

Dog's Day

by

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EXT. MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Early fall. Evening rush hour. Cold rainy drizzle. People hurry to get home after a long day's work. Traffic sounds blare in the background.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - NIGHT

Weary COMMUTERS hurry to catch crowded trains.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Nerves on edge, PEOPLE stand on a crowded platform, waiting for the subway. A packed train pulls into the station.

The gravelly VOICE OVER fondly recalls that of Thelma Ritter/Selma Diamond:

DOG O.S.
Despite the daily hassles of life
. . . its trials and tribulations
. . .

EXT. UPPER EAST SIDE MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Congested streets and crowded sidewalks. Within the hustle and bustle, several NEW YORKERS are seen walking their dogs.

DOG O.S.
Everyone has their day . . . even
a dog and this was mine.

THE TITLES AND MUSIC BEGIN.

Some of the people are conversing with their pets or other people who stop to talk with them or their dogs. Other dog walkers simply enjoy the solitude that the evening walk with their best friend provides.

END OF TITLES.

A yellow cab pulls over to the curb. FRANCIS MCDOOGLE gets out of the cab and pays the driver.

DOG O.S.
(continuing)
From the moment I saw him, I knew
he was the one.

Francis -- Fran to his family and friends -- is an Ivy-League attorney in his late 30s. TWO DOG OWNERS stop in front of Fran and talk while their DOGS sniff one another. Preoccupied by the day's events, Fran doesn't notice the people around him, trips on their dogs' leashes and falls flat on the ground.

He looks up in disgust and sees a stray DOG, huddled between two buildings.

The thin and mangy-looking dog is a mutt that has been abandoned by her owner.

DOG O.S.
 (continuing)
 Even though I knew he wasn't perfect, I figured, "Who is?"

Fran and the dog look at each other for a moment. The concerned dog owners and their dogs come to Fran's rescue.

FIRST DOG OWNER
 Are you okay?

SECOND DOG OWNER
 Did you hurt yourself?

The dog owners help Fran off the ground.

FIRST DOG OWNER
 We're sorry--

FRAN
 You should keep those dogs on a leash.

FIRST DOG OWNER
 They're on a leash.

FRAN
 This city is no place for dogs.

The dog watches Fran climb up the steps of his brownstone.

EXT. FRAN'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

FRAN shakes the rain off his overcoat as he searches for his house keys. He turns around and sees the DOG, watching him in the rain.

DOG O.S.
 With some people, you've gotta look beyond their exterior to see the good.
 (beat)
 I knew there was plenty of good inside him waiting to come out.

Fran grunts and unlocks the door.

DOG O.S.
 (continuing)
 The problem was how to get it out.

INT. FRAN'S BROWNSTOWN - NIGHT

FRAN enters his house and locks the door behind him.

RACHEL O.S.
Honey, is that you?

He grunts as he takes off his overcoat.

FRAN
Who do you think it is?

RACHEL O.S.
You're late.

Trying to ignore her, Fran pours himself a scotch and looks through his mail. His house resembles a tastefully decorated museum, filled with expensive pieces of furniture, paintings, and art objects. RACHEL WEINSTEIN, an attractive woman in her mid-30s, stylishly dressed in evening clothes, stands looking at him.

RACHEL
Honey, we don't have time for that. And you know what I told you about putting your drinks on the Louis the Sixteenth.

She takes away his drink and grabs him by the hand.

RACHEL
(continuing)
We're already late for the fundraiser at the Whitney.

FRAN
What?
(beat)
Where are we going?

RACHEL
Do you want to go?

FRAN
You want to go.

RACHEL
Of course, everybody who's anybody is going to be there. But that's not the point. I asked you if you wanted to go.

FRAN
Do I have a choice?

RACHEL
Yes. We can either go to the fundraiser or we can stay home . . . alone.

Fran looks at Rachel and then begins to take off his tie.

FRAN

I'll be ready in fifteen minutes.

INT. FRAN'S MAS- BATHROOM

In a heavy cloud of steam, FRAN steps out of the shower and starts to dry himself.

RACHEL O.S.

. . . and then I told her . . .

(beat)

Honey, why are you using that towel?

Fran stops and looks up at her.

FRAN

Because it was here and I thought

. . .

RACHEL sitting on the bed with her legs crossed, filing away on her nails.

RACHEL

(Laughs to herself.)

Fran. What am I going to do with you? I didn't buy those towels for that.

Fran studies the towel.

FRAN

You didn't?!

Vindictively, Fran uses the towel to wipe the steam off the mirror. He looks at himself for a moment.

RACHEL O.S.

No, silly! Besides, they're Ralph Lauren.

Fran looks over to Rachel with disdain.

RACHEL O.S.

(continuing)

Can't you read the label?

(beat)

They're designer towels.

He looks back at himself in mirror.

EXT. FRAN'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

RACHEL charges out of the house, still talking away. She is followed by FRAN.

RACHEL

. . . You'll see. That jacket wasn't right. Sometimes I wonder if I wasn't around who would dress you.

(beat)

Fran, hurry it up. We're late as it is.

He quickly locks the doors and opens the umbrella for her.

FRAN

I thought you said it was a fundraiser?

RACHEL

It is. But I don't want to miss anybody.

The DOG sticks her head out of the alley and looks to see who's talking. The dog perks up and starts to wag her tail when she sees Fran.

DOG O.S.

I thought it was him.

The Dog looks over to Rachel.

DOG O.S.

(continuing)

Okay, you can't always judge a man by the company he keeps.

Rachel turns to Fran.

RACHEL

Aren't we going to get a cab?

FRAN

Why? It's only six blocks.

RACHEL

Six blocks?!

FRAN

By the time it takes to get a cab in this rain, the fund-raiser will be over. We can walk it.

RACHEL

Nobody walks. Besides, I'm wearing my Kenneth Coles. They'll be ruined.

FRAN

You have fifty other pairs in the closet. Come on.

RACHEL

But . . .

About to lose his patience, Fran takes Rachel's arm. As they walk down the sidewalk, Rachel alternates between whining and complaining. The dog watches them for a moment and then shakes her head in disbelief.

DOG O.S.

No wonder he's the way he is.

The dog runs after Fran and Rachel.

EXT. WHITNEY MUSEUM - NIGHT

Cold drizzly rain. As FRAN and RACHEL hurry to the museum, HOMER, a homeless man approaches them for some change. Fran reaches in his wallet but Rachel motions the man away as she leads Fran to the entrance.

HOMER

"Wisdom outweighs any wealth."
Sophocles.

Fran looks up and sees a large banner over the entrance, which reads, "**NEW YORKERS CONCERNED FOR THE HOMELESS.**" He turns back to look at the homeless man.

The DOG witnesses the scene and shakes her head in disbelief.

DOG O.S.

Go figure.

INT. WHITNEY MUSEUM - NIGHT

A fashionable fund-raiser is in progress, the room's crowded with New York elite as FRAN and RACHEL make their way through the people, carrying their drinks. There is low-key chatter and laughter in the background.

RACHEL

There's Donald and Myra.

(Waves and calls out
to them.)

Hi Don . . . Myra. I love that
dress on you.

(To Fran. In private.)

Did you get a load of that dress?
It makes her look like one of
Cezanne's pears. And that short
man talking to Sylvia Prescott is
Henry Rich -- the new art critic
for the Times.

(more)

RACHEL (cont'd)
 (To Sylvia and Henry
 as they pass by.)
 Hi Sylvia. Hello Henry. I loved
 your recent essay in the New
 Yorker on the neo-modern art
 renaissance in the ghetto.
 Stimulating!
 (To Fran. In private.)
 Not!

FRAN
 Can we go? It's getting late and
 I'm --

RACHEL
 We just got here. What's wrong
 with you? Everybody is here.
 (beat)
 Aren't you having fun?

FRAN
 No. Not really.

RACHEL
 (Not Listening.)
 Is that April Levine over there?
 Ever since her face lift and nose
 job, she's pronouncing her name as
 "La" Vine. Really! Talk about
 superficial.

Fran stops and looks at Rachel for a moment, swallowing his
 entire drink in one gulp.

INT. WHITNEY MUSEUM - NIGHT

Later. FRAN helps RACHEL with her coat as they are about to
 leave the museum. As Rachel is talking away to the people
 around her, Fran glances outside and sees HOMER standing in
 the drizzling rain. Their eyes meet. He turns and looks
 back into the museum where the waiters are taking away mounds
 of leftover food. He turns to Rachel.

FRAN
 Excuse me a moment.

Fran leaves Rachel and walks back into the museum. She turns
 around . . .

RACHEL
 Where are you going?

Fran follows a WAITER, who's carrying a tray of food to the
 kitchen/service area.

FRAN
 Excuse me.

The Waiter, a young man in his mid-20s, turns around.

WAITER

Yes?

FRAN

What are you going to do with all that food?

WAITER

Dump it, I guess.

FRAN

Can I have some of it?

WAITER

Yeah, sure.

Fran spots a plastic container.

FRAN

Can I have this?

WAITER

Sure.

FRAN

Thanks.

Puzzled, the Waiter watches Fran dish food into the container.

WAITER

Are you still hungry?

FRAN

It's not for me.
(Finishes dishing the food.)
Thanks again.

Fran walks away, carrying the container of food. As he walks past Rachel . . .

RACHEL

What are you doing?

She quickly bids goodbye to her friends and follows him outside.

EXT. WHITNEY MUSEUM - NIGHT

FRAN walks toward HOMER. The DOG crawls out from under a parked car to greet him but Fran doesn't see her.

RACHEL

Wait!

Fran gives him the container of food. Taken aback by Fran's generosity, Homer looks up.

Suddenly, Rachel swoops down and grabs the food out of the homeless man's hands.

RACHEL
(continuing)
What do you think you're doing?

Rachel walks to the container over the trash receptacle and dumps it out.

RACHEL
(continuing)
You're only encouraging them.

FRAN
What?! To eat?

RACHEL
Come on.
(Takes his hand and
leads him away.)
Before you make a spectacle of
yourself.

As Homer rescues the container of food from the receptacle, the Dog watches Fran and Rachel walk down the sidewalk.

DOG O.S.
You've gotta love a man who tries.

The Dog hurries after them.

INT. FRAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

FRAN turns the light on in the bedroom. RACHEL comes into the room . . .

RACHEL
. . . and then I said to her, "I
don't think so." It's more like
a post-impressionist on prozac
. . .

She busily removes her shoes, unzips her dress, strips down to her black bikini pants and bra.

RACHEL
(continuing)
. . .and then she was raving
about the exhibit at the Altman,
which I thought very pedestrian
. . .

Nearly nude, she entwines herself around Fran, who is stripped to his trousers. They slide down into the bed. Rachel efficiently unbuckles and unzips Fran's trousers.

RACHEL

(continuing)

. . . I said, "Le Witts is so over rated, even though he does convey a sense of negative capability that is rare in post-modern . . .

Groping, grasping, gasping, and fondling, they finish undressing each other. In a fever of sexual hunger, Rachel mounts Fran and starts to writhe in ecstasy. She cries out in the throes of passion . . .

RACHEL

(continuing)

. . . And I know that if the Times gives him a good review for his next showing, the gallery can easily sell his paintings with a 250 percent mark-up and then I can buy that Winslow Homer for the library. It will look great with the new pieces of early American that I want to . . .

She screams in consummation, sighs a long, deliciously shuddering sigh, and sinks softly down into Fran's embrace. For a brief moment, she rests her head on Fran's chest, eyes closed in contentment. Then she climbs off and reaches for her nail file . . .

RACHEL

(continuing)

What do you think about getting a house in South Hampton this summer instead of the Island? Everybody I know will be going there. And besides, no one goes to the Island. It's so trite.

Fran looks over at her and shakes his head in disbelief.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FRAN'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Next morning. FRAN walks out of the Brownstone on his way to work. The DOG comes out of her hiding place and sees Fran. She runs after him. Fran looks down and sees the DOG walking along with him. Trying to ignore the dog, he continues walking to the corner where he hails a cab. He looks back down and sees the Dog looking up at him.

FRAN

What do you want?

The Dog looks at him inquisitively and then barks.

FRAN
 (continuing)
 Oh yeah?
 (Looks closer at the
 Dog.)
 Don't I know you? You look
 familiar.
 (Remembers.)
 It was last night, right? You
 were there last night. I thought
 that was you.
 (Pets the dog's head.)
 Don't you have someone to go home
 to?

The Dog looks at him with a sorrowful expression. A cab
 pulls up to the curb.

FRAN
 I've gotta go to work.

Fran gets into the cab and looks over at the dog. Their eyes
 meet. Fran turns and gives instructions to the driver. As
 the cab pulls away, Fran turns around and glances back at the
 Dog.

The Dog watches the cab drive away . . .

DOG O.S.
 The man was desperate for my help
 . . . he just hadn't realized it
 yet.

EXT. LAW OFFICE - DAY

In a prestigious Wall Street law office, FRAN sits behind a
 large oak desk in the midst of drafting up a will for RAYMOND
 BALANSKY, a man in his late 50s. Fran reads the document. . .

FRAN
 . . . being of a sound mind, I,
 Raymond Balansky, leave my entire
 estate, to be divided equally
 between my mother, Mrs. Eugene
 Balansky Jacobson Gittleman
 Kaplan --

BALANSKY O.S.
 You forgot the latest one.
 (To himself.)
 What's his name? Oh yeah . . .
 Myers.

FRAN
 (Makes a change in
 the document.)
 Mrs. Eugene Balansky Jacobson
 Gittleman Kaplan Myers.

FRAN

(continuing; Glances
up at Balansky.)

Your mother must have the nuptial
service memorized by now.

BALANSKY O.S.

Memorized?! At the Golden Years
Retirement Village in Miami Beach,
she's known as "Elizabeth Taylor."

FRAN

(Continues to read.)

. . . my wife, Ethel Balansky, .
. . and my daughter, Virginia
Balansky Marshal.

(Looks over to
Balansky.)

Is there anything else you'd like
me to change?

BALANSKY O.S.

Yeah. My life.

FRAN

(Looking up.)

Excuse me?

BALANSKY O.S.

My life. Can you change my life?

(beat)

Listen, a word of advice from
someone with one foot in the
grave, the only regrets you'll
ever have are the risks you didn't
take, the love you didn't return
and the freedom you never had.

(beat)

Don't die with regrets.

Perplexed, Fran watches Balansky leave.

EXT. ROOSEVELT EXPRESSWAY - DAY

Late afternoon. Traffic races up the Expressway as weary
commuters hurry to go home.

INT. YELLOW CAB - DAY

FRAN sits in the back seat, reading the New York Times,
occasionally glancing out the window at the traffic
surrounding him. The CAB DRIVER, a Middle-Eastern man in his
early 60s, sees something strange ahead of them and points to
it . . .

CAB DRIVER

What the fuck is going on there?

Fran turns to see what the driver is talking about. Through the windshield, he sees the faint figure of a dog standing in the middle of the Expressway as cars race by.

EXT. ROOSEVELT EXPRESSWAY - DAY

About 500 feet ahead of the cab, the DOG stands stranded among the six lanes of fast moving traffic.

INT. YELLOW CAB - DAY

CAB DRIVER and FRAN stare out the window as the cab drives past the DOG.

CAB DRIVER

That's going be one dead dog . . .

EXT. ROOSEVELT EXPRESSWAY - DAY

The DOG stands patiently, watching the traffic go by as if she's looking for someone. She sees FRAN go by in the cab. Their eyes meet.

INT. YELLOW CAB - DAY

FRAN looks back at the DOG and suddenly motions to the CAB DRIVER.

FRAN

Pull over.

CAB DRIVER

What?! Here? Are you crazy or something?

FRAN

I said "PULL OVER!"

CAB DRIVER

Okay. Okay.

As the driver pulls over to the side, the cab is greeted with blasts of horns and obscene words by the passing motorists. As Fran gets out of the cab . . .

CAB DRIVER O.S.

Where are you going?

FRAN

Wait here!

EXT. ROOSEVELT EXPRESSWAY - DAY

As the vehicles speeds past him, FRAN looks for an opening in the traffic. The DOG turns and sees FRAN.

DOG V.O.

I knew he would come back. Good men always do.

Happy to see Fran, the Dog starts to wag its tail and bark. Fran shouts over to the Dog . . .

FRAN

Stay there! I'll get you.

Fran sees an opportunity and races across the lanes of speeding traffic to the median and picks up the Dog.

With the Dog in his arms, Fran looks for another opening. The Dog looks up at Fran and licks his face. Fran grimaces and wipes his face.

Seeing an opening, Fran races across the expressway. The driver quickly opens the door as Fran, holding the Dog, dives into the cab.

EXT. FRAN'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Late afternoon. The cab pulls up to Fran's Brownstone. Still holding the DOG in his arms, FRAN climbs out of the cab and pays the DRIVER. As Fran walks toward his brownstone, the Driver sticks his head out of the window and calls to him . . .

CAB DRIVER

Hey mister!

Fran turns around.

CAB DRIVER

(continuing)

You know . . . Muhammad said something that whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall see it. But saving a dog's life?!

(beat)

You're all right, mister.

The cab drives off down the street. Fran watches it for a moment, petting the dog and then proceeds up the front steps.

INT. FRAN'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

As FRAN and the DOG enter the house, he hears the television in the bedroom. Fran calls out . . .

FRAN

Rachel . . . Rachel.

RACHEL

I'm in the bedroom getting ready.

Fran quickly looks through the mail as he walks sheepishly to the bedroom.

FRAN

Getting ready? Getting ready for what?