

Grady (The Last Dog)

By

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FADE IN ON:

INT. MILLIE'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

A modest little abode. The wallpaper peels. The furniture's antique, but preserved.

As is MILLIE (70s) - arthritic, but well maintained. She leans over a pale, blond head. Belonging to:

GRADY (17) - an old Golden Retriever. Pleasingly plump, and slow. A white mask on his furry face.

Millie fumbles with a sling for Grady's hindquarters. Her fingers don't move like they used to, but she snaps it on anyway. Grady WHINES.

MILLIE

Did I hurt you, Boy? You know I do this for your own good.

Grady wriggles and licks her face. Millie tightens the sling, and guides Grady towards the door. It's almost a race in reverse - who can move slower?

MILLIE

Come on, Grady. Walkies! I know it's been... quite a while. But today, it's just too beautiful outside!

She passes a huge litter box in one corner, tastefully hidden by a Chinese screen.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Millie stares at the metal door. Grady PANTS, drools on the floor.

A LARGE MAN saunters in. He sees Grady; his eyes widen. He inches towards the wall - as far away as he can be, without sinking in.

MILLIE

Don't worry. Grady doesn't bite. I doubt he has any teeth!

EXT. NYC SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Millie supports the sling with her frail arms, and navigates Grady down the stairs. The process is clumsy. But ultimately, a success.

The man from the elevator edges around them. He keeps his distance. Darts away.

Millie waves.

MILLIE

Goodbye, Dearie. Watch your step!

The sun is bright. Millie and Grady walk towards it - as slow as molasses down the street. CHAOS erupts, every human that they pass:

Two TEEN PUNKS swing around and stare.

TEEN PUNK 1

What the fuck. Is that a wolf?

MILLIE

No, it's a dog. Can't you tell?

TEEN PUNK 2

A "dog"? What the Hell is that?

TEEN PUNK 1

It's what the old folks used to have.

A few steps farther... A LITTLE GIRL spots Grady. She COOES and toddles towards him, hand outstretched.

LITTLE GIRL

Furry!

Her MOTHER freaks, yanks her back. The waterworks start instantly. Mom bundles the WEEPING child in her arms.

UPSET MOM

I won't let that nasty thing hurt you.

MILLIE

Pish-tosh. Grady loves little kids.

UPSET MOM

Don't you EVER endanger my child!

Grady and Millie turn the corner. Grady squats to pee: too unstable to lift his leg.

TWO OLD MEN (one Black, one White) watch from a distance. They WHISPER amongst themselves, amused.

WHITE OLD MAN

Am I losing my mind? Is that a robot I see before me?

BLACK OLD MAN

Hell, no. That's a dog.

WHITE OLD MAN

I thought they wuz gone.

BLACK OLD MAN

So did I. That plague was sixteen years ago. Didn't think there were none left.

WHITE OLD MAN

What is it?

BLACK OLD MAN

A dog, I said. Are you deaf?

WHITE OLD MAN

You crazy coot. I mean: what breed?

BLACK OLD MAN

A German Shepherd? Maybe a Belgian?

WHITE OLD MAN

No. Those colors ain't close to right.

Millie wanders past with Grady, amusement on her face.

MILLIE

My Grady's a Golden Retriever, Sirs.

BLACK OLD MAN

Why, thank you Ma'am. Much obliged.

He tips his hat.

MILLIE

My pleasure. Have a splendid day.

The old men smile, and watch her leave. The Black Gentleman turns to his friend.

BLACK OLD MAN

I wuz always surprised they didn't try cloning.

WHITE OLD MAN

The Animal Rights folks raised a fuss. About pets being "slavery" and stuff.

BLACK OLD MAN

Don't start that metaphor shit with me...

A stiff wind buffets Millie and Grady. The two old souls wobble in the breeze.

BLACK OLD MAN
He's pretty preserved. Sturdy.

WHITE OLD MAN
(grins)
So is she.

Millie and Grady head for home. It's only a block - but it still seems miles away. SEVERAL MORE PEDESTRIANS spot Grady and jump back: each time, they CURSE or SCREAM.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Millie hits a button - the doors begin to slide closed.

A YOUNG COUPLE (BOY and GIRL) approach. They spot Grady and recoil. Millie grabs the door.

MILLIE
Come on in. There's lots of room.

GIRL
We'll wait for the next one. Thanks!

The boy HISSES in the Girl's ear.

BOY
She's standing right next that... *animal*.
That's disgusting, don't you think?

GIRL
Shhhh. Not so loud. She'll hear!

The door closes. The elevator rises. Millie pets Grady.

MILLIE
Don't you listen to a single word they
say.

INT. MILLIE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Home sweet home. Millie locks the door. She fumbles with Grady's sling, and frees him from its nylon web.

Grady slumps to the floor. Millie spreads her skirt, and lays down neatly at his side.

She extracts a dog treat from her purse, and breaks it into tiny crumbs. She feeds it to Grady. He nibbles the morsels. Not too hungry - just a bit.

Grady GRUMBLES, happy. Lays his head across her legs.

Millie looks towards the fireplace.

A LINE OF PET PHOTOS decorate the shelf: A CHOW, a DOBERMAN, a GERMAN SHEPHERD. And Grady, as a PUP.

MILLIE

I wish you'd known them, Boy. They were all so special. Each in their own peculiar way.

Grady licks her hand. Millie strokes his muzzle.

MILLIE

But they're gone now and won't come back. I don't know why the scientists won't do more. There are so many children who've never known a dog's kiss. That's an everlasting sin, you ask me.

Grady SIGHS deeply. Millie ruffles his ears.

She feels no movement. Looks down, and sees...

Grady's passed away: warm and peaceful in her arms.

Tears roll down Millie's cheeks. She keeps petting Grady's head. Rummages in her purse to find...

...a BOTTLE OF PILLS. The label shows it's medicine from the Vet.

MILLIE

So funny. They gave me these months ago, if ever you were in too much pain, they said. I hope the prescription's not expired. I'll take more - just in case.

Millie pops five pills in her mouth. Though it's hard with her aging joints, she lies down flat on the floor.

And snuggles up to Grady's fur. Almost immediately, it's hard to open her eyes.

Mustering her energy, Millie glances at the fireplace again. Takes in one last lingering look at her pets.

Then she lays her head on Grady's muzzle. Owner and Beloved Golden - cheek to cheek.

MILLIE

(mumbles)

My Sweet Golden Boy. I bet that Rainbow Bridge is bright. See you on the other side.