

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN:

MAN (V.O.)  
What do dogs dream of?

INT. FAMILY ROOM - AFTERNOON

DANIEL, 30, lean with dark hair, in a flannel shirt and heavy socks, lays stretched out on the sofa, eyes closed. SUNNY, a large yellow-white dog of indeterminate breed, lays on the floor next to him, her head on his thigh. He mumbles suddenly and his legs jerk, and Sunny's head comes up. She watches him as he falls back into sleep.

INT. TRUCK - AFTERNOON

Daniel, farmer's tan above a light blue workshirt, eyes hidden behind mirrored shades, taps his fingers on the steering wheel of the mid-80's pickup. He stares straight ahead at the empty blacktop road as the cottonwood trees stripe it in shadow and then sunlight.

In the passenger's seat, Sunny sits with her head hanging out the half-opened window, smiling into the wind.

Daniel glances at Sunny and rubs the side of his face. He looks back at the road and downshifts, the engine whining as the truck slows down.

DANIEL

Hey, girl. That's a good girl.

Sunny pulls her head inside the truck and shifts in her seat, giving him her best dog-smile. She clumsily leans toward him across the seat and laps at his hand on the gearshift, tail thumping against the back of the seat. Daniel gently shoves her head away and finishes shifting.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Good girl.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Daniel stands at the kitchen sink rinsing a small colander full of noodles. He wears dark blue work pants and a lighter blue workshirt with his name embroidered over the chest pocket.

He turns the faucet off and dumps the noodles into a small casserole dish filled with a thick milky mixture.

As he turns and reaches for the refrigerator door, his feet knock against two dog dishes on the floor, one large and one small, spilling nuggets of dog food onto the floor. Scowling, he kicks out at a large water dish, sloshing water onto the floor on top of the dog food. He sighs heavily and dramatically.

DANIEL

I am not gonna waste my time. I  
don't need help. I just need a wife  
who does something besides sit and  
play on the computer.

JESSICA, a rail-thin woman in her late 20's, blonde and sun-tanned, attractive in a cheerleader kind of way, sits slumped at the kitchen table in front of an open patio door. She cradles a cup of coffee.

JESSICA

I don't just play on the computer.  
Which you would know if you -

DANIEL

(interrupts)

I don't have time to listen to your  
bullshit. I have a job and I have  
to go to that job now.

Jessica straightens and leans forward in her chair. Her  
voice is low and angry.

JESSICA

You always have to leave. You never  
have time to talk about this.

Daniel slides the casserole dish into the refrigerator and  
shuts the door. He stands still in front of it for a moment  
and then shrugs.

DANIEL

Well, one of us has to make some  
money, don't I?

Think you can remember to heat this  
up for her at noon?

He doesn't wait for a response as he grabs a metal lunch pail off the cabinet and quickly leaves the kitchen through the door into the garage, slamming it behind him. Jessica stares at the door and then slides her head onto the table, cradling it on her arms. Her voice is muffled.

JESSICA

You always have to leave a mess,  
don't you.

EXT. HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Daniel stands on the patio, holding his ONE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER in his arms. Both are dressed in light jackets. The autumn wind blows fallen leaves around his feet and both he and his daughter squint against the wind.

They watch Sunny and a SMALL WHITE DOG chase each other around the yard, barking and skidding through piles of leaves.

Daniel kisses his daughter on the forehead as she lays her cheek against his chest.

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