend of Bones.

The one place Bones comes alive each day is the DOGPARK, where he trains his fellow pets in the tricks he’s learned over the years to defeat the Grendlers. Seems his prowess and Annabelle’s untouched childhood have made them both celebrities, Annabelle learning from the old schnauzer CASSIDY about Grendlers. But the young buck German Sheppard TITAN is unimpressed by the squat and older Bones, learning the hard way why Bones is a legend as Bones performs his patented GATOR ROLL to defeat him. Titan immediately becomes Bones student, learning all he can to better protect his family.

All is well in Annabelle and Bones’ world, until TWO Grendlers arrive that night, one slipping past Bones while the other distracts him. Only Neil’s intervention saves Annabelle, Bones arriving to dispatch the second creature, but not before the Grendler informs them they’ve finally figured out the secret to defeating Bones…

**ACT II**

Knowing the usually solitary Grendlers never work together, this new team up troubles Bones, the situation worsening the next night when THREE Grendlers work in tandem though Bones is barely able to defeat them. All three wore the mark of a TOOTH, an image Bones cannot decipher as to its meaning as he wonders what their secret can be.

Sure the Grendlers must be teeming in the nearby WOODS, Bones allows Annabelle to search with him for any trace of them in the daylight to her great delight at being included in his adventures despite her constant conscience Ms. Boots warning her against such dangerous actions. Though they find traces of the Grendlers’ presence, Bones and Annabelle are unable to discover their lair. His now daytime expeditions stealing his sleep and making him lose a step at his nightly guard duty, Bones must unwillingly rely on the untrustworthy Neil to bring him information on the Grendlers’ camp.

That day at the dogpark the unthinkable happens, Titan defeating Bones in one on one combat, the student finally surpassing his master. Though Annabelle maintains the only reason Bones lost was that he was tired from his both daily and nightly adventures, Bones finally realizes the Grendlers’ secret to defeating him: He’s getting older, unable to keep up his nightly routine much longer.

To make matters worse, Annabelle’s parents worry at why their daughter prefers the company of her toys and pets to human companions, deciding to throw a SLUMBER PARTY for her eighth birthday to encourage her to interact with kids her age. Though Annabelle’s incensed at having to deal with these kids who have lost their childhood and therefore can no longer converse with her pets or toys, her parents insist, meaning Bones will not only have to look after Annabelle but all her friends as well.

Due to Neil’s manipulations, Bones mistakenly believes a Grendler attack is ongoing, leaping upon one of Annabelle’s friends and appearing to SNAP at the girl. Terrified that their terrier might harm a child, Annabelle’s parents exile Bones from the house that night, forcing him to guard it from the outside during the actual Grendler attack. Forcing his way back inside just in time to save Annabelle, Bones meets his true foe: The GRENDLER KING, the same creature Bones faced the night they brought Annabelle home from the hospital. Now wearing Bones’ lost BABY TOOTH around his neck as a badge of honor, the King has grown huge from gorging himself on children from around the globe. Possibly a physical match for Bones, the King has also united the Grendlers with the promise of Annabelle’s unsullied childhood as spoils for their victory over Bones.

To defeat so many foes, Bones does the unthinkable, WAKING up the adults to frighten the Grendlers away that night, further alienating him from the household though Annabelle still believes in her protector.

**MIDPOINT**

Now well aware he’s getting older and slower, Bones realizes he cannot both investigate the Grendlers’ lair during the day while protecting Annabelle at night. As such he brings Annabelle with him into the woods at night, ready to bring the battle to the Grendlers themselves. Though he tears through the unaware Grendler ranks, the King was prepared, shooting a poisoned DART at Bones. Barely evading the missile, Bones engages the King in one-on-one combat only to discover too late that the King is indeed his physical better. Barely escaping by his patented gator roll, Bones knows he can never defeat the Grendler throng on his own.

As such he and Annabelle prepare their home for battle, Annabelle setting up her toys as defenders against an oncoming siege. Giving an inspiring speech to her dolls, Annabelle and Bones hunker down, prepared for war.

And the dogs of war are indeed let slipped that night as the Grendlers arrive en mass. Though her toys fight the good fight, they are quickly overwhelmed. Bones and Annabelle are soon cornered, the King loading another poisoned dart, this time aiming for Annabelle herself…

Bones leaps before the dart, drinking deep from its poison in her place.

But it seems he’s played right into the King’s hands, the Grendler well aware he could never hit the dog and instead aiming for the girl knowing full well Bones would sacrifice himself for her. As day breaks and the Grendlers flee, Annabelle knows her protector will not be there the next night to save her from their impending attack.

The vets unable to discover what’s felled the ailing Bones, the family brings him home, Annabelle insisting he remain in the healing sunlight if he is to survive. Though Bones assures the girl that this is the way of things, dogs doing all they can to protect their families until they’re unable, Annabelle intends to face the Grendler King alone to procure the antidote that will save Bones’ life. Sending the cat Neil out into the woods to treat with the King, Annabelle offers him a deal: She’ll give him whatever he wants to save Bones.

Neil soon returns with a missive from the King: He will deal with Annabelle, so long as she comes to him that night in the woods on his home turf. As Bones’ life slips away, Annabelle knows his survival all depends on her actions that night…

**FINALE**

Braving the woods with Ms. Boots her only companion, Annabelle learns firsthand of Neil’s treachery as he lead her into a squad of Grendlers. And finally does Ms. Boots reveal her sharp and poisonous FIN RAYS as she leaps between Annabelle and her attackers. Insisting Annabelle continue on for the cure, Ms. Boots stands her ground, allowing the girl to finally find the Grendler King.

Though the King is ready to feast upon her that night, Annabelle offers him a deal: The ENTIRETY of her childhood in exchange for the antidote to Bones’ poison. Well aware he cannot siphon away all her childhood on his own in a single night without her approval, the King agrees, producing the ANTIDOTE. Annabelle therefore willingly sacrifices her childhood, all her golden energy flowing into a BOTTLE that the King can sup from at his leisure.

Giving up all but the last breath of her childhood, Annabelle realizes too late that without it the Grendlers cease to exist. Only the King himself remains, the greatest of our childhood fears continuing long after the onset of adolescence. Now alone with Annabelle, the King reneges on his bargain, trying to steal both her childhood and the antidote.

Facing her final fear alone, Annabelle does battle with the King, no match for him physically. But Annabelle too has learned Bones’ patented gator roll, using it to fling the King over a cliff while she claims the antidote…

Too bad for her both grasp the bottle containing her childhood, the only thing keeping the King from his demise. Knowing she cannot both save her childhood and Bones, Annabelle releases the bottle, destroying both the King and her childhood upon the sharp rocks below.

Victorious, Annabelle realizes she does not know the way back home, Neil arriving to lead her back out. Because of her sacrificed childhood, Annabelle can no longer understand Neil’s words but she follows him nonetheless, discovering the body of Ms. Boots, now just a stuffed animal and no longer animated. Clutching her former friend to her chest, Annabelle trudges home as sunlight threatens on the horizon.

Climbing into Bones’ bed as day breaks, Annabelle administers the antidote, its effects immediate upon the dog. But due to her sacrifice, Bones no longer has the words to thank her, only able to show his gratitude by licking her hand. Still, Annabelle knows her forfeit was worth it, and though she can no longer understand her best friend, he will remain at her side for years to come.

Taking the mending Bones to the dogpark that day, Annabelle is amazed as all the other dogs bow to them in acknowledgment of each one’s sacrifice for the other. Now too old and worn to take part in the pets’ play, Bones sits on the sidelines, the young Titan taking his former role as instructor in their continual war against the Grendlers. Bones barks at them from Annabelle’s side, and though she’s now unable to understand his words, she knows he’s telling them…

Dogs look after our families; that’s what we do.

**Characters**

**BONES**

A throwback to action stars of the 80s, the taciturn Bones is always ready with a perfectly timed one-liner and seems larger than life, no easy feat considering he’s barely 35 pounds and doesn’t even reach your knee. A mutt mix between a Pit Bull and a Corgi, Bones has the former’s physique but the latter’s stature, complete with tiny T-Rex legs. His almost pig-like build coupled with his long tail and one ear that flops down though the other remains always at attention makes him a bit of an odd amalgamation. But a girl could never hope for a better companion, Bones’ loyalty making up for his shortcomings and summed up in his enduring motto, “Dogs look after our families; that’s what we do.”

Despite his squat stature, Bones is a powder keg of fighting prowess, having perfected his GATOR ROLL, a quick spin from a full run that allows him to shift directions without losing momentum. Coupled with his powerful jaws clamped down on an opponent, Bones can and does bring down dogs three times his size at the dogpark with an almost judo-like throw.

Having protected Annabelle since the first night she was brought home from the hospital, Bones has made sure no GRENDLERS have snuck in to feed off her childhood. No monster has ever made it past his post, making both him and Annabelle celebrities at the dogpark where Bones trains the other dogs to better protect their families with the tricks he’s learned over the years.

Each night after his family is in bed, Bones constantly patrols the house, making sure no Grendlers slip past him. He’s effectively kept up an eight year watch, staggering to bed each morning covered in the sooty blood of Grendlers to let the sunshine wash the darkness away. Because he sleeps all day to keep up with his nightly patrols, his owners believe him to be quite lazy. Only Annabelle knows the truth, able to CONVERSE with Bones due to her intact childhood. Each morning her ritual is to climb into his dog bed and have him regale her with stories of his nightly heroics. Though she dreams to take part of the adventures, Bones will never allow this since his entire mission in life is to keep her safe.

But while he’s kept Annabelle safe all these years, Bones is no spring chicken, almost pushing nine years old. He’s well aware he’s missing a step these days and fears that the reappearance of the GRENDLER KING might spell the end of Annabelle’s unspoiled childhood. With the King coordinating the Grendlers attacks for the first time ever, Bones now faces opponents on numerous fronts and is forced to bring Annabelle with him as he seeks answers to the King’s plans in the nearby WOODS. Bones must come to terms with both his mortality and his untrusting nature as he must balance his desire to keep her safe with his sudden reliance upon both Annabelle and his constant feline foil NEIL.

Unceasingly loyal, Bones leaps before the King’s poisoned dart aimed for Annabelle only to realize too late he’s played into his hands: The King knew he could never hit Bones outright so aimed at Annabelle, knowing the dog would sacrifice himself to keep his human safe. Despite the ailing Bones insisting that Annabelle keep herself out of harm’s way by remaining hidden under her covers each night (there’s no better way to ward off monsters after all), she goes out to face the King alone and return with the cure for her faithful protector.

Though he’s unable to verbally thank Annabelle for her sacrifice by the end of the story, Bones knows she’s given him the ultimate gift, a gift he intends on repaying by teaching dogs everywhere how to keep our children safe from monsters as long as he’s able.

**ANNABELLE:**

Her perfect protector Bones having kept her childhood entirely unsullied, Annabelle has never had to grow up in the slightest in her eight years. The world is still a whimsical wonderland to the girl, a blank canvass on which she can paint all sorts of imaginative adventures. Untouched by Grendlers by this late age, this allows Annabelle to still be able to speak to and understand all animals as well as her toys becoming animated whenever she’s around them. Precocious, whip smart and ready for anything, Annabelle has existed in a perfect fantasy land her entire life and only knows of the grand adventures inherent in the most mundane of objects and situations .

This perfect childhood unfortunately makes the girl perfectly childish as well, always expecting to get her way and a bit of a recluse, preferring her toys and pets to human playmates. It’s not that Annabelle avoids human contact, but since most of her former friends have had their childhoods stolen away by Grendlers and are therefore unable to still join her in her fantasyland with talking dogs and toys, Annabelle prefers the later to the former. Her parents are therefore worried about Annabelle, inviting several of her friends for a sleepover party, Annabelle incensed when they would rather play video games than with her talking toys. Due to Bones’ protection she’s never had to deal with loss and has no idea of the dangers out there in the world. Easily bored, Annabelle craves adventure, even if it means she’ll have to manufacture it herself.

Annabelle wants nothing more than to go with Bones on his nightly escapades, something he will never allow. As such she cuddle into bed with the exhausted dog each morning, begging him to amuse her with stories of his nightly adventures and then recreating them each day with her toys, she now in the role of protector over his sleeping form.

Her constant companion is MS. BOOTS, a plush fish that functions a bit like Hobbes from *Calvin and Hobbes* in that only when Annabelle is alone with her toy does she come to life. Ms. Boots acts as Annabelle’s conscience, always advising the girl on the “right” course of action to keep her safe, advice that Annabelle invariable ignores in her search for fun.

Finally getting what she’s wanted for years and being taken with the weary Bones on his nightly adventures, Annabelle receives her first taste of the bitter drink of danger. Too late does she realize it’s a frightening world out there, one she must deal with directly if she is to save Bones from the King’s deadly dart by acquiring the antidote. Braving the dark woods that Bones has always forbidden her from entering by night, Annabelle comes face to face with her fears in the form of the King, offering him what he’s wanted all along: The entirety of her childhood if he will give her the cure to save her former protector. Though the cost is dear, Annabelle offers it willingly, telling Bones “families look after our dogs; that’s what we do.”

Annabelle’s journey is not entirely a happy one, losing the bulk of her childhood to the King’s treachery. But she saves her best friend, ultimately a worthy trade in her mind. Her childhood only a memory, Annabelle finally understands the pang of loss, Ms. Boots now just a stuffed animal and no longer able to comprehend Bones when he tries to thank her for her sacrifice. These are her first shaky steps into adulthood as she realizes she has to make hard decisions in a difficult world. But as she takes the mending Bones to the dogpark to watch him train the next generation of protectors of childhood. Though she cannot understand his words anymore, she takes solace knowing he’s telling them “dogs look after our families; that’s what we do.”

**MS. BOOTS**

A stuffed LIONFISH, Ms. Boots’ frilly fins belie a sharp intellect. Prim, proper and entirely English, Ms. Boots acts as Annabelle’s conscience. Since she’s not physically imposing in the least and without hands with which to interact with the world, Ms. Boots must instead rely upon convincing Annabelle on the correct course of action. Too bad for Ms. Boots Annabelle remains more interested in adventure than being a proper lady.

If Bones is Annabelle’s anthropomorphism of her father, the personification of him keeping her safe from harm, Ms. Boots is her bossy mother, always instructing her on how to be a better person. While Bones physically keeps Annabelle safe from Grendlers, Ms. Boots is relegated to advising the girl to stay away from dangerous situations in the first place. Ms. Boots’ greatest fear is that Annabelle will one day venture too far afield and get into so much trouble that neither she nor Bones will be able to rescue her.

A child’s personification of what a proper lady should be, Ms. Boots has a monocle she often has to shift from one eye to the other by huffing at it until it spins to the proper place to see things more clearly. Ms. Boots acts as a bumbling straight-man for the rather goofy Annabelle to befuddle by ignoring. That said, Ms. Boots is not without her defenses, her venomous spiky FIN RAYS always ready to protect her adopted daughter from harm by placing herself in its way.

**NEIL**

The oldest member of the household, the cat Neil knows firsthand what it’s like to be replaced as the object of affection, first by the dog Bones and then by their daughter Annabelle. A very mercurial creature, Neil’s motivations are the most complex. He has no love of Grendlers and views them as pests like a rat or a lizard – quite fun for hunting. But as a cat, he also has no love for being dragged into Annabelle’s games or the degradation of being dressed up for tea parties and therefore would not mind in the least if Annabelle were to grow up due to the Grendler’s siphoning her childhood away. His loyalties always suspect, Bones does not trust Neil in the least but both he and Annabelle must depend on the capricious cat if they are to defeat the Grendler King.

Though Neil prefers the status quo, he’s also intent on creating an interesting existence by manipulating both Bones and Annabelle. Due to Neil’s machinations, Bones is fooled into believing a Grendler attack is ongoing, snapping at one of Annabelle’s friends and causing him to be exiled from the house. Neil does not do this because he’s evil, only because by doing so he makes his life more interesting in the moment.

Deep down Neil does care for Annabelle, and to a certain extent Bones (much like one misses an ugly painting one has grown used to over the years after it’s gone). As such he leads Annabelle into the woods to deal with the Grendler King as well as guiding her out even though she is unable to understand his words any longer due to her sacrifice.

**GRENDLERS**

Effectively GOBLINS, Grendlers are two-feet-tall spindly humanoid creatures that encompass childhood fears. Sneaking into homes each night in order to gorge themselves on the CHILDHOOD of kids they find, Grendler’s nourishment explains why it is that children grow up into adults. The act itself is like taking a bit from a buffet, barely a scratch on the surface as the Grendlers siphon but a fraction of the GOLDEN ENERGY away. But since the buffet is never added to, enough stolen meals will eventually deplete the source and launch the child into the angst of adolescence.

Solitary in nature, one must usually only worry about one Grendler attack a night, the family dog easily able to dispatch the beast so long as the stealthy creature does not slip in unseen. Most dogs do their best, but are unable to keep watch all the time, hence children growing up despite their best efforts. Instead of blood, Grendlers have SOOT, covering the dog that defeats one in poison. Thankfully sunlight is the best antiseptic, burning the darkness away in the daylight. Fortunately for both Bones and Annabelle, news of Bones’ prowess has spread among the Grendler ranks, few of the creatures willing to risk the dangers of the dog’s jaws to claim her childhood as Bones’ ages.

Rather dim-witted, Grendlers possess the intelligence of their quarry, only as smart as the children they hunt. Too bad for Annabelle that she’s developmentally further along than most of their prey, thus creating the GRENDLER KING…

**GRENDLER KING**

Encountering Bones on the first night Annabelle was brought home from the hospital, the King is a bit of an outlier among Grendlers. Their first battle ending in a stalemate, Bones unable to kill the King due to the fact he lost a BABY TOOTH in the scuffle, the King has taken this single defeat to heart. Wearing the tooth around his neck as a badge of honor, the King has honed his abilities over the years, gorging himself on the childhood of kids on every continent. Doubling in size due to his feasts, the King could quite possibly be a physical match for Bones. And what’s worse, he’s significantly SMARTER…

Realizing a single Grendler cannot defeat Bones, the King has rallied the usually solitary creatures, making them work as units against the dog. Viewing his fellow creatures as no more than fodder, the King probes Bones’ weaknesses, realizing his unceasing loyalty will spell his downfall. And the King focuses on another of Bones’ weaknesses, Annabelle herself as he forces her to make a deal with him to save her dog.

The King represents the Shadow Archetype in Jungian psychology, the dark part of Annabelle’s unconscious that appears in dreams and fantasies while she’s asleep. And only after facing down her own darkness on its own terms does Annabelle become a more complete individual by willingly entering adolescence.

**ANNABELLE’S PARENTS**

Much like adults from *Peanuts* shows, Annabelle’s parents’ faces are never revealed to the girl (or audience) so long as her youth is intact. It’s only after she’s sacrificed her childhood do they become people she can comprehend and see them for who they really are.

Eschewing traditional family dynamics, her FATHER is a stay at home dad while her MOTHER provides for the household with her job. Though they are not major characters in and of themselves, the personalities of both Bones and Ms. Boots reflect Annabelle’s concepts of her parents.

**THE DOGS**

A small subplot, the DOGPARK and the dogs within do provide some important information as well as the final scene. It is only here that Bones comes alive during the day, BARKING constantly to the chagrins of his owners who insist he’s entirely silent in the house. What they are unaware of is that Bones is taking this opportunity to teach the other dogs all he’s learned about fighting Grenlders over the years. While there are dozens of dogs there, the two that stand out the most are:

**Cassidy** – a saintly old Schnauzer whose children have grown up, Cassidy often sits with Annabelle as Bones trains the other dogs. Cassidy represents Bones’ future: Too old to protect her children or to play. Despite this, she is a sweetheart and provides exposition to Annabelle as to the function of both Grendlers and dogs as family protectors.

**Titan** – a massive young German Sheppard new to the park, Titan is still full of piss and vinegar and does not understand why the rest of the dogs there hold the small Bones in such high regard… until Bones makes an example of him by demonstrating his gator roll. Titan therefore then learns all he can from Bones, the student soon surpassing his mentor and the first dog to ever pin Bones. But while Annabelle makes up all sorts of excuses for why it was Bones lost, it’s this moment that Bones realizes his own mortality and must accept it, giving Titan his due and insisting he use this information to keep his family safe. It is also Titan who leads the dogs through their paces in the final scene, taking up the mantel Bones formally wore as the now elder Bones sits on the sidelines barking orders.

Bones Inspiration:

