

Fade in:

EXT. NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA - DAY - 2006

The ocean can be seen in the distance. TRAFFIC from the city can be heard.

EXT. ABANDONED AMUSEMENT PARK ENTRANCE - DAY

The amusement park is dirty and desolate. There are large puddles of water everywhere.

The roller coasters appear to be rusting. The remaining buildings are falling apart and are missing windows and doors.

There is little activity in the park. A few trash bags blow across the ticket booth at the entrance.

INT. TRAIN STATION BOOTH - DAY

TRAIN, early twenties, slowly wakes up. His face is grimy and clothes appear worn.

One wall of the booth is the old control station for the ride. To the left is a wooden table with two plastic chairs. Across from the table is a sleeping bag on the ground.

Train is sitting on the sleeping bag against the wall. There are empty bottles throughout the small booth.

His eyes are still closed, and he reaches up to his head where there is dried blood.

Train hears a RUSTLE and becomes still. His eyes remain closed as the noise becomes louder.

A hand grabs Train's foot and his eyes shoot open to see a DERANGED MAN grabbing at him. The man is bearded and wearing tattered clothes.

Train kicks at the man, knocking him unconscious. Train pushes the man off his legs.

He gets up, but the combination of a hangover and head injury causes him to stumble through the empty bottles.

Train rushes outside.

EXT. TRAIN STATION BOOTH - DAY

Train pukes. He braces himself against the building.

Train looks up to see ROCKET, mid-forties, his neighbor that lives in the rocket ride booth across the way. Rocket has a friendly demeanor.

ROCKET
Morning sunshine. How's that
hangover treating you?

Train glares at Rocket, and stands up straight. He puts his hand on the side of his head where there is dried blood.

TRAIN
Did you hit me last night? How
badly did I beat you at blackjack?

ROCKET
I didn't lose man. You attacked me
after I won the jackpot. Did what I
had to.

Train notices a dog named WHISTLE sitting behind Rocket.

The dog stares at Train, and looks eager to get near him. Train stares in confusion at Rocket and the dog. He takes an uneasy step towards them.

ROCKET
Train, I told you this was gonna
happen. I took her for the greater
good!

Rocket starts walking towards the rocket booth. He holds Whistle's leash. She BARKS once in Train's direction, but continues to walk with Rocket.

ROCKET
Let's go Whistle. Come on girl.

Train is still too dizzy to react or go after them. He continues to stare, and is struck with a memory from last night.

INT. TRAIN BOOTH - NIGHT (FLASHBACK - NIGHT BEFORE)

Train and Rocket are sitting at the table across from each other. There are bottles of booze on the table and ground. A majority of the bottles are behind Train.

Train is angry and pounds his fists on the table.

TRAIN
You're a fucking cheater.

ROCKET

You agreed to the rules man. I'm leaving.

TRAIN

Don't you fucking dare.

ROCKET

(to Whistle)

Come on girl.

Train dives at Rocket. Rocket lifts an empty bottle and hits Train in the side of the head.

Train shakily stands up from the table, a stumbles to the other side of the booth. He falls unconscious against the wall.

Rocket leaves with Whistle.

EXT. TRAIN STATION BOOTH - DAY

Train stands and stares in Rocket's direction. He takes a few quick steps forward. He has to reorient himself when he stops moving.

TRAIN

Rocket. Give me my damn dog back.
You can't just take a man's dog.

He winces at the loudness of his voice, but stands firm.

Rocket stops walking towards his booth. He turns around. Whistle's leash is still in his hand.

ROCKET

Won her fair and square, bud.
Whistle and I are a pair now. If you didn't drown yourself in every damn bottle of liquor you could get your hands on, maybe it'd be different.

TRAIN

What does that have to do with anything?

ROCKET

Why don't you figure that out yourself.

Rocket turns around and keeps walking.

Train angrily goes back to his booth. The once unconscious man is rummaging through his stuff. Train rushes towards the man and grabs him by the jacket. He lifts him with effort, and shoves him towards the door. The man exits.

Train searches through his backpack and sleeping bag for food. He comes out empty handed. Train grabs two cardboard signs that are lying against the wall.

One of the signs says "NEED FOOD ANYTHING HELPS." The other says "NEED DOG FOOD."

Train throws the second sign on the ground.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK ENTRANCE - DAY

Train walks towards the entrance. Rocket and Whistle are playing fetch nearby.

Train notices, and takes a moment to watch. Whistle appears to be having fun.

Train growls in anger and storms out of the park.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Train stands on the side of the building. He holds a wad of crumpled money in his hand from panhandling. AN OLDER MAN walks by him and Train steps forward.

TRAIN

Hey man, would you help me out? I was going to get a bottle of Jack, but I lost my I.D. I have money for it, and I'll give you a little extra for your trouble. No funny business, I promise.

OLDER MAN

(shakes head)

Sorry, I'm in a hurry.

The man quickly walks off.

TRAIN

Oh, come on man! Help me out.

The man enters the liquor store.

Train steps back to the side of the building, mumbling to himself.

A STRONG MAN, mid-thirties and obviously works out, gets out of his truck. Train hesitates to walk towards him, but decides to go towards him anyway.

TRAIN

Hey man--

The man doesn't look at Train, and keeps walking toward the store entrance.

STRONG MAN

Fuck off.

TRAIN

Excuse me?

The man turns around, and looks Train up and down.

STRONG MAN

I'm not going to buy you anything.
Fuck off, and go get a job.

TRAIN

No man, I just lost my I.D.--

STRONG MAN

I'm only going to tell you one more
time, Fuck off.

Train steps back and puts his hands up in surrender.

TRAIN

Alright, alright. I don't want any
problems here. Go on your merry
way.

Train walks back to the side of the building. The strong man walks into the liquor store. Train watches the strong man talk to the cashier, and point in his direction.

Train casually looks around, and begins walking toward the parking lot.

A WOMAN walks out of the liquor store holding a large bottle in a paper bag. She puts it in her purse and walks towards her SUV.

Train changes directions and walks towards her. He hides behind the few cars in the parking lot as he gets closer.

The woman searches through her bag for her keys. Train is at the back of the SUV. He looks around to make sure he isn't being watched.

The woman continues to search through her bag. Train runs up to her and grabs her bag. The woman struggles and he pushes her into the SUV. Train forces the purse from the woman and runs away.

INT. TRAIN STATION BOOTH - NIGHT

Train is sitting on his sleeping bag. He finishes the bottle of booze he stole. He throws the bottle across the room.

Train takes a lighter out of his pocket, and lights it. He stares intensely at the flame. Train keeps relighting it and staring at the flame.

A small smile goes across Train's face. He begins rummaging through his backpack. He pulls out a tattered shirt and puts it on the sleeping bag.

He gets up and steps towards the wood table against the wall. He swipes his arm across it, throwing a deck of cards and other trash across the room.

Train flips the table. He struggles to break one of the legs off, but manages to get it.

Train wraps the tattered shirt around the table leg, making it look like a torch. He grabs his backpack and finds a baggy of lighters.

He begins breaking open lighters and pouring the butane on the makeshift torch. He pockets the last lighter.

Train stands up holding the torch. He has an angry look on his face.

EXT. ROCKET RIDE BOOTH -NIGHT

Train walks towards the rocket ride booth. He stops twenty feet from the booth and is swaying forward and backward slightly.

He holds the unlit torch in his right hand.

TRAIN

(slurring)

Rocket! Rocket! Get out here. Give me my dog back. Give her. To me. I know you're in there! Come out here and give me my dog!

Whistle begins BARKING within the booth. Rocket appears at the screen door, hesitantly looking at Train. The top screen of the door is missing.

ROCKET

What the hell are you doing? Calm down.

TRAIN

You thought you could just take a man's dog and get away with it? Get out here. Bring Whistle with you. She needs to be with her master!

Whistle BARKS.

TRAIN

Come here girl. Whistle whistle whistle.

Rocket steps out of the booth. He closes the screen door and keeps Whistle inside. She can be seen behind the screen, and still BARKS occasionally.

Rocket walks about ten feet forward, standing between Train and the booth. He stands firm.

ROCKET

You're not getting her back. Look at yourself. You can barely stand up straight. You care more about that damn booze than you do yourself!

TRAIN

Give her to me! Whistle belongs to me!

Train takes out the lighter from his pocket and holds it under the makeshift torch.

TRAIN

This is your last fucking chance Rocket. Give Whistle to me, or I'll fucking torch you.

ROCKET

Do you really want to do that?

TRAIN

Yes, I do.

Train lights the torch.

TRAIN

I'll burn this whole goddamn place down, and make sure you go down with it!

Rocket takes a step backwards.

ROCKET

I can't give her back Train. Look at yourself. You steal a bottle of booze before you try and get her food. Last night you through a bottle at her because she was snoring. That ain't no way to treat a dog! She needs a safe home.

TRAIN

Don't you tell me what she needs. You son-of-a-bitch. You stole her. You stole her!

Train charges at at Rocket.

Rocket braces himself and Train hits him dead on. The two fall over and struggle.

The torch flies out of Train's hand and launches because of the impact.

The torch goes straight through the top of the rocket booth door where the screen is missing.

Whistle YELPS. The fire spreads within the booth.

TRAIN

No!

ROCKET

(overlapping)

Whistle!

Train struggles to get up and off Rocket. Rocket shoves him over, and Train grunts in pain.

Rocket gets up first and runs towards the booth. Train uneasily stands up and runs after Rocket.

The door and door frame have caught fire. Flames can be seen from outside the booth.

Whistle can be heard WHINING. She cannot be seen.

The men quickly reach the door. Train stands just behind Rocket.

Rocket pulls the door open, and manages to avoid the flames. Rocket enters the booth.

Train grabs the door to keep it open for himself, but burns his hand. He cries out and begins to panic.

Train stumbles into the door frame. He falls backwards outside the booth.

He lies on the ground from exhaustion, and makes no attempt to get up again.

Rocket emerges with Whistle in his arms. She appears unharmed. He puts her down and she begins BARKING at the burning building.

Rocket looks at Train and sees that his sleeve is on fire.

ROCKET

Train, Train, your jacket!

Train moves to look at his arm, and begins to scream. He sits up and tries to take his jacket off.

He struggles and manages to let the flame spread further up his arm.

Rocket takes off his own jacket and begins to beat out the flames. He hits Train repeatedly and gets the fire out.

Train looks Rocket in the eye, and then collapses in defeat. He lies on the ground.

Rocket looks down at Train's pathetic state. He sits on the ground next to Train. Whistle walks up to Rocket and sits beside him. She nuzzles under Rocket's arm.

The rocket booth burns behind them. Train begins to move and mumble.

TRAIN

I'm sorry...

(pause)

... I just, she's all I have you know? Since the day I found her with that stupid train whistle in her mouth.

Train sits up and looks at Rocket.

TRAIN

You keep her. She's better off with you. It's time I moved on anyway. I need another new beginning.

Whistle stands up and walks towards Train. She nudges him with her nose. He pets her and half-smiles.

TRAIN

Bye girl.

Train takes a deep breath and looks at Whistle. He nods his head at Rocket.

Train gets up and walks towards the train station booth.

Rocket and Whistle watch him walk away.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Train is wearing his backpack with the sleeping bag attached. He looks back at the park.

The sun is peaking over the horizon, outlining the roller coasters and buildings. The park is still and calm.

Train exits the park.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Train is walking backwards, sticking his thumb out to get a ride.

A few cars with bright headlights drive past him.

He walks at a steady pace. A slim-smile appears on his face.

A semi-truck stops for Train and opens the passenger side door.

SEMI DRIVER

Where you heading?

TRAIN

West.

FADE OUT.

THE END.