

THE SHOW

An Animation Screenplay

Based on the novella by Carter

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EXT. A TOWN IN TEXAS - DAY

ESTABLISHING. WIDE. Over a quaint, sunny little neighborhood.

EXT. BACKYARD, COLLINS HOUSE - DAY

A bright day in May. Meet our birthday boy BRIAN COLLINS (5), sitting amongst unwrapped presents -- toys, sporting goods, a cool cap. Brian is the center of attention at a party featuring picnic tables, food, balloons, family, and friends.

Brian's MOM (30s) looks at him lovingly, snapping a few phone pictures. Brian looks up from his opened gifts looking somewhat disappointed. He looks to his mom, expectant.

BRIAN

Mommy?

His mom tilts her head already guessing what's on his mind.

MOM

Your daddy is bringing in your present now.

Brian's DAD (late-30s) exits the back door onto the porch, holding something fluffy in his arms we do not yet see...

Brian looks up, his face lighting up like a Christmas tree as his friends and family turn their heads with curiosity.

The sound of a cute LITTLE PUPPY BARK.

Brian's eyes pop open and a big smile takes over his face.

BRIAN

YAY!

He gets up from the picnic table and runs over to his dad where we REVEAL he's holding the cutest little brown puppy.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

A chocolate Labrador!

Brian grabs the puppy and holds it close to him. The puppy immediately starts to smell and lick Brian's excited face.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

He must be looking for more cake!

His friends gather around as Brian shows off his puppy. It continues BARKING as though greeting them all individually.

Brian's parents are happy that Brian loves his puppy so much.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Thank you so much! This is the best present ever.

And as Brian stands there hugging the puppy, we move to...

INT. LIVING ROOM, COLLINS HOUSE - LATER

The party is over. Brian is completely distracted with the puppy, playing with him and running around the living room.

MOM

The fun has just begun, eh?

Brian nods enthusiastically, turning back to the puppy. The puppy is panting, its tiny tongue hanging from its mouth.

MOM (CONT'D)

You both look like you could do with some water.

The puppy looks up at Brian's mom as though in agreement.

BRIAN

I'll get it!

Brian looks down at the puppy.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I'm going to take good care of you.

He jumps up and heads into the open-plan kitchen... His mom watches as Brian opens the cabinets looking for something.

Brian emerges from behind the counter with two bowls. He fills one of them with water and the other with puppy food from a bag on the counter. He places them down on the tiles.

The puppy makes a beeline to the bowls and gets started...

Brian spots a few old blankets folded over the kitchen chair and looks to his mom for approval.

MOM

You can use those to make a bed until we go out and choose one.

BRIAN

Thanks mom!

Brian scoops them into his arms, struggling to see over the top of them as the puppy follows him out of the kitchen.

MOM
Where are you going, sweetie?

Brian's answer is muffled by the blankets. As his mom curiously follows Brian and the puppy, we move to...

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brian makes a bed for the puppy right beside his bed. Then, he looks down at the puppy curiously looking up at Brian.

BRIAN
Hmmm, let's see...

The puppy just sits there, turning his head back and forth like he's listening to what Brian's saying.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
What else?

Brian's parents exchange a smile as they watch him from the doorway. Brian looks around, eventually spotting them there.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
What else does a puppy need?

DAD
Well son, he does need a name.

BRIAN
A name? I get to name him?

DAD
You do.

BRIAN
Oh. I thought he came with a name.

Brian places his hand on his chin to think before turning back around to look at the puppy for inspiration.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Hmmm, who should you be, cute little puppy?

The puppy stares back, blinking sweetly.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
I got it! Rocky. I like the name Rocky.

Brian picks up Rocky. As Rocky looks back at his new owner and best friend, we switch to Rocky's POV --

BRIAN (CONT'D)
 Hey Rocky. That is your name from
 now on, little puppy.

And now we HOLD TIGHT on Rocky.

ROCKY (V.O.)
 And that's when I realized life was
 about to get a whole lot more
 exciting.

Rocky licks Brian's face and belts out a PUPPY BARK. And as
 we HOLD TIGHT on Brian and Rocky, now bonded, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD, COLLINS HOUSE - DAY

Brian exits the house with Rocky following excitedly, his
 little legs scrambling across the porch.

Brian stops on the grass. Rocky looks up, waiting --

BRIAN
 I'm going to teach you tricks and
 manners, so you will grow up to be
 a great dog.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS - HOUSE ACTIVITIES

- Brian and Rocky playing ball in the backyard.
- Brian and Rocky playing hide-and-seek.
- Brian and Rocky eating lunch in the kitchen.
- Brian teaching Rocky to fetch the newspaper.
- Brian and Rocky on the couch watching "K-9 Heroes."

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brian's parents kiss him goodnight and leave the room. Rocky
 jumps up and positions himself next to Brian's head.

BRIAN
 Goodnight, Rocky.

Rocky stays awake until he sees that Brian is asleep, and then he drifts off to sleep.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Brian and his parents walking Rocky down a tree-lined street in their quaint neighborhood. His mom and dad chat to one another as Brian and Rocky zigzag down the pavement.

MOM

Rocky is a great addition to our family.

DAD

Besides the little "accidents" when he is excited.

They share a laugh.

MOM

Not unlike Brian as a baby.

Rocky is drawn to a large puddle on the street and splashes through it freely. Brian follows suit, laughing raucously.

EXT. FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Brian's parents head toward the house as Brian and Rocky stay on the lawn to continue playing. Then --

The sound of FRIENDLY BARKING on the other side of the fence.

Brian and Rocky wander over together. They see...

The door of the neighbor's house opens and out comes a little brown-haired girl in a ponytail with a gorgeous fluffy puppy.

This is EMMA (6), vivacious and trendy in her colored jeans.

ROCKY (V.O.)

Wow, what a cute puppy.

The girl's puppy stops in its tracks waiting for Emma's cue.

EMMA

Molly, you ready to play?

Rocky and Brian continue watching.

ROCKY (V.O.)

Molly, is that a girl name? Is she a girl puppy?

(MORE)

ROCKY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I would sure like to meet her. She
looks like she might be my age.

Molly bounds over toward Rocky, her eyes focused behind her on Emma. She's waiting for Emma to throw her ball...

Emma throws the ball over Molly's head. Molly turns to chase it... She runs into Rocky, knocking them both to the ground.

Molly pops up quickly to see that she had pummeled Rocky.

MOLLY (V.O.)
I am so sorry. I didn't see you
there. Are you okay?

Rocky just lays there looking up at Molly, his mouth gaping open with 'puppy love' eyes. Rocky begins to stutter --

ROCKY (V.O.)
Uh, uh, okay. I mean, yes, I am
okay.

He jumps up from the ground.

MOLLY (V.O.)
I was playing ball with my owner,
Emma. She is my best friend and we
live right over there. See...

She points with her paw to their house. Emma is waiting on the porch steps for Molly to come back with the ball.

EMMA
Molly, here girl. Come on. Bring
the ball back.

Molly runs to grab the ball. Then she heads back to Rocky, dropping the ball from her mouth to say goodbye.

MOLLY (V.O.)
I have to go. Maybe we could talk
or play sometime?

ROCKY (V.O.)
Sure, I would like that, but we
haven't been properly introduced.

MOLLY (V.O.)
I'm Molly, and I'm a cocker
spaniel. What's your name?

ROCKY (V.O.)
I'm a Labrador, and my name is
Rocky.

Molly puppy-giggles. She picks up her ball, gives Rocky a wink, and runs across the grass back to Emma.

Rocky stands there just watching Molly and Emma until --

BRIAN (O.C.)

Rocky!

Rocky turns to see Brian in the flower bed looking for worms.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Come and help me find some worms!

Rocky joins Brian and starts digging like crazy. Dirt flying everywhere, neither of them caring about the mess.

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rocky is curled up in his bed staring up at the ceiling. A warm smile crosses his face as he lets out a big sigh.

ROCKY (V.O.)

Molly...

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rocky wakes up excited, pulling off his blankets and jumping onto Brian's bed. He BARKS and starts licking his face.

BRIAN

Okay, okay, boy! I'm awake. I guess you need to go outside?

Rocky looks at him, wags his tail, and lets out another BARK.

ROCKY (V.O.)

Yes, yes!

Covering a yawn, Brian gets dressed and follows Rocky out...

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Rocky bounds out the front door with excitement. Brian waits for him to pee but instead Rocky is looking at Emma's house.

BRIAN

What is it?

Rocky can't see Emma or Molly.

ROCKY (V.O.)
I sure hope they will be out soon.

He quickly does his business in the flower bed. Then, he pretends to sniff every plant and mail box, looking back to see if Molly has come outside yet.

BRIAN
Come on, Rocky. Let's go...

Rocky dissapointedly follows Brian back inside the house.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Rocky reacts excitedly to a waft of bacon from the kitchen.

ROCKY (V.O.)
Woah! Bacon day!

Brian sneaks him a piece before the family sit down to eat.

MOM
Good morning everyone.

Rocky makes his rounds, asking each person for bacon with a silent plea from his big, brown eyes. Then --

EMMA (O.C.)
Come on, Molly!

Rocky runs to the glass door to catch a glimpse of Molly.

ROCKY (V.O.)
Emma's taller than Brian. Is she older?

Molly looks adorable as she bounces around on the grass.

ROCKY (V.O.)
Her coat is so shiny in the sun.

Rocky runs to Brian to bug him to go outside. Brian gets the hint...

EXT. FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Brian sees Emma playing with Molly. He motions for Rocky to follow him...

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They walk over together, Rocky barely keeping himself from running ahead to speak with Molly. Emma looks up and smiles.

BRIAN

Hi. I'm Brian and this is Rocky.

EMMA

Hi Brian. I'm Emma... and this is Molly.

They each smile and reach down to pet the other's dog. They are jumping up and down with joy, barking, and nudging each other with their noses. Then, Emma's older BROTHER appears --

BROTHER

Hey, why don't I take you guys and the puppies to the lake?

Off their excited look, we move to...

EXT. LAKE - DAY

While Emma and Brian are fishing with her brother, Rocky shows off for Molly. He runs and jumps into the lake, swimming around freely with a big smile on his face.

Molly looks impressed as she watches Rocky from the dock.

MOLLY

Wow, you are really fast in the water. How do you swim so well? I don't know how to swim.

ROCKY

I don't know how or why, but I just love it. I think it's my genes. I would love to teach you sometime.

MOLLY

I am afraid of the water, but if you teach me then ... then maybe I won't be so afraid anymore.

As she watches him, he tries to look particularly impressive, raising his head above the water and making big paw strokes.

ROCKY

Okay then, I will. Maybe we can come back another day when the kids are at school.

MOLLY
Sure, that would be great.

And as they exchange a cheeky smile, we...

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rocky gets Brian up by pulling off his bed covers and jumping up to lick his face. Brian grumbles but gives him a big hug.

EXT. COLLINS HOUSE - DAY

Rocky walks Brian to the bus stop. Emma is there waiting...

EMMA
Oh, hey.

BRIAN
Hi Emma.

The bus arrives. Brian smiles at Rocky, bidding him farewell.

INT. COLLINS HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Rocky checks to see if Brian's parents are busy -- they are.

ROCKY (V.O.)
Time to plan my escape. Otherwise
known as "Rocky's Master Sneak Out
to Teach Molly to Swim So We Can
Swim Off Into the Sunset."

Rocky uses the back doggy door to get outside.

EXT. BACKYARD, COLLINS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

He digs a hole big enough to get under the fence surrounding his yard. Rocky lifts his nose and sniffs --

ROCKY
I can smell you Molly... you smell
like roses and vanilla.

Rocky heads to Molly's fence. He starts to BARK playfully.

INT. KITCHEN, EMMA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Molly hears Rocky... She bounds off her daybed and exits the house through her doggy door.

EXT. BACKYARD, EMMA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Molly heads to where she can hear Rocky by the fence.

MOLLY

Hey Rocky! How are you today? Isn't it a beautiful day?!

INTERCUT with:

EXT. BACKYARD, COLLINS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rocky is excited to hear Molly on the other side.

ROCKY

Yes, it is... I thought maybe we could go to the lake to play, and maybe I can teach you how to swim.

MOLLY

Great. I'd like that. But one small problem: How do I get over to you?

ROCKY

No problem. I got this!

Rocky digs a hole big enough to get through. He sticks his head under the fence and looks up at Molly.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

Hi. Here's your door, ma'am.

Molly laughs and crawls under the fence via the hole. The two puppies start frolicking about and share a few laughs. Then --

ROCKY (CONT'D)

Ready to swim?

MOLLY

Yep!

And as Rocky leads the way, looking back to ensure Molly is following, we move to...

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Rocky runs to the water and jumps in without hesitation.

ROCKY

Woohoo!

He swims around, enjoying the cool water surrounding him and moving through his paws. He looks up to find Molly smiling.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

See how much fun it can be?

MOLLY

It still really scares me. Can we just sit on the dock for a few minutes together and chat?

ROCKY

That sounds great.

The two scamper over to the dock and sit side by side.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

I can't believe you like baths and getting your hair brushed. Ewww. I hate that.

Molly laughs, shaking her head.

MOLLY

Oh yeah. It makes me feel clean and pretty.

ROCKY

Well, you don't need anything to look pretty. You are a natural beauty.

A beat. They look at each other and then he quickly shifts.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

I need to use the little boy's room. I will be right back.

Rocky stands and runs toward the trees. Then, to himself --

ROCKY (V.O.)

Geez, Rocky. Keep it cool.

He glances over and sees Molly sitting there smelling the fresh air around the lake. She spots a grasshopper...

Molly jumps up and uses her nose to annoy the grasshopper so it will start jumping. She follows it all over the dock.

Rocky emerges from the tree cover, smooths out the fur on his face with his paw, and then runs to join Molly's game.

Molly's tail thumps from side to side. She's crouching with the most intense look on her face. She starts jumping around with the grasshopper, chasing it as it hops farther away.

The grasshopper leaps to the water's edge. Molly bounds after him, following it right off the dock and into the water.

MOLLY
YIIIKKKEESSSS!

Molly flails her paws... her barks are choking on the water.

Rocky jumps into the water, swimming as fast as he can to her side. He tries to grab her scruff, but can't get a grip with his baby teeth. Next he tries to nudge her along, but she's panicking too much. Finally, he realizes the solution...

ROCKY
Get on my back!

Molly complies and they make it to the shore where her short, hysterical breaths start to slow down. Rocky walks a good distance on the ground, but even then, she stays on his back.

ROCKY (CONT'D)
Are you okay, Molly?

He cranes his neck and nuzzles her with his nose to try to make her feel better. After another moment, she gets off his back, shaking out her fur before curling into a ball.

ROCKY (V.O.)
Stupid question! Of course she's not OK! She almost died coming out to do something that you wanted!

Rocky braces himself for her anger. But, instead --

MOLLY
You saved me, Rocky. I just ... I couldn't do it. I have seen you swim and tried to move my paws like yours, but I just got so scared that I couldn't think.

She takes another deep breath and looks into his eyes.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

ROCKY

You did great, though! You stayed on top of the water. We will work on it. You will be fine.

MOLLY

Thanks to you I'm still alive to try again.

ROCKY

Why don't we call it a day and head back home? We can get dry and relax in the yard a bit.

MOLLY

Sounds good. On the way home, I want to show you my favorite place.

Off their excited faces, we move to...

EXT. PATHWAY - DAY

Molly leads Rocky down a dirt bike path into a tall grass field. Flowers are blooming on both sides of the path, big red and yellow ones waving gently in the wind. A few trees dot the way, giving them shade, but mostly it's blue sky.

ROCKY

What is this pretty place?

MOLLY

Just wait. Follow me.

Molly runs into the grass where grasshoppers pop up by the dozens. She starts chasing them. A few jump right into Rocky's face, startling him. When another grasshopper bumps into Rocky, he grins and stands his ground.

ROCKY

Okay, that's it! Let the chase begin!

And as we leave them there, both jumping around and having a great time with the grasshoppers, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Molly and Rocky walk side by side and brush each other's shoulders. There's a content silence for a long beat. Then --

ROCKY

Hey, would you like to take a nap in the sunshine until Emma and Brian get home from school? I think we could both use some rest after all that happened.

MOLLY

I would really like that.

Off Rocky's smile, we move to...

EXT. FRONT YARD, EMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

Molly leads Rocky to her front patio. They settle on a spot near the potted roses, the warm stone pavement feeling good against their coats. They both SIGH and fall asleep...

EXT. COLLINS HOUSE - DAY

The school bus arrives and the doors open. Emma and Brian descend the steps laughing together. They are about to bid each other farewell when something catches their eye.

Molly and Rocky asleep on Emma's patio.

They both walk over in shock to Emma's house...

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The FOOTSTEPS wake the puppies and they both look up to find Emma and Brian staring right back at them.

BRIAN

What are you doing out here by yourselves? How did you get out of the yard?

The puppies just looks from each other to their owners.

MOLLY

Molly, you are dirty! Where have you been?

They pretend they don't understand and jump up to play.

BRIAN

I think they like each other.

MOLLY

I think they do too. Maybe we can
all play together more.

The puppies look at each other with big smiles. And as Emma and Brian exchange a nod, happily watching them play, we...

CUT TO:

MONTAGE -- PUPPIES GROWING UP

- Molly and Rocky swimming together
- Emma and Brian doing homework together
- The four of them watching "K-9 Heroes" on TV
- Molly and Rocky sneaking out again
- Emma and Brian riding the bus looking older
- Molly and Rocky jumping off the dock into the water
- Molly and Brian on an excursion through the woods
- The four of them exploring the developing neighborhood

END MONTAGE

EXT. PATIO, EMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

Molly and Rocky sitting together looking two years bigger.

MOLLY

Where have the days gone? It has
been two years now. Emma and Brian
are seven, and we are older too.

ROCKY

Do we really have to talk about
getting older and wiser? I like
just playing around all the time.

MOLLY

Rocky, I overheard Emma and her
parents talking about sending me to
beauty school and then entering me
in a national dog show. I really
would love to go...

(MORE)

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Can you imagine being the best dog in the world? What a wonderful honor.

ROCKY

Beauty school? A dog show? That means that you will be leaving me.

MOLLY

Yes, it does. Hey, you could come with me! We could slip hints to your family, and maybe they will send you to beauty school, too.

ROCKY

Uh, no way. No way am I going to beauty school.

MOLLY

Then I guess we will be separated for a while.

ROCKY

When are you leaving?

MOLLY

The school doesn't start for eight months, so we still have some time.

ROCKY

Well, I guess I don't have a choice. Let's make the best of these eight months, shall we?

Molly leans over and rubs her nose against Rocky's head.

EXT. COLLINS HOUSE - DAY

The school bus arrives. Emma and Brian descend the steps.

The dogs welcome them and each walk toward their houses.

While walking them inside, Molly and Rocky look back at each other with sad faces knowing that they'll soon be separated.

INT. KITCHEN, COLLINS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Brian races inside, excitedly throwing down his backpack.

BRIAN

Look mom, a police badge.

Both his mother and Rocky look at the shiny badge.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

A policeman came to school today and taught us about safety. He also asked if we had a dog that we might like to send to the police academy.

Brian glances at Rocky looking at him with curiosity.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

They train security dogs and service dogs. They usually only take puppies, but they're starting a new program to train older dogs for less dangerous work. Rocky would be a perfect police dog with his skills. What do you think mom?

MOM

Really Brian, are you sure? You would have to let him go to the academy. He would be gone until he completed his training and then if he succeeded, he wouldn't come back at all because he would be working.

His mom puts a hand on his shoulder. Brian thinks for a beat about her words. Then --

BRIAN

Wow, I don't want to lose him. I will think about it a while longer.

Brian walks away, head lowered. Rocky quietly follows...

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brian climbs on his bed and sighs, looking up at the ceiling.

Rocky jumps onto the bed and snuggles, trying to comfort him. Brian absent-mindedly pets him as he stares at the police badge. The smell of metal hit Rocky's nose and he starts curiously sniffing. He stops and looks closely at the badge.

ROCKY (V.O.)

Oh! I know what this is! The dogs and officers on 'K-9 Heroes' wear these! I would love to wear one! I would miss Brian so much, but I would learn how to take better care of him.

Rocky wiggles his head over to Brian, barks, and grabs the police badge with his mouth. Brian turns to Rocky.

BRIAN

Hey boy, do you want to be a police dog?

He rubs Rocky between the ears, but Rocky jumps off the bed, barking and jumping around.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Okay, okay boy. I guess you do.

Brian lets out a sigh.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I will talk to mom and dad to see if they will let you join the canine police academy. I love you, boy. I don't want to let you go.

He starts crying while he hugs and kisses Rocky in his arms.

ROCKY (V.O.)

I don't want to lose you either.

Rocky licks Brian's tears.

ROCKY (V.O.)

But I think this is what I'm meant to do.

And as we stay on their faces snuggling close, Brian looking resigned to the idea, we...

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - BRIAN PRE-TRAINING ROCKY

-- Brian and Rocky playing fetch

-- Brian and Rocky playing tug-of-war

-- Brian and Rocky practicing obedience commands

BRIAN

I want to make sure you graduate at the top of the class.

Rocky looks up, panting. And as Brian smiles and pets his head, we...

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - EMMA PRE-TRAINING MOLLY

- Emma teaching Molly tricks
- Emma teaching Molly posture
- Emma teaching Molly commands
- Emma dressing Molly in various outfits
- Emma grooming Molly's fur with beauty products

EMMA

It's not long now before you start
beauty school, Molly. You're going
to win best in show for sure.

Molly looks up, smiling. And as Emma smiles and pets her
head, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD, COLLINS HOUSE - DAY

Rocky emerges from the bushes. He hears Molly on the other
side of the fence and stops in his tracks.

He tries to wiggle through the hole underneath the fence but
now he's too big.

ROCKY

Hey, Molly, are you over there?

INTERCUT with:

EXT. PATIO, EMMA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Molly is resting in the sun when she hears Rocky's voice.

MOLLY

Hey Rocky. How are you? You haven't
been around as much lately.

ROCKY

I know, let me explain. Can you
crawl under the fence to play?

Molly crawls under the fence. She leaps up to snuggle Rocky.

MOLLY

I've missed you.

ROCKY

I've missed you, too. How are you?
What have you been up to?

MOLLY

Girl stuff. Things you probably
don't want to know about.

ROCKY

Girl stuff, huh? Interesting...

MOLLY

Well, Emma and I have been getting
me ready for beauty school. I've
been dressing up in doll clothes.

ROCKY

Really, doll clothes? And this is
fun for you?

Molly laughs and looks over to Rocky.

MOLLY

Rocky, you are so cute and honest.

Rocky looks down, shy but charmed.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

So, where have you been? What have
you been doing?

ROCKY

Same as you: I have been preparing.

MOLLY

Preparing for what?

Then, she thinks a beat. Excitedly looks up --

MOLLY (CONT'D)

You changed your mind and want to
go to beauty school with me?

Rocky looks back at her with a hesitant smile.

ROCKY

Preparing for the canine police
academy.

MOLLY

What? Wow, really? Are you going to
be on 'K-9 Heroes'?

She starts skipping and nudging Rocky with her shoulder.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

What do you have to do?

ROCKY

It's a new program at the police academy and I'll start the same time that you start beauty school!

MOLLY

That sounds so great. You will be so good; you saved me. I know you will be the best police dog ever.

She smiles for him, but Rocky catches the hint of a frown.

ROCKY

What? What is it Molly?

MOLLY

Police work is dangerous. You could get hurt or even killed.

She looks away, slowly walking to a tree to lay down. He looks at her looking up at him with her big, brown eyes.

Rocky joins her on the grass. He puts his head next to hers and they sit quietly for a few moments looking at the sky.

ROCKY

I love helping Brian's family around the house, nudging them if they forget something, bringing them things or picking up after them. But I feel in my heart that I am meant for something other than just a buddy for Brian.

MOLLY

They will miss you so much.

ROCKY

The dogs on "K-9 Hero" are my heroes, and even though they have to do boring stuff sometimes, they also get to be in the community helping people.

Molly looks to Rocky, noting he's serious.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

The proudest moment of my life was when I saved you.

Now he looks at her, a mix of pride and sadness.

MOLLY

Well, I support you just as you are supporting me.

She nudges him with her head. And as the two lapse into silence, thinking about what the future holds, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE ACADEMY - DAY

Rocky, Brian, and his parents pull into the parking lot.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Brian's dad drums his fingers on the steering wheel.

DAD

Well, it's time to say goodbye.

Brian sniffles, trying not to cry. He turns to Rocky.

BRIAN

I remember how you always pulled me back if I got too close to the water when I was little, and I remember you making sure I didn't run into the street when it was busy. You learn so fast, and you already protect your family so well. You're going to be great.

Brian buries his face in Rocky's brown coat.

His dad turns to look at Rocky too.

DAD

Rocky, you're a star.

His mom reaches back to pet Rocky's head.

MOM

Yeah, I thought I was imagining things when I started noticing you pick up after me around the house. With that kind of smarts, you're going to blow them all away.

They exit the car and head toward the building.

EXT. POLICE ACADEMY - CONTINUOUS

Brian can't stop the tears now. With one last hug from each of his family members, Rocky is led away by his TRAINER (30).

Rocky watches his family walk away. His trainer gives him a reassuring pat on the shoulder and then leads the way.

CUT TO:

EXT. LASSIE'S LOCKS BEAUTY SCHOOL - DAY

Molly's family and Emma pull into the parking lot. Molly has her head out the window catching the wind.

They exit the car and are greeted by a REPRESENTATIVE. She looks a little like a show dog with bows in her fluffy hair.

EMMA

Hello, this is my dog Molly. She's ready to be the best show dog ever.

REP

Really? Show dogs don't hang their heads out of car windows like little hooligans.

Emma is taken aback. She turns to find Molly looking up at her with her big, brown puppy eyes.

EMMA

Here we are, Molly. Give me a hug goodbye.

Molly hugs Emma. With her head over her shoulder, something catches her eye on the large building. The sign: "LASSIE'S LOCKS BEAUTY SCHOOL," in bright pink, yellow, and purple.

Molly BARKS excitedly and wags her tail to show her approval.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Goodbye, Molly. See you soon, I love you very much.

As Emma wipes away tears, watching the rep leading Molly away, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD, POLICE ACADEMY - DAY

Metal fences surround a field. There are several buildings, rows of dog houses, obstacle courses, and a big pond.

Every dog is wearing the same blue collar with a golden emblem on its tag. Rocky looks around in awe. Sees...

Dogs BARKING in sync as they run in formation with their trainer. Others sniff bags, looking for illegal substances.

Rocky trips and falls. The trainer patiently waits for Rocky.

TRAINER

It's OK, buddy. Every dog gets distracted when he first arrives.

A nearby group of dogs are less sympathetic. Meet CAPTAIN BRUISER, a Doberman who stands by Rocky, towering over him.

BRUISER

Wow, newbie. Perhaps we should call you 'Trip.'

Rocky looks up, trying to look confident.

BRUISER (CONT'D)

How'd you get here, newbie? This academy is only for the best.

ROCKY

Umm, my person, I already miss him.

BRUISER

Your person? You don't have a person here, kid; just us and we are not as nice. Now get over here and stand in line.

With that, he turns around and starts walking, pausing and glaring when he notices Rocky isn't following.

ROCKY

Um sir, I am sorry but my trainer is right there, and I need to follow him.

BRUISER

Listen you idiot. I'm captain of this platoon, and your trainer is talking to our trainer because you are going to join us. Now follow me before you get hurt, newbie.

ROCKY
My name is Rocky, sir.

Rocky follows him to the formation, trying to stand as tall and straight as the others. Then, his trainer appears --

TRAINER
Good boy, but you won't be needing this anymore.

And cuts off the collar he had worn since he was a puppy. He is unexpectedly caught off guard, and sadly lowers his head.

ROGER (O.C.)
What's wrong, tenderfoot?

Rocky looks up to find ROGER, a black and white Pitbull mix.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Are you going to cry?

ROCKY
Look man, I just lost my family, and I am in a new place. Give me a break.

Rocky turns around, trying to regain composure.

ROGER
Sure I'll give you a break.

He pushes Rocky to the ground. He scrambles to get up but not before everyone sees him sprawled out. Rocky barrels into Roger and tries to wrestle him. He is about to go for his neck when a female Labrador, CALI, separates them and snarls.

CALI
You don't want to do this. Believe me, it isn't worth it. He isn't worth it.

This gives Rocky pause. He notes the calm and strong way she broke up the fight with authority in her voice.

ROCKY
I am sorry, I can't believe ... I mean, I have never...

Roger stands and growls at him.

ROGER
Whatever man, you are an animal. We don't need that type of behavior here.

The trainer appears and scolds Rocky in front of everyone.

TRAINER

Hey! Now that's no way to behave!

Rocky looks down, ashamed. The trainer kneels down and puts his arms around his neck. Rocky thinks it's a hug, but he puts a blue collar on him instead. The trainer pets his head.

ROGER

You better wear that proud, jerk,
and don't make our team look bad.

Rocky ignores him, focusing his attention on Cali.

ROCKY

Hi, I'm Rocky. I really appreciate
you standing up for me. I promise
I'm not normally like that, and I
will prove that to you.

CALI

Don't worry-I can tell. I know you
just lost your family. I was on
edge when I lost mine. I too jumped
Roger, that Pitbull you were
fighting, for spitting on me. See
that scar near his eye? That was
from me.

Rocky looks back at the pitbull's face. He can see the bare gap where skin has healed without growing fur back.

ROCKY

Wow, that was you?

CALI

Yeah, but I do regret doing that to
him. I was in the brig for a week
before they let me back with my
group. He was being really mean
when I first got here and none of
the other dogs helped me. He was
saying bad things about my family,
and I had to defend my honor. I
don't feel badly for standing up
for myself, but I should have done
it in a better way.

Pausing, she allows herself a small smile.

CALI (CONT'D)

I should have made him pee all over
himself.

Rocky laughs.

ROCKY

Yeah, I would have paid to see that. And is Roger his real name? I mean, like that's what we call him?

CALI

Yeah, it really is... I mean, is he a person or a dog? I make fun of his name all the time. He hates it.

Rocky and Cali laugh. Then, a WHISTLE... The trainer starts back to the dog houses. Rocky and Cali follow the herd.

CALI (CONT'D)

You already have your own place.

She nods at a red, white and blue house. There's a sign above that says: "ROCKY." Next door is another that says: "CALI."

CALI (CONT'D)

I'm next door. Lucky you.

ROCKY

Cali... That's a cool name.

They stop outside their neighboring houses. A German Shepherd named BUTCH appears, smiling at Cali. Then, to Rocky --

BUTCH

Hey Rocky. My name's Butch. Go ahead. Go inside. It won't bite.

ROCKY

I know, I know.

Rocky grins playfully. Cali and Butch smile back.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

It's very patriotic.

BUTCH

Yeah, each platoon has their own colors, and I'm still thanking my lucky stars I'm not in the group that's orange, green and purple. I still can't figure out who put together that combination.

He shakes his head in disbelief. Rocky notes Butch's collar.

ROCKY

Wow. You have a bunch of tags on your collar. What are those for?

BUTCH

They give you a tag when you do a good deed.

ROCKY

Oh, really? By the time I'm done, I'm going to get a bunch; I am going to do a lot of good deeds. In fact, I am going to be the best.

BUTCH

Great, another hot shot rookie.

ROCKY

It's not that I think I'm better than anyone, and I don't want to make it a competition. I want to work the hardest, and be the best because that means I am doing my best to help others. Don't you feel the same way?

BUTCH

Yes and no. Yes, I love my job, but after so many years, I've learned that I need a greater balance between working and living life.

ROCKY

But you have all those medals. They must mean something to you.

BUTCH

They do, but don't burn yourself out kid. Just be your best.

Off Rocky's look, we move to...

INT. COMPLEX, LASSIE'S LOCKS BEAUTY SCHOOL - DAY

Dogs everywhere. Molly looking around in shock at all the different types. Then, something catches her eye. Sees...

A tall, blond Afghan dog barking at its trainer. This is ZOE.

ZOE

I don't want to go! I don't want to go, and you can't make me!

Zoe pulls against the leash. The trainer gives her a stern look and then Zoe walks to the check point near Molly.

ZOE (CONT'D)

I can't believe this place.
Everyone smells the same. How are
we supposed to tell each other
apart? Seriously.

Zoe primps herself. Molly finds her amusing, unable to take her eyes away. Zoe catches Molly's eye.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Do you have something to add,
smalls?

MOLLY

Oh no. My laugh was only to agree
with you. I think you are right.
There is no need to go around
smelling each other when we all
smell like eucalyptus.

They share a giggle.

ZOE

I'm Zoe. Held hostage here against
my will as you can see...

MOM

I'm Molly. You have such gorgeous,
flowing hair. Why don't you want to
be here - is it a confidence thing?

ZOE

Thanks. And NO. Although I
appreciate the compliment. This
place is too pretentious for me. I
need to find the red meat and bacon
aisle. Girl, the only thing we are
going to be eating around here is
bird seed and rabbit food. I am
going to try to ditch this place.

MOLLY

Come on Zoe, look around. This
place is awesome. You can get your
hair done, the trainers will give
you manicures and pedicures, and I
am sure they have a gym and
obstacle course. Those are always
fun! Just give it a chance.

ZOE

I take it you wanted to come here,
a cute little thing like yourself.
This is your dream, isn't it?

MOLLY

Yes, yes it is...

Molly looks around, now looking a bit self-conscious.

ZOE

You poor thing. Don't worry,
smalls. I will be right beside you
until I bolt. I will help you
achieve your goals and make sure
that no one will get in your way.

Zoe does some stretches for good measure. The lighting makes her coat gleam. Molly notices plenty of dogs admiring Zoe.

MOLLY

Why would anyone get in my way?

ZOE

Oh, wow. You don't know? Beauty
schools and dog shows aren't filled
with friends. They're filled with
enemies, and the judges you'll be
performing for aren't any nicer.
Because of that, the other dogs
will do whatever they can to make
you lose. This business is tough.

MOLLY

Well, I appreciate your help and
information, but I think I will be
just fine. Ouch--

She's cut off by a dog bumping into her, stepping on her paw with an ungracious clomp that doesn't match his light gait.

ZOE

(laughs heartily)
See, I told you. Look out for
yourself, smalls.

Just then a BELL rings. Two trainers motion for the dogs to follow and everyone eagerly obeys...

CUT TO:

INT. DOG HOUSE, POLICE ACADEMY - NIGHT

Rocky looks around at all the dogs in great shape with shiny coats. He looks proud and happy to be there. Butch and Cali give him a smile and they join all the other sleeping dogs.

CUT TO:

INT. BUNKING QUARTERS, BEAUTY SCHOOL - NIGHT

The walls are colorful. Molly jumps on her fluffy bed marked with her name looking around at all the beautiful dogs. Zoe slumps down on her blue bed that is on her half of the room.

ZOE

Okay. Nice bed, big mirror, awesome vanity. This is fine until they start to wear us out with the pampering. But where's the TV and unlimited bacon feeder?

MOLLY

What? Why would they have a bacon feeder at a beauty school where they try to keep everyone healthy and looking good?

ZOE

To test your willpower and dedication to the program. Don't you know anything?

A poodle rolls her eyes from the doorway. This is HEATHER.

HEATHER

Rookies.

ZOE

Excuse me? And who might you be?

HEATHER

I'm Heather; I'm sure you've heard of me.

MOLLY

Oh, hi. So you have been here before?

Heather glares at Molly.

HEATHER

I was best in show once.

Zoe flicks back the hair from her face, annoyed at Heather.

ZOE

And you're standing there because...?

HEATHER

Merely checking out the fresh meat.

And then she turns on her back paw and vanishes out of sight.

ZOE

Heather, is that for real? Did we stumble onto the set of 90210?

MOLLY

Zoe, you are a hoot. We are definitely going to have some fun here. For real though, isn't Heather the name of one of those scary dolls like Chuckie?

Molly then leans over to scare Zoe with a "BOO."

ZOE

Seriously smalls, I didn't think you had it in you. You're playful, huh? We're going to have a blast.

Zoe gives Molly a fist bump and heads to the stereo. She uses her nose until she finds the song "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun." Zoe blares it to Molly's surprise. And as we leave them there, jumping around, ears, fur, and tails flopping, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. DOG HOUSE - DAY

All the dogs lined up, waiting. Rocky finds Cali, looking a little down. She smiles at him and nudges his shoulder.

CALI

The first morning away is one of the hardest, but you're a police dog in training now. James, our trainer, will be here in a second.

ROCKY

Thanks for looking out for me.

The trainer, JAMES (30), looks over all the dogs and then gives short BURSTS OF WHISTLES and a hand movement. Then, the Doberman from yesterday named Captain Bruiser trots up front.

BRUISER

Let's go!

As the dogs all follow in a line, Cali quietly advises Rocky.

CALI

We're probably going to the track or the obstacle course. They usually want to see new recruits' abilities, so get ready for some tests.

ROGER

I hope you fall on your face, rookie.

The Pitbull from yesterday nudges Rocky before trotting to a different spot in the running block. As Rocky stops himself from reacting, Cali looking proud of him, we move to...

INT. BUNKING QUARTERS, BEAUTY SCHOOL - DAY

An attractive dog pokes his head inside, blowing a WHISTLE to wake all of the dogs. This is BRODY, lean, shiny, handsome.

BRODY

Time to get up girls...

As he walks away, Molly and Zoe jump up to see more of him...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Female dogs poke their heads out of their houses to watch Brody cockily go down the hall. The males roll their eyes.

ZOE

Wow, he can wake me up anytime.

Molly laughs as a small Corgi chimes in from the hall. This is JAMIE. She's got a high-pitched voice and bright eyes.

JAMIE

That's Heather's boyfriend.

ZOE

Of course that stuck up poodle would have an equally stuck up boyfriend. But who is Heather to control a big boy like that?

The female dogs are amused. Zoe continues, flicking her hair.

ZOE (CONT'D)

He makes his own choices, and a new one just arrived.

And as the girls laugh hysterically, we move back to...

EXT. OBSTACLE COURSE - DAY

Butch comes up alongside Cali and Rocky. He notes Rocky looks a little nervous, his heart beating up against his chest.

BUTCH

Yep, it looks fun, but you have to go through and not screw up. It's not the end of the world or anything; I would just hate for you to miss your chance at going...

ROCKY

Going? Go where?

CALI

The suits have a party for the trainers and dogs at the end of each week. If you make your times, you get to go to the party. I didn't want to put too much pressure on you.

Butch laughs at Rocky's anxious expression.

BUTCH

Don't coddle him, Cali. If he wants to be the best, he has to know the stakes.

ROCKY

So, what's so big about the party?

BUTCH

The party consists of BBQ! That means meat and bones and all sorts of juicy goodness for us. Plus, that's when we get to play with the trainers. Not work, just play.

CALI

And for you and me, Rocky, it gets even better.

ROCKY

What do you mean, Cali?

CALI

Well since you're a lab, I'm assuming you like to swim as much as I do. They let us go into the pond and do whatever we want. Old farts like Butch like taking the time to lounge on the grass.

ROCKY

Are you kidding me? I didn't think I would ever get to swim. I thought we would always be on the ground!

James blows the WHISTLE. Then, Bruiser appears in front --

BRUISER

Arrange yourselves from the slowest to the fastest time on the course.

Rocky looks around, puzzled.

BRUISER (CONT'D)

You'll go at the front, Rocky.
You're slow until you prove you're not slow.

The dogs shuffle around. Rocky sees that Cali is last (the fastest) and Butch the second fastest with Roger in the middle of the 12-dog group. Off Rocky's nervous look...

SERIES OF SHOTS -- THE OBSTACLE COURSE

-- A 20-yard sprint -- Rocky manages to do this with ease.

-- Stairs up to a platform -- Rocky stumbles a little but gains momentum.

-- A 5-yard crawl under a lattice -- Rocky has no problem.

-- Jumping through hoops -- Rocky is a star.

-- Grabbing a weighted dummy hanging from the hoop -- Rocky can't get the combo of height and accuracy to grab the dummy at first, but then he manages to grab the end of the limb.

-- Swimming across a pool with a toy in his mouth - Rocky slows down significantly, the weight of the dummy too heavy.

-- Bringing the toy down a ramp -- Rocky severely struggling.

-- Another 20-yard sprint - Rocky only manages a fast walk.

END OF COURSE

James pets Rocky's head and ushers him to the water bowl, but Rocky sheepishly looks around, seeing Bruiser grinning wide.

CALI

Don't worry Rocky; you will get it soon.

Rocky bows his head and attempts a small smile.

ROCKY

Cali, you were fantastic.

Cali keeps her head down upon spotting Roger.

ROGER

What was your time, blondie?

Cali doesn't answer -- *it wasn't her best.*

ROGER (CONT'D)

That bad, huh?

The others remain quiet as Cali tries to keep her cool.

ROGER (CONT'D)

So, the magnificent Lab got beat. Must have gotten beat by me. I knew it. She looked a little sluggish!

CALI

Give it a rest you jack rabbit, James double clicked the timer.

ROGER

Whatever. Talk to the paw because this Pit is not listening to your bull.

Cali rolls her eyes as he saunters away. And as we stay on Rocky trying to offer her a warm smile, we...

CUT TO:

INT. LASSIE'S LOCKS BEAUTY SCHOOL - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS -- BASIC INTRODUCTION

-- Zoe and Molly having their nails filed

-- The dogs having their coats trimmed

-- The dogs walking upright with books on their heads

-- The dogs practicing sitting elegantly

END OF INTRODUCTION

Molly and Zoe meet to the side, looking primped. They can't help but giggle, twirling around. Zoe speaks in a high falsetto, skipping around Molly and flopping her ears about.

ZOE

Girl, I told you on the first day;
we'll all smell and look the same.

Zoe mimics Molly's posture and voice.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Look, I'm Molly...

MOLLY

Hey, hey, don't hate just because I
am cute.

The two dogs chase each other around in the grooming salon, and other dogs join in the fun. And as the groomers dodge the playful dogs to avoid accidentally cutting off extra fur, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD, POLICE ACADEMY - NIGHT

The dogs having a great time at the cookout. The trainers and dogs enjoy playing frisbee and catch, eating, and mingling.

Rocky looks for Cali but she's not there. He spots Butch.

ROCKY

Hey, Butch. Where's Cali?

BUTCH

She's over by the lake. I guess she
is still mad about her time.

ROCKY

Wow, why is she taking this so
hard? Why is she so competitive?

BUTCH

Well, she is competitive, but
that's not why she tries so hard.

Off Rocky's curious look.

BUTCH (CONT'D)

For Cali this is more complicated than just being a police dog. She's out here for many reasons.

ROCKY

What reasons?

BUTCH

That's something she is going to have to tell you. I don't like to say.

And with that Butch follows after a female German Shepherd who is playing chase with her friends. Off Rocky's look...

EXT. LAKE - MOMENTS LATER

Rocky spots Cali sitting by the lake. He sits beside her close to the water. She looks up, offering a warm smile.

ROCKY

I can smell the ducks and some of the fish swimming around. Smells like home.

CALI

Sure does... I miss home.

ROCKY

Is that why you look so sad?

Cali looks over the water, quiet. Then --

CALI

Six months ago, my owners were robbed at gun point at their home. The mother was killed and her young son was injured. It all happened so fast... I charged the criminal but he kicked my chest and I was useless. The mother was shot trying to protect her son. I didn't know how to fight like a police dog to protect my owners. I'll never forgive myself. I want to avenge my family. That's why I'm here.

ROCKY

I'm really sorry that happened.

Cali nods, both of them sitting there looking at the stars.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

You have been great to me. I will always be here for you. I know you have to do this for yourself, but if you need anything, I'm here.

CALI

Thanks, Rocky - same here, friend.

And as Cali and Rocky exchange a smile, we...

CUT TO:

INT. LASSIE'S LOCKS BEAUTY SCHOOL - DAY

The dogs are gathered, ready for training. Heather shoots Zoe and Molly a look, then lifts her head ridiculously high. The trainer, ALLIE, enthusiastically addresses the line of dogs.

ALLIE

Today is gait training.

The dogs exchange a confused look. Heather rolls her eyes.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

The correct gait is usually a trot, with your head up. It's all about showing the judges your motion and structure. Now, let's line up.

Some dogs start to line up but Heather pushes them out of the way to be first. Zoe and Molly exchange a look.

ZOE

Really, Heather at the front? She walks as if she has a corn cob stuck up her--

MOLLY

It's cool. We can deal with this Zoe, can't we?

And motions that the trainers are within earshot. Then, the trainers clap their hands, ready to watch... The male and female dogs take turns strutting across the catwalk. The trainers evaluate their movements and correct as needed.

TRAINER

Good job, Zoe. Here's a treat.

Zoe gobbles up the biscuit, flashing a winning smile at Molly. Without even trying, Zoe is getting some attention.

TRAINER (CONT'D)
Molly's up next... That's it...

Molly's gait isn't as effortless as Zoe's, but she makes a good impression. Heather shoots daggers at Zoe and Molly.

ZOE
You know, smalls, you keep this up
and you just might beat Heather.

And as Zoe and Molly share a prideful look, we move to...

INT. HALLWAY, BEAUTY SCHOOL - NIGHT

Jamie and Molly are searching the rooms for Zoe. At the end of the hall, they see the door to the supplies room is ajar.

INT. SUPPLIES ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jamie and Molly enter and look around. They stop in their tracks, trying not to burst out laughing. See...

Zoe sprawled out on a huge pile of blankets, like a very lazy queen on her throne, getting through a big bag of treats.

ZOE
This is the life. I love bacon.

Molly and Jamie join Zoe on her blanket throne. Zoe offers them the bacon treats and falls back into the blankets.

ZOE (CONT'D)
Not my fault the trainers don't
lock the door.

And as the trio giggle together, devouring the bacon, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE ACADEMY - DAY

Dogs performing their duty training. Even Roger is in a good mood. Even though Rocky and Cali have a handicap, they are still able to finish strong. Cali grins at Rocky, impressed with their efforts. James gathers them around for a pep talk.

JAMES
It's been eight weeks! Each of you
has done very well.
(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

As you know, the temperament of some breeds is a handicap, but you've all proven yourselves to be good enough to be appointed police officer duties.

The dogs are elated, even Roger nudges Rocky.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I look forward to the ceremony.

Bruiser manages to crack a smile and nods approvingly at the dogs. And as they disperse, jumping around playfully, we...

CUT TO:

INT. LASSIE'S LOCKS BEAUTY SCHOOL - DAY

The trainers post their favorites on the announcement board as the dogs gather around. Heather turns to a greyhound named TIFFANY and a dachshund named GABI, both equally stuck up.

HEATHER

Wow, the rookies are trying to make a push.

Jamie whispers to Molly and Zoe behind her large paw.

JAMIE

Heather chose her two buddies for their stupidity and size. Their stupidity meant they worshipped Heather; their differing sizes meant that Heather could go either small and sneaky with Gabi or big and intimidating with Tiffany.

Heather shoves her way up front to read the board.

HEATHER

Ha! I have the most points thus far, followed by Gabi and Tiffany.

GAB

See! There's no way those scrawny mutts will push us out, Heather. We're at the top of the list, and that's where we'll stay.

The clique of three saunter away, shoving Molly aside as they pass. Zoe wants to lunge on her but Jamie holds her back.

MOLLY

I am ranked tenth overall, and Zoe is eleventh.

JAMIE

You are the two highest ranked rookies! You've totally beaten out many seasoned show dogs!

The dogs high-five, giving each other a hug. Then --

ZOE

Don't get too excited. Eliminations start tomorrow. By the end of the week, there will be only ten dogs that can attend the national show.

And as Molly and Jamie exchange a look, Zoe shrugging at having ruined their parade, we...

CUT TO:

INT. HALL, POLICE ACADEMY - NIGHT

The dogs stand beside their trainers at the graduation ceremony. They are groomed and look professional. Brian and his family are there to see Rocky graduate. They wave at Rocky as the ceremony starts, he's standing tall and proud.

JAMES

Without further ado, the top three dogs... Finishing first is Cali, Rocky second, and Butch third.

Roger leans forward from behind Cali and quips in her ear.

ROGER

Hey blondie, I can't believe you made it through without crying or breaking a nail or quitting.

CALI

Thanks Roger, and I can't believe you made it through without crying or biting someone's ear off.

Rocky and Butch giggle.

ROCKY

We did it, man. We are now officially police officers.

Rocky looks to Brian and his family smiling and clapping.

BUTCH

I know, I am proud of myself and
I'm proud of you guys too.

Rocky looks to Cali who is laughing, but soon her cheers turn to happy tears. Rocky steps closer, giving her a big smile.

ROCKY

You did it, Cali. You made it through the academy, and you were the best. You are the #1 ranked police dog. You can go wherever you want. Where will you choose?

CALI

Let's get our medals first! Then you can question me later...

James and the trainers finish handing out their medals.

JAMES

Now it's time to choose the trainer/police officer for your desired division. They include: SWAT, Search and Rescue, drug enforcement, and bomb squad.

Roger heads straight to the SWAT officer. Butch heads to the drug and bomb squad. Rocky waits to see what Cali picks...

Cali keeps looking back and forth unable to decide.

ROCKY

What are you going to do? You need to pick or they'll pick for you.

CALI

I know, I know. I came here to choose SWAT and hurt all the bad people, but I can't. Plus, I would be around Roger and OMG, I can't.

Rocky smirks, stepping closer.

ROCKY

I know Cali. I want to help people, not kill them. I think I know where you need to go. Will you trust me?

Cali looks at Rocky, motions for him to lead the way.

CALI

Yes, I do trust you.

ROCKY
Friends forever.

Rocky leads them to Search and Rescue. Cali smiles at Rocky when they reach the trainer. They are given a new collar.

TRAINER
Congratulations. We're excited to have the best on our team.

Rocky smiles at Cali. Then, she motions to his family waiting for him... Rocky smiles and nods and runs over excitedly.

BRIAN
Rocky! You champ!

Brian bends down to hug and kiss Rocky. Rocky continues over to his mom and dad to receive their embrace. The trainer talks to Brian's parents while Brian goes to hug Rocky again.

TRAINER
He's a great dog. I will keep him with me at all times don't worry.

And now Brian looks up, shocked.

BRIAN
What? I thought that after the academy Rocky would come home?

His parents exchange a nervous look.

TRAINER
Well, Rocky needs to be available at any time for any issue, so he must stay with his trainer.

Rocky looks to Brian, seeing he is now teary-eyed and sad.

BRIAN
I understand.

Brian turns to Rocky.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
You're a police officer now and you need to help people.

Rocky moves in for another embrace. Brian gives him one last squeeze and then Rocky waits until they leave the complex.

BRUISER
Nice job kid.

Rocky turns to find Bruiser, now less imposing and scary.

ROCKY
Thanks, CAP.

BRUISER
I'm proud of you. I think you will
make a great officer.

Rocky bows his head to thank him when he's sprayed from behind. He turns to find Roger playfully spraying water from his mouth. Now others gather water from the bowls and spray each other, Cali joining in too. And as we leave them there, celebrating their graduation and chasing each other, we...

CUT TO:

INT. LASSIE'S LOCKS BEAUTY SCHOOL - DAY

It's the last elimination day. The dogs are primed and looking their best. Some are stretching.

It's about to be Zoe's turn on the catwalk. She turns to look at Molly waiting in the wings, gives her a wink.

The MUSIC starts...

Zoe performs her ring walk and trot perfectly down the platform with her head held high and shiny coat glistening.

Next up is Molly, nervously trembling in the wings. Zoe gives her a pat on the back and she's off... Molly does an improvised pirouette and it's a hit, instilling confidence.

Now the dogs are in line waiting for the elimination results.

ZOE
Go Molly! Where did you pull that
move?

MOLLY
It actually started as a slip and
then I twirled to keep balance.

ZOE
Let's just keep that between us.

And now the rep we met earlier (who resembles a groomed dog herself) speaks quietly with the judges for a few moments.

Molly and Zoe wait nervously as Heather shoots them a look.

REP

The lucky dogs will be announced from 10th place to first: Tiffany at ten... Katy ninth... Lola eighth... Jamie seventh... Zoe sixth... Kim fifth... Gabi fourth... Viola third... which leaves Molly and Heather in the first two positions...

The dogs react accordingly upon hearing their names. Zoe, Molly, and Jamie share an excited hug until --

REP (CONT'D)

And the runner up going into the big, national show is...

The dogs are frozen. Jamie and Zoe excitedly look to Molly.

REP (CONT'D)

Heather!

Heather's face drops like a sack of potatoes. She turns to Gabi and Tiffany for their support but they're in shock.

REP (CONT'D)

Which means Molly, the cute cocker spaniel from Paragon, Texas, is our frontrunner for the show. Who knew a show dog would come out of a tiny town? You think of cowboys and horses, but here she is. Good golly Miss Molly, the regional winner.

Molly can't believe it and only moves forward to bow to the audience after Zoe nudges her, almost knocking her down.

And as Zoe and Jamie clap loudly as Molly takes her bow, we hear Heather, Gabi, and Tiffany sulking and gossiping --

HEATHER

She will never get any further. She doesn't deserve this attention. I am the one with the pedigree, and I will beat her if it's the last thing I do.

Gabi looks at her, shocked. She answers her halfheartedly.

GABI

Yeah Heather, you will. But we should be excited to make it to the finals so let's go celebrate with the other dogs.

TIFFANY

Yeah... Molly is so nice. I like her. Can't we all be friends?

Heather shoots them both a look that could kill. And as Tiffany and Gabi lower their heads in terror, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Lights and sirens are going crazy. Police and K-9 crews approach the building where a bomb has exploded inside. SWAT, the bomb squad, and Search and Rescue arrive while the patrons are evacuated. We FIND Cali and Rocky amongst them.

ROCKY

Cali, are you ready for this? It looks bad.

Rocky and Cali look ahead to survey the situation.

CALI

Yeah, I know Rocky. There are probably kids in there. The suspects are bank robbers.

They see terrified people stream out of the building.

ROCKY

It looks really bad actually...

CALI

Your picture is up on the wall at the station, and you were on TV for saving those kids. If anyone can fix this bad situation, it's you.

Off Rocky's look.

CALI (CONT'D)

I mean, no pressure.

ROCKY

To be fair, it was only through your good nose that we found those kids in the river. You have more saves than any K-9s on the force.

CALI

That one was easy.

ROCKY
See! Stand tall, golden goddess.

BUTCH (O.C.)
Golden goddess, eh?

They turn around to see Butch. They all swipe their paws.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
And here I thought you guys were just friends. Well, hot dog! It's good to see you!

CALI
We're so glad that you're here. And yes, Rocky and I are just friends, no matter how much you keep trying to push us together. Plus, he still supposedly has that girlfriend.

Cali chuckles.

CALI (CONT'D)
I can't wait to meet the woman who tolerated a younger Rocky.

Butch and Cali laugh while Rocky rolls his eyes. Then --

ROCKY
Okay, pals, are you ready to get down to business?

Butch reaches out his paw to Rocky.

BUTCH
Rocky, you can't go in until I scope out the place. The bomb squad needs to make sure the place is safe before you proceed. Just sit tight until we get done, okay?

Rocky and Cali hesitantly nod. Butch and Roger run off toward the mall buildings. Then, something catches Rocky's eye.

Distraught civilians speaking with NEWS CREWS.

CIVILIAN
I managed to escape through the smoke but there's hostages inside.

Cali and Rocky exchange a look before moving closer to talk.

CALI

Hostages? I can't handle this,
Rocky. Butch and Roger didn't know
about that yet.

Cali's panicking, forcing herself to take deep breaths.

CALI (CONT'D)

I can't let this happen again. I
can't! We have a chance to get
there before something bad happens,
and I think we would be stupid not
to take it. Our search and rescue
team gets to a scene after
something happens, when people are
injured or worse. We have a chance
to do something now and get in and
out before something bad happens.

A beat. Rocky staring at Cali for a couple of seconds. Then --

ROCKY

Well let's get our noses in there.
I am with you Cali, and I will be
beside you. I think with the two of
us, we can figure out something.
But make no mistake: Don't do this
because of what happened with your
family. That will make you misjudge
the situation and make a mistake.
Do this because this is a problem
today that we need to solve. Okay?

He waits for her to promise him via a hesitant nod.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

Then let's go. We'll have to sneak
away because our trainers won't let
us go otherwise.

Rocky and Cali walk out of sight to the collapsed building,
careful to avoid Roger and Butch. They manage to slip inside
amongst the other dogs rushing in and out with trainers.

EXT./INT. COLLAPSED BUILDING, MALL - CONTINUOUS

Cali and Rocky inch their way through the shadows closer to
the mall, sniffing for potential survivors under the rubble.

CALI

I don't smell anything. I don't
think there's anyone in the rubble.

ROCKY

I think you're right.

CALI

Thank goodness. I really didn't want to find anyone, you know.

Now they're at the mall entrance. There are dogs running everywhere looking for threats. Then, suddenly --

BUTCH IS STANDING RIGHT THERE

Cali and Rocky are momentarily lost for words.

BUTCH

I could smell you two the moment you crossed the threshold. Are you kidding me? I thought I told you kids to stand down.

ROCKY

Yes sir, and we did. Then our trainers gave us the okay to check the rubble, and it is clear, no victims.

He looks to Cali and raises his eyebrows when Butch isn't looking. Cali takes the hint and goes along with the story.

BUTCH

Okay, good. I am almost done here. I only found the first bomb in the aftermath, and I found two more at the parking ramp and the fountain. I've had the team sweep the rest of the area, but I don't foresee any other bombs. Stick with me or another bomb squad member so that when you're investigating the other areas for criminals and hostages, they can clear the area for you.

Cali and Rocky nod, following Butch into...

INT. HALLWAY, MALL - CONTINUOUS

Rocky catches a whiff of something foreign. He gestures with his head to Cali, and they duck away to an unchecked wing.

Butch spots them and wants to growl but he can't...

INT. WING - CONTINUOUS

Rocky and Cali track the scent past Roger and the rest of the SWAT team as they sniff their way around the mall. They see them help the shoppers out of the rooms where they were held.

Rocky and Cali keep following the scent of the suspects using their police skills. The trail leads them downstairs...

INT. MEN'S ROOM, BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Where the perps have tied up the bank HOSTAGE and SECURITY GUARD. The PERPS are trying to figure out what to do...

PERP #1

Dude, no one will find us in here.
Why would they look in the restroom
unless they need to tinkle?

PERP #2

Tinkle, really? Are you seven? I
moved us in here because the dogs
won't be able to smell us as well;
there are too many smells in this
place. Now shut up and lemme think.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rocky and Cali are in the shadows listening to the suspects.

PERP #1 (O.C.)

I think we are going to have to
hurt one of the victims and send a
recording to the police for them to
take us seriously, Bean.

PERP #2

Really, idiot? You just said my
name. But I think you're right.

Rocky and Cali exchange a look -- *it's time to make a move.*

ROCKY

(whispering)

I will go in and attack while you
go in back and wait for my move.

CALI

But Rocky, if they see you, they
will shoot you. Don't we have time
to go upstairs for backup?

ROCKY
You know we don't.

Cali nods bravely and runs to the other entrance. Rocky slowly approaches the men's room...

INT. MEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The perp sees Rocky and jumps up, searching behind him for his gun. As Rocky distracts the perp, Cali bursts through the door and attacks, knocking his gun to the ground. Cali looks to the security guard and he kicks the gun away.

But the other perp exits a stall and aims his gun at the dogs. He fires a SHOT that misses them... Rocky lunges toward him just as he fires again... The perp is knocked down but the bullet hit Rocky... Rocky tries to get up but he can't...

Cali uses her teeth to quickly untie the hostage and guard.

CALI
Rocky? Rocky! I have to escort
these people upstairs. I'm sorry,
but I will be right back with help.

Rocky nods and is left alone. And as we leave him there, shivering and looking defeated, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD, CALIFORNIA - DAY

The dogs and trainers traveling by bus to the 'Big Show.'

INT. HOTEL - DAY

Dogs and trainers running around everywhere, practicing all over the lobby, on the escalators, and in the hallways.

ZOE
Can you believe this, smalls? If I
had a thumb, I would be all over
this and taking selfies of us.

MOLLY
Ha! So would I, Emma would love it!

The rep appears with Brody, trying to get everything under control. And as the dogs go wild, we...

CUT TO:

INT. DOG HOUSES, POLICE ACADEMY - DAY

Rocky lays in his bed wearing a cast on his leg. A DOCTOR is by his side, checking that everything is healing properly.

ROCKY

It's been two weeks now... When can I start training again, doc?

DOC

Well, you'll have to keep the cast for the next few months, but you can start physical therapy to get strong again, and hey, at least you can say you'll be back with a bang.

Off Rocky's hopeful look, we move to...

INT. HALL, POLICE ACADEMY - DAY

It's a K-9 division medal ceremony. Rocky is a guest of honor for his work at the mall along with Cali, Butch, and Roger.

A BRASS BAND plays a dignified march as the four dogs walk side by side up the red carpet to the CHIEF OF POLICE.

CHIEF

Today these dogs will receive bravery medals for their work at the mall crisis. Thanks to these heroes there were zero deaths and 100% of the criminals were caught.

Cali is led first onto the stage by her trainer. The chief puts the medal on her collar as Rocks smiles proudly.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

For bravery, persistence, and the presence of mind to be both a good dog and a good police detective.

Next up is Butch, lifting his head proudly to the chief.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

For your team's outstanding work at bomb identification.

Then, it's Roger, strutting his stuff as usual.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

For successfully evacuating so many people.

Rocky is stoic as the medal is pinned to his collar. Cali catches his eye, smiling proudly. He looks super proud.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

For following his heart and improvising a plan when one was needed and for the depth of his love for the town's people.

CAMERAS FLASH and REPORTERS converge on the police trainers.

The dogs come together for their usual banter. Roger mindlessly nudges Rocky's leg, making him wince in pain.

ROGER

I guess you finally made a splash by tackling the toilet bowl ring master. Oh, and the--

ROCKY

You know what, Roger? Good job. We may not get along, but you are a fine police dog, and you lead your team well.

Roger blinks, surprised at the sudden change of attitude.

ROGER

Th-thank you. Well, good luck with your temp job until you're fully back in action with us big-timers.

Rocky steps back to avoid another mindless nudge from Roger as Cali rolls her eyes. And as we leave Cali and Rocky there, exchanging a silent smile, we...

CUT TO:

INT. DRESSING ROOM, HOTEL - DAY

Dogs and trainers are getting ready backstage. There are mini-clothing racks filled with costumes, vanity dressing mirrors, and assistants running around with clipboards and headsets.

Heather is glaring at Molly, Zoe, and Jamie excitedly talking amongst themselves when something catches her eye. Sees...

Brody trying to keep the noise levels down near the mirrors.

Suddenly, Brody is shoved behind a clothing rack in the corner. He lifts himself off the ground to find Heather staring right at him, hidden from everyone else in the room.

HEATHER

Hey babe, you know I really want to win this year, right?

Off Brody's look -- *duh, yeah.*

HEATHER (CONT'D)

And you know I really like you-right, babe? So, are we good? Is our plan going to work? Are you going to make it happen?

She rubs her head and nose all over Brody. He's trying his best to stand tall and look straight ahead.

BRODY

Of course. We-we're all set. Dang, you have the cutest nose.

HEATHER

Good, then no mess ups.

She abruptly unwinds herself from him and stands up to leave.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

See you later, babe.

As her swinging tail hits Brody in the face, we move to...

INT. BALLROOM, HOTEL - DAY

It's the national show called the legendary 'Big Show.' The venue is decked out with decorations, a catwalk, and an imposing table where a line of JUDGES are seated together.

Molly and Zoe enter to take a sneak peek.

MOLLY

O.M.G. Zoe! This is all I have dreamed about since the start.

Then, something catches Zoe's eye. She nudges Molly to look.

ZOE

Wow, the show sure brings out the best; check him out.

Zoe's staring at a chocolate Labrador sitting at the entrance of the arena. He's the Security officer. Before Molly can reply, Zoe's off with a shake of her fur to approach the Lab.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Hi, I'm Zoe and, wouldn't you know,
chocolate is my favorite sweet.

The lab shifts uncomfortably as Zoe's batting her eyes.

CHOC LAB

That's cute, but I am on duty.

Molly bounds behind Zoe to stop her from getting in trouble.

MOLLY

What have you gotten yourself into?
Sorry, sir, we're just leaving.

She's too embarrassed to look in the security dog's eyes, so she focuses on getting Zoe back to the training area.

CHOC LAB (O.C.)

Wait!

Molly turns and now the two come face to face. Then --

CHOC LAB (CONT'D)

Molly?! It's me, Rocky!

Molly's jaw drops. This chocolate lab was bigger, stronger, and his face has filled out. But she knows it's her Rocky.

Zoe is pretty much nudged aside as the two lovesick dogs rub up to one another and nuzzle. Rocky's leg is in the cast.

ROCKY

You look so beautiful... and you've
done it. You're living your dream.

MOLLY

Yeah, I made it, and it is
everything I had hoped it would be.
But wait! What are you doing here?
What about the police academy?

Zoe perks up again when she hears that Rocky was in the police academy. A man in uniform is always impressive.

ROCKY

Well, I did make it through the
academy, but it's a long story.

Off Molly and Zoe's intrigued look.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

You're going to be great. I'm proud
of you. Break a leg, Molly.

Silence as they look down at Rocky's leg. They start laughing and Rocky shrugs his shoulders.

MOLLY

We better go and get ready!

And as they walk away, Molly turning back to find Rocky smiling right at her, we...

CUT TO:

INT. DRESSING ROOM, HOTEL - DAY

The room has turned into a zoo and there's tension in the air. Zoe appears from behind the dressing room curtain.

ZOE

What do you think, Molly?

Zoe looks surprised when Molly's not standing there.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Yo, Molly? Where'd you go, girl?

Zoe looks to the left and right, trying to spot Molly amongst the chaos. Then, Jamie catches her eye as she trots past.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Jamie, have you seen smalls?

JAMIE

No, I have no clue.

Heather appears from behind the curtain dressed to the nines.

HEATHER

I heard the trainers saying they think she bolted-like, ran away.

Zoe and Jamie turn to find Heather sneering at them.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

What a coward.

Heather waltzes off toward her trainer. Off Zoe's puzzled look, we move to...

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Zoe arrives panting at the security office. Rocky is sitting outside. He looks up, immediately noting her concerned look.

ROCKY
Are you okay, Zoe?

ZOE
Yes, yes I am fine. But Molly is missing and I thought she might be with you. Which I totally get but we're supposed to be getting ready!

ROCKY
No, she's not with me... Hmmm, that is strange.

Off Zoe's concerned look.

ROCKY (CONT'D)
You go back to the arena, look around again and ask everyone if they have seen Molly. I'll do the same and then we'll meet up again.

Zoe nods and takes off. Off Rocky's concerned look...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS - SEARCHING FOR MOLLY

- Zoe speaking with the trainers
- Jamie speaking with the dogs as they're stretching
- Rocky speaking with Brody
- Zoe speaking with dogs getting blow-outs
- The rep speaking with Brody
- Zoe seeing dead grasshoppers in Molly's room

INT. LOBBY, HOTEL - DAY

Zoe and Rocky meet up in the middle of the reception area.

ROCKY
Nothing. And by the look on your face, you don't have any clues?

ZOE

I've asked everyone and looked everywhere. Her room was empty except for some grasshoppers...

ROCKY

What?! Grasshoppers?

ZOE

Yeah, dead ones, why?

ROCKY

Molly loves grasshoppers. She may have been chasing them...

Rocky looks away -- thinking -- speaking his thoughts aloud --

ROCKY (CONT'D)

But how would grasshoppers get in here? And who else knows about Molly's grasshopper obsession?

ZOE

Um, not me and I am her bestie. It may have been in her profile.

ROCKY

But only trainers and security have access to contestant profiles.

ZOE

Oh my gosh, of course.

ROCKY

What?

ZOE

Our security guard Brody is Heather's boyfriend. I bet he had something to do with this...

ROCKY

Who's Heather?

ZOE

She's a nightmare dressed as a daydream.

ROCKY

So let me get this straight. Brody has access to her personal information and Heather is bad news and they are together? I think you are right, Zoe.

(MORE)

ROCKY (CONT'D)

Brody probably has her somewhere hidden to keep her out of the competition.

ZOE

Molly would never miss today.

Rocky hears a LOUD WHISTLE and turns his head. It's his trainer beckoning him over. He quickly turns back to Zoe.

ROCKY

I need you to distract the trainer and stay with him while I try and find Molly. Brody sounds dangerous and you could get taken, too.

ZOE

OK, but please hurry. The contest is soon and it's everything to her!

ROCKY

Yes, I know. I will find her.

Zoe approaches the trainer while Rocky slips away. And as we STAY on his determined face, we...

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. HOTEL - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS -- ROCKY ON A MISSION

- Rocky checking the janitor closet
- Rocky checking the kitchen's storage locker
- Rocky checking the loading dock
- Rocky reaches the top of the stairs

ROCKY

(to himself)

Ouch... Don't give up on me now leg, I need you...

Rocky winces in pain. He takes a deep breath, looking out over the skyline from the hotel's rooftop.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

I need some help to find Molly.

Off Rocky's look, we move to...

EXT. CALIFORNIA'S FIRE STADIUM - DAY

Brody's pacing back and forth. He looks mean and smug.

BRODY

Well, how are you doing, beautiful?

And now we reveal Molly is trapped in the batting cages.

MOLLY

Well, I would be doing great, Mr. Brody, if I were out of here and back with my friends. And I would be doing even better if I never saw your ugly mug again.

He grins wickedly at her, getting close to her cage.

BRODY

You don't want that. Without me, you wouldn't be getting any food or water. Baseball is not in season, and no one else is around.

He gestures to the empty stadium. Molly looks up. Sees...

The logo for California's Fire stadium.

Molly turns sharply back to Brody.

MOLLY

You know you will lose your job if someone finds out what you've done. Heather is just using you. She doesn't care about you or anyone. She just cares about herself.

BRODY

You don't know her. You don't know us. Now shut up unless you want a mouthful of spray.

He sprays a canister right into her face. Molly squeezes her eyes closed to avoid getting it in her eyes. The particles still drift into her nose, though, and she starts coughing.

MOLLY

What is that?

BRODY

Odor remover. The trainers use it during the contest, but it also has the handy use of hiding your scent so no one can track or find you.

Molly slowly backs up in her cage until she's as far away from him as possible. Off her devastated look, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Rocky exits with his friends who he's enlisted to become a search team -- Cali, Butch, Roger, and Bruiser included.

BUTCH

Let's hit the stadium first.

Off Cali's curious look.

BUTCH (CONT'D)

Nothing's in season. It's a good hiding spot. I'll take the east side... You and Cali take the west.

As the team nod and take off down the street, we move to...

EXT. STADIUM - DAY

FROM ABOVE we see the dogs circling the stadium trying to pick up a scent... then they meet again in the middle. Each dog is wearing a radio head piece and Police Dept. collar.

CALI

Nothing. We need to get our brains in this and not just use our noses.

ROCKY

That's it, Cali!

BUTCH

What, what's it?

ROCKY

They are probably using the groomer's deodorizer spray that keeps a dog's scent hidden. It stops the contestants smelling each other and from marking their territory, if you know what I mean.

The dogs look defeated.

CALI

If you know her scent and you can't smell her, what's our new plan?

ROCKY

I'm stumped. But what I do know is that we have an hour to find Molly and get her ready for the show.

Then, something catches Butch's eye. Sees...

THE SHADOW OF SOMETHING APPROACHING

He sniffs his nose, and then GROWLS, ready to attack.

BUTCH

I smell and see something moving.

Everyone prepares to defend themselves in a flash. Then --

From the dark appears a beautiful, tall, blonde -- it's Zoe.

ZOE

Whoa, back off, Cujo.

BUTCH

Oh my gosh, sorry, ma'am.

ROCKY

Zoe, what are you doing? You shouldn't be here.

ZOE

I know, I know, but I can't stand back and wait. My Molly is out there and she's probably scared.

ROCKY

I hear you, Zoe. We are all here to find Molly. I can't lose her again.

BUTCH

Well, we can always do with an extra set of paws. Zoe and I will be a team and Rocky and Cali should continue together.

He gives Zoe a wink and she follows him. Rocky and Cali adjust their head pieces and set off in the other direction.

ROCKY

This dognapping would only be short lived. They could not leave the stadium without someone seeing them or triggering an alarm.

CALI

Are there any places where they could keep her locked up that is off limits to security personnel?

ROCKY

Oh my gosh, yes, the batting cages. We don't go inside because there's nothing valuable in there.

Off Cali's look, Rocky speaks into his radio --

ROCKY (CONT'D)

Butch, Roger, come in... Meet us at the batting cages, stat!

And as they depart with urgency, we move to...

EXT. BATTING CAGES - DAY

Cali, Rocky, Zoe, Roger, and Butch converge behind the door, hiding out of sight. Butch cranes his neck. Stops. Sees...

FOUR BIG DOGS -- BUT NO MOLLY

CALI

This must be it. Why else would those dogs be in here?

ROCKY

That must be Brody. Look like he brought his own security team.

ZOE

Wow, those are big dogs.

BUTCH

Don't worry about them, sweetheart. I will protect you.

Rocky and Cali see Butch and Zoe star gazing at each other.

CALI

Well, I guess Butch has found his love gene. Good for him.

Rocky cracks a smile. One of the big dogs moves, allowing our four to see Molly lying on the floor at the back of the cage.

ROCKY

There she is... She is so beautiful.

CALI

Okay, okay, Romeo. What's the plan?

ROCKY

Butch and I will distract the guys, while Cali and Zoe release Molly.

CALI

But Rocky, you have a bad leg plus they are too big for you.

ZOE

Ah, yeah - they will destroy you.

Cali shoots Zoe a dirty look.

ROCKY

Butch?

BUTCH

We got this, man. You ladies save the girl. Don't worry about us.

Butch, Rocky, and Roger do paw bumps ready to attack. The girls enter when they see the other big dogs are occupied.

Rocky signals and they burst out after the others. Cali and Zoe race away after the coast is clear straight for Molly.

Molly looks up, weary, and spots the girls approaching. She quickly gets up as Cali and Zoe work together to release the latch off the cage door. The girls excitedly reunite. Then --

MOLLY

Oh no. Rocky is getting hurt.

They follow her concerned gaze to see the boys fighting hard.

CALI

He's doing fine, Molly. You just have never seen this side of him.

MOLLY

How can we help them? I can't stand to see this happening.

Cali looks around to find something they can use... She spots the netting for the baseball cages. The girls bite through the tethers of one side. Then, Cali whistles at Rocky...

Rocky is on his back and being kicked by Brody. Cali gets his attention and Rocky understands her cues. Cali rushes over and jumps Brody, knocking him down.

Rocky and Cali run to the end of the cage as Molly and Zoe pull the tethers to raise the net and catch Brody. Then, they also trap the other big dogs.

And as Butch radios for backup, Zoe smiling wide at Molly and Rocky nuzzling together, we...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL - DAY

Rocky and Molly walk together. They both smile and head toward Molly's dog house so she can prepare for the show.

MOLLY

I can't believe you and your friends found me. Wow, they are great.

ROCKY

Yeah, they are.

A beat. Rocky and Molly share a warm look, eyes glistening.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

I know you don't have much time left before the show, so I'll leave you to get ready.

Molly thanks him again with a nose nudge. She rubs her head against his forehead.

ROCKY (CONT'D)

Can I see you after?

MOLLY

Yes, of course. I want you there!

And as Rocky smiles wide, Molly giggling as she inches backward into her quarters where Zoe is almost ready, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. ARENA - DAY

ANGLE ON the huge banner: THE FORBES NATIONAL DOG SHOW."

All the dogs are lined up in order to be viewed.

Molly and Zoe wait impatiently at the end of the line, out of view from Heather, Tiffany, and Gabi.

ZOE

Good luck, smalls. Can't wait to see those Mean Dogs faces when they see you perform! Go ghost Molly!

MOLLY

Ha! You too, bestie.

The dogs are presented one by one and show off their assets.

Heather, Tiffany, and Gabi, each make a great showing and receive high scores. Then, after all the dogs are presented --

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, two additional dogs will now be shown: Molly and Zoe.

Heather and her gang are aghast as Zoe performs first with perfect stature and vibrant hair, her confidence radiating.

Finally, comes Molly... She looks spectacular and confident.

Heather looks around for Brody, her face bright red.

Molly captures the crowd and prances her way around the ring, veering toward Heather in line. Then, Molly stops right in front of her, standing on her hind legs to show that she is not afraid.

The crowd LAUGHS and there is LOUD APPLAUSE. They look to the judges and are thrilled to see Molly's scores are highest.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Well, there we have it... Molly has scored the highest in the dog show's history. Let's see the judges tallies for our runners up...

One of the judges stands and hands the announcer the scores.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

2nd place goes to Zoe... and Jamie in 3rd place.

The three winners celebrate with their friends, jumping up and down excitedly. Molly is thrilled to see Emma there too.

Rocky spots Heather looking sour-faced and kicking up a fuss with her minions. Cali and Rocky approach Heather's gang.

ROCKY

Brody and his bruisers are in the
batting cages locked up. You and
your gang better be nice Heather or
you'll be there with them, get it?

Cali bumps Heather in the back.

HEATHER

Alright. Alright. I get it. We're
done. Let's go, girls.

Gabi follows Heather but Tiffany stays with Rocky and Cali.

TIFFANY

I never liked her, that crazy
poodle is on her own.

Molly and her friends walk around the arena taking in the
CHEERS and bowing to the crowd. Rocky watches with pride.

CALI

It is all worth it, when your
people see you succeed. I miss
that.

Rocky turns to hug Cali.

ROCKY

We are your people and your family
now, Cali. We love you. I asked you
to help me because I knew I could
trust you and that we would
succeed. You're the best, Cali.

Zoe walks over to Butch and gives him a smooch on the mouth,
causing him to pass out. Cali and Zoe share a laugh together.

Rocky makes his way to Emma and Molly where he receives hugs
and kisses from Emma and her family.

Brian and his family appear from the stands. As Brian strokes
Rocky's coat, thrilled to see him, Molly returns to Rocky.

MOLLY

Rocky, I have really missed my
family. I heard that since I won
the show, Emma has the option to
take me home. And I want to go with
her.

ROCKY

That's great, Molly, I am so happy
for you.

(MORE)

ROCKY (CONT'D)

You now have everything you have ever wanted.. Friends, family, and a win at the dog show.

MOLLY

Everything but you. You saved me, Rocky. Again. I love you.

ROCKY

I love you to Molly. I will miss you.

Rocky rubs his head against Molly's.

BRIAN

Really, are you serious?

Brian turns to his parents, eyes pleading.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Mom, I can take Rocky home. They are releasing him to me. He has completed his service.

And as Brian's parents simultaneously nod in agreement, Rocky and Molly exchanging an ecstatic smile, we...

FADE OUT.