

THE DOG

by

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DIALOGUE SAMPLE

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CHARACTERS

SMOKEY, female, a dog. She moves on all fours. She holds things in her mouth. She growls a little. Other than this, there should be no behavior or costume choices that illustrate she's a dog. No ears, no painted noses. In other words, she should be as human as possible. She has great dignity.

OLD DYSON, Mid 40s, Male. Scar on cheek. Has made his mark on the world. Filled with regret.

YOUNG DYSON, late teens, early 20s, Male. Is eager to make his mark on the world. Somewhat disdainful.

SETTING

Place: In front of Dyson's house, in the woods; a desert island.

Time: Manhood. Childhood. Between. Manhood.

Scene 1

(SMOKEY, old, lies in front of the door to a house. OLD DYSON enters, in worn fatigues, carrying an old duffle. He has a scar on his cheek.)

SMOKEY *(growling:)*

This isn't your home anymore. Verrrrmin. Deserrrrter. No, better yet...strangerrr.

(O. DYSON freezes, wary of her.)

SMOKEY tries to rise. She is ill.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

I smelled you halfway up the drive, even over the rotting logs and the raccoon piss. This isn't your home. You're not in my pack. You left the pack.

(O. DYSON moves to her. She bites:)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

No!

(He jumps back. She collapses a bit.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

You smell like machine oil, corpses on fire, strange poisoned soil...

(She recovers.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

She's happier without you. We're all happier without you. Twenty years of fetching tumbling belly-scratching happiness. What did you think? You leave for the sake of your shadows, and the house freezes, preserved for your homecoming? The sun rises and sets, but not because of you.

(From the house, a baby cries. O. DYSON looks at the house.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

Yes...she found a new mate, and that happiness of the litter. He's good to me. When the ground's cold, sometimes he gives me an old newspaper to lie on...

(MORE)

(O. DYSON moves toward the house. With effort, SMOKEY blocks his path.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

You'll harm her with your presence. Is that why you've come back?

(Beat. He offers his hand to her.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

What? You bring your wet eyes here to comfort me? To whip my heart into submission? No.

I tried to keep you. I took that bag of yours in my mouth, but you tore it from me. Better remember that scar on your cheek. My teeth are sharp from twenty years of the absence of you. I'll give you a worse scar than that. That wound was from anger. The next one will be from bitterness, and those are fatal.

(She collapses. He moves toward her, but hesitates, afraid.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd, weakly:)*

I stood at your door and waited...I tear you apart in my mouth...my heart smells like a broken clock...like an empty house...why did you leave me?...

(O. DYSON kneels, away from her. He begins to pray to himself.)

Lights out, with the report of distant artillery.)

Scene 2

(Lights up. The same house, twenty years earlier.)

SMOKEY, young, runs in on all fours, with a duffle in her mouth, like the one O. DYSON had, but new. She drops it. YOUNG DYSON runs in.)

SMOKEY

You need this. You can't leave without it. I dare you to steal from my mouth.

(She picks it up in her mouth. They wrestle. Y. DYSON ends up on top of SMOKEY, their faces pressed cheek-to-cheek. She drops the bag. He scratches her belly.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

When I'm near you, I smell sweet shit, the sun rises, fills the gullies with joy. Was anyone ever as happy as all of us together?

(Y. DYSON stands and pets her head.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

What's that? It smells like you locking your heart...I saw you kiss her good-bye. Wait. You're leaving for a long time, aren't you?

(Y. DYSON turns and starts to leave. SMOKEY jumps in front of him.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

Wait. Who will teach me? Not the woman. She's stupid. She was lucky to get you for a mate. You still have so much to show me...teach me how to pick up a glass and drink.

(He pets her again, tries to move past. She presses herself against his legs.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

It's shadows that you chase. Phantom lights flying down the road at the end of the drive. You're not free to go.

(MORE)

(He puts down his duffle and pushes her out of the way. She steals his duffle, and runs across the stage.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

You were born owing. You owe us...you owe me.

(Angry now, Y. DYSON wrestles on top of her quickly, cheek-to-cheek. In the excitement, she bites his cheek.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

I'm sorry...that was an accident...

(Y. DYSON strikes her on the head. She cowers and tries to get away.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry...

(Y. DYSON wipes the blood from his cheek. He picks up his bag and exits. She looks up to find him gone.)

SMOKEY *(cont'd)*

I'm sorry. I love you. Come back.

(Lights out, with the report of distant artillery.)

Scene 3

(Lights up. Days later. An island in the sea. We hear the tide.)

Y. DYSON enters, bandage on his face. He carries a tall prayer candle, a bowl and a plastic baggy of orange powder.

He pours the powder into the bowl, spits into it, stirs with his finger.

He goes to the water's edge, takes a handful of sea-water, and pours it into the bowl. He drinks the concoction. It's not good.

He lights the candle and sets it down. He kneels and prays, in the same way O. DYSON did at the end of Scene 1.)

Y. DYSON

Blessed Virgin of Guadeloupe, I offer my prayer to you, let me see my future.

(He opens his eyes and looks. Nothing. He prays again.)

Y. DYSON *(cont'd)*

Blessed Virgin of Guadeloupe, I offer my prayer to you, let me see my future.

(Opens his eyes, nothing.)

Behind him, O. DYSON enters. Y. DYSON doesn't see or hear him, but prays.)

Y. DYSON *(cont'd)*

Blessed Virgin of Guadeloupe, I offer my prayer to you, let me see my future!

(He opens his eyes. Nothing.)

Y. DYSON *(cont'd)*

Ah dammit to hell!

O. DYSON

Hey there.

(Y. DYSON startles, turns to O. DYSON.)