

Dog Run
by
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FADE IN ON:

EXT. PARK. MORNING.

CARRIE SAUNDERS (30) walks along a wet walkway in a foggy park. She is dragged by her leashed beagle, LINUS.

Linus' muzzle is grey; his colors are dull. He sniffs around as he trots through puddles. Carrie dodges them as she zips up her parka.

Joggers pass by. Linus tries chasing them and pulls on his leash. Carrie pulls back.

CARRIE

Linus, no! I'm not letting you
loose here. Not after last time.

She pulls him down a different path.

EXT. DOG RUN.

Carrie and Linus pass through double gates, into a fenced-in area. Park benches line the fence. Wood chips cover the ground. Trees are scattered about.

It's foggier in the run than outside.

Carrie unleashes Linus.

CARRIE

Go on, boy. You're free. Become
the feral beagle you truly are!

He runs off.

CARRIE

Don't get dirty!

She looks around.

There's only a few dogs (and owners) in the run, scattered about.

She wipes water off a nearby bench with her hand and sits down. She pulls a paperback from her jacket pocket and starts reading.

HRUMPH!

Carrie looks up. A large Malamute sits in front of her.

CARRIE
(startled)
Well, hello there...

Her smiles quickly fades as she stares at the dog.

CARRIE
Gypsy?

The dog WHINES.

She looks at the dog in sad disbelief.

SAWYER (O.C.)
Is she bothering you?

Carrie looks up.

SAWYER (60) steps up to Carrie. His skin is leather-like. His hair is long and white. He wears an old grey duster and matching hat.

CARRIE
No. No... I just didn't hear her
come up. And she looks just like
my first dog.

SAWYER
Your first dog?

He steps toward the bench and motions at it.

SAWYER
May I?

CARRIE
Sure. Go ahead.

He swipes water off it with a newspaper and PLOPS down. He lets out a GROAN.

SAWYER
Not many out here today. Guess the
weather's keeping them away.

The dog WHINES.

Sawyer points angrily at it.

SAWYER
What did I tell you about whining?

The Malamute looks away, frightened.

CARRIE

Oh, she's not bothering me. I was--
I was just thinking how much she
looks like my first dog, Gypsy.

SAWYER

Gypsy, you say?

CARRIE

Yeah. My parents got her for me
when I was five for my birthday.
Your dog looks just like her. I
mean exactly like her.

She leans forward, extending her hand toward the Malamute.
The dog sniffs her.

CARRIE

What's your name, cutey?

SAWYER

Her name's Sawyer, just like mine.

The Malamute licks her hand.

CARRIE

You named your dog after you?

She pets the Malamute.

SAWYER

All my dogs are named after me.

CARRIE

All of them?

SAWYER

All three. This way I can't forget
their names. Saves time when I
call them.

She smiles as she scratches the Malamute's neck. The dog
tilts its head straight back, stretching its neck.

CARRIE

You like that, don't you Sawyer?

SAWYER

What happened to your dog? Gypsy?

CARRIE

We had to put her down when I was
eleven.

(MORE)

CARRIE (cont'd)
She developed hip dysplasia. My
folks couldn't afford the
operation.

She stops scratching the dog and turns to Sawyer.

SAWYER
That's too bad.

CARRIE
I cried for weeks.

SAWYER
I'm sure you did. She easily had
another six good years in her.

CARRIE
Yeah....

She sits back on the bench.

CARRIE
How long have you had Sawyer?

SAWYER
Ages, it seems. Why, I've had her--

The Malamute lifts her paw and brushes it against Carrie's
leg, leaving mud on her.

SAWYER
You little shit!

He smacks the Malamute on the face with his newspaper--

--YELP--

He swings again. The Malamute leaps away, taking only a
light hit the second time.

SAWYER
Get over here, you! Get over here!

CARRIE
No. No. It's okay.

He turns to her.

SAWYER
It's not okay. She knows better
than to do that.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out some paper napkins.

SAWYER
She should know better.

He offers the napkins to her.

CARRIE
It's nothing. Really. All dogs do that.

SAWYER
Sawyer shouldn't. I'm sorry. I'm very sorry. It's my fault.

She takes them and wipes her leg with it.

CARRIE
She was just being playful.

SAWYER
I'm responsible for her.

A pack of dogs runs by the two, BARKING playfully. Linus trails the pack.

SAWYER
Your dog in that bunch?

CARRIE
(smiling)
The beagle at the end. His name is Linus.

SAWYER
Linus? Not Snoopy?

CARRIE
I didn't name him. He's a second-hand dog.

SAWYER
Just as well, naming a beagle 'Snoopy' is cliché. Like naming a dalmation 'Spot' or a collie 'Lassie...' So, how old's the little guy? Eight? Nine?

CARRIE
Eight. I got him four years ago when I first moved to the city.

SAWYER
So you went ten years between dogs? Long time without a dog--

CARRIE

Well, I had two other dogs before
Linus.

SAWYER

Two? Really?

CARRIE

Yeah, well, about a year after we
put Gypsy down, my neighbor's dog
had, like, eight puppies. They
were mutts. A little bit of
everything--

SAWYER

Heinz fifty-seven.

CARRIE

That's what my father called them.
We got two, Scarlet and Max.
Scarlet was the bigger of the two,
with a lot of red fur. Max was
tiny. Runt of the litter. They
were a handful.

SAWYER

I'm sure they were. Do your
parents still have them?

CARRIE

No. They're gone, too... Max was
pretty sickly. We kept him as long
as we could but the vet bills were
too much and he started getting
nasty to my Mom--

SAWYER

So you had him put down?

CARRIE

We didn't want to.

BARKING is heard in the distance.

SAWYER

No one wants to... But they do it.
What about Scarlet?

CARRIE

Scarlet? She's gone, too. She was
fourteen.

SAWYER
Long life for a dog.

CARRIE
Yeah. I guess. I don't know how
old she was when she died.

SAWYER
Excuse me?

CARRIE
I was at college and my father got
cancer. His treatment left him in
bad shape. My mother was busy
taking care of him and Scarlet was
too much for her. When I came home
one weekend, my mother asked me to
bring her to the pound... They
told me they'd find her a good
home.

A tear rolls down her cheek.

CARRIE
I swore I'd never get another dog
after that.

SAWYER
But you did. You got Linus.

He gives her more napkins. She wipes her tears.

CARRIE
A neighbor in my building was
moving and couldn't keep him. I
said I'd take him.

SAWYER
That's nice of you... How's your
father doing? Is he--?

CARRIE
He's fine.

She wipes her eyes with the napkins.

SAWYER
He's fine.

A LARGE RED DOG, with a grey muzzle, trots out of the fog and
up to Sawyer. He pets it.

Carrie looks at the Red Dog, amazed.

And horrified.

CARRIE
Scarlet...?

SAWYER
(still scratching dog)
Funny how far we go to keep people
alive. Radiation therapy for those
with cancer. Heart replacements
for those with bad tickers. Now
they're talking stem research--

CARRIE
Scarlet? It can't be you.

SAWYER
You'd think we want to live
forever. But if your dog develops
a little incontinence, or if you
can't take him when you move, what
do you do? You put him down.

Carrie slowly reaches out to the Red Dog. The dog SNARLS.

Carrie jerks her hand back, frightened.

SAWYER
What? You think she's going to
lick your hand after what you did?

CARRIE
What?

SAWYER
What do you mean 'what?' You
killed your dog. That's what!

CARRIE
I didn't--

SAWYER
You brought a fourteen year old dog
to an animal shelter. How many
people you know go to pounds and
ask for dogs that old? They don't!
They want puppies...! Your
precious Scarlet was given the
needle before you even got home.

CARRIE
Stop it! I don't know who you are
but these aren't my dogs.

SAWYER
You're right. They're mine. All
three of them!

CARRIE
Three?

She leaps to her feet.

CARRIE
(shouting)
Linus? Linus?

She walks away from Sawyer.

CARRIE
Linus? Linus! Here boy!

The fog thickens as she walks, frantically looking around.
Sawyer disappears into the fog.

CARRIE
Linus!

A faint WHIMPER is heard.

Carrie looks down.

CARRIE
Linus?

The silhouette of a small dog is seen. It slowly walks
toward her.

CARRIE
(smiling)
C'mere Linus.

Her smile fades.

The dog isn't a beagle, but a SMALL BLACK MUTT.

CARRIE
(stunned)
Max?

The Black Dog stops a few feet from her. It sniffs the air.

CARRIE
Max? How? How can you...?

The Black Dog is suddenly kicked. It YELPS as it runs off.

Carrie jumps back. She looks up.

CARRIE

Ohh!

It's Sawyer!

SAWYER

Never liked that one.

CARRIE

You kicked him!

SAWYER

I can do what I want. He's mine.

CARRIE

That's terrible! I don't know how you're doing this or if those are even my dogs--

SAWYER

They're not your dogs, remember? They became an inconvenience, you put them out of their misery. A quick injection and it's over.

She walks away from him, looking around.

CARRIE

Linus, come here, boy!

SAWYER

Do you know what happens when dogs are put to sleep?

CARRIE

Leave me alone.

Sawyer fades away in the background as Carrie walks off.

CARRIE

Linus, where are you?

SAWYER (O.C.)

They inject the dog with sodium pentobarbital. A barbiturate. It suppresses the dog's respiratory system. They suffocate. For three, four, five minutes, they lay there and they can't breathe. And do you know what they're thinking of during this time--

CARRIE

Linus--!

She starts crying as she picks up her pace.

SAWYER (O.C.)

In their child-like minds during those last minutes? They're thinking--

Carrie walks right up to Sawyer. He stares at her. His eyes are filled with hatred

She SCREAMS, startled.

SAWYER

Where are my owners? What did I done wrong?

CARRIE

Stop it!

She runs away from him, crying hysterically.

CARRIE

Leave me alone!

He fades away in the fog as she zig-zags around.

SAWYER (O.C.)

Their lungs burn for air for five minutes. That's thirty-five minutes in dog years when you think about it.

CARRIE

Linus, please come here!

SAWYER (O.C.)

Where are my owners? Where are the ones who raised me? Who love me? Who I love? What am I being punished for?

She runs into Sawyer again and SCREAMS.

SAWYER

I'm sorry I was bad. I won't do it again.

CARRIE

Why are you doing this to me?

SAWYER

Why am I doing this to you? Why
are you doing this to me?

She runs off.

SAWYER (O.C.)

Each time you put one of your damn
dogs down, I get stuck with it. I
don't ask for them! I didn't
promise Mommy and Daddy that I'd
walk them and feed them and clean
up after them! And I sure as hell
never said I'd kill 'em!

Carrie leans against a small tree trunk. She looks around.

SAWYER (O.C.)

But, somehow, when you or your
father put one down, I end up with
it! There's no rainbow bridge,
sweetheart... Not all dogs go to
heaven. Some come to me--

She runs into Sawyer. He holds the Little Dog up by the
scruff of the neck.

The Little Dog looks terrified. It squirms and WHIMPERS.

SAWYER

And I'm getting pretty fucking
tired of it.

She timidly reaches for the Little Dog. He tosses it aside.

THUD

YELP!

SAWYER

So, when should I expect the
beagle?

CARRIE

You leave him alone!

She slaps him in the face.

Vicious BARKING is heard.

Carrie looks down.

The Red Dog stands next to Sawyer, snarling and bearing her teeth.

Carrie steps back, afraid.

SAWYER
What'd you expect? She's
protecting her master.

She runs off.

CARRIE
Linus!

Sawyer casually follows, hands in his pockets.

SAWYER
You act like I'm the bad guy. I'm
not the dog killer here.

He disappears into the fog.

SAWYER (O.C.)
Hell, I wouldn't have any of your
dogs if they died naturally.

CARRIE
Leave me alone!

SAWYER
I'd love to, kid. If only you'd
stop dumping your dead animals in
my lap.

Carrie does a double-take.

CARRIE
(happy)
Linus!

Linus chews happily on a tree branch.

She rushes up to him and scoops him up. She hugs him.

CARRIE
Oh, baby dog!

SAWYER (O.C.)
It's baby dog now. But once he
starts pissing on the rug--

CARRIE
Get away from me!

She looks around as the fog gradually lifts. She doesn't see Sawyer.

There is no one around her. Even the other dogs seem to be keeping their distance.

She puts Linus down and quickly leashes him.

EXT. PARK EXIT.

Linus pulls on the leash as he and Carrie leave the park.

She frantically looks all around.

She sees Sawyer standing on the pathway. He blends in with the fog in an almost spectral way.

She watches him as she and Linus enter the street.

The beagle pulls on the leash into a lane of traffic.

A taxi cab races.

The SCREECHING of brakes are heard.

THUD

YELP!

Carrie spins around quickly as SCREAMS are heard.

People gather around.

The cabbie steps from his car.

Carrie kneels next to the stopped cab.

She picks up Linus. He is limp. She SCREAMS.

People ad-lib MURMURS on cell phones.

Carrie looks around the crowd that has gathered, into the park. Sawyer walks away, into the fog.

His three dogs are with him.

CARRIE

(mutters)

Only three... He has only three.

Not four.

She turns to Linus, crying hysterically.

CARRIE

Oh Linus... Linus. I'm sorry.

She hugs him tightly, crying.

FADE OUT.

CARRIE (V.O.)

I'm so sorry...