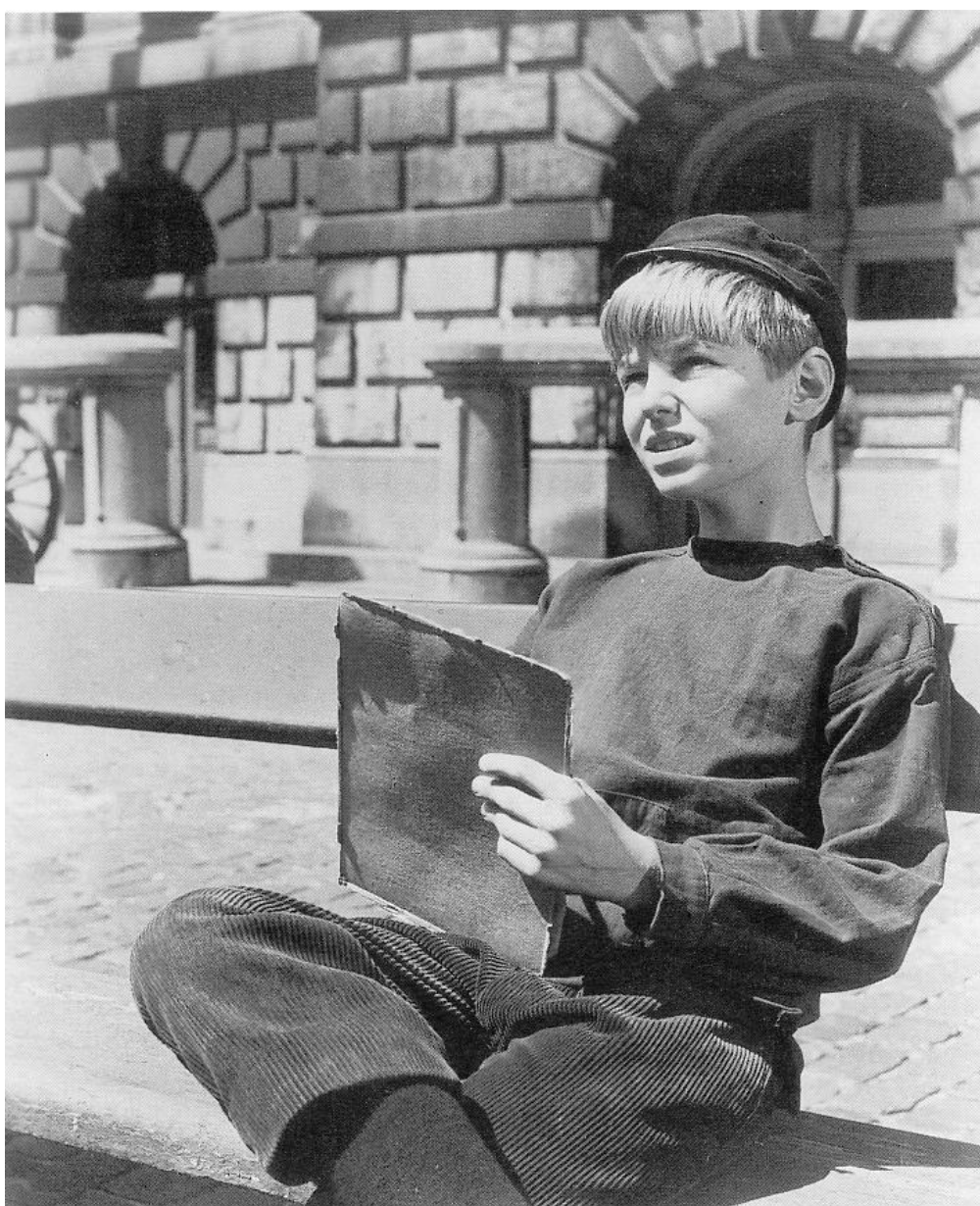


A Dog of Flanders

US : 1959 : dir. James B Clark : 20th Century Fox : 97 min
 prod: Robert D Radnitz : scr: Ted Sherdeman : dir.ph.: Otto Heller
[David Ladd](#)
 Donald Crisp; Theodore Bikel; Max Croiset; Monique Ahrens; Gibst Tersteeg; John Soer;
 Monique Ahrens; Lo Van Hensbergen; Slobhan Taylor; Katherine Holland

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ ∅ Z ∞	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
2405b	3½	10	2	1,372	3 - - - -	No	Unseen



David Ladd contemplates the gables

Source: The Moving Picture Boy

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide
1996 review:

"Tear-jerker for children about a boy, his dog, and friends they make. Crisp and Bikel have good character roles. Shot in CinemaScope. **"

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review - identical to above

Halliwell's Film Guide review:

"A small boy wants to be an artist; when he runs away in frustration, his shaggy dog, formerly a stray, leads his family to him. Old-fashioned tearjerker for well-brought-up children, previously filmed as a silent; quite accomplished in presentation. Novel by Ouida."

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89
review:

"One of the loveliest children's films ever made, the third film version of the famous novel by Ouida written in 1872. About a young Dutch boy, his grandfather, and the stray dog they adopt. ***½"

The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television review:

"What chance have even Donald Crisp and Theodore Bikel against appealing dog and kid in this happy tear-jerker for children? James B Clark laid it on thick. 3"

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

"Ouida's world-famous 1872 tear jerking novel about a boy and his dog and their devotion to each other tastefully filmed in its European locale. Nello (David Ladd) delivers milk in a cart pulled by dog Patrasche. Donald Crisp and Theodore Bikel shine in character roles, but the picture belongs to Ladd and the scene-stealing mutt fans will recall from "OLD YELLER". Have Kleenex handy. ****"

The Films of 20th Century Fox - a Pictorial History note:

"The classic tale (written in 1872 and twice filmed during the silent era) is about a Dutch boy (David Ladd) who lives with his wise old grandfather (Donald Crisp) in a little house on the great Flanders Plain. They make their living collecting milk from nearby farms and delivering it to Antwerp in a hand cart. They save an abandoned dog and nurse it back to health - the grandfather realising it will be a good companion for the boy when he is gone."

When the grandfather dies, the boy has a hard time until he is adopted by a painter (Theodore Bikel). The film tells its simple story in a straightforward and winning manner, and benefits from fine location shooting in Belgium and the Netherlands. Screenplay by Ted Sherdeman, based on a story by Ouida. Photographed in CinemaScope and DeLuxe Color by Otto Heller. Produced by Robert D Radnitz."

Those Endearing Young Charms still caption:

"Based on the 1872 novel by Ouida, "A DOG OF FLANDERS" is the story of a lad in turn-of-the-century Antwerp and of his beloved pet, Petrasche. Together they sell milk from a hand cart in order to support the boy's lame grandfather, Johan, played by Donald Crisp."

NFT bulletin - July '79 - review:

"Windmills and clogs and a big floppy dog, a kindly grandpa, a wild-eyed artist and a small boy who wants to learn to paint too - these ingredients are lovingly confectioned by James B Clark and superbly photographed by Otto Heller. The one threatening character comes to a satisfyingly sticky end, and dog and boy help each other out at moments of crisis. It's a charming, affectionate film, and Alan Ladd's son David makes a highly likeable hero."

Historical Boys' Clothing website review:

Color. The Ouida classic deals with a poor boy (David Ladd) and his grandfather who adopt a mistreated dog and share their meager rations with him. You may remember the dog, it was Old Yeller.

David plays the part beautifully of Nello, an innocent boy with a big heart. The costuming in the film appears quite accurate. Mello wears a kind of military styled cap which was popular in the Netherlands and a short jacket like Dutch smock. He also wears long pants cut above the ankles. They may be meant to be kneepants. HBC is not sure as to just what length Dutch boys would have worn their pants. Both Nello and his grandfather wear wooden shoes--footwear especially associated with the Netherlands. Nello desires to be a painter. The two find their lives are changed by the dog. When the old man dies, the two have to fend for themselves. The film is a real tear jerker. There are a few fleeting shots of more affluent boys in knicker suits.

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "A Pictorial History of the Talkies", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Ladd:

"David was the son of ALan Ladd and his second wife, Sue Carol. As a child he won several awards for dancing. His part in **"THE BIG LAND"** was only marginal, but he had leads in his other four early films. He was an outstandingly gentle little boy, quite without his father's cold-eyed cockiness. (Alan starred in his first two films.) In **"THE PROUD REBEL"** - which earned him a Critics' Award - David plays a mute boy; in **"A DOG OF FLANDERS"**, a sensitive child who learns to paint; in **"THE SAD HORSE"** a little cripple.

Pathos was his strong suit, but he kept sickliness at bay. When his father wasn't in the film, he often shared the honours with a dog and/or horse. In his 20s David returned to movies, with supporting roles in **"R.P.M."** (70), **"CATLOW"** (GB 71), **"DEATH LINE"** (GB 72), **"JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL"** (73), **"THE KLANSMAN"** (74), **"THE DAY OF THE LOCUST"** (75), **"EVIL IN THE DEEP"** (76), **"THE WILD GEESE"** (GB 77), **"CAPTIVE"** (80) and **"BEYOND THE UNIVERSE"** (81)."

Those Endearing Young Charms entry on Ladd:

"David Ladd, the son of film star Alan Ladd and former actress Sue Carol, was the youngest of four children but the first to follow in his parents' footsteps. His "living room" theatrics and driving interest in films and movie stars during his pre-school days made it clear to his family that he would one day be an actor. At first David acted only in school productions, receiving recognition strictly from his own peers. In 1957 his father landed him a role in **"THE BIG LAND"**, and even though it was a minor part, it managed to set the pace for future assignments in **"THE PROUD REBEL"** and **"A DOG OF FLANDERS"**, which established David as one of the top flight moppet stars of the fifties¹.

David not only was a good actor but he was also a first-rate dancer with several awards under his belt. And when he wasn't acting or dancing, he enjoyed swimming, diving, fishing, horseback riding, reading, making model planes, and playing with his four dogs on the ranch in Hidden Valley, California. He was educated at the Black Fox Military Academy and the Harvard Military Academy in Los Angeles. For **"THE PROUD REBEL"**, David won the Critics' Award for giving one of the top ten juvenile performances of 1958. Also that year he won "the best child actor award" from Photoplay magazine. His picture **"A DOG OF FLANDERS"** won the Grand Prix award at the 1960 Venice Children's Film Festival."

¹ even as the author of a book cooing all over child actors, he still reaches for the epithet "moppets"!

"He was an outstandingly gentle little boy.." who won several dancing awards as a small child - so his parents packed him off to the Black Fox Military Academy?? Is that a joke?

Whatever its literary pedigree, this is the sort of tulip-and-windmills vision of Flemish life that the Dutch themselves find so exasperating, though perhaps they're more tolerant of whimsy directed at a child market. Orphans, beloved dogs and kindly old grandfathers were the stock in trade of many a Hollywood child actor, and as Holmstrom indicates, David Ladd quickly found himself slotted into horsey and doggie pictures - **"THE SAD HORSE"** (59), **"MISTY"** (61) - which were scarcely calculated to enhance his dramatic potential. He's 11 here, but it was interesting to see him again, years later, in **"DEATH LINE"**, as a laid-back US student in swinging London whose girlfriend is abducted by a cannibal lurking in an abandoned section of the Underground (in the States it rejoiced under the even subtler title **"RAW MEAT"**).

The dog who appears as Petrasche, incidentally, was the same one - Lightning - who played **"OLD YELLER"** so affectingly in 57. See also the 1935 version with Frankie Thomas and the 1924 original, **"A BOY OF FLANDERS"**, title suitably adjusted in deference to its then mighty box office star, Jackie Coogan. This remake has the added merit of being shot on original location, as in 1972 was **"THE LITTLE ARK"**, also directed by James B Clark and also starring Theodore Bikel.

See subject index under **DIRECTORS, DOGS, GRANDPARENTS, ORPHANS / ADOPTION, OSCAR WINNERS / AWARD WINNERS** and **RUNAWAYS / STOWAWAYS**.