

## ABEL

### **Ext. Apartment Complex – Night.**

*We see a shadowy figure going door to door knocking. After the knocks we hear several different people react.*

*A woman screams and slams the door*

*A man yells, “What the hell is wrong wit you? Git da hell outta here! Go on! Git!”*

*Another man, “Dude! What the hell?” Slam.*

*These can overlap into a cacophony of reactions and door slams.*

### **Int. Apartment - Night**

*We hear loud knocks on the door that wake up Matthew. He is an elderly gentleman with kind eyes and firm hands. He walks to put on a bathrobe before he walks over to the door. He opens the door without looking and suddenly the visitor pushes his way into the apartment. Sammy, a middle-aged, disheveled and scraggly looking man wearing very worn and dirty clothes. He is obviously a vagrant of some kind. Attached to Sammy 's chest with several laps of duct tape is Abel, a full sized German shepherd with matted and bloody fur. Abel hangs lifeless from the front of Sammy. Sammy immediately starts pleading his case for help.*

(Overlapping)

Sammy

You gotta help me! You gotta save Abel! You gotta save him!

Matthew

Woah there! Hey now! What do you think you are doing?

Sammy

You gotta help me sir! You jus' gotta!

Matthew

Now calm down, calm down. Sha, sha.

*Matthew put his hands up to shush him. Sammy flinches then stops talking and stares at Matthew confused.*

Matthew

Now, are you asking to come into my home?

Sammy  
...Yes

Matthew  
Then please ask.

Sammy  
...Can I come into—

Matthew  
May I—

Sammy  
...May I come into your home?

Matthew  
Please.

Sammy  
Please?

Matthew  
Yes. Yes you may. Please do come in.

*Sammy looks around, as he is already inside the home. He takes a step away from the door as Matthew shuts it.*

Matthew  
Have a seat if you'd like.

*Sammy sits on the couch stiffly with the dog still on his chest. Matthew goes to the kitchen and starts boiling water for tea.*

Sammy  
...Why din't you yell at me an' telling me to go?

Matthew  
You knocked on my door and asked to come in. You're my guest. Now, if you barged in here and started with the stealing and breaking, then I might ask you to clean up and go.

Sammy  
You ain't scared?

Matthew  
Ha, not as much as I should be. It should be in my blood to not answer doors in the middle of the night, ya know?

*Sammy stares at him blankly.*

Matthew

Because of the, uh,

*He half-gestures an armband and the Nazi salute but to no avail.*

Matthew

Holocaust.

*Matthew sits down in a chair and pours a cup of tea.*

Matthew

Anyway, now on with your spiel, what's with the dog?

Sammy

Abel! Dis is Abel an he ain't feelin' good an I can't help him nothin'. Can you help him?

Matthew

Oh, I don't think—

Sammy

Please?

Matthew

Oy. Well, I'm no doctor, but let's have a look.

*Sammy abruptly stands up and walks very close to Matthew's face. Matthew begins to look at the dog taped to Sammy's chest while keeping his tea sheltered.*

Sammy

Oh tank you! Abel got sick ta'day and no one wants ta help us none so we was asking 'round here an' people jus' yelling at us all night.

Matthew

Yeah, I bet. I imagine not a whole lot of vets like house calls in the middle of the night at their house.

Sammy

What is you den?

Matthew

I'm retired.

Sammy

Dat why yous sleepin?

Matthew

Yeah, I suppose so.

*Matthew finishes looking at the dog and gets up from the chair.*

Matthew

Your dog is not ill, he's kaput.

Sammy

He's Abel.

Matthew

Yes and Abel here is, uh...

*Matthew half gestures to the dog and a death motion*

Matthew

Dead. Dead as a doggy doornail.

Sammy

You ain't gonna help him?

Matthew

There's nothing I can do for him.

*The tea kettle starts to sound.*

Sammy

Notin'?

Matthew

Nothing.

*Matthew heads to the kitchen to handle the tea kettle. Sammy starts to remove the duct tape from his body.*

Matthew

Tea's ready. Want some tea and a little nosh, uh, what was your name?

Sammy

Sameal Cain. But they's jus' call me Sammy.

Matthew

Matthew. Nice to meet you Sammy. Here, have a snack. It'll help you...

*Samael drops the dog carcass, now stiff, on the ground with a thud.*

Matthew

Grieve.

*Samael starts to pet the matted and bloody fur.*

Sammy

Abel, I's sorry. I's so sorry Abel buddy.

*Matthew returns and puts a plate of crackers and tea on the coffee table.*

Matthew

It seems a eulogy is in order.

Sammy

What's dat?

Matthew

It's where you say some nice words or a prayer about the person, or uh, dog, that died.

Sammy

You gots a prayer?

Matthew

I can say the Kaddish, but that's not for dogs, it's for family.

Sammy

Abel's all da family I's got.

Matthew

Eh, just tell me a bit about Abel here.

Sammy

Okay. Me an Abel be living in dat shelter cross da street near da Taco-Taco an people always loved ta say hi to us. They'd always bring Abel sometin' to eat, like a taco-taco or sometin, an they'd pet him an say nice tings.

*Sammy looks to Matthew for approval.*

Matthew

Very good.

Sammy

Now you go.

Matthew

Me go? I don't know--

Sammy

Please?

Matthew

Oh okay. Uh, Abel buddy, I just met you when you came in here mounted on this man's chest. I'll always remember this night as the night dog blood cost me my rental deposit. Amein.

Sammy

**Okay, now me go again. Abel, you's been my only friend after I got hurt. I's was a farmhand in dis field where da planes farting on all da corn. I knows I's not supposed to be in da field when the planes were flying, but I'd hide in da corn cuz I loved to smell da the plane farts. One time, I smelled too much farts and fell sleep on ax-i-dent. Den the doctors found me sleepin' in the corn and said I was sick and dat my brain was no good no more. Den dey wanted money for stuff, an' I ran away cuz I din't have none. Dat's when I found Abel, he was tied to a pole outside a sammich place so I took him and we's been buddies ever—**

Matthew

You stole this dog?

Sammy

I helped him. He's was tied up like a dog.

Matthew

He is a dog

Sammy

He's Abel.

Matthew

He's Abel, yes, the dog, named Abel.

*Matthew shakes his head then kneels down next to Abel and takes a look for a moment before grabbing the table cloth off the coffee table and using it to cover Abel.*

Matthew

Poor shlimazls, both of ya. You know, I used to have a cat—Sarah, my wife's cat; I hated the damn thing. It used to make this horrible noise

*He makes a cat hairball noise and finishes with a vomit and splat.*

Matthew

And my wife thought it was so damn funny, I imagine because it was fun for her to watch me try to chase the cat outside before the, you know.

*He gestures to the vomit/splat motion before.*

Sammy

Where your wife? She sleepin'?

Matthew

In a way yes, she's been sleeping for about 9 years now. The damn cat, on the other hand, stuck around for a while longer. I hated the cat even more because when the cat would, heave and,

*Gesture*

Matthew

I could still hear Sarah laughing.

*He looks to the wall where he has photos of both Sarah and the cat.*

Sammy

Where da kitty?

Dead, finally. But all burying that cat did for me was trade one pain for another. The pain of missing Sara for the pain of waiting to die alone.

*Beat*

Sammy

And no more

*He makes the similar cat noise and gesture*

Matthew

Heh, yeah, that too. So, how did Abel here, uh, you know...

*Matthew takes a bite of a snack. Sammy stares at him blankly while Matthew gestures to the dog again, trying to be sensitive.*

Matthew

Die. How did he die?

Sammy

An ax-i-dent.

Matthew

What happened?

Sammy

I din't do notin'. You believe me?

Matthew

That's okay, I believe you. What happened to Abel? You can tell me.

Sammy

Me an Abel used ta sit outside da Taco-Taco and dey used to always say hi to Abel and pet him and dey get him a taco-taco to eat. An' today dis guy gave Abel two taco-tacos and I wanted one, jus' one taco-taco, and den Abel says, "Grrrrr" so I try ta take one of da taco-tacos and he bites at me! So I said "Grrrrr" and I bite at him back! He's my buddy but dey all like him more. Dey never said hi to ME. Dey never pet ME. Dey never give ME a taco-taco! An it's cuz a him! Den I see dis big rock dat holds the door open and an I grabbed it like dis

*He picks up the tea kettle by the handle.*

Sammy

An I said, I jus' want one taco-taco! **GIMME IT ABEL!**

*He strikes the dog carcass with the tea kettle, splashing hot water and blood across the room. Matthew starts in with Yiddish and English phrases to calm him down, but they are lost under the sound of Sammy's yelling and continued pounding.*

Sammy

**Why do dey all 'nore me! Dey never say hi to me! Dey never pet me! Dey never buy me a taco-taco! I exist! I's not broken! I's hungry too Abel!**

*Sammy kneels, heaving, over the dog's bloody and wet body. Matthew calmly surveys the damage for a moment.*

Matthew

Gay Avek

Sammy

What?

Matthew

Get out of here.

Sammy

But you said

Matthew

Look at my home. Look what you did. The place is feroct after your little shtik there!

Sammy

B-b-but where does I's go?

Matthew

Away! Go away! Wander the Earth for all I care just leave me be!

Sammy

Can I—May I be here just for dis night?

Matthew

NO!

Sammy

...please?

*There is a long pause as Matthew takes a deep breathe and closes his eyes.*

Matthew

I'm sorry Sammy. I'm asking you to leave.

Sammy

But I's—

Matthew

PLEASE GO!

*Beat before Sammy moves to pick up the dog.*

Matthew

Leave it.

*He walks towards the door, opens it, and then turns back to look at the dog.*

Sammy

Good bye Abel buddy. I love you.

*He exits and shuts the door leaving Matthew alone. He looks from the door to the dog. Takes a breath and starts to recite an intimate Kaddish.*

*Blackout.*