

NEW FRIENDS

by

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INT. MASON'S HOUSE - DAY

MASON'S holding a toy in his hands as he is playing with a child.

CUT TO

Close up of Mason'S DOG, who is lying on a sofa and looking at Mason.

INT. A SHAKING MAN - DAY

A SHAKING MAN in earbuds walking around the apartment, holding and petting a CHIHUAHUA.

INT. A TALL MAN'S HOUSE - DAY

A TALL MAN is trying outfits on his GREYHOUND.

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - DAY

CLAUDIA is hanging up posters on the village walls and bulletin boards. We see the text on a poster: "Dogwalker in your neighborhood, +13475989434, Claudia".

INT. CLAUDIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Claudia is sitting near the dining table with BORIS.

CLAUDIA

How I wish we had a dog!

BORIS

We already discussed it a thousand times, you know my major objection.

CLAUDIA

Yep, I remember, you have an allergy to dog's hair.

(sighs)

I'm just thinking out loud.

BORIS

Well, if it makes you feel better, there's something else..

Boris is pointing at the window. It is raining outside the

window, and a maple tree is leaning down from the wind.

We see TWO PEOPLE walking towards each other in raincoats, each with a dog on a leash.

BORIS

See?! You have to go outside in any weather! And what about the vacation time? The dog hotels are so expensive!

CLAUDIA

Well, we don't travel much..

BORIS

We are moving a lot! Especially lately.

Claudia sighs and looks down at her hands and knees under the table. There're several posters, and Claudia is fiddling with the edge of the paper.

INT.CLAUDIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's dark and we barely can see the outlines of objects. Claudia is lying on her bed, and her face is lit up with her smartphone. On the phone's screen we see the text of a message: "Hi, can you pick up my dog at 7am tomorrow?" Claudia is texting the answer: "Sure, please, tell me your address". Boris is turning over from side to side.

BORIS

(grumbles)

Why don't you sleep, hun?

Claudia is hiding the phone under the blanket.

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - DAY

Claudia is standing at the front door of a house and rings the doorbell. The Tall Man opens the door and looks at Claudia with a straight face. The Greyhound appears at the threshold, and looks at Claudia cautiously, then quickly escapes to the back of the house.

CLAUDIA

Hello!

The Tall Man is turning his head and looking back in the house.

THE TALL MAN
(shouting at the dog)
I told you, don't be so shy!

The Tall Man is turning his head back and staring incredulously at Claudia with his brow furrowing.

THE TALL MAN
Wait a minute. Are you going to walk with him without a car?

CLAUDIA
(confused)
But.. there wasn't anything about the car on your list!

THE TALL MAN
(angrily to Claudia)
How will you get to the park?

CLAUDIA
Well, it's not so far, you know, just a five minute walk.

THE TALL MAN
It's a Greyhound, not a bus!

The Tall Man is rolling his eyes and slamming the door in Claudia's face. Claudia is standing confused near the door.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A door is opening, and we see a WOMAN on the threshold. Claudia is smiling at the Woman. The Woman hands Claudia A CAT with the harness.

CLAUDIA
(puzzled)
But..it's a cat!?

WOMAN
So what?! If you're a cat you don't need to be walked? I've never heard such nonsense.
(looking at the cat)
She's strange, Sweetie, right?

The Woman slams the door in Claudia's face.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A door slams in Claudia's face.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Mason is standing in a doorway, he has a long gray beard. He's holding a GRIFFON's dog, also with a gray beard. Mason is looking down at Claudia.

MASON

Please, stay nearby on your walk.
(pointing at the dog)
He doesn't like to stray far from home.

Mason is passing a leash to Claudia. The door is closing. Claudia is smiling, she's getting on one knee, and holding out her palm. The Griffon is sniffing her palm gently. Claudia is petting the Griffon and saying something we can't hear. Then Claudia is picking up the Griffon, standing up, and turning around from the door, and leading the Griffon down the street.

INT. LEONID'S HOUSE - DAY

Claudia holds the Griffon. Mason is sitting in the back of the room and talking on the phone, we can't hear his words. Mason is glancing at Claudia, then moving the phone from his ear and palming the phone.

MASON

Katya..

CLAUDIA

Claudia!

MASON

Claudia, please, wash Felix's paws,
I'll be back in a few minutes.

Claudia is walking across the room to the bathroom, looking at the house briefly.

CUT TO

POV

Claudia is looking at the room through the narrow gap from the door.

Suddenly Mason is opening the door and staring at the Griffon.

MASON

(taking the Griffon in his arms)

Well, Felix looks happy. So, you can come tomorrow morning, and I'll walk with him after lunch.

Claudia is nodding, then looking around the bathroom, and finally wiping her hands on her pants.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Claudia is walking with the Griffon by the road. The Shaking Man is going towards Claudia with the Chihuahua on a leash, and with a phone in his other hand. The Shaking Man is staring at his phone, while he passes by Claudia.

Claudia is watching the Shaking Man going. We hear the sound of her ringing phone, and Claudia takes the phone from her pocket. Claudia's hands start shaking, and the phone is falling on the ground. Claudia is swearing.

CUT TO

LIANE is going towards Claudia with a DOG on a leash.

LIANE

Hi, what a nice dog!

CLAUDIA

Well, thanks! I always wanted to have a dog, but my husband doesn't want one. So, I've started walking other people's dogs.

LIANE

Good idea!

(to the dog)

Rich, wait a minute, we'll go soon.

(to Claudia)

By the way, how long have you been living here? I don't think I have ever seen you before.

CLAUDIA

Only for a few months. My husband and I are from the North. We'd lived in New York for five years, but since we can work remotely, we decided to move to a suburb.

LIANE

I used to love New York, but here it's a quieter and cleaner place.

CLAUDIA

(laughing)

Yes, definitely, and neighbors are more friendly!

LIANE

You know what, I have an idea: if you like dogs, let's walk together. My name is Liane, here's my phone number..

Claudia is getting her phone from her pocket, and Liane is still talking, but we can't hear what she is saying.

EXT. STREET - DAY

We see Mason walking with the Griffon towards Claudia. A CHILD comes close to Mason and tries to pet the Griffon.

MASON

(Worryingly)

I'm so sorry, he's not a very kind friendly dog. You better not bother him.

The Child removes his hand quickly, pouts and resentfully and walks away.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Claudia is sitting on a chair near the table. The Griffon lies on the floor and chews a stuffed bear. Claudia takes a piece of dog food from a bag on the table, then comes closer to the Griffon, and gives him a piece of dog food. The Griffon lets Claudia take the stuffed bear from his mouth and takes a piece of food from Claudia's hand.

CLAUDIA
(petting the Griffon)
Good boy!
(sighs)
It's time for you
to go home, sweetie.

Claudia stands up, puts on a coat, takes the Griffon, and goes to the door.

INT. CLAUDIA'S HOME - DAY

Boris is sitting on a chair near the table. Claudia is coming from the back to Boris, trying to give a hug. Boris stops Claudia's hand.

BORIS
Still busy, sorry.

Claudia takes her hand off Boris and shrugs.

CLAUDIA
Boris, don't be boring!

Claudia turns around and steps away from Boris.

BORIS
Hey, I'm working for us!
(Sneezing)
Did you bring a dog into the house
today?

Claudia stops and looks at Boris, then looks at the floor.

CLAUDIA
(guilty)
Just for a moment.

Boris is looking at Claudia with a tortured look.

BORIS
I understand, dear! I'll
finish this project in a
few days, and then we can
spend more time together,
I promise!

Claudia nods, then turns and leaves the room.

CUT TO

Claudia is standing in the kitchen near the countertop. On the counter are two bowls with soup. Claudia is turning and goes to the stairs. Then stops, turns her head up and looks at the 2nd floor.

CLAUDIA

Dear, the food is ready,
let's eat!

Claudia is coming back to the countertop, carrying the soup bowls with two spoons. She goes to the dinner table. Claudia puts the bowls on the table and sits. Boris is going from the 2nd floor to the middle of the stairs. The phone in Boris's pocket starts to ring. Boris sighs loudly and has a little guilty look on Claudia.

BORIS

So sorry, it's a project manager.
Today is the last day, I have to
answer. Don't wait for me, I'll eat
later.

Boris wears his headphones and picks up the phone. Claudia glares at Boris, then takes the spoon and starts to mix her soup with it.

EXT. A STREET NEAR CLAUDIA'S HOME - DAY

TITLES: IN A FEW DAYS

A DETECTIVE (45) knocks at the door of Claudia's house. Nobody opens the door. The Detective observes the areas surrounding the house. We see Liane walking with the Dog on the street. The Detective is waving at Liane and getting closer to her.

THE DETECTIVE

Do you know how long ago the people
who rented this house moved out?

LIANE

(surprised)

That's strange, I've seen Claudia
recently. She didn't tell me, they
were going to move. Very nice young
woman, I should say. So, what's the
matter?

The Detective takes a photo from his pocket and shows it to Liane.

THE DETECTIVE

Do you know this woman?

LIANE

(looking at the picture)

Yes, but what's going on?

Liane looks at the Detective with a question on her face. We see Leonid running from afar.

MASON

My dog was stolen!

INT. BORIS'S CAR - DAY

Boris and Claudia are sitting in the car. Claudia's holding the Griffon on her knees. Boris holds the steering wheel in a half-face mask. The allergy relief tablets are near, and Boris is opening all the windows. In the back of the car the dogs and cats are sitting together.

After titles

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Detective and Mason are standing face to face.

MASON

(taking his phone from his coat)

Felix has a small GPS-tracker on his leash.

Wait a minute.

Mason and the Detective look closely at the phone's screen: "Location of Felix is detected". Mason and the Detective look excited.

INT. BORIS'S CAR - DAY

The Griffon is sitting on Claudia's knees and we hear the signal from his leash. Claudia is nervous.

CLAUDIA

You said, you had disconnected this thing!

Boris stops the car, picks up the laptop from Claudia's feet, opens the laptop, and pushes the button. The signal goes off.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Detective and Mason are looking at the phone's screen and laughing. Then we see on the screen: "Location is not found. Try again".

INT. BORIS'S CAR - DAY

CLAUDIA
(relaxes)
What will we do now?

BORIS
Find new friends!

Boris and Claudia are laughing and the car is going forward.

END