

THE KING OF TRACKS

Written by

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The scene opens at a cynodrome.

INT. CYNODROME - MORNING / PROLOGUE.

A race is about to begin at the greyhound track.

Men and women are preparing the circuit...

CUT TO :

Owners armed with their GREYHOUNDS (including a DALMATIAN, a SALUKI, a DOBERMAN, a HUNGARIAN SHORT-HAIRED POINTER, a WHIPPET, and a SPANISH GREYHOUND) arrive...

SUPERIMPOSE ON BLACK : DISNEY PRESENTS.

The spectators take their seats...

CUT TO :

Each owner puts a muzzle and a numbered vest on their greyhound...

CUT TO :

The owners bring their greyhounds, equipped with muzzles and numbered vests from 1 to 6 (in order of presentation), into the starting box...

CUT TO :

A man behind the starting boxes waves a flag...

SUPERIMPOSE ON BLACK : A PIXAR ANIMATION STUDIOS FILM.

The lure starts moving, gaining a 15-meter lead...

CUT TO :

The starting boxes open, and the greyhounds take off for 400 meters...

CUT TO :

Barely off the mark, the greyhound wearing the number 6 vest is already in the lead, but soon the greyhound with the number 2 vest catches up, and the two greyhounds engage in a fierce race...

CUT TO :

The crowd is in a frenzy...

CUT TO :

The greyhound wearing the number 5 vest speeds up, overtaking the greyhounds with numbers 6 and 2 in the final turn, then crosses the finish line...

CUT TO :

The delighted audience rises as one and applauds...

TITLE CARD : « THE KING OF TRACKS »

INT. RESTAURANT - MORNING

Inside a bustling modern restaurant, a TV high on the wall shows a greyhound race. A poorly groomed dog with a long, narrow head, small ears, a broad and long back with brindle fur, and somewhat skinny sits near the entrance. It's a Greyhound, seemingly captivated by the screen.

THE DOG (in awe)

GOLDIE Drive, the fastest dog in the world. Nine-time RACING champion, one of the first to earn the title of KING OF TRACKS.

ON TV: GOLDIE receives an award in the presence of its owner on an elevated podium, to the cheers of the crowd.

FLASHBACK. GREYHOUND TRACK CENTER - MORNING / ELEVATED PODIUM

The restaurant dog receives a medal and trophy amidst applause from the audience.

CUT TO :

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. RESTAURANT

THE DOG

What a dog ! I would give anything to be as fast as him. (Barking)
WOOF ! WOOF ! WOOF !

The customers look at the barking dog. A man at the back of the restaurant, with half-eaten food on his table, addresses the others.

MAN

Excuse me, whose dog is this ? (Barking)
It's driving me crazy.

Another man sitting with a woman at a table with food speaks up.

MAN #2

No one ! Who would own such a scruffy dog ? Maybe you do.

He starts laughing, then notices he's the only one doing so.

MAN #2 (embarrassed)

Anyway, not me.

He forces a smile of discomfort. A skinny, wrinkled man dressed as a chef comes out of the kitchen with a knife in hand and frowns. (This is SAZU, the 40-year-old restaurant owner.)

SAZU

But who is making all this unbearable noise ?

He looks at the customers who point off-camera. He turns to see the dog, and the camera zooms in on the dog, Sazu is horrified.

SAZU

OOOOOH !

He goes into a frenzy.

SAZU (cont'd)

A dog ! A dog in my restaurant ! And it's a mangy one, it hardly has any fur.

The camera zooms in on the dog's hairless body. Sazu moves angrily toward him.

SAZU (to the dog)

Hey, you ! What are you doing here ? Didn't you see the sign at the entrance : « RESTAURANT SAZU - No Animals Allowed » ?

EXT - IN FRONT OF THE RESTAURANT

Near the entrance, a sign reads « RESTAURANT SAZU - No Animals Allowed. »

SAZU (OS)

Where are you blind ?

INT - RESTAURANT / SAME

The dog doesn't budge, its gaze still fixed on the TV. Sazu, beside himself, explodes with rage.

SAZU

I'm talking to you ! Get out of my restaurant !

The dog and the customers look at him. Sazu brandishes the knife he has in a threatening manner toward the dog. The entire clientele gasps OOOOHH !

SAZU (in a menacing tone)

Before I add you to my menu.

The customers gasp again OOOOH ! Sazu notices and suddenly changes his tone.

SAZU

Don't take it seriously, it's just a joke to scare him !

The customers feel reassured.

SAZU

Now scram ! Get out of here before I lose my temper.

THE DOG (coldly, without looking at him)
But you've already lost it !

SAZU

You're still here !

Sazu throws the knife at the dog. Startled, the dog runs away at full speed, and the knife gets lodged in the door. The customers gasp collectively again OOOOHH !

EXT. STREET - DAY

The panicked dog dashes into traffic without waiting. Suddenly, VROOOM !!! A car barely avoids hitting him. Once safe, the dog stops and looks at the restaurant from across the traffic, where Sazu stands mockingly in front of his restaurant.

SAZU

HA, ha, ha, ha ! Serves you right ! I don't even know why he didn't run you over.

He suddenly adopts a serious demeanor.

SAZU

And I never see your paws around here again, hairless animal.

Sazu goes back into his restaurant, removing the knife lodged in the entrance door.

INT. RESTAURANT

He heads towards the kitchen of the restaurant but notices that everyone is staring at him. He stops and responds nervously.

SAZU

What ?!

No one reacts.

SAZU (calmer)

Ah, I see... (beat) Well, grilled Omar for everyone.

The customers express their joy.

CUT TO :

EXT. STREET - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

The dog is sitting on the sidewalk, visibly depressed.

THE DOG

That was a close call this time. Puff !

Not far away, a pile of garbage moves. A dog (MALT, a large BOBTAIL, cheeky character) emerges and spots the dog sitting on the sidewalk. He alerts his friends.

MALT

Guys, come see who's here !

Two other dogs appear, coming out from different trash cans : RITCH (a small, very excited and playful FRENCH BULLDOG) and BEAUCE (a large BEAUCERON with an impressive physique and a dissuasive look). They notice the dog.

BEAUCE

Isn't that our old friend the hairless one ?

Malt and Ritch burst into laughter. The dog sees them.

THE DOG

No, not them.

They join him on the sidewalk.

RITCH
Hey there, hairless one !

The dog sighs, not really happy to see them.

THE DOG
Eh ! Hey guys.

RITCH
It's been a while since we've seen you. Where have you been ?

THE DOG
Here, in the... !

Malt interrupts him.

MALT
Street ! You mean.

Malt and Ritch start laughing again.

MALT (continuing)
Oh ! Oh ! I almost forgot, have you found the master you were looking for ?

THE DOG (frustrated)
----- !

RITCH
Is that why you decided to leave, right ?

MALT (more teasing)
And you even told us before you left that the next time we saw each other, you'd be with your master, right ?

THE DOG
Yes ! But...

RITCH
Oh, wait ! Wait !

Ritch shows a mischievous grin.

RITCH (continuing)
Don't tell me it's him who just chased you with a knife in hand ?

Laughing at the two dogs, he's not amused.

THE DOG

Ha, ha ! Very funny, but no ! It's not him, and I haven't found a master yet.

Ritch and Malt gasp.

RITCH

Of course, I'm not surprised. How do you expect to find a master looking like that ?

Close-up on the dog's hairless body. Malt and Ritch laugh again.

MALT

But don't worry, you'll find your master.

The dog's eyes widen and his ears perk up, surprised.

THE DOG

Do you really believe that ?

Malt approaches him closer.

MALT

Yeah, I believe it firmly ! You're not just anyone, you know ! And knowing you, I'm sure you won't give up that easily.

The dog seems comforted and regains courage.

THE DOG

Yeah !

MALT

But by the time that day comes, you'll have lost all your hair.

Ritch and Malt start laughing again. The dog takes this to heart, and his ears droop again.

BEAUCE

Don't listen to them. Have you found a way to grow your hair back ?

The dog responds, dejected.

THE DOG

Not yet, but I'm working on it.

BEAUCE

Look at how you've become.

The dog looks at his hairless body.

BEAUCE (continuing)

It's even worse than before. Now, they fall off with the slightest movement.

The dog shifts slightly to his right, and the camera follows as some of his fur falls gently to the ground. Malt and Ritch burst out laughing again.

RITCH

Just a few more moves, and you'll be completely naked.

More laughter ensues, Beauce tries to stifle a laugh. The dog is totally affected by all these words.

THE DOG

Very funny, guys. Well, I'm leaving.

He takes a small path to his right. Malt and Ritch continue to laugh.

MALT

Yeah, that's right, get lost, hairless animal.

Even more laughter.

CUT TO :

EXT. COURTYARD - AFTERNOON

Under a tree, a slightly overweight teenager (16 years old) counts out loud.

THE TEENAGER

7, 8, 9, and 10. Get ready, I'm coming !

The teenager rushes into the garage next door.

INT. GARAGE

The teenager searches for a few minutes in the garage, then comes out and enters the house across the street.

INT. HOUSE

He takes the stairs and arrives in a bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM

He throws himself onto the bed and lifts the sheet.

THE TEENAGER

Found you !

He is surprised to discover that there is no one under the sheet, just a pile of pillows. He exits the room and starts searching in all the other rooms (bathroom and living room) before heading to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

He searches in the kitchen. A woman (36 years old) is preparing a meal, smiles at him.

THE WOMAN

He's not here.

THE TEENAGER (surprised)

Really ?! I thought I searched everywhere.

THE WOMAN

Are you sure ?

An idea suddenly lights up for him.

THE TEENAGER (enlightened)

OH ! Thanks.

He rushes out of the kitchen.

CUT TO :

INT. ATTIC - DAY

THE TEENAGER

I know you're in here. So show yourself.

He walks over to a dusty box and opens it.

THE TEENAGER

Found you !

He bursts out laughing. Another child (12 years old) pops his head out of the box, not happy at all.

THE CHILD IN THE BOX

That's not fair. You would never have found me without her. I know she helped you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DINING TABLE / A FEW MOMENTS LATER

The woman in the kitchen is setting the dining table.

THE CHILD IN THE BOX (V.O.)

Yes.

THE TEENAGER (V.O.)

No.

THE CHILD IN THE BOX (V.O.)

I say yes.

THE TEENAGER (V.O.)

And I say no.

The woman smiles as the children enter the living room. She waits for them at the table.

THE WOMAN IN THE KITCHEN

I was waiting for you to eat. Come on, come.

The two children rush to the table. The woman opens a large dish, and the children are immediately amazed by its contents.

BOTH CHILDREN (simultaneously)

Stew !

THE WOMAN IN THE KITCHEN

Just how you like it, my darlings.

THE TEENAGER

Mmm ! What flavor ! I'm already drooling.

The woman fills the bowls of both children. They wish each other « enjoy your meal » and start eating joyfully.

THE CHILD IN THE BOX (V.O.)

Oh ! Hi, sorry, I got a bit carried away with all this action, so I forgot to introduce myself. So I'll start.

Camera on the teenager eating.

THE CHILD IN THE BOX (V.O.)

This is my best friend, BASILE, 16 years old. His father is a lawyer, and his mother owns the biggest

hair salon in our town. But I see him as my big brother since mom considers him her son.

Camera focused on BASILE enjoying his dish.

BASILE
Mmm... ! So good.

THE CHILD IN THE BOX
He only thinks about his stomach, that's why he is shaped like that.

Camera on the woman in the kitchen.

THE CHILD IN THE BOX (continuing)
That beautiful and sweet woman over there, well, that's MIRETTE, my mother, 36 years old. Beautiful woman, isn't she ? She's a veterinarian.

MIRETTE (to the child in the box)
Stop talking and eat.

THE CHILD IN THE BOX
Okay, mom.

Camera on himself (the child in the box), eating.

THE CHILD IN THE BOX (V.O.)
And finally, me, CHARLES, 12 years old, the beloved son of this lovely lady. We look alike, don't you think ?

CUT TO :

A MONTAGE ON : a blank page with doodles coming to life. A man gets out of a car, and a child runs towards him, then the man picks him up in his arms.

CHARLES (V.O., continued)
You were all expecting me to introduce a handsome, elegant man and say, here's my father, but... no, sorry, I no longer have a father...

On another page, the man boards a plane, but shortly after takeoff, the plane crashes.

CHARLES (V.O., continued)
I lost him when I was very young in a plane crash.

END OF MONTAGE BACK TO :

INT. DINING ROOM

CHARLES (V.O.)

Well, that's what my mother told me. Since that day, my mother does everything she can to take care of me. What a courageous woman ! Basically, since my father's death, we've become a middle-class family, which causes me a lot of trouble with the other kids from upper class families. In fact, they hate me ; luckily, BASILE is always there to protect me.

They finish eating.

BASILE

Wow ! That was really good. Can I have some more, please ?

MIRETTE

Yes, my boy.

Mirette takes his bowl and fills it again.

BASILE

Great.

He receives his new bowl of stew and starts to enjoy it.

CUT TO :

EXT. IN FRONT OF CHARLES' HOUSE - EVENING

Charles and his mother stand in front of the house, Basile facing them with his bike in hand.

BASILE

Goodbye, ma'am ! Goodbye, Charles. (To Mirette)
Thank you, ma'am, for the stew, it was really delicious. I really appreciated it.

MIRETTE

Let me at least walk you home.

A black BMW X6 parks in front of them and honks, TUUUT !!

BASILE

No need, my father sent the driver.

He gets in the car. The driver takes the bike and puts it in the trunk, then approaches Mirette.

THE DRIVER

Good evening, Mrs. MIRETTE, good evening, my boy.

MIRETTE
Good evening.

CHARLES
Good evening, sir.

THE DRIVER
And once again, good evening from Basile's father. He thanks you for often taking care of his son.

MIRETTE
Without hesitation, tell him he will always be welcome at my home.

THE DRIVER
I won't fail to tell him. Now we are leaving.

Basile waves from the car, and the driver gets in and starts the engine.

MIRETTE (loudly)
And don't forget to say good evening on my behalf !

The driver drives away, and they leave as MIRETTE enters the house.

MIRETTE
Don't stay outside, come in and close the door.

CHARLES
Okay, mom.

Charles stands in front of the door.

CHARLES
Basile is lucky to still have his father.

CUT TO :

INT. CHARLES' ROOM - DAY

An alarm clock on the nightstand beeps BEEP, BEEP, BEEP repeatedly, showing 9 :00 AM. Charles opens his eyes, and the rays of sunlight streaming in through the window hit his face.

CHARLES
Who left the window open ?

He gets up from his bed and heads towards the window to close it. The alarm clock continues to beep BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, now showing 9 :01 AM.

CHARLES

It's already 9 AM ! (To himself)
I set it as usual, but why is it ringing now ? (Call)
Mom ! Mom !

No answer, he leaves the room, intrigued.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Charles enters the living room and is amazed by the decor : colorful balloons, sparkling streamers, festive garlands, and pennants floating in the air. The table is adorned with dishes, colorful cups, flowers, candles, and candies.

Suddenly, he notices confetti and glitter floating in the air. He twirls around and sees his mother and Basile smiling and cheerfully welcoming him with enthusiastic gestures.

MIRETTE AND BASILE

HAPPY BIRTHDAY CHARLES !

Charles stands frozen, tears in his eyes, moved by the surprise. Mirette takes him in her arms and gives him a comforting hug.

MIRETTE

Happy birthday, my bunny. (Wiping his tears)
Don't cry, today is a big day for you.

CHARLES

Thank you, mom.

BASILE

Come on, stop your circus, Charles. You're a big boy now. And big boys don't cry.

Charles looks up and smiles.

CUT TO :

INT. LIVING ROOM - DINING TABLE

They are all three sitting around the table decorated for the birthday. The cake is beautifully decorated with candles, and Basile watches the cake impatiently, saliva dripping from his mouth.

BASILE

Finally, I'm going to get to eat that cake ! I couldn't wait any longer.

MIRETTE

Blow out your candles, my darling.

Charles approaches the cake, but Mirette stops him.

MIRETTE

Don't forget to make a wish before you blow.

CHARLES

Already did, Mom.

MIRETTE

Then blow !

BASILE (to Mirette)

Tell me, ma'am, does that thing really work ?

MIRETTE

What thing ? And stop calling me ma'am.

BASILE

Oh ! ...excuse me, I was talking about the wish.

MIRETTE

I don't know much about it, but it's better to do it. It's a birthday tradition.

BASILE

Ah ! Okay !

Charles blows out his candles. They applaud, CLAP, CLAP, CLAP. Suddenly, KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK ! Someone knocks at the door.

MIRETTE

Oh ! That must be him.

CHARLES (to Basile)

Who ? Did you invite someone ?

Basile shrugs.

MIRETTE

Stay here, I'll open it.

She leaves the frame. Basile and Charles exchange curious looks. Mirette returns with a friendly young man, stylishly coiffed (about 20 years old).

THE YOUNG MAN

Yo ! Kids, ready for a super photo session ?

BASILE

Yo ! Humm ! Man !

THE YOUNG MAN

No, not man ! I'm FREDERIC.

CHARLES

Yo... Frédéric.

MIRETTE

Alright, kids, I hope you're ready because it's time for the photo session. (To Frédéric)
So... let's get started !

Frédéric gets into action, and in a series of quick beats, he takes funny shots.

- Charles alone with his cake, smiling with a delighted expression.
- Charles and Basile posing with the cake, then various poses without the cake.
- Basile alone with the cake, showing a clear intention to eat it.
- Charles and Mirette, then Charles and Mirette preventing Basile from eating the cake by holding him back.
- To finish, a photo of all three together, with Basile looking displeased.

CUT TO :

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE - A FEW HOURS LATER

Mirette, Frédéric, Basile, and Charles stand in front of the house.

FREDERIC

I think I'm going to head out now.

BASILE

Now it's time for the cake ! I've been waiting for this moment forever.

Basile sneaks quietly into the house.

MIRETTE (to Frédéric)

Come have a bite of cake with us before you leave.

FREDERIC

No, I'm good, I don't really like sweets. (Beat)
For the photos, you'll get them during the week.

Frédéric looks at Charles and ruffles his hair.

FREDERIC

Happy birthday, my boy.

CHARLES

Thanks.

FREDERIC

Oh ! Wait ! Take this !

Frédéric pulls a chocolate cookie from his pocket.
Mirette gives a disapproving look to Frédéric, who notices it,
then hands the cookie to Charles.

FREDERIC (playfully)

I know it's not much, but you know, a gift is still a
gift, no matter its size or value.

CHARLES

Thank you very much, Mr. Photographer.

FREDERIC

You're welcome. Goodbye, ma'am.

He leaves the frame. Mirette turns toward the house.

MIRETTE

Where's Basile ?

INT. LIVING ROOM

Mirette and Charles find Basile with his mouth full, the cake
half-eaten. Basile sees them.

BASILE (mouth full)

Oh ! Hi, you're here. (Beat)
Frédéric left ?

He tries to smile, but with his mouth too full, it's hard.
Charles and Mirette exchange a look. Basile swallows quickly
and shrugs while smiling, looking a bit guilty.

BASILE

Sorry, I couldn't resist.

Mirette responds sternly.

MIRETTE

Basile !

He feels bad for having done that. Mirette approaches and touches his head, trying to comfort him.

MIRETTE

No ! No ! Don't make that face. Just remember that too many sweets aren't good for your health.

Charles looks at both of them with a resolute expression.

CHARLES

I think we should move on to the presents, don't you think ?

BASILE

Oh yes ! Good idea.

Basile gets up from the table and heads toward the exit.

BASILE (to Charles)

Follow me.

Charles follows, impatient and excited.

EXT. CHARLES' YARD - AFTERNOON

Once outside, Charles waits eagerly. Basile returns from behind the house with a brand new sky-blue bicycle that he hands to Charles.

BASILE

And here you go, it's for you. From me and your mom.

Charles can't believe it, a few seconds later, he bursts with joy.

CHARLES

Wow... ! A bike ! I can't believe it. Thank you, Basile, you're the best !

Charles rushes to hug Basile enthusiastically.

BASILE

Slow down ! Slow down !

Charles hugs him so tightly that Basile has trouble breathing.

BASILE (choking)

I can't breathe, I can't breathe.

Charles immediately lets him go, feeling embarrassed. Basile struggles to catch his breath.

CHARLES

Oh, sorry ! It's just the emotion, you know.

BASILE (still gasping)

Yeah, yeah, I know. (Beat)

But it's not me you should be thanking so much, it's your mom.

Basile goes back into the house. Charles approaches the bike, admiring it in wonder.

CHARLES

I finally have a bike, my very own super cool bike !

Basile watches him from the window of the house and smiles. Mirette enters the frame and approaches Charles.

MIRETTE

You look very happy, from what I can see.

Charles jumps on her and gives her a big hug.

CHARLES

Oh yes, Mom ! And you can't imagine how much !

He lifts his head and looks at Mirette with childlike curiosity.

CHARLES (continued)

Tell me, Mom ! What did you buy for me as a gift ?

MIRETTE

Me !

CHARLES

Yes, you ! No, no ! Don't tell me, I'll try to guess.

He pretends to think.

CHARLES

A dog ! You bought me a dog as a gift, didn't you, Mom ?

MIRETTE

No ! Just this ---

CHARLES

So you didn't buy me a dog ?!

Basile comes back from the house, mouth full, carrying a plate with a piece of cake and a spoon.

BASILE

Aren't you going to try your bike ?

CHARLES

Not now ! I don't really feel like it.

Basile notices the sadness on Charles' face.

BASILE

What's wrong, Charles ?

He says nothing, and Mirette becomes very cold.

MIRETTE

Sorry, my boy, but I couldn't get you a dog, especially the one you wanted.

Charles looks at her with eyes filled with sadness.

MIRETTE (continued)

Don't give me that look ! You know very well that we've already talked about the dog.

CHARLES

But I... !! You told me I could have anything I wanted on my birthday !

MIRETTE

Yes ! But what you're asking for is really..

Basile watches the scene while eating, affected by the situation.

CHARLES (to himself)

If I don't get a dog, I won't be able to participate in the championship. I can forget my dream of winning the championship this year.

Tears begin to form in Charles' eyes. Mirette wipes them away.

MIRETTE (more)

No ! No ! No ! Don't cry, my bunny. Today is a big day for you, so you shouldn't cry or be sad.

While she tries to cheer him up, Basile finishes his plate.

MIRETTE

If I could find you that dog, I would have donne it.
But right now...

CHARLES

I thought that if I asked you on my birthday, it
would change your mind, but now I see that it hasn't.

Mirette takes this to heart, feeling more affected than
Charles, but tries not to let this emotion overwhelm her son.

MIRETTE

But you can choose something else, you know !

CHARLES (tears in his eyes)

Thank you, Mom ! But I don't want anything else, I
just want a dog.

Charles sniffs back his tears. Mirette is completely saddened
to see her son in this state and can't think of anything to
lift his spirits, she feels depressed. Seeing this, Basile
tries to salvage the situation. He comes over and pats Charles
on the back.

BASILE (smiling)

Come on, don't make that funeral face. It's just a
dog, after all.

CHARLES (loudly)

For you, it's just an animal, while for me, it's
something completely different.

Charles runs off, tears in his eyes, grabs his bike, and moves
out of the frame. Mirette raises her hand as if she wants to
stop him but remains there, powerless.

BASILE (confused, to Mirette)

But what did I say ?! (Beat)
Why didn't you mention the bicycle to him ?

Mirette collapses sadly to the ground, and Basile heads
towards her with his bike in hand.

BASILE

Don't worry, I'll bring him back.

He moves a bit with his bike and hears Mirette's cold voice.

MIRETTE (dejected)

Basile... !

Basile stops and looks her straight in the eye as if to say, "Don't worry, everything will be fine." She returns a confident smile.

MIRETTE (continued, with a small smile)
Thank you.

Basile moves on with his bike and leaves the frame as well. Mirette stays there, silent, then tears appear along her face. She rushes into the house.

CUT TO :

EXT. STREET - SOMEWHERE IN THE CITY / SUNSET

The dog wanders through the streets of the city, hungry, its stomach making strange noises. It stops in front of a butcher shop window, looking at the pieces of meat with longing.

THE BUTCHER (to the dog)
Hey !

The dog notices the butcher speaking to it and wags its tail.

THE BUTCHER (continued, in German)
What are you doing here ? Go on, this isn't a place for dogs. Go away !

The dog doesn't understand a word he says.

THE BUTCHER (more, still in German)
You're still here ! I warn you, if you scare away my customers with that scraggly body of yours, you'll hear from me.

THE DOG
Fine, I'm leaving. Anyway, you won't give me anything if I stay here.

The dog continues on its way, its stomach growling again.

THE BUTCHER (in French)
Pff ! The animals of today.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN DOWNTOWN - SAME TIME

CLOSE-UP ON : a billboard showing Charles with a greyhound.

We zoom out to see Charles at the foot of the billboard, and the sign displays greyhounds racing. He becomes even more depressed and continues on with his bike.

CARD : DOWNTOWN

Three boys (LEON, EDITH : 14 years old, and CREPIN : 15 years old) are sitting near a lively fountain in the city center. Suddenly, Léon spots something off-screen and points.

LEON

Hey ! Guys, look over there.

The two boys turn and see Charles walking alone with his bike.

EDITH

Uh ! But that's Charles the broke. What's he doing here ?

CREPIN

No idea, but we should go say hi to him, don't you think ?

LEON

Good idea !

Crépin grabs his skateboard.

CREPIN

Let's go, guys.

Léon takes his scooter, and Edith grabs her bike.

QUICK CUT TO :

Charles moving forward, head down, still in shock.

Crépin approaches him doing tricks (kick flip, heel flip, and 360 flips), but Charles barely notices and keeps walking. Crépin circles him with his board.

Léon arrives with his scooter, and Edith follows. Charles finally notices them and stops.

LEON (to Edith)

I beat you again.

EDITH (a bit out of breath)

Pff !

LEON

As usual.

CREPIN

Look who it is ! The broke who wants to play with the big boys !

LEON (to Charles)

Why do you have that funeral face ? Did you lose someone or what ?

Still looking down, Charles says nothing. Crépin and the others exchange glances.

CREPIN (to Charles)

So, are you still holding on to your dream of becoming the KING OF THE TRACKS ?

Still nothing. Charles doesn't respond. They exchange glances among themselves.

LEON

You dream big for a broke guy like you, you know.

(Beat)

You know what's funny about all this ? it's that the thinks he's special.

They all start laughing together.

CREPIN

Listen, broke guy, the dog racing tracks are reserved for people of our social class, not for kids like you. (Beat)

I mean, people of your class, of course.

LEON

Exactly. You'd better give up before you embarrass yourself in front of everyone. So go back to your insignificant little world.

A VOICE

He won't go anywhere.

They all turn to look. The camera adjusts its frame and reveals BASILE.

BASILE (continuing, to Crepin)

And he has just as much right as you do to participate in this race.

LEON

Still you ?

BASILE
Yes ! It's still me.

CREPIN (to Edith and Leon)
Pff ! Come on, let's go. The sumo is here.

Leon gets on his scooter, and Edith takes her bike. Crepin, on his skateboard, does a BACKSIDE 180 and stops next to Charles, then whispers in his ear.

CREPIN (more, to Charles)
Know that you have no chance of winning this championship, nor the title of KING OF THE TRACKS.
(Beat)
And even if that happens, I'll be in your way, believe me.

Then he and Edith leave, Leon stays behind.

LEON (to Basile)
You can thank your dear daddy otherwise, I would have already settled your account.

BASILE
In your dreams, maybe !

He leaves too, and Basile joins Charles.

BASILE
Charles, are you okay ?

Charles doesn't respond and watches Leon, Crepin, and Edith exit the frame.

BASILE (continuing)
What got into you to leave like that ? Do you know how worried mom was after you left ?!

Charles doesn't react.

BASILE (more)
She went through so much for you despite having so little—the cake, the photographer... (Beat)
...and even this bike you're dragging around right now.

Charles looks confused. Basile continues, turning his back to Charles.

BASILE

And you, what are you doing ? Nothing. Not even a little thank you. And... !

Charles realizes what he just did. Basile turns to Charles.

BASILE

And... eh... !

He sees Charles walking away on his bike.

BASILE

Where are you going again ?

Charles answers him as he distances himself, leaving Basile in confusion.

CHARLES

Home before mom worries even more.

BASILE (surprised)

Uh... ! As you wish. (Beat)

See you tomorrow, then, and be careful on your way back.

Charles walks away far enough for Basile to lose sight of him. Basile watches until he disappears.

CUT TO :

EXT. BEHIND A RESTAURANT - A FEW HOURS LATER

The dog rummages through a trash can behind a restaurant, but it's empty. His stomach growls with hunger. He digs into another pot, still nothing.

THE DOG

I'm so hungry. I think this is the end of my adventures, and I didn't even get to participate in a single dog race.

The dog collapses heavily on the ground, dejected. Suddenly, he hears a door open, revealing a 19-year-old waiter in uniform. He struggles to pull out a garbage bag. After a few minutes of struggle, he manages to get it out and closes the door behind him.

The waiter turns around and sees the dog sitting, wagging his tail with hopeful eyes, staring at the bag. The waiter grumbles.

WAITER

What are you doing here ? (Beat)
This isn't a place for dogs, go on, get lost.

The dog gets up, takes a few steps forward as if leaving, then gives him puppy eyes.

WAITER (continuing)

Don't give me those eyes.

The dog continues to look at him, insistent.

WAITER (more)

No ! No ! Not those eyes, stop, I hate them.

The dog keeps looking at him with big sad eyes.

WAITER

Fine, alright, you win.

The dog wags his tail excitedly as the waiter pulls a bone out of the garbage bag and waves it.

WAITER

Who's it for, the big bone ? Huh, who's it for ?

The dog wags his tail even more with excitement, tongue hanging out.

WAITER (continuing)

...The big bone ! Who's it for ?

The dog slowly approaches the waiter while wagging his tail. Once close enough,

WAITER (more, abruptly)

And well, it's mine. Now get lost.

He throws the bone at the dog. Scared, the dog darts into the bushes about fifteen steps away, leaving the bone near the bushes.

WAITER (continuing)

You flea-ridden mutt.

He thinks for a moment, and the dog returns to retrieve the bone.

WAITER

That one doesn't have any hair, so I don't think it has fleas. I should rather say... (loudly)

...Fur-less animal. Yeah, that's even better. (Beat)
You hear me, fur-less animal ?

The door of the restaurant opens, revealing a little man in an apron with a spatula in hand it's the chef.

CHEF (angrily)
What are you doing here again ?

WAITER (stumbling)
It's... it's the... the dog !

The chef looks around but sees no dog.

CHEF
The dog ! A dog ? Where ?

WAITER
It was just there.

The chef looks in the indicated direction but sees nothing.
WHAM ! The waiter gets hit on the head with the spatula.

CHEF (angrily)
I pay you to work, not to make up excuses to slack off. (Beat)
It's work time and not rest time, understood ?
Lazybones.

The waiter stands at attention.

WAITER
Yes, chef !

The chef points his spatula at him.

CHEF
Get rid of that pile of trash, and join me in the kitchen in four seconds flat. Understood ?

WAITER (still at attention)
Yes, chef !

CHEF
You legless centipede.

He goes back into the kitchen. The waiter mumbles.

WAITER
That doesn't make any sense, a millipede without legs.

He remembers the chef's last words and rushes to get rid of the garbage bag.

EXT. STREET - BEHIND THE BUSHES / SAME TIME

The dog runs out of the bushes but suddenly BOOM, he gets hit by something off-screen. The camera moves to reveal Charles lying on the ground, clutching his bleeding knee.

CHARLES
Ouch... ! My knee.

He hears a noise, looks up, and sees the dog on the ground.

THE DOG
AW-AW, AW-AW !

CHARLES
A dog !

Charles gets up and approaches the dog.

CHARLES
Are you okay ? Did I hurt you ? I hope I didn't hurt you too badly.

THE DOG
Oh really ! How would you feel if I did that to you ?

The dog tries to get up, but can barely stand. Its right front paw is hurt, and Charles reacts upon seeing it.

CHARLES
Sorry about your paw.

THE DOG
Sorry ! Is that all you have to say ? I get it, since you're not the one sprawled out on the ground, you can say that easily. Sorry, pff !

The dog sighs. Close-up on Charles, who looks at the dog.

CHARLES
I don't speak dog, but I know how much you're hurting. I'm really sorry.

THE DOG
Oh really !

CHARLES

I didn't see you come out of the bushes, so...

THE DOG

You just had to pay attention, that's all.

CHARLES (continued)

...but don't worry, I'll find a way to help you.

THE DOG

So, you're going to finish breaking my leg and then want to help me ? What a nice little boy. (Beat)
You'd better come up with a solution, or else...

Charles looks around the dog's neck.

THE DOG

Hey ! What are you doing ?

CHARLES

Just as I thought, you're a stray dog.

THE DOG

And now he realizes it !

CHARLES

I can't leave you here.

THE DOG

You wouldn't dare after what you just did to me.

CHARLES (continued)

I've got it !

THE DOG

Got what ?

Charles picks up his bike and starts walking with it. The dog watches him and barks.

THE DOG

WOOF ! WOOF ! Where are you going ? Don't tell me you're going to leave me here, that wouldn't be human of you, you know.

Charles stops and turns to the dog.

CHARLES

What are you waiting for ? Come on, let's go.

The dog stays still.

THE DOG

Go where ?

Charles starts to walk away, unaware that the dog isn't following him. After a few steps, he turns around to see that the dog hasn't moved an inch.

CHARLES

Come on, I'm taking you home. Once we're there, my mom will take care of your paw she's a veterinarian, and she's the best, you'll see.

THE DOG

Okay ! If you say so, but I hope this isn't a trick to take me to the pound.

CHARLES

Just come on.

The dog barks and wags its tail as it approaches Charles, who rubs its head.

CHARLES

I don't speak dog, but I think that's a yes !

The two leave, and the camera adjusts to show them exiting the frame.

CUT TO :

EXT. IN FRONT OF CHARLES'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Charles arrives home late at night with the dog. He notices the light inside and heads towards the door, which he finds open. He goes inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Charles finds Mirette, asleep with her head against the dining table. Charles gestures to the dog to stay quiet, unaware that his mother is asleep.

CHARLES (to the dog)

Come in, don't stay outside.

The dog quietly enters and observes the surroundings.

CHARLES (more)

Stay here and don't make any noise, okay ?

Charles approaches to wake Mirette.

CHARLES
Mom ! Mom ! I'm home.

Mirette wakes up.

MIRETTE
Charles, is that you ! (Beat)
You're back ?

CHARLES
Sorry, Mom, I'm sorry for...

Mirette immediately hugs him.

MIRETTE
You scared me so much, you know.

CHARLES
I'm sorry for behaving like that, Mom.

MIRETTE
The important thing is that you're home. But promise
me you'll never do that again.

CHARLES
I promise, Mom.

She kisses him on the head.

MIRETTE
Thank you, my angel. (Beat)
I'm sorry I couldn't buy you that...

THE DOG
So cute.

Mirette then notices the dog next to them, wagging its tail,
and jumps back in fright.

MIRETTE
AAAAAAH !

She hides behind Charles.

MIRETTE (terrified)
What is that ?

CHARLES
What ?

She points at the dog.

MIRETTE

That !

THE DOG (completely confused)

What's wrong with her ?

Charles turns to the dog.

CHARLES (to the dog)

What are you doing here ? I told you not to follow me.

MIRETTE

Do you know this thing ?

CHARLES

Yes, Mom, and it's not a thing, it's a dog.

MIRETTE

A dog ? This... thing is a dog ?

CHARLES

Yes, Mom, it's a dog, not a thing.

MIRETTE

As far as I remember, dogs didn't have...

Camera focuses on the dog's body.

MIRETTE (continued)

...a body like that.

THE DOG (completely falsely)

Thanks for the compliment.

CHARLES

Don't exaggerate, Mom. It's not that terrible.

MIRETTE

Why did you bring it here ?

CHARLES

I accidentally knocked it over while coming in I couldn't just leave it there. (Beat)
Plus, I think I broke its right front paw.

The dog raises its injured paw.

THE DOG
AW-AW, AW-AW !

MIRETTE
Charles ! We've already talked about having animals
in the house, especially dogs.

CHARLES
I know very well, but it's because of his paw. (Beat)
You're a veterinarian isn't it your job to help
animals in distress ?

Mirette is left speechless by Charles's words.

MIRETTE
I'm proud of you. Send me my first aid kit so we can
take care of this paw together.

CHARLES
Great !

He jumps into Mirette's arms. She then notices his knee.

MIRETTE
Did you hurt your knee ?

CHARLES
Oh, that ? It's nothing.

CUT TO :

The end of bandaging the dog's paw.

MIRETTE
There, it's done. It wasn't serious, just a little
sprain.

Charles and the dog both have bandages. The dog tries to
remove its bandage, but Charles stops it.

CHARLES (to the dog)
No ! No ! Don't take it off just yet. Mom said it's a
little sprain. So you'll have to keep it on for a
good week.

MIRETTE (putting away her things)
Let him rest. Tomorrow, I'll call the pound to come
and pick him up.

CHARLES

But that's not necessary. He can stay here while he recovers.

MIRETTE

Oh no ! Don't even think about it. (Beat)
Look at this dog, we don't know anything about him.
And look at his body maybe he has a contagious disease.

CHARLES

But mom...

She finishes putting away her things.

MIRETTE

There's no but about it I'll call them tomorrow.

CHARLES

Mom !

MIRETTE

End of discussion. It's getting late.

Mirette leaves with her kit. Charles and the dog exchange a worried look.

CHARLES (to the dog)

Don't worry, I won't let them take you that easily.

He leaves as well. The dog, lying on the floor, watches him leave.

THE DOG

Are we not eating ? (Beat)
I'm hungry.

CUT TO :

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Mirette is on the phone while cleaning.

MIRETTE (on the phone)

Okay ! I understand. No, no, no ! Don't worry ; that time works for me. Thank you.

She hangs up.

CHARLES

Was that the pound ?

MIRETTE

No, it was JOHN, one of my colleagues.
And Basile called this morning to say he wouldn't be here this week.

CHARLES

Why ?

MIRETTE

Well, he's visiting his uncle with his parents.

CHARLES

Ah, okay. But what about the pound ?

MIRETTE

They're on vacation for a whole week, so...

Charles, happy, interrupts her.

CHARLES

The dog gets to stay with us for a week ! So cool !

The dog suddenly sits up.

THE DOG

What !

Charles jumps for joy. Mirette, seeing his enthusiasm, agrees.

MIRETTE

Yes, that's right.

Mirette continues cleaning.

CHARLES (to the dog)

I hope you heard what my mom said. So get ready for a wild week.

THE DOG

Hey ! Not so fast. I have a say in this too. I don't want to stay here for a whole week, I have a ton of things to do.

CHARLES

If you agree, bark.

The dog doesn't bark. Charles rubs its head.

CHARLES

Stop being shy and bark.

Charles gives Mirette a surprising hug.

CHARLES

Thank you for agreeing, Mom. You don't know how happy I am. You're the best.

Mirette returns the hug. Charles gets overwhelmed with emotions and starts to cry, Mirette notices.

MIRETTE

What's wrong, my dear ?

CHARLES

I'm sorry, Mom, for leaving like that yesterday. I'm so ashamed of my behavior. But I...

Mirette places her hand on Charles's head.

MIRETTE

Don't worry, it's in the past now. But for the dog, it's only a week.

Charles wipes his tears.

CHARLES

Yes, Mom. A week, no more, no less.

MIRETTE

Exactly, no more, but there could be less, depending on his behavior.

Charles stands at attention.

CHARLES

Noted, Lieutenant Mom.

Mirette kisses him on the head.

MIRETTE

I love you, my dear.

CHARLES

I love you too, Mom.

THE DOG

That's all nice and dandy, but can we move on to something else now ?

Charles approaches the dog.

CHARLES

I'm counting on you to be as calm as a slug.

THE DOG (totally confused)
I don't understand anything !

Mirette gives a disapproving look to the dog, which doesn't go unnoticed.

THE DOG
Wow ! I feel like I'm going to enjoy it here for this week.

CUT TO :

A BEGINNING OF A MONTAGE :
As the montage music begins to play, in a series of quick shots, the days go by, and Charles has a lot of fun with his new companion. Both are still wearing their bandages.

INT. CHARLES'S ROOM - DAY

Charles's alarm rings, DRELIN ! DRELIN ! DRELIN !
Indicating 7 :30. Charles and the dog synchronize their wake-up. They both get off the bed and leave the room, heading for the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Charles and the dog walk through the living room, Charles greets his mom, and the dog barks. They are outside before she can respond.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN TOWN - NOON

Charles is bikejoring with the dog.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

In the evening, they are all at the table. Charles and the dog are playing with their food. Mirette gets annoyed and asks them to leave the table.

QUICK CUT TO :

Later that night, they return to watch a greyhound race on TV, in the dark.

INT. LIVING ROOM - A FEW DAYS LATER / DAY

Charles and the dog are playing ball in the living room. At each throw, the dog brings the ball back to Charles. But in a

final throw, the dog leaps, catches the ball in the air, but falls heavily to the ground, knocking over a nearby vase which breaks.

Mirette immediately comes out of the kitchen with an apron around her neck and discovers the broken vase. She scolds Charles and the dog, sending them out.

INT. LIVING ROOM / NIGHT

Charles and the dog are in the dark. The race on TV ends, and their favorite greyhound wins. Charles and the dog jump for joy, and to their surprise, Mirette stands behind them.

MIRETTE

Turn that off and go to bed !

EXT. BACKYARD / AFTERNOON

Charles and the dog rest under a tree.

CHARLES (to the dog)

You know, I have a dream I'd really like to achieve.

THE DOG (completely uninterested)

And what do you want me to do about it ?

CHARLES

I'd love to win the RACING this year.

The dog's ears perk up.

THE DOG

Wait, you said win the RACING ? What a coincidence, that's my dream too.

CHARLES

It would be amazing if it came true, don't you think ?

THE DOG

Yeah, it would be so cool.

CHARLES

If only mom would let me have a dog, it would be different. (Beat)
Anyway, the registrations for the championship end in a few days, so..

Charles reties his shoelaces. The dog surprises him by taking one of his shoes off. Charles chases after him until he stops, out of breath. He tries to catch his breath.

The dog approaches him, and Charles catches him by surprise. They both start laughing, sprawled out on the grass.

INT. KITCHEN

Mirette, watching them from the kitchen window, smiles.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE CITY - NIGHT

Charles and the dog arrive at the foot of a poster showing him and the dog. The camera zooms out to show a CLOSE-UP of the poster presenting the current KING OF THE TRACKS and his owner.

The montage ends on this frame before CUTTING TO A CARD DISPLAYING : ONE WEEK LATER.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE CITY - DAY

A bespectacled young man (19 years old), wearing a veterinarian's coat, rides a basket bike and passes a woman walking with her chihuahua.

THE YOUNG MAN

Hello, Mrs. Léa !

MRS. LÉA

Hi !

He passes another acquaintance who is watering flowers in front of a house.

THE YOUNG MAN

Hello, Mr. Duck.

MR. DUCK

Hello, my boy.

He encounters a much bulkier man, wearing a tracksuit, with his mouth full and a piece of cake in hand, jogging in the same direction as him.

THE YOUNG MAN

Hi, Mr. Degueul.

MR. DEGUEUL (mouth full)

Oh, it's you. Hi !

THE YOUNG MAN

If you really want to lose that weight, be realistic and start by cutting out all those sweets.

MR. DEGUEUL

Thanks for the advice.

Mr. DEGUEUL swallows the rest of the cake and notices the young man on his bike pulling ahead. He tries to overtake him. The young man accelerates as well.

Mr. DEGUEUL runs as hard as he can but fails to catch up and falls flat on his face, out of breath.

THE YOUNG MAN (loudly)

Sorry, Mr. DEGUEUL, maybe next time will be the right one.

Mr. DEGUEUL is lying flat on the ground, reaching out towards the young man who is gradually moving away. He rolls onto his back and pulls a chocolate bar from his pocket to take a bite.

CUT TO :

EXT. IN FRONT OF CHARLES'S HOUSE

The young man arrives in front of Charles's house, gets off his bike, and knocks on the door, KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK ! The door opens, and Mirette stands in front of him.

MIRETTE (a bit surprised)

KEVIN ! What are you doing here ?

KEVIN

Hello Mirette. I'm here on behalf of JOHN.

MIRETTE

Hello, come in, please.

INT. LIVING ROOM

MIRETTE (continuing)

Why didn't he come himself ?

KEVIN

He's too busy at the moment, so he sent me.

MIRETTE

He told me three days.

KEVIN

Yeah, but he had a little setback.

MIRETTE

A little setback ?

KEVIN

Yeah, but it's nothing serious.

MIRETTE (sighs)

Do you have the results ?

Kevin rummages through his coat and pulls out a paper, handing it to Mirette.

KEVIN

Yes, here it is, but it's negative.

MIRETTE (surprised)

Negative ! Let me see.

Mirette checks it herself. The camera zooms in on the paper : it's the result of an analysis.

KEVIN (VOICE OVER)

Negative for ringworm, rabies, and also negative for alopecia.

The camera returns to its original state.

MIRETTE

It's impossible, the test can't be negative.

KEVIN

Why ? Is that not the expected result ?

MIRETTE

Have you at least seen the dog in question ?

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE

A blue van with the yellow inscription « ANIMAL CONTROL AGENCY » with their number below and a drawing of a sad dog parks.

Two men in work uniforms for animal control, with a dog logo on their uniforms, get out. (Agent #1, tall and thin, around 28 years old) and (Agent #2, a little overweight, around 22 years old).

They open the back of the van and take out a dog cage. They head towards the front door of the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM

MIRETTE

So, how does he explain that ?

KEVIN

He said it could be due to an allergy he contracted on the street or to shedding.

MIRETTE

To shedding ? (Pause)
The change that affects the animal's coat.

KEVIN

Yeah, that's it. (Pause)
He's 70% convinced that what's happening to him is due to shedding and 30% to an allergy.

MIRETTE

I was sure he had rabies.

KEVIN

Oh no, you were wrong. Well, I have to go before they notice I'm missing.

He approaches the door and grabs his wrist.

KEVIN

I almost forgot, he also said he was sorry.

MIRETTE

Tell him I thank him, and thank you too for coming.
We'll see each other again once my leave is over.

KEVIN

You're welcome, Mrs. Mirette. We're all looking forward to your return.

Suddenly, KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK ! Someone is knocking at the door.

KEVIN

Are you expecting someone ?

MIRETTE

No ! And what about you ? Did you come with someone ?

KEVIN

No !

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK !

AGENT #1 (OFF-SCREEN)
This is the animal control, is Mrs. Mirette there ?
We'd like to speak with her.

Kevin and Mirette exchange a glance.

KEVIN
Animal control ? What are they doing here ? (Beat)
Don't tell me.. !

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE

AGENT #1 (to Agent #2)
It seems no one is home, boss.

AGENT #2
Let me handle this.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK ! Agent #2 knocks on the door.

AGENT #2 (continued)
Open up, I know you're there.

AGENT #1
Are you sure they're in there, boss ?

AGENT #2
They're in there ! It's animal control, open up.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK ! He knocks on the door again.

INT. KITCHEN

Mirette and Kevin arrive in the kitchen.

MIRETTE
Understand, I was scared at first with this dog, I
thought he had a disease.

KEVIN
Knowing you, I know that's not the only reason for
your choice.

Kevin spots Charles and the dog playing in the garden.

KEVIN (continued)

A dog to which your son has become so attached. Look at him...

Mirette moves closer to the kitchen window and sees Charles and the dog playing together in the garden, a big smile on Charles's face (they no longer have their bandages).

KEVIN (continued)

...He seems to be having so much fun with that dog. Isn't this why you're enduring all of this ? Have you thought about the shock this will cause him ?

A silence falls.

KEVIN (more)

An indiscreet question : how long has it been since you've seen him this happy ?

Mirette begins to realize.

MIRETTE

Since his father died. What have I almost done ? I didn't even realize how happy he was with that animal.

AGENT #2 (OFF-SCREEN)

I warn you, we're not leaving here without the dog.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK ! He knocks again.

KEVIN

You know what ? It's not too late yet. I'll go talk to them and tell them you're not home, if that's alright with you.

MIRETTE

Yes, I agree. Thank you, Kevin.

KEVIN

You're welcome, Mirette. Well, I'm off.

He leaves the frame.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE

AGENT #1

There's no one here, boss. We'll come back another time.

AGENT #2

There's no "another time." Just know that I never
come out for nothing. (determined)
I'll get that dog.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK ! More knocks at the door. It opens, and
Kevin is seen. They all look at each other.

AGENT #1
Hello !

Suddenly, Kevin runs, hops on his bike, and leaves. The two
agents are left speechless, exchanging astonished glances.

AGENT #2
But... !

AGENT #1
He's gone. What do we do now, boss ?

AGENT #2 (overwhelmed)
Help me put this away !

The two agents leave to put the cage away, get in the van, and
start it up.

INT. VAN

Agent #1 looks out of frame as the van moves forward.

AGENT #1
That kid seems to be having a lot of fun.

Agent #2 looks and sees Charles and the dog playing in the
garden. He stops the van.

AGENT #1
Why are you stopping the car ?

AGENT #2
The boy's dog looks like the one the woman described
on the phone.

AGENT #1
Oh really !

Agent #2 hands a photo to Agent #1.

AGENT #2
Look.

Agent #1 looks at the photo, then at the dog. He observes for a few seconds.

AGENT #1
No, but it's kind of him.

INT. KITCHEN

Mirette looks at the test results and then observes Charles and the dog having a blast through the kitchen window.

It has been a long time since she has seen her son this happy.

We zoom in on her face.

INT. LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Little Charles plays with a big Borzoi. Mirette, her head against the chest of a man whose face is blurred, watches Charles and the Borzoi play and then smiles. Little Charles gives the Borzoi a big hug and laughs.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. KITCHEN

She brings out a smile, and tears begin to form on her face.

EXT. GARDEN

Charles finally spots the animal control van.

INT. VAN

AGENT #1
He spotted us. Come on, start ! Start !

Agent #2 starts the van, and they drive off.

EXT. GARDEN

Charles watches the van pull away.

CHARLES (to the dog)
Come on, let's go. That's enough for today, we're heading home.

He and the dog leave the garden.

INT. KITCHEN

Charles joins Mirette in the kitchen.

CHARLES

Mom !

She quickly wipes her tears.

MIRETTE

Yes, my darling ?

CHARLES

I saw an animal control van not far from our house.
Are they here for the dog ?

MIRETTE

No, darling ! (pausing)
Besides, you can keep your dog.

CHARLES (surprised)

Really ? Wait... (Beat)
...You mean forever ?

MIRETTE

Yes ! Forever, my dear.

CHARLES

Awesome. He jumps into Mirette's arms.

CHARLES (continued)

You're the best mom ever.

MIRETTE

Yes, I know, my dear.

THE DOG

YES ! I stay, how great ! I finally have a roof and a
master. (Beat)
One less goal.

They hear a voice behind them.

THE VOICE

Hello in there ! I found the door wide open, so I
took the liberty of coming in.

They all turn around and see Basile with a big smile.

BASILE (continued)

I'm not interrupting, I hope.

CHARLES

Basile !

BASILE
Charles !

Charles throws himself into his arms.

CHARLES
I missed you, you know !

BASILE
You too, my brother.

MIRETTE
Hello, Basile.

Basile approaches Mirette.

BASILE
Hello, Madame Mirette...

He does this while trying to see what's in the pot behind Mirette, who notices.

BASILE (continued)
...I've missed you so much.

MIRETTE
Me or the pot ?

BASILE
Both of you.

They all start laughing. The dog seems confused.

THE DOG
Who's this fat guy ?

Basile notices the dog and jumps back.

BASILE
AAAAAAAAAAAH !!!

He hides behind Mirette.

BASILE (continued)
What is that ?

MIRETTE
It's Charles's new pet.

BASILE

That thing ?

CHARLES

It's not a thing, it's a dog, and his name is NINO.

MIRETTE

NINO ! Just a week, and you've already found him a name.

CHARLES

A week spent together is more than enough to give him a name, don't you think ?

Basile waves at Nino.

BASILE

Hi, NINO.

Nino barks.

NINO

Yeah, hi, fat guy !

CHARLES

I think he already loves you.

NINO

Not even close.

Basile gets a little closer to Mirette and whispers.

BASILE

Please tell me you didn't buy that for him ?

MIRETTE (in the same tone as Basile)

No, it's a stray dog he met.

BASILE

OH OK !

CHARLES

Don't worry ; I can hear you.

BASILE

I think your problem for the championship is now solved.

Charles grabs his head.

CHARLES

Oh no, the championship ! I forgot. The registration ends today. (Beat, in a hurry)
You're coming with me, Basile.

MIRETTE
What championship ?

BASILE
Where are we going ?

CHARLES
To the park to register Nino. (To Mirette)
Mom...

MIRETTE
You're planning to participate in a championship, and I didn't even know.

Charles looks at her, then she remembers Kevin's words :
« Isn't this the state you endure all this for ? »

MIRETTE (continued)
Alright ! But don't take too long, okay ?

CHARLES
Okay, mom.

MIRETTE (to Basile)
Keep an eye on him, Basile.

BASILE
You can count on me for that !

CHARLES
Come on, Nino.

They exit the room.

MIRETTE (loudly)
And don't get into trouble.

They respond off-screen.

CHARLES AND BASILE (OFF-SCREEN)
Understood.

CUT TO :
EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE CITY / AFTERNOON

Close-up of Agent #2 sipping a cup of coffee while crossing the street, careless. Suddenly, two bikes rush into the frame and narrowly miss him.

Agent #2, startled, grabs onto a small wooden electrical pole next to him, and his coffee cup spills. The camera adjusts to reveal Charles, Basile, and Nino speeding away.

CHARLES

Sorry, sir !

BASILE

Excuse us.

NINO

WOOF !

They continue on their way.

AGENT #2 (loudly)

Reckless driver ! Can't you drive safely ?

He realizes it's the garden dog. Charles, Basile, and Nino turn a corner and exit the frame.

Agent #2 hurries to join the van on the other side of the street, gets in, and slams the door.

INT. VAN

AGENT #1

Hey ! Take it easy. (Beat)

I think I saw the dog and the kid from this morning pass by.

AGENT #2

They just passed by, for real.

AGENT #1

Oh really !

The two agents look at each other in surprise.

AGENT #2

But what are you waiting for ?

AGENT #1

Me ? Nothing.

AGENT #2

But chase them !

AGENT #1

Okay !

Agent #1 looks straight ahead but sees no one.

AGENT #1

But who ?

AGENT #2

Idiot, the kids on bikes !

AGENT #1

Ah, them !

AGENT #2 (enthusiastically)

Come on, step on it, step on it !

Agent #1 starts the engine but moves slowly. Agent #2 frowns, annoyed.

AGENT #2

What are you doing ?

AGENT #1

I'm chasing them, just like you said.

AGENT #2

Do you know that at this speed, we'll never catch up to them ?

AGENT #1

Yes ! But what do you want me to do ?

AGENT #2

Step on the gas, come on.

AGENT #1

I can't.

AGENT #2

And why not ? (Beat)

You don't have a broken foot, do you ?

AGENT #1

We're in the downtown area, and there's a speed limit, look.

Agent #2 sees a speed limit sign indicating 20 km/h to their right. He explodes in anger.

AGENT #2

AAAHH !

Agent #1 stops the van and clutches his chest.

AGENT #1

You're going to give me a heart attack one day with those screams.

AGENT #2

Let's switch places.

AGENT #1

If you want !

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE VAN

Agent #2 grabs the van keys, and then they switch places.

INT. VAN

Agent #2 inserts the key, starting the van's engine. He grips the steering wheel tightly, then furrows his brow.

AGENT #2 (with a sly smile)

Now, it's our turn.

EXT. CITY

Agent #1 looks at him in fear as Agent #2 floors the accelerator. The car takes off at full speed, and they take the same turn as the kids on their bikes.

After the turn, the van rights itself.

INT. VAN

Agent #1, terrified, immediately puts on his seatbelt and pulls it tight, while Agent #2 laughs maniacally and accelerates.

EXT. CITY

The camera rises to show them speeding away, dangerously dodging each car until the next turn.

CUT TO :

EXT. PARK REGISTRATION STAND - AFTERNOON

Charles, Basile, and Nino are in line. All eyes are on Nino.

NINO

What's with them staring at me like that ? (Beat)
Have you never seen a dog before or what ?

Charles and Basile hear the whispers behind them but pretend not to notice.

A YOUNG MAN

Is he going to participate in the championship too ?

A YOUNG WOMAN

I don't think they'll let him.

Another person takes out their smartphone and takes a picture of Nino.

A YOUNG MAN

Little scoop for social media.

BASILE (to Charles)

Charles, I'm not feeling well here.

A man (47 years old, cold look, not smiling, and hard to impress) behind a reception desk organizes a document.

THE MAN AT THE DESK

Next !

Charles, Basile, and Nino move forward.

CHARLES

Hello, I'd like to register my dog for...

THE MAN AT THE DESK (In a cold voice)

I know.

He hands a form to Charles.

THE MAN AT THE DESK (cont'd)

Here, fill this out.

Charles takes the form, fills it out, and hands it back to the man.

CHARLES

Here you go.

THE MAN AT THE DESK

Well, let's see your greyhound.

Charles presents Nino.

CHARLES
His name is Nino.

NINO
I'm finally going to participate in the race, so cool.

The man at the desk examines Nino.

CHARLES
So, can he participate in the race ?

THE MAN AT THE DESK
I'm sorry, but I can't register your greyhound.

CHARLES
Why not ? He's perfectly healthy.

THE MAN AT THE DESK
I'm sorry, but we have to ensure the safety of all greyhounds participating in this championship. And given your greyhound's appearance, he might be sick.

CHARLES (insisting)
But that's unfair, Nino is fine, he's just a little hairless, nothing else. Please register him !

THE MAN AT THE DESK
Do you have his health report ?

Charles looks down.

THE MAN AT THE DESK (cont'd)
I thought so. (Beat)
I understand your frustration, but we must follow the protocols to ensure the safety of all greyhounds participating in this championship.

BASILE
But... !

THE MAN AT THE DESK
It's uncertain whether the dog federation will accept him or let him participate in this championship without a complete health report.

CHARLES
I understand, thank you for everything.

Charles, discouraged and sad, leaves the line.

BASILE
Goodbye, sir.

Basile and Nino follow.

THE MAN AT THE DESK
Next !

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE PARK

NINO
I knew it wouldn't be that easy to register for this
championship.

Basile tries to lighten the mood.

BASILE
Don't make that face. We'll find a way to register
Nino.

CHARLES (with tears in his eyes)
But...

Basile stops him with a gesture.

BASILE
Trust me. But first, I'm going to get us something to
eat.

Basile exits the frame. Charles sits down on a bench in the
park, shoulders slumped and looking depressed.

Nino, beside him, tries to catch a butterfly and wanders off,
leaving the frame, unnoticed by Charles. Edith enters the
frame.

EDITH
Hey, Charles ! What are you doing here all alone ?

Charles pretends everything is fine and smiles at Edith.

CHARLES
Hey, Edith ! I came to register Nino for the RACING
CHAMPIONSHIP. And you ?

EDITH
I came with Crépin, but I'm not sure why.

CHARLES
Crépin is here ?

EDITH

Yeah, with Léon. So, where's this greyhound ?

CHARLES

Right over there.

Edith looks but sees only the green space around them.

EDITH

Um... Charles, I don't see any dog here.

CHARLES (surprised)

Really ?

EDITH

Yeah, yeah !

Charles starts to panic and frantically searches for Nino.

CHARLES (worried)

Nino ! Nino ! Where are you, my dog ?

He goes off searching for his furry friend, leaving Edith behind.

EDITH

Well, I'm off !

Edith also walks away. Basile returns with two large bags of chips pressed against his chest, already munching on an open bag.

He arrives and finds neither Charles nor Nino.

BASILE

But where have they gone ?

Charles continues searching for his furry friend.

CHARLES (loudly)

Nino ! Nino ! (to himself)
Where could he have gone ?

Suddenly, he spots Crépin nearby. He turns and comes face-to-face with Léon.

LEON (snickering)

Well, well ! Look who it is !

He calls out to Crépin.

LEON (continuing, waving his arms)
Crépin ! Crépin !

Crépin sees Léon.

LEON (more)
Look who's here !

CHARLES (in a firm tone)
Well, I think I'm going to leave.

Léon stops him.

LEON
Not so fast, broke boy.

Crépin joins them.

CREPIN (to Charles)
I was just looking for you, no need to ask what
you're doing here, I know you're here for the
registrations, right ?

Charles doesn't respond and lowers his head.

LEON
No need to be shy, we already know. Edith told us.

CREPIN (to Charles)
Where's the greyhound you came to register ?

LEON
I still can't believe you took a greyhound for
yourself. (Beat)
Are you sure you bought it ? It wouldn't be a stray
dog, would it ?

CREPIN (mocking)
Ha, ha, ha ! Of course it is ! (Beat)
Since when do broke kids like you have enough money
to get such an animal ?

LEON (mocking)
Ha, ha, ha ! Yeah, they don't even have enough money
to buy decent clothes, so a greyhound ? No way.

CREPIN
Let me tell you something, broke boy. Leave the
racing at the dog track, it's not meant for your
social class. You'd better find another hobby.

CHARLES (in a trembling voice)
You can say what you want, but you won't make me give up my dream. I will participate in this championship.

LEON (ironically)
Look at him, he talks like he's a hero, pathetic !

CREPIN
Remember this, broke boy. Someone from your social class won't get far in this championship, nor will they win that prestigious title. (Beat)
And if you want to ask me why i'm doing all this, i have no idea myself. But letting a poor person like you win this tile makes my skin crawl.

LEON
Ha ha ha ! Well said.

Charles clenches his fists, trying to keep calm in the face of their mockery, and then walks away.

LEON (continuing)
Yeah, that's right, get out of here, you church rat !

Passersby look at them.

LEON (to Crépin)
Registration is ending soon. Aren't you going to register your greyhound ?

CREPIN
No, I'm going to participate in their little race to get a special invitation to this championship instead. (Beat)
My Polish greyhound is the best of all, he'll win hands down.

LEON
Cool, let's go then.

CUT TO :

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF THE PARK - SAME TIME

CLOSE-UP ON : A crowd gathered on one side of the park. THE CAMERA approaches to reveal a greyhound race on a mini-circuit (348 meters) about to begin.

The greyhounds (a Saluki, a Dalmatian, a Whippet, and a Polish greyhound) are placed in the starting box, while three judges (two boys and a girl) stand nearby.

Not far from the crowd, a six-year-old girl, LUCIE, plays with her toys, while her mother, ANNE, reads a book. Suddenly, Lucie spots Nino still following the fluttering butterfly in the air. She sees another dog closely following its owner, and her eyes light up with curiosity.

LUCIE (watching Nino leave)
Mom, look at that dog ! Why is he so different from the others ?

ANNE puts down her book and approaches Lucie, watching Nino leave and smiling softly.

ANNE (kneeling beside Lucie)
Different how ?

LUCIE (in her small innocent voice)
I mean, why doesn't he have fur like the others ?

ANNE
Well, sweetheart, this dog is special. You see, every dog is unique, just like you and me.

Lucie squints, trying to understand.

ANNE (continuing)
Some dogs are born with little fur, like that one. It's what we call a hairless dog. It's not common, but that doesn't make it any less special, you understand ?

Lucie thinks for a moment and then looks up at her mother.

LUCIE (smiling)
Yes, Mom. (Beat)
But doesn't he get cold ?

INT. IN THE CROWD

The starting signal sounds. The starting boxes open, and the greyhounds leap forth with grace and power onto the track, the crowd is excited.

The butterfly enters the crowd. Nino follows it and weaves through the spectators. He reaches the center of the crowd and discovers the greyhounds in full race, each refusing to give up their place. Nino is thrilled.

NINO (enthusiastically)

A race !

Without hesitation, he bolts onto the track, drawing everyone's attention. The spectators are surprised to see an unexpected dog join the race.

IN THE CROWD :

A MAN

Is that dog lost or what ?

ANOTHER MAN IN THE CROWD

But where did he come from ?

ANOTHER MAN IN THE CROWD

Who does this dog belong to ?

Some laugh, others are perplexed, but all are curious to see what will happen.

ANOTHER MAN IN THE CROWD

Look at him, he's almost hairless.

ANOTHER MAN IN THE CROWD

Yeah, he's as bald as a skull.

Laughter. Léon, Crépin, and Edith are side by side. Crépin furrows his brow.

CREPIN (to the audience)

But you're not going to let that dog participate in the race !

ON THE TRACK : Nino hears the whispers and mockery but continues to run. The greyhounds in front of him are also puzzled by his sudden entrance into the race.

THE DALMATIAN

Hey guys ! There's a dog behind us ?

THE WHIPPET

What's he doing here ?

THE SALUKI

He's participating in the race.

THE DALMATIAN

That mutt !

THE POLISH GREYHOUND

The little street dog wants to race with high-class dogs, that's adorable.

General laughter.

IN THE CROWD :

SPECTATOR #

What's he doing ? He'll never catch up from this far behind.

SPECTATOR #1

At this distance, it's dead, he can't come back from that.

SPECTATOR #2

He's definitely going to give up along the way.

Jury member 2 stands up.

JURY 1

Where are you going ?

JURY 2

I'm going to get that dog off the track before he ruins the race.

JURY 1 (looking at Nino on the track)

No, let him run, I can't wait to see what's going to happen.

JURY 2 (looking at Jury 1)

But !!

JURY 3 (looking at Jury 2)

I agree too.

Jury 2 sits back down.

ON THE TRACK :

NINO

Yeah, keep murmuring and mocking.

Nino starts to gradually speed up, slowly catching up to the greyhounds.

NOT FAR FROM THE CROWD :

Charles continues to look for Nino, asking passersby but to no avail.

A PASSERBY
Sorry, I haven't seen him.

Charles spots the crowd gathered a few meters away.

CHARLES (intrigued, to himself)
What could be causing such a gathering ?

He heads towards the crowd.

ON THE TRACK :

The race continues. Nino, fully accelerating, catches up with the greyhounds.

NINO (to the greyhounds)
So, who's the cattle dog now ?

The greyhounds are astonished. The whippet exclaims :

THE WHIPPET
Impossible !!

THE SALUKI
What ! Don't tell me he's caught up with us ?

THE WHIPPET
Yeah, he did.

THE DALMATIAN
How did he do that ?

THE WHIPPET
No idea !

THE POLISH GREYHOUND
I refuse to be beaten by a wandering unknown.

The Polish greyhound accelerates and takes the lead, putting a good distance between them. Nino catches up and passes the whippet.

THE WHIPPET
He just passed me.

Then the dalmatian.

THE DALMATIAN

Me too.

THE SALUKI
You're not passing me.

The Saluki starts to speed up. Nino catches up to him.

NINO (to the Saluki)
Move.

He passes the Saluki.

THE SALUKI
No, he passed me.

Nino accelerates even more. The final meters are between Nino and the Polish greyhound.

The crowd is in a frenzy.

CREPIN (worried)
You can't let this dog continue the race. Where did he even come from ?

Charles weaves through the crowd, trying to get a good view of what's happening.

ON THE TRACK :
Nino and the Polish greyhound are side and side.

NINO (to the Polish greyhound)
You've got some serious stamina, old man.

THE POLISH GREYHOUND
I'm just showing you the extent of my speed. (Beat)
Give up, you can't beat me. I'm not like those rookies behind us.

The Polish greyhound starts to pull ahead of Nino.

IN THE CROWD : Charles finally spots Nino in full stride.

CHARLES (surprised)
Nino !

CREPIN (agitated)
Stop him ! Someone stop that dog !

ON THE TRACK :

NINO

You think ?

THE POLISH GREYHOUND

It's not a matter of belief. I ranked seventh in the last RACING championship, so...

Suddenly, time seems to freeze. The Polish greyhound watches Nino overtake him.

NINO

Yet you're as slow as a slug. There weren't any good runners this year.

Time unfreezes, and the Polish greyhound starts to decelerate. He stops just a few feet from the finish line.

THE POLISH GREYHOUND (coldly and softly)

...a mutt like you can't beat me.

Nino crosses the finish line, creating a stunned silence. The crowd remains frozen, the atmosphere tense.

The other greyhounds stop running.

THE DALMATIAN

What just happened ?

THE WHIPPET

Don't tell me he lost !

Suddenly, the crowd erupts in joy, cheering for Nino. Crépin and Léon are dumbfounded.

LEON

We lost !

A MAN FROM THE CROWD

Wow, that dog is a prodigy, a real powerhouse !

ANOTHER MAN FROM THE CROWD

Yes ! A true champion.

A THIRD MAN FROM THE CROWD

Despite his delay, he managed to win the race. I'm quite impressed.

Charles, with shining eyes, joins Nino and picks him up in his arms.

CHARLES

Wow ! Nino, how did you do that ? (Beat)

You were incredible, congratulations.

He hugs Nino tightly.

NINO (joyful)
WOOF, thank you, master.

CHARLES
I didn't know you were this fast.

NINO
Stop it, master, I'm going to end up blushing if you keep this up.

Charles happily pets Nino, and the three judges approaching.

JURY 2
Are you the owner of this greyhound ?

CHARLES
Yes, that's me. Sorry if my dog disturbed your race.

JURY 2
Julia, we were just looking for you. Congratulations on your victory.

Charles shakes Julia's hand.

CHARLES
Thank you, I'm Charles.

JULIA
Nice to meet you, Charles.

JURY 1 (To Charles, waving)
Rodriguez, great demonstration.

JURY 3 (Similarly)
Edmond, and a great performance too.

CHARLES (Gratefully)
Thank you.

Julia hands him a card.

JULIA
Here you go, Charles.

Charles takes the card.

CHARLES (Looking at the card, curious)
What is this ?

EDMOND
It's a special pass for the championship.

Charles's eyes widen.

CHARLES
Really ?

Crépin arrives running, out of breath.

CREPIN (Out of breath)
No, no, no, wait !

CHARLES (Surprised)
Crépin !

CREPIN (Surprised as well)
So, that dirty dog is yours !

Léon, Edith, and the Polish greyhound join Crépin.

JULIA (To Crépin)
Yes, what's the matter ?

CREPIN (Catching his breath)
You can't give that card to this... !

He looks at Charles and Nino.

JULIA
And why not ? He did win the race, right ?

CREPIN
Yes, but his greyhound wasn't even a competitor at the start. It just sneaked into the race.

JULIA
That makes him a competitor. Listen, kid, this race was organized to spot a talented greyhound.

EDMOND
It wasn't just about crossing the finish line. You had to show skill.

RODRIGUEZ
Agility, flexibility, speed, and performance are what we came to find.

JULIA (Looking at Nino)
And this dog has demonstrated that he has all those qualities.

CREPIN
Yes, but it should be my dog.

EDMOND
It should be, you're right, but it's not.

CREPIN
So you're going to leave my dog to take this rabid-looking mutt ?

CLOSE-UP ON : Nino, Julia looks at him.

CHARLES
No, that's not true. Nino doesn't have rabies.

CREPIN (To Charles)
You, shut up !

JULIA
We're still keeping him. (To Charles)
Congratulations again on your greyhound's victory.

EDMOND
We would be happy to count you among the competitors in the championship.

RODRIGUEZ
But with a complete health check, of course.

CHARLES (Gratefully)
I'll do it. Thank you for everything.

EDMOND (Smiling)
Better thank your greyhound for giving you this opportunity.

The three jurors leave the frame. Charles and the three boys look at each other.

LEON (To Charles)
So, that filthy greyhound belongs to you ?

CREPIN
I was surprised myself. (To Charles)
Listen well, broke boy, you might have won this race, I don't know by what miracle, but let me say it again, A broke boy like you will never be a champion.

CHARLES

That's your opinion. But I know Nino has everything it takes to become a great champion.

CREPIN (Laughing harder)

Your dog ! Ah ! As if a street dog could compete with the champions of the cynodrome.
Stop dreaming, Charles, Besides, what a ridiculous name.

LEON (In a disdainful tone)

Look at him, he thinks he's a great champion with his street dog. You should find another hobby.

CHARLES (Smiling)

You think ? Yet this street dog just beat you today, didn't he !

Léon gets angry.

LEON

Oh yeah ! You want to play like that !

Crépin holds him back.

CREPIN

Easy, Léon. (To Charles)
This is the last time I'm beaten by a broke guy and a dog as filthy as yours.

He and Charles stare at each other as Charles wears a joyful expression. Suddenly, an old man (63 years old) in a tracksuit approaches them, having heard everything.

OLD MAN (In a firm tone)

What's going on here, boys ?

EDITH (In a falsely innocent voice)

Nothing serious, sir. We were just chatting with our friend.

LEON (Backing up Edith's words)

Exactly, sir. We were congratulating him on his crushing victory today.

The old man gives them a disapproving look.

CREPIN

Puff ! We'll see each other again very soon, and this time, I won't be the one in this position, Charles. You can trust me on that.

LEON

Oh yes, very soon. You don't fall into the dust twice in a row, Charles.

Léon and Crépin turn to leave, followed by the Polish greyhound.

CREPIN (To the Polish greyhound)

Oh no ! You're not following me, you stay here, you good-for-nothing.

The Polish greyhound slumps down. Everyone looks at them ; Edith shrugs.

EDITH (To Charles)

Congratulations on your greyhound's victory, Charles.

Edith goes to rejoin Crépin and Léon, calling the Polish greyhound. The old man watches them leave the frame.

OLD MAN (Without even looking at Charles)

Are they friends of yours ?

CHARLES

Not really.

OLD MAN

Congratulations.

CHARLES

Thank you, sir. Did you watch the whole race ?

OLD MAN

Of course, what a question. I was very impressed by his performance. Speed, agility, he really amazed us today. (To Charles)
You have a real champion there.

CHARLES

Yes, I just discovered that.

OLD MAN

I haven't seen such a performance in a decade.

Men walk across the frame.

ONE OF THEM (To the other)

Seriously, I didn't believe he would win. If this dog is a candidate, this year's championship would be exciting.

THE OTHER

I won't say it for you.

Laughter from the two men. The old man checks his watch.

OLD MAN (looking at his watch)
It's time for me to go home.

Charles extends his hand, smiling.

CHARLES
I'm Charles, and this is Nino.

NINO
Woof !

The old man takes his hand.

OLD MAN
Well, nice to meet you, Charles.

He crouches down and touches Nino's head.

OLD MAN
And you too, GU... HEEEEEE...

CHARLES
Nino.

OLD MAN
There you go, Nino.

He stands up.

OLD MAN
I'm...

CHARLES (cutting him off)
Is it just me, or are those people over there staring at us ?

Three men nearby are staring intently at them.

MAN #1 (scrutinizing the old man)
Are you sure about what you're saying ?

MAN #2

It's definitely him, look at this.

He shows his phone to the others.

CLOSE-UP on his phone displaying a search with a photo of the old man that matches exactly.

MAN #3

I knew it, I knew it was him, ALEXANDER SWIFT.

A commotion among passersby.

PASSERBY #1

Huh, what ?

PASSERBY #2

Alexander Swift is here !

PASSERBY #3

No way, you need to stop with these jokes, it's not funny.

MAN #3

You think this is a joke ? Just look over there.

He points at the old man. The passersby all turn to look.

OLD MAN

What do they all have to look at us like that ?

CHARLES

No idea, should we go ask them, right ?

OLD MAN

No need.

The passersby are all speechless.

PASSERBY #1

Impossible !

PASSERBY #2

I can't believe it.

PASSERBY #3

It's really him.

ANOTHER PASSERBY

Him who ?

Very quickly, the news creates a crowd.

A PERSON (pointing at Nino)
Look, he's even with his famous companion.

OLD MAN (to himself)
They recognized me.

ANOTHER PERSON IN THE CROWD
Let's take some pictures quickly before they leave !

They all pull out their phones. As the first photo is taken,
the old man grabs Charles' hand.

OLD MAN
Run !

The old man drags Charles into a frenzied sprint.

PASSERBY #
They're fleeing, let's follow them !

The entire crowd starts running after them.

CHARLES
Why are we running ?

OLD MAN
And your dog ?

NINO
Woof ! Woof !

Nino is right behind Charles, who looks back and sees the
crowd dangerously approaching him.

A VOICE IN THE CROWD
Don't let them escape !

CHARLES (fearfully)
Mom !!

He speeds up and overtakes the old man, with Nino keeping
pace.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PARK - AT THE SAME TIME

CLOSE-UP ON : Basile, cheerfully walking toward the camera
while eating chips. Suddenly, something rushes into the frame
and bumps into him.

BASILE

Hey ! Watch where you're going, you're not...

The camera raises to show Charles running at full speed.

BASILE (continued)

Charles !

Nino also speeds past him, following Charles.

BASILE (again)

Nino !

The old man follows suit. Basile, puzzled, watches the scene. Soon after, the crowd arrives and leaves Basile in a cloud of dust.

BASILE

Cough ! Cough ! Cough !!

What do they all have to run like that ?

He stops for a few seconds, then shrugs, eats his chips, and continues on his way.

CUT TO :

CLOSE-UP ON : the three greyhounds. The Saluki is sitting alone, and his friends are watching him from nearby.

THE WHIPPET

Are we going to talk to him ?

THE DALMATIAN (looking at the whippet)

No, let's leave him alone for now.

THE SALUKI

I still can't believe we were beaten by him !

CAMERA POV

They are being watched through binoculars.

INT. VANS

The binoculars lower, revealing Agent #2 and Agent #1, who is using his binoculars to look at the girls while laughing. Agent #2 looks at him coldly.

EXT. VAN

CLOSE-UP : on the van parked in front of the park. Suddenly, the back opens, and Agent #1 is violently thrown to the ground. Everyone looks at him. He gets up, all embarrassed, grabs his binoculars, and goes back into the van.

INT. VAN

Agent #1 starts looking for Charles and Nino with his binoculars. He finds Basile but not Charles and Nino. He turns to Agent #2.

AGENT #1

The kid and the dog are nowhere to be found. We've lost them !

Agent #2 steps on his foot. Agent #1 writhes in pain, grabbing his knee.

AGENT #2

We haven't lost them, idiot ! (Beat)
They just left.

AGENT #1

Oh really !

Agent #2 starts the van's engine.

AGENT #2

I didn't know he was that fast. Capturing that dog will earn us a lot. Yes, much more than those other dogs.

EXT. VAN

The maniacal laughter of Agent #2, followed shortly by that of Agent #1, as the camera rises to show their departure.

CUT TO :

EXT. SUNSET - FAR FROM THE PARK - A FEW HOURS LATER : IN FRONT OF A MODEST HOUSE

Charles, the old man, and Nino arrive in front of a house, all exhausted.

OLD MAN (out of breath)

This is perfect here, they won't find us.

CHARLES (catching his breath)

You run fast for your age.

NINO

Woof !

The old man opens the door of the house.

OLD MAN

Come in quickly.

They enter, and the old man closes the door.

INT. HOUSE / LIVING ROOM

The living room is spacious and luxurious. Photos of greyhounds in full race adorn the walls, and medals are displayed, trophies are showcased on the shelves.

Charles and Nino are amazed by all the beautiful things inside.

CHARLES (in awe)

Wow !

OLD MAN

Take a seat, I'll get you something to snack on.

He leaves the frame. Charles begins to admire the framed photos of the old man and his greyhound on the tracks, while Nino searches for a place to rest. He spots a rug.

NINO

Wow ! What a beautiful rug.

He lies down on it.

NINO (cont'd)

It's sweet, too.

The old man returns with a tray full of snacks and finds Nino lying on the rug and Charles in front of the trophy shelf.

CHARLES

Wow ! All these trophies, it's really...

He hears a throat clearing.

OLD MAN (clearing throat)

Ahem ! Ahem!

Charles turns around and sees the old man, visibly embarrassed.

CHARLES

Your shelf is really beautiful.

Charles smiles at him.

OLD MAN

Magnificent, isn't it ?

He places the tray on the small table and joins Charles.

CHARLES (looking at the shelf)

You didn't tell me you were a champion of the cynodrome races.

OLD MAN

Oh, I was much more than that.

CHARLES

Oh really !

The old man points out some specific trophies while Charles listens attentively.

OLD MAN

You see this trophy, this one, and that one...
I won them when I was a young greyhound racer. Every race was a challenge, every victory a testament to our determination. My partner and I spent years racing on the tracks, living for the adrenaline and the passion of racing. It was a vibrant time, full of challenges and glory.

CHARLES

Wow ! Incredible, I mean, I can't believe you... !

OLD MAN (interrupting)

You know what wouldn't be believable ?

Charles looks at the old man.

OLD MAN (cont'd)

Step back.

Charles steps back, and the old man pulls a small trophy from the shelf, then steps back himself.

CHARLES

I was wondering why that one was so small.

Suddenly, the shelf makes a strange sound : CRACK ! – CRACK ! CRACK ! Charles watches as the shelf begins to shift, tier by tier, revealing a space in the middle : BRRRRRRR !

Nino's ears perk up at the sound. The shelf finishes moving, revealing a large trophy that shines brightly. Charles's eyes widen, and the old man smiles.

CHARLES (stunned)
No, don't tell me it's...

OLD MAN
Yes, it is. (pausing)
THE CYNOPHILE !!

Charles can hardly believe it.

CHARLES
But if you have THE CYNOPHILE No. 1, that means... No, no, no ! This isn't possible. The first holder of THE CYNOPHILE hasn't been seen in ages, and rumors say he's dead.

OLD MAN
Yet here I am in front of you, ALEXANDER SWIFT, very much alive, without a wrinkle of old age.

CHARLES
Wait, wait. You mean ALEXANDER SWIFT, the master whose greyhound revolutionized the cynodrome racing world ? The one who gave a hard time to all his competitors for years ?

ALEXANDER
Exactly !

CHARLES
Wow ! This is amazing, I can't believe I'm in front of you. (Looking at THE CYNOPHILE)
Can I touch it ?

CUT TO :

INT. SWIFT'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM

Charles and ALEXANDER are sitting on the sofa. On the small table is the tray that ALEXANDER held, and next to it is THE CYNOPHILE. NINO is still lying down. Charles holds a cookie and a glass of milk.

CHARLES

So, if I understand correctly, you and your dog were legends of the circuit. And thanks to your many victories, your dog was crowned king of the tracks.

ALEXANDER
Crowned king of the tracks. (pausing)
Yes, that's right.

ALEXANDER sees Nino waking up.

ALEXANDER
Ah ! You're awake. Wait, I'll bring you something to eat.

ALEXANDER gets up and goes to the kitchen. Nino turns and sees THE CYNOPHILE. He is completely amazed.

NINO
OHH !! I can't believe it, it's really THE CYNOPHILE, it's really him. (Looking around)
I didn't think I would see him in real life so soon.
What a marvel.

ALEXANDER returns with a bowl and a bag of dog food. He places the bowl in front of Nino and opens the bag.

CHARLES
So why did you stop ?

ALEXANDER
I didn't stop ! I simply retired.

The bowl remains empty. Nino furrows his brow and looks at them.

CHARLES
That's the same thing.
So why ? Everything was perfect.

ALEXANDER
Not quite !

NINO
WOOF ! WOOF !

ALEXANDER (to Nino)
Sorry, big guy.

ALEXANDER begins to fill the bowl.

CHARLES

But what happened ?

ALEXANDER

It's a very long story that goes back a long time.
(pausing)

At a new cynodrome that had just been built in
Florida, and I was called to participate in its
inauguration...

Nino looks at the bowl, which contains just a few kibbles,
then falls heavily onto the rug.

CLOSE-UP ON : Nino's face, disgusted.

CUT TO :

EXT. DAY - IN FRONT OF THE CYNODROME / FLASHBACK

A crowd stands in front of a new cynodrome, ready for the
inauguration. An American-made car pulls up. A young ALEXANDER
and his greyhound GOLDIE (an English greyhound) get out of the
car, welcomed by journalists, camera flashes, and the cheers
of the crowd. The journalists begin their series of questions.

JOURNALIST #1

Tell me, Mr. ALEXANDER, how does it feel to be in
Florida ?

JOURNALIST #2

Why did you accept the invitation ? I mean, do you
have something to gain by participating in this
inauguration ?

JOURNALIST #3

Is it true what the streets of Florida are saying ?
Apparently, GOLDIE, the current king of the tracks,
will be the first to test the one thousand meters
never run by another greyhound ?

JOURNALIST #4

Have you been prepared for this ? Is our champion
ready to face this new course ?

JOURNALIST #2

Speak up, Mr. ALEXANDER.

Young ALEXANDER feels overwhelmed by all these questions.

GOLDIE

WOOF ! WOOF !

A security guard arrives and pushes the journalists back.

SECURITY AGENT

Let our guest of honor breathe. What's with all these questions ?

Are you the ones who brought him here ?

Come on, scram ! Shoo !

The journalists continue to ask questions anyway.

JOURNALIST #2

Please answer our questions.

JOURNALIST #4

Are you sure Goldie is up for running these one thousand meters in less than one minute thirty ?

Alexander stops and looks at the journalists.

JOURNALIST #1

Answer, Alexander.

Another agent arrives near him.

AGENT

Please follow me.

He takes Alexander and Goldie to the entrance of cynodrome.

EXT. RACING TRACK ENTRANCE - A FEW MOMENTS LATER.

The mayor of the city (a short, slightly round man, 36 years old) makes his announcement. To his right are ALEXANDER, Goldie, and his assistant holding a giant pair of scissors, and to his left, three guys in suits.

MAYOR

Thank you for coming in such large numbers to attend the inauguration of this new racing track, and I also thank Mr. ALEXANDER and his famous companion for accepting the invitation. (Beat)

You know, this racing track has been designed to host the final races of kings.

The crowd applauds. The mayor raises his hand, and the crowd quiets down. He reaches out, and his assistant hands him the giant pair of scissors she holds. The mayor approaches the large ribbon blocking the entrance of the racing track and prepares to cut it.

MAYOR (while cutting the ribbon)
I now declare this racing track open, but not operational.

The crowd becomes even louder, and the mayor raises his hand to calm the cheers and continues his announcement.

MAYOR (continued)
From this moment on, all the final races will take place here in Florida, at this racing track. All the kings will be crowned here, and a new day will begin !

The crowd cheers enthusiastically.

MAYOR (further)
Without further ado, we will move on to the heart of this event. Goldie, ALEXANDER's dog, will be the first to tackle the one thousand meters of this racing track for the inauguration, and to set the best time for these one thousand meters ever run.

The crowd erupts with joy.

CUT TO :

INT. COMMENTATOR'S BOOTH

COMMENTATOR 1
Hello, ladies and gentlemen, what a beautiful day it is today ! We are at 32 degrees, and the sky is completely clear.

COMMENTATOR 2
Absolutely. Well, we are currently at the new racing track built by our beloved mayor here in Florida.

COMMENTATOR 1
Today will see the very first race of this track for its inauguration.

CAMERA POV : The commentators appear on a television screen. The camera pulls back to reveal a young boy in a living room.

COMMENTATOR 2 (on TV)
And this inaugural race will not be run by just anyone. It will be run by GOLDIE, the greyhound of the famous Alexander Swift, the KING of the CIRCUITS.

YOUNG BOY (loudly)
Mom, come see, it's dad on TV !

MOM (off-screen)
I'm coming, sweetheart.

COMMENTATOR 1 (on TV)
Many spectators have come to witness this
inauguration.

RETURN TO : INT. RACING TRACK - A FEW MOMENTS LATER.

The stands of the racing track begin to fill up.

COMMENTATOR 1 (voiceover)
The stands are filling up like hotcakes.

INT. SPECIAL BOOTH

COMMENTATOR 2 (voiceover)
We can see that the mayor is comfortably seated and
waiting for the event to begin.

The mayor is comfortably seated, waiting for the event to
start.

ON THE TRACK : behind the starting box.

COMMENTATOR 2 (voiceover)
Alexander seems to be motivating Goldie for his one
thousand meters.

Young ALEXANDER and Goldie are behind the starting box.

YOUNG ALEXANDER (with a confident look)
Hey ! I know you can do it. I have blind faith in
you, you know.

Goldie looks at his master.

YOUNG ALEXANDER (continued)
Run like you've never run before and show them a
score that will surpass everyone's expectations here
in this racing track. (Beat)
A score that no one will be able to beat for the next
3 to 6 years.

GOLDIE
Woof ! Woof !

Goldie enters the starting box. Alexander watches him enter
and approaches the box one last time.

ALEXANDER (further)
Go ahead ! And show them that the king is here on
this track.

He closes the starting box. A man next to him waves a flag,
and the signal is given.

COMMENTATOR 1 (voiceover)
The signal is given, it's about to start.

The spectators take out their phones. The lure activates and
takes a 16-meter lead.

COMMENTATOR 1 (voiceover, continued)
The lure is on the move, and..

The starting box opens.

COMMENTATOR 1 (voiceover, further)
..Go, it's off !

Goldie shoots out like a rocket.

COMMENTATOR 2 (voiceover)
Wow ! What a start, it's magnificent.

COMMENTATOR 1 (voiceover)
That's what I call a good start.

Goldie continues to accelerate, and the crowd is amazed. The
mayor stands up from his seat to admire the scene. They are
all in awe of GOLDIE's divine speed.

COMMENTATOR 2 (voiceover)
What a blazing acceleration from Goldie !

YOUNG ALEXANDER
That's it, keep going !

The crowd gets louder, and Goldie keeps accelerating. He takes
the turns with impressive mastery and pushes his speed
further.

COMMENTATOR 1 (voiceover)
Look how he tackles this track and its turns ! We can
feel we are facing a professional in the field.

Goldie is now thirty meters from the finish line, while the
timer shows twenty-one seconds.

COMMENTATOR 1 (voiceover, continued)

Oh ! This is unbelievable ! He's going to do it !
He's going to finish these one thousand meters of
this racing track in under one minute.

COMMENTATOR 2 (voiceover)
He's less than thirty meters from the finish line,
and we're at twenty-two seconds.

Suddenly, Goldie collapses in the final meters.

COMMENTATOR 1 (voiceover)
Oh no ! Goldie has collapsed in the last remaining
meters !

The shocked and saddened crowd rises. The mayor stands up as
well. ALEXANDER rushes onto the track to join Goldie.

COMMENTATOR 2 (voiceover)
What's happening ? It seems Goldie is in bad shape.

The race is interrupted, and the paramedics rush toward
Goldie.

A few minutes later, we see ALEXANDER carrying Goldie in his
arms, heading toward the exit of the dog racing track.

WE CUT FROM THIS TRAGIC EVENT.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. ALEXANDER'S LIVING ROOM - SUNSET.

Back to reality.

ALEXANDER stands, all sad, holding a bag of dog food in his
hand. Nino's bowl is still empty.

NINO
Wow ! What a story, it gives me chills.

CHARLES
I'm sorry to remind you of that event.

ALEXANDER (sadly)
He never recovered from that injury, and I never set
foot in a dog racing track again after that.

CHARLES
But...

ALEXANDER pulls himself together.

ALEXANDER

Well, enough about me like that. You'd better head home before your parents start to worry.

CHARLES

Yes, I'm sorry again. But one last thing before I go.

ALEXANDER

What !

CHARLES

Since you know this discipline so well, I was wondering...

ALEXANDER

No ! Don't even think about it.

CHARLES

But I haven't even finished my sentence. Are you sure you don't want to hear what I have to say ?

CUT TO :

EXT. IN FRONT OF ALEXANDER'S HOUSE / SUNSET

Charles is on his knees, begging Alexander.

CHARLES

Please.

ALEXANDER

Go home. It's not up for discussion.

Nino, not far away, stands up and takes a few steps forward.

NINO

Come on, master. This man won't offer us his knowledge or his services.

ALEXANDER

At least your dog understands.

Charles looks at Nino, who walks away behind him.

ALEXANDER (cont'd)

Follow him, and don't come back here.

Charles submits, clenches his fists, and stands tall.

CHARLES

Fine, I understand. I'm leaving, but first, I want to know why you refuse to help me. (Beat)
Is it because you think we're not good enough for this championship, or because of our social status ?

ALEXANDER

I have no reason to give you. But let me tell you something : you can be determined, but that alone won't make you win races and reach the top. In a word, determination alone isn't enough in this field.

CHARLES

Thank you, Mr. Alexander. At least I learned something from you. (Beat, to Nino)
Come on, Nino.

ALEXANDER stays at the door, watching Charles and Nino run off.

CLOSE-UP on ALEXANDER's face.

ALEXANDER (to himself)

Go ahead, prove yourselves, and come back to see me when the time is right.

CUT TO :

EXT. ON THE WAY BACK - NIGHT

Nino closely follows Charles.

CHARLES

We're going to win this championship, even if all the best greyhounds in this city present.

Nino hears a noise and looks back, but sees nothing, he continues on his way.

CHARLES (cont'd)

We'll show them they were wrong about us.

Nino hears the noise again, this time coming from the bushes nearby. He stops and looks while Charles continues talking as he walks away.

CHARLES (cont'd)

We'll become the champions of France and face the best greyhounds from around the world.

CLOSE-UP ON : the bushes. Nino moves closer, and suddenly a dog pokes its head out.

MALT
BOO !!!

NINO
AAAAH !

Nino steps back in fright and hears laughter. The camera adjusts to reveal his three friends emerging from the bushes. Malt and Ritch are laughing, then Beauce, Nino furrows his brow.

MALT (laughing)
Did you see your face ? You looked like you saw a ghost.

RITCH
Come on, don't make that face, it was just for fun.
(Beat)
So, still running the streets, the stray ?

NINO
No ! That's all over.

Malt and Ritch exchange glances.

MALT (curious)
You look in great shape compared to last time. Tell us, what dump are you eating from now ?

Nino bursts into laughter.

NINO
Haha ! Dump ? That one was good !

His three friends exchange confused glances.

MALT
Did I say something funny, it seems ?

RITCH
Stop the circus and give us the scoop. (Beat)
You're not going to hide that from us, remember we're your friends.

NINO
You guys are so funny !

Malt and Ritch exchange looks, Beauce's eyes widen.

BEAUCE

No, don't tell me it's what I think it is ?

NINO (with a smile)

Yes, that's right !

MALT (to Ritch)

Hey, Ritch, do you know what Beauce is thinking ?

RITCH

No idea.

NINO (cont'd)

I have a human taking good care of me now.

Malt and Ritch can hardly believe it.

MALT AND RITCH

Seriously ! Tell us it's not true !

NINO (nodding)

Yes, and I'm even participating in the Racing this year.

The eyes of the two dogs widen.

MALT AND RITCH

Really !

BEAUCE

Seriously ! (Beat)

You mean the championship that's happening in a few days ?

NINO

Oh yes !

BACK TO : Charles, who continues on his way talking.

CHARLES

Can you believe it ? We're going to become living legends.

He stops.

CHARLES (cont'd)

Will you, right, Nino ?

He looks around and doesn't see Nino.

CHARLES (cont'd)

Nino ? Nino ! Where are you ? It's really getting late, and Mom isn't going to appreciate it if we don't get home soon. (Beat)

Nino !

They all hear Charles's call.

NINO

I have to go, guys. My human is waiting for me.

Beauce stops him.

BEAUCE

I'm proud of you.

NINO

Thank you, Beauce. It's because of you that I am where I am today.

CHARLES (voice-over)

Come on, Nino, let's go, we don't have all night.

NINO

Okay, I'm going now. (Beats)
See you at the cynodrome or on TV if you can find one. Just don't get yourself decapitated, of course.

BEAUCE

Ah, ha, ha ! Very funny.

NINO

Oh, and I forgot...

BEAUCE

What ?!

NINO

...from now on, it's NINO.

He leaves to join Charles.

CHARLES (voice-over)

Where have you been ? Do you want Mom to scold me or what ?

The three dogs watch them leave.

BEAUCE (almost in tears)

Oh no ! I forgot to tell him to take good care of his coat.

Malt starts to laugh.

RITCH

So, is he really going to be on TV ? Uh... what was his name again ?

CUT TO :

A CLOSE-UP of the city center, with a visible cynodrome. The camera moves toward the cynodrome.

ADIXIA MAELYS (voice-over, suddenly)

And here we are live from the MELBI cynodrome..

CLOSE-UP OF THE CYNODROME

TITLE CARD : MELBI CYNODROME

INT. CYNODROME - DAY

ADIXIA MAELYS (voice-over, continued)

...Where the very first heat of the championship will take place, determining the best greyhound in this city.

INT. COMMENTARY STUDIO

The studio is buzzing with images of the MELBI cynodrome displayed on the screens.

On our announcers introducing themselves : ADIXIA MAELYS (23), LISANDRO SATILMIS (33), and ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (31).

ADIXIA MAELYS

This long-awaited moment has finally arrived. Hello everyone, and welcome to the cynodrome racing championship. I'm ADIXIA MAELYS, and I'm joined by your favorite TV commentators, LISANDRO SATILMIS and ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD, to bring you all the details of this incredible competition and let you experience it live from your screens.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (smiling)

Well, hello everyone ! We're thrilled to be here today to give you a unique live experience and moments of pure adrenaline.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

Exactly, Lisandro. We have a beautiful, perfectly sunny day for this race. Greyhounds are incredible athletes, and we will witness diverse and impressive performances during this championship.

INT. MELBI CYNODROME

The camera moves to show the greyhounds being prepared in their kennels by their owners. The dogs are elegant and in great shape.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (voice-over)

Look at these magnificent specimens, Adixia, all ready to show their speed and agility today.

ADIXIA MAELYS (voice-over)

Yes ! Each one is ready to compete for the championship.

A SHOT OF THE STANDS, as they fill up, and Basil is shown munching on chips.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (voice-over, nodding)

Absolutely, Adixia. Greyhound racing combines speed, agility, and strategy. Each greyhound has its own abilities, and we're going to witness incredible and exceptional displays during this championship.

BACK TO THE STUDIO

ADIXIA MAELYS

So, Abdelhafid, how is this championship shaping up ?

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

This championship will take place in four heats..

THE SHOTS OF THE FOUR CYNODROMES are displayed. Labeled MELBI, MOLTON, MAO, NOLWENN, they vary in shape and size.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

(voice-over, continued)

The first heat will take place right here at the MELBI cynodrome, followed by the second and third at the MOLTON and MAO cynodromes. Finally, the fourth heat will be held at the NOLWENN cynodrome.

LISANDRO SATILMIS

Indeed. The competitors have been divided into groups of four, labeled A, B, C, and D.

ADIXIA MAELYS

Why this division ?

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

Good question, Adixia. The greyhounds have been classified according to their class and level of competition.

A SHOT OF A GROUP OF GREYHOUNDS

TITLE CARD : GROUP A

LISANDRO SATILMIS (voice-over)

That's right, Abdelhafid. Exceptional greyhounds, like the Borzoi MAX, who has already participated in several championships, are placed directly in category A.

A SHOT of a greyhound named MAX (a well-groomed, fawn-and-white Borzoi) presented in an insert.

ADIXIA MAELYS (voice-over)

Max is an exceptional greyhound. His trainer has high hopes for him, and he has proven time and again that he is capable of remarkable performances. He could even become the champion of France.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (voice-over)

Yes, but let's not forget BELLA when we talk about the concept of champion of France..

A SHOT of a female greyhound named BELLA (a French pointer), in another group, presented in an insert.

TITLE CARD : GROUP B

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

(voice-over, continued)

She is also exceptional and is among the favorites in this championship.

ADIXIA MAELYS (voice-over, nodding)

That's true, Abdelhafid. Bella has certainly proven herself and has made her mark in various cynodromes. Although the title of champion of France narrowly escaped her last year, she remains one of the best in this championship.

BACK TO THE STUDIO

LISANDRO SATILMIS

As for the other greyhounds participating in this championship for the first time, they are placed in groups C and D.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

Notably the new NINO, who was recently promoted at the park.

A SHOT of another group of six greyhounds, wearing vests and muzzles, tugging impatiently on their leashes as they are led to the starting boxes by their owners. Nino, wearing a blue vest numbered six and a muzzle, is accompanied by Charles and presented in an insert.

TITLE CARD : GROUP D

LISANDRO SATILMIS (voice-over)

A lot of information about him. Apparently, this little newcomer is full of talent, according to what they say. Let's hope that's true.

ADIXIA MAELYS (voice-over)

Well, we'll find out soon.

The greyhounds from GROUP D are placed in the starting boxes. Nino is the last.

CHARLES (to Nino)

Here's the moment we've all dreamed of. Go out there and show everyone what you're worth. Surprise them all.

NINO

Woof !

Then he enters his box.

BACK TO THE STUDIO

ADIXIA MAELYS

And here's the moment we've all been waiting for. The championship begins with GROUP D.

ON THE TRACK : the mechanical lure starts moving and takes a 23-meter lead. The starting boxes open simultaneously, releasing the greyhounds who leap onto the track with feline grace.

ADIXIA MAELYS (voice-over)

And here we go, it's off for the 432 meters of this track.

The greyhounds sprint down the track, competing with agility and speed.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (voice-over)

Look at them run, it's a wonderful ballet of power and grace. Each greyhound is a true artist on the track.

In the background : Charles is pacing nervously.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (voice-over)

Absolutely, Lisandro. These dogs are virtuosos of racing. Their agility and coordination are simply remarkable.

ON THE TRACK : the greyhounds brush past each other, overtaking and measuring up against one another with palpable intensity. None of them wants to give up their place, all are driven by fierce determination.

The audience holds its breath, captivated by the beauty of these canine athletes.

ADIXIA MAELYS (voiceover)

The competition is at its peak. The greyhounds are fighting for every inch of this track ; none of them want to give up.

BACK TO THE STUDIO : The race is being broadcast on the studio screens in the background.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

This is an intensely rare race. Each greyhound is ready to do anything to take the lead.

ON THE STUDIO BROADCAST SCREEN : The greyhounds continue their incredible strides, but it is still difficult to pinpoint the leading greyhound.

LISANDRO SATILMIS

We're a hundred meters from the finish line, and there is still no leader in this race.

ADIXIA MAELYS (suddenly standing up)

Wait ! There seems to be some movement on the track.

On the track : Nino accelerates, his graceful stride propelling him forward, overtaking each of his competitors.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (voiceover)

It's Nino ! He seems to be taking the lead in the race. What a lightning-fast acceleration from him !

ONE OF THE GREYHOUNDS

Where did that one come from ?

Charles leaves the stands and comes to see for himself, astonished.

CHARLES

That's it, keep it up, Nino !

On the track : Nino emerges from the pack and takes the lead in the race.

ADIXIA MAELYS (voiceover)

He did it ! Nino is now in the lead.

Nino increases his strides, widening the gap between him and his opponents in the remaining meters.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (voiceover)

He doesn't seem to be stopping there. He's pulling away more and more.

ANOTHER GREYHOUND

But how is he able to accelerate like that ?

The finish line approaches quickly. Nino is now in the lead, his gaze fixed on victory. Charles expresses his joy as Nino crosses the finish line first, triggering an explosion of joy in the cynodrome.

The audience rises in unison, and applause echoes throughout the cynodrome. Charles, overwhelmed with emotion, goes to greet Nino at the finish.

CHARLES (to Nino)

Wow ! You were amazing, Nino. That sprint at the end was truly incredible.

Nino barks and wags his tail. A man retrieves his greyhound.

THE MAN (to Charles)

Congratulations, kid. Great race.

CHARLES

Thank you, sir.

Others come to congratulate him as well.

Back to the studio :

ADIXIA MAELYS

What an incredible race ! Nino managed to dominate his competitors in the final meters with brilliance and truly deserves this victory.

LISANDRO SATILMIS

Absolutely, Adixia. Nino showed unwavering determination from start to finish. It's simply perfect there's nothing to say.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

Indeed, every greyhound demonstrated remarkable technique, but Nino has made it one of the most exceptional.

ADIXIA MAELYS

These greyhounds have given us a magnificent spectacle. Their talent and determination are admirable. But that's not the only surprise of the day ; now it's time for the second race.

On the track : the mechanical lure resumes its course, pulling ahead. The starting boxes open as we cut to the greyhounds bursting onto the track with boundless energy.

EXT. LATER - CHARLES' HOUSE / EVENING

Charles, Nino, and Basil stand in front of the entrance door. Charles opens the door and is surprised to see his mother, standing right in front of him with a joyful expression.

CHARLES

Mom ! What are you doing at the door ?

MIRETTE

Good evening, boys, I was just waiting for you.

BASIL

Good evening, ma'am.

Mirette spreads her arms.

MIRETTE (to Charles)

So, aren't you going to give me a hug ?

He jumps into her arms, intrigued.

MIRETTE (continued)

Congratulations on your victory.

CHARLES

How do you know ? Did you watch the race ?

MIRETTE

Yes ! On TV. I wouldn't miss my little rabbit's very first race for anything in the world.

Charles is touched.

CHARLES (holding his mother tighter)

Thank you, Mom, you're the best.

BASIL

I hope there's some room for me in all this.

MIRETTE

Yes, of course. Come here.

Basil joins the hug, sniffing something.

BASIL

I wouldn't want to spoil the mood, but is it just me, or does it smell good in here ? (Beat)
What's on the menu tonight ?

MIRETTE

Your favorite stews. It's specially made for this occasion.

Charles and Basil exchange joyful looks.

CHARLES AND BASIL

STEW !

They rush to the dining table, leaving Mirette and Nino.
Mirette approaches and gently strokes Nino's head.

MIRETTE

Congratulations to you too, champion, and thank you for all the joy you bring us. I'm sorry for my initial reluctance to have you, I didn't want an animal to suffer from our poverty. But you managed to hold on. Thank you so much. (Beat, aloud)
Not so fast, boys, wait for me.

She heads to join them. Nino can't believe it, he barks and then follows them.

QUICK CUT TO :

Mirette and the children happily enjoying their special stew.
We also see Nino savoring his dish.

CUT TO :

THE MONTAGE MUSIC STARTS TO PLAY.

EXT. CHARLES' HOUSE - DAY

Charles steps out of the house, kisses his mom, and then rides off on his bike with Nino.

INT. CYNODROME - DAY

TITLE CARD : MOLTON CYNODROME

ON THE TRACK : Nino accelerates and overtakes all his competitors, taking the lead in the race.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN DOWNTOWN - DAY

Basil catches up with Charles and Nino, and together they continue on a cani-cross.

INT. CYNODROME - DAY

TITLE CARD : MOLTON CYNODROME

Nino wins another race, and the audience stands to cheer for him.

INT. TOW TRUCK VAN - DAY

The two tow truck agents lay out a plan on a sheet of paper for capturing Nino.

INT. CYNODROME - CONTINUOUS

Another greyhound wins a race and is cheered on with his owner.

INT. CHARLES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charles lies in bed without a blanket. Mirette enters his room, covers him, smiles, and turns off the lamp.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Mirette, Charles, and Basil go to a pet supply store.

INT. VANS - EVENING

The two tow truck agents finalize their plan and rejoice.

INT. CHARLES' HOUSE - DAY

Charles crosses out a new date on his wall calendar. The final race isn't too far away.

INT. CYNODROME - DAY

TITLE CARD : MAO CYNODROME

Nino wins another race. Charles goes to greet him at the finish line while the press surrounds them.

ON THE TRACK : Max wins a race with a crushing lead.

INT. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CYNODROME - SAME

Nino spends time with Bella.

INT. STORE - DAY

Mirette, Basile, and Charles are choosing various products for Nino.

INT. PARK - DAY

Charles and Basile are training Nino over a long distance. Two security agents are closely following Nino (they are animal control agents in disguise).

EXT. CHARLES' GARDEN - DAY

Mirette mixes the products from the store. Charles and Basile try to catch Nino for his bath.

EXT. CITY CENTER - DAY

Newspaper articles about Nino's progress and the final race are everywhere in the streets.

INT. CYNODROME - DAY

TITLE CARD : CYNODROME MAO

Bella wins her race.

INT. PARK - DAY

Charles and Basile are sitting on a park bench with Nino beside them.

IN THE BUSHES BEHIND THEM :

AGENT 1

Are they distracted ? Should we catch him now ?

AGENT 2

Yes ! But be careful, don't get noticed. Do you have the net ?

The first agent nods and quietly sneaks up behind Nino. He places a small net over Nino's head, who suddenly gets up. Charles notices.

CHARLES

Hey ! What are you doing to Nino ?

AGENT 1

Me ?

(Backing away, removing and hiding the net behind him)

Nothing at all.

Charles and Basile give him a sharp look. The second agent arrives and hits the first agent on the head.

AGENT 2

Excuse my colleague, he mistook the dog.

(Looking at the first agent)

Right ?

The first agent quickly nods.

AGENT 1

Oh, yes, yes !!

AGENT 2 (with a fake smile) :

We're leaving now.

Nino starts growling.

NINO

GRRR !!!

CHARLES

Nino, no !

NINO

Woof ! GRRR !!

CHARLES
No, Nino, no !

The two agents exchange glances before fleeing. Nino chases after them through the park. Basile and Charles try to stop Nino.

EXT. CHARLES' GARDEN - DAY

They eventually catch Nino and give him a bath.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE UP : Someone is reading an article about the championship. He lowers the newspaper, and the camera reveals Alexander smiling.

EXT. CHARLES' GARDEN - AFTERNOON

The montage ends with a scene showing a brand new Nino, having regained his coat and ready for the final.

INT. CAR - DAY

An impatient driver is sitting in his car, gripping the steering wheel. He looks frustrated at the dense traffic in front of him. The cars are moving at a snail's pace.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The camera pulls back to show a congested road where traffic is at a standstill. Drivers are annoyed, horns are honking, and frustrated conversations are heard from passengers.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (vo)
All these cars.

The camera flies over the traffic jam to the entrance of a cynodrome where a huge crowd rushes to enter.

EXT. CYNODROME ENTRANCE - DAY

LISANDRO SATILMIS (vo)
You might be wondering why all this commotion today ?
Well, it's simply because it's not wise to miss the event happening today.

The camera performs an elegant rotation around the cynodrome, providing an impressive overall view of the venue. It transitions to a beautiful shot above the cynodrome.

TITLE CARD : CYNODROME NOLWENN - 780 METERS

LISANDRO SATILMIS (vo)

Welcome everyone to the third and final round of the cynodrome racing championship ! We are speaking to you live from the Nolwenn cynodrome, the largest of all the tracks in this city.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (vo)

What a magnificent setting for this final race !

INT. CYNODROME NOLWENN - DAY

CROWD SHOT : The camera slowly moves through the crowd, capturing the palpable excitement in the air.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (vo)

Look at all these spectators who have come from all walks of life to witness this extraordinary event. The cynodrome is packed to the brim, and I can tell you, the atmosphere is already electric.

The camera focuses on the faces of the spectators : families, friends, couples, all smiling. Some are holding signs with the names of their favorite greyhounds, while others wear bright jerseys representing their favorite racer.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (vo)

And what can we say about this cynodrome itself, Lisandro ?

Each corner of the cynodrome is showcased.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (vo)

Well, first of all, this cynodrome is much more than just a place for competition. It's a symbol of passion, determination, and overcoming oneself. With its majestic stands offering a breathtaking view of the seven hundred eighty meters of its two grass tracks, the vibrant colors of the flags fluttering in the wind, the dazzling lights illuminating the stage, and above all, the architectural beauty of this place, it truly lives up to the event taking place here today.

ON OUR ANNOUNCERS.

INT. COMMENTATOR'S CABIN - DAY

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

Well said, Lisandro. Adixia, how is this final shaping up ?

ADIXIA MAELYS

So... this championship is coming to an end, and the best greyhounds from each category will compete today on this track. Only two of them will have the chance to run in the final, and only one will be crowned champion of France in cynodrome racing.

LISANDRO SATILMIS

For the selected greyhounds, we have..

The various greyhounds are introduced in a graphic.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (cont'd)

The Barzoï MAX, nicknamed the demon of the tracks in category A, will face the French Pointer BELLA from category B on the second track. On the first track, the Spanish Greyhound BORNE from category C will compete against the Greyhound NINO from category D.

SHOT OF THE BETTING LINE.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (vo)

Bets are being placed in large numbers today, look at that long line.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (vo)

That's normal, Abdelhafid, everyone has come to support their favorite today.

TRACK ANNOUNCER (vo)

Everyone, please return to your seats, the race will start soon.

INT. CYNODROME / THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRACK - SAME

BELLA

Hey, handsome.

NINO

Oh Bella, it's you.

BELLA

Wow ! Is it just me or have you become even more charming than before ?

NINO

Stop it, you're making me blush.

BELLA

Still so sensitive, as I can see. So, are you ready for this race ?

NINO (excited)

Absolutely, my paws are itching to go !

BELLA

So am I, but don't lose your race.

NINO

Don't worry about that it won't happen.

BELLA

Still so confident, that's what I love about you. But don't forget, BORNE is your opponent.

CHARLES

Hey you. (To Nino)

Come on, let's go, the race is about to start.

NINO

Goodbye, Bella, and you too, don't lose your race.

He turns to leave with Charles.

BELLA

Nino !

He pivots towards her.

BELLA (cont'd)

Good luck.

He smiles at her and leaves.

TRACK ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The greyhounds may now head to the starting boxes.

Shots of the stands : a few people take their seats.

EXT. SOMEWHERE ON THE STREET - DAY

Beauce is trying to get a signal on an old television.

RITCH

Come on, Beauce, hurry up, we're going to miss the start of the final !

BEAUCE

I'm doing my best.

Beauce adjusts the antenna, and the picture stabilizes.

RITCH

Great, the picture's back.

Beauce takes a few steps before the picture starts to jump again. He turns back, annoyed.

INT. CYNODROME - SAME

ON TRACK 1 : behind the starting boxes.

CHARLES

Here we go, Nino. We're just a few meters away from our big goal. All I ask for is victory. I know you can do it, I trust you.

Nino looks at Charles and enters his box. The flag is raised on both tracks, and the lure begins to pull ahead.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)

The race begins, and the lure is off.

The starting boxes open simultaneously on both tracks, and the greyhounds burst out with impressive energy.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)

Wow ! What a start ! You can feel the energy they're putting out throughout the cynodrome.

The crowd is buzzing.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)

They're off for the 780 meters of this cynodrome.

On both tracks, the greyhounds are side by side until the first turn.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Beauce continues to fiddle with the antenna, still no signal.

MALT (disgusted)

We're going to miss the race, that's for sure.

BEAUCE

It's not my fault.

Suddenly, the sound from the television returns, but the picture is still absent.

ADIXIA MAELYS (V.O., on TV)
It looks tight on both tracks.

They all exchange looks. The picture comes back. he really gets it.

RITCH
We got it !

They all gather in front of the television.

MALT
I told you, we missed the start of the race.

BEAUCE
It's okay, at least we'll follow the end.

The camera zooms in on the TV screen.

INT. CYNODROME - SAME

ON TRACK 1 : both greyhounds are overtaking each other.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)
It's serious business for Nino and Borne, neither wants to give up their position.

Charles crosses his arms, anxious.

ON TRACK 2 : Bella is starting to take the lead over Max.

ADIXIA MAELYS (V.O.)
Bella looks more determined than ever, she's now in the lead.

VANESSA
Yes, my girl, you've got this.

The camera shows Crépin, comfortably seated and smiling. The crowd is in a frenzy.

INT. SUPER CAFÉ - DAY

A good number of people have gathered in a super café to follow the race, including Mirette.

BACK TO CYNODROME

ON TRACK 1 : we approach the finish line, and both greyhounds are still side by side.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)

We're just a turn away from the finish line, and it's still impossible to determine the leading greyhound on track one.

ADIXIA MAELYS (V.O.)

However, Bella is leading on track two, increasing her gap over Max. (Beat)

Wait ! Is it just me, or does Max seem to be gaining ?

ON TRACK 2 : Bella is in the lead, but suddenly Max surges ahead and starts distancing himself from Bella.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)

Incredible ! What a phenomenal acceleration from Max.

ADIXIA MAELYS (V.O.)

Max, known as the circuit demon, seems to be awake now.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)

It's amazing, look how quickly he closed the gap between himself and Bella. He truly deserves his nickname, the circuit demon.

Vanessa is stunned while Crépin smirks.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)

However, it's still tight on track one.

ON TRACK 1 : the finish line is right ahead, and no greyhound is in the lead yet.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)

I can't describe the feeling we're having right now. Who will win this race ?

CROWD SHOT : total silence reigns, the crowd holds its breath. Charles closes his eyes, completely focused.

INT. SUPER CAFÉ - SAME

Everyone has their eyes glued to the television. Mirette crosses her fingers and closes her eyes.

EXT. STREET - SAME

The three dogs are much closer to the TV screen.
CAMERA ON : the TV screen.
ON THE TRACK : Nino and Borne are still side by side.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O., on TV)
It's getting heated.

At the finish line, the television suddenly goes dark.

BEAUCE
What !!

MALT
Noooooooo !!!

Ritch faints, and Beauce gives the TV a kick, which immediately turns it back on.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O., on TV)
Wow ! That was really tight, who would have thought ?

The race is over, Beauce turns to the camera, visibly annoyed.

INT. CYNODROME - SAME

The crowd is buzzing, the race has finished on both tracks.
ON OUR COMMENTATORS

INT. STUDIO - DAY

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD
This race was truly fantastic.

LISANDRO SATILMIS
A real feast for the eyes ! There was an incredible adrenaline rush, especially on track one.

A presentation of the last 43 meters opposing Max to Bella appears in a box. Max finishes the race 23 meters ahead of Bella.

ADIXIA MAELYS
The nickname circuit demon is well deserved for Max, who literally crushed Bella in the final meters.

LISANDRO SATILMIS
Indeed, as for the race between Nino and Borne...

A presentation of the final meters opposing Nino to Borne appears in a box...

LISANDRO SATILMIS (cont'd)

...It was a display of incredible tenacity from start to finish.

ADIXIA MAELYS

Yes, neither of them wanted to give in. But it was Nino who emerged victorious in the end, thanks to a well-deserved stroke of luck.

A frozen image of Nino winning the race just ahead of Borne.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

So, Nino will face the so-called demon of the circuits, Max, in the final.

GRAPHIC RACE DISPLAYING : FINAL NINO VS MAX

INT. SUPER CAFÉ - SAME TIME

The gathering becomes noisy, and Mirette smiles.

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME

On the TV.

ADIXIA MAELYS (on TV)

Ladies and gentlemen, don't go away ! It's not over yet, a short break and we will resume the events.

BEAUCE

Awesome ! Nino won the race, guys.

MALT

That's great ! When does the final race start ?

BEAUCE

Soon. I hope he wins the final and realizes his dream.

RITCH

Don't worry about that, he's a tough cookie, he'll do it with his paws on the nose.

INT. CYNODROME / THE OTHER SIDE SAME TIME

Nino is looking for Bella. Borne is nearby.

BORNE

Congratulations on your victory, Nino. Great race.

NINO

Thank you, it's thanks to you.

BORNE

I gave it my all, but you proved to be stronger than me. You're the toughest opponent I've faced so far. But less tough than Max. (Beating)
I hope you won't be humiliated like those other competitors.

NINO

I hope so too.

BORNE

Listen well, Nino. For the final, you'll need more than hope, more than what you've given so far.

Nino looks at him.

BORNE (cont'd)

You saw what happened on track number two, right ? Your opponent this time is not just a simple racer, it's MAX, the so-called demon of the circuits. And I can tell you, he hasn't earned that reputation for nothing.

Bella enters the frame.

BELLA

Nino !

Spinning towards her.

NINO

Bella, I was just looking for you.

BORNE

I'll leave you. But don't lose this race. I know you have the ability and skill to win it, so please don't lose.

Nino and Bella watch him leave.

BELLA

A friend of yours ? He seems very nice.

NINO

Yes, a very good friend. (He corrects himself) I hope you're not too shaken up by the race ?

CAMERA ON CHARLES : Crépin's gang approaches him.

CREPIN

Oh ! Look who we've stumbled upon, the broke one.

CHARLES

My name is Charles !

LEON

I didn't know you had one.

CHARLES

You came to bother me, right ?

CREPIN

No, come on. We have much more important things to do than that, like... (Beating)
... winning this final, for example.

CHARLES

Winning the final ? What are you talking about ?

CREPIN

For your information, I am Max's master, your final opponent.

CHARLES

But how is that possible ?

CREPIN

I knew you would react like this. And given Max's performance, you've already lost the race before it even starts.

CHARLES

When did you become the master of such a greyhound ?

CREPIN

The power of money, it's crazy what you can do with it. I told you we would meet again, and that I would break that stupid dream you hold so dear. (Beating)
A word of advice from a friend, it's better to give up right now. You have no chance. A little shame is always better than a big one. Now, if you want to play the stubborn, see you on the track.

LEON

You'd better give up, Charles. You really have no chance.

Léon and Crépin laugh before leaving the frame, leaving Charles puzzled.

INT. SUPER CAFÉ - SAME / ON THE TV

LISANDRO SATILMIS

We're back after this little break. We've seen incredible performances from these greyhounds, but I guarantee the rest will be breathtaking.

A man in the super café.

THE MAN

Come on, the final race is starting.

ADIXIA MAELYS (voice-over)

I remind you that the greyhounds running in the final are Max and Nino.

ANNOUNCER OF THE TRACKS (voice-over)

The greyhounds can head to the starting box.

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME

RITCH

Malt, Beauce, come on ! The final race is starting.

ON TV : Max and Nino are presented in two different boxes.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (voice-over)

And here are our competitors for the final. They are world-class greyhounds, ready to clash on this track. Bettors will have to make tough choices, as the final promises to be fierce.

INT. CYNODROME - STARTING BOX / AFTERNOON

Crépin and Charles are behind the starting box. Max is already in his box. Nino and Charles exchange a long look, then nod simultaneously before he enters his box, Charles straightens up.

CREPIN

You finally showed up. Good. I hope you're ready to take that defeat.

Charles ignores this comment, lost in his thoughts.

CREPIN (cont'd)

It will be very bitter, I warn you.

INT. STARTING BOX

Nino tries to motivate himself, he closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

NINO
I'm going to do it, I can do it.

VOICE (OFF-SCREEN)
And who told you that ?

NINO (opening his eyes)
What do you want ?

MAX
Let me tell you something, little newbie. Here, it takes more than motivation to break barriers. You need to be capable of..

NINO (cutting him off)
You'd better focus on the race instead of wasting your time babbling.

MAX (astonished)
You... ! I don't need to focus to beat you, you're just an insignificant little pebble in my way.. !

NINO (once again)
Shut up, you're distracting me.

Max grits his teeth while Nino closes his eyes again.

ON THE CIRCUIT : The lure starts moving and begins to gain a few meters ahead.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (voice-over)
It's starting.

SHOT OF : Charles stressed while Crépin settles comfortably, crossing his feet, and displaying a big smile.

The starting box opens, and the greyhounds burst onto the track. Max immediately takes the lead and starts pulling away quickly.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (VOICE-OVER)
What a magnificent start !

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)
Especially from Max, who is off to an exceptional start ! He's literally flying down the track. What an incredible performance !

MAX (to himself)
I'm going to completely crush him.

The crowd is in a frenzy as Max continues to widen the gap.
His speed impresses everyone.

VARIOUS SHOTS OF THE RUNNERS as they take the first turn on
the track.

INT. SUPER CAFÉ - SAME TIME

A man in the crowd.

THE MAN
This Max is a real prodigy. Look at how he's
annihilating his opponent.

MAN #1
It's clear that this isn't the same category. Pff ! I
should have listened to you and bet on Max.

MAN #2
I told you, Nino is strong, but he can't compete with
Max.

MIRETTE (to herself)
This can't be happening.

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME

The three dogs in front of the TV.

MALT
Nino is getting completely crushed.

RITCH
This Max is truly a demon. He keeps increasing the
gap between them.

BEAUCE
At this distance already, it's over. There's no way
he's going to win.

BACK TO THE CYNODROME - GRANDSTAND

BASILE (loudly)
Come on, Nino ! Keep going, it's not over yet.

Not far behind him.

LEON (loudly)
Yeah, that's it, crush him, Max ! Crush that mutt !

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)
Max is giving us one of the most impressive demonstrations. He seems to be in a different league today.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)
He is clearly showing the difference between himself and Nino.

ON THE TRACK : Nino tries to close the distance between him and Max, but to no avail.

ADIXIA MAELYS (V.O.)
Nino can't catch up. Max keeps increasing the gap between them.

The greyhounds approach the final turn.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)
We're getting closer to the finish line, and Nino seems completely overwhelmed. He is literally getting beaten.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)
It's over for him, Abdelhafid. Given the remaining distance and the gap between him and Max, it's clear the winner has already been decided.

CAMERA ON : CHARLES, incredulous.

CHARLES
NINO !!

SHOT OF : Borne, pulling away from the cynodrome.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)
I wonder if Nino is really present on the track today.

Charles collapses to the ground, visibly crushed. Crépin approaches him, mocking.

CREPIN
So, what's wrong, champ ? I warned you, didn't I ?

CHARLES (with tears in his eyes)
It's over. Everything is over. All this journey to end up here...

CREPIN

Don't look like that. Your greyhound did well, but he just can't measure up to mine.

SHOT OF THE FINISH LINE : Max is dangerously close.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)

And there it is, the same scenario from track number 2 repeats. Max remains unbeatable this year.

INT. SUPER CAFÉ / SAME TIME

MAN #2

It's Max, who wins. We saw that coming.

Mirette sits down on a chair, desperate, almost in tears.

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME.

MALT

It's no use. At this distance, he's already lost.

BEAUCE

I can't believe it, so close to the finish..

BACK TO THE CYNODROME.

The crowd is going wild, cheering for Max.

SUDDENLY, A BOOM sounds, and smoke fills the circuit.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)

What's happening ? There's smoke on the track !

ON THE TRACK : The lure starts to lose speed, its engine has exploded.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)

Oh no. The lure's engine has exploded !

All the spectators stand up, surprised.

CHARLES

What's happening ?

CREPIN

What's going on ?

ON THE CIRCUIT : The racing greyhounds see the lure slowing down until it stops fifteen meters from the finish line.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)

I can't believe it, the lure has stopped with just a few meters left.

The racing greyhounds stop around the broken lure, and the crowd murmurs.

ANNOUNCERS (V.O.)

Owners are invited to retrieve their greyhounds from the track.

Charles and Crépin head towards their greyhounds.

INT. SUPER CAFÉ

MAN #2

Oh no, this can't be true. I had bet big on Max's victory.

MAN #3

But they can't cancel the race. Max clearly won that victory.

MAN #4

Yes, especially with that distance.

BACK TO THE STUDIO.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

It's a shame the race had to stop. Max was putting on a remarkable performance.

LISANDRO SATILMIS

Oh yes ! This technical failure cuts off all that adrenaline rush.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Your attention, please !

ADIXIA MAELYS

I believe a decision has been made by the federation. Let's listen in.

CENTER OF THE CYNODROME, PODIUM : The president of the canine federation (a well-dressed, slender man, about 1.88 m tall for his 38 years, in a well-tailored suit) addresses the crowd.

PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION

We are deeply sorry for this incident and sincerely apologize to every owner and to you, dear viewers.

Everyone listens attentively.

PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION (cont'd)

Due to this technical failure, we have decided to suspend the race and resume it in two weeks at the CYNODROME DES SABLES. We apologize again for this inconvenience. Thank you for your attention.

SHOT OF : Charles and Nino.

CHARLES

Congratulations, champ. You did very well.

NINO

No, master. I don't deserve these compliments. I was totally pathetic tonight.

Charles smiles and places his hand on Nino's completely defeated head.

CHARLES

Don't look like that. Sometimes it happens to face defeats. Besides, I'm sure you'll do better next time.

NINO (holding back tears)

Thank you, master. I promise I'll do better next time.

CREPIN (mocking)

You're congratulating him ? You're congratulating him for that ? Unbelievable.

Crépin and Max enter the frame.

CREPIN (cont'd)

You can say you got lucky this time, but don't worry, it won't last. I'll win that final sooner or later.

CHARLES

It's not my fault that the gods are on my side. I can't help it. It's my luck or your misfortune.

(Beat, to Nino)

Come on, Nino, let's go home.

MAX (to Nino)

So, no more big talk now.

NINO

Pff !

Charles and Nino exit the frame, while the press gathers around Crépin and Max.

BACK TO THE STUDIO

LISANDRO SATILMIS

Here is the decision made by the federation members. So, ABDESSAMAD, what can you say about this race ?

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

I can say that Max made a great impression today. He demonstrated the difference between him and the other lower-class greyhounds, especially Bella and Nino. There's a lot of work for these greyhounds, especially Nino, if he wants to compete with Max, because he literally crushed him tonight.

LISANDRO SATILMIS

Well said, Abdessamad. And I think that's what we all noticed tonight. If he doesn't double his efforts, Max will win the final very easily. (Beat)
This was Lisandro Satilmis on your screens. The race is postponed to the second week due to a technical failure at the Cynodrome des Sables.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ALEXANDER'S HOUSE

The camera pulls back to show Lisandro on a TV screen.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (cont'd)

I hope many of you will come. With that, ladies and gentlemen, good evening.

Alexander turns off the TV.

EXT. STREET - SUNSET

BEAUCE

It's not over yet. He still has a chance to win this final.

MALT

Yes, but there's a lot to do in that case. Did you see the gap between him and Max ?

RITCH

I don't think he will do it. He must be demoralized right now.

BEAUCE

Yes, that's true. After all, he got hit hard today.
(Beat, an idea occurs to him)
In that case, let's go cheer him up.

CUT TO :

INT. CHARLES'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Charles and his mother are at the table, and Nino is lying next to them, totally dejected. The atmosphere is tense.

MIRETTE
Charles, eat something.

CHARLES
I'm not hungry, Mom.

Mirette looks at him as he leaves the table.

INT. CYNODROME - DAY

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)
It's really tight. The two greyhounds are side by side, it's breathtaking.

ON THE TRACK : Nino and Max are racing, and Max wins by a hair.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)
And in the end, it's Max who wins narrowly over Nino.

Charles collapses on the ground, tears in his eyes.

CHARLES
This can't be happening. Why ? Why does it have to end like this ?

He hears mocking voices behind him.

CREPIN
I told you to give up, but you didn't listen. You were playing tough. Did you really think you could beat me with that stray dog ? (Beat)
No ! But you can't be serious.

LEON
This is what happens when you play champion.

CREPIN

I won the final and shattered your stupid dream, just like I told you. I'm the champion of France, and you are nothing, just a broke kid.

LEON

You should have given up, like I advised you, Crépin. Look at everyone laughing at you right now.

Charles lifts his head and realizes the entire Cynodrome is mocking him.

CHARLES

No, stop, stop !

The mockery intensifies, and he covers his ears with his hands.

CHARLES

Stop, stop, stop !!!

INT. CHARLES'S ROOM - NIGHT

He wakes up abruptly from his bed, it was a nightmare. Mirette wakes up.

MIRETTE

What's wrong, my bunny ? A nightmare ?
Go back to sleep, Mom is here.

He lies back down. Nino beside him hasn't closed an eye.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK !

MIRETTE

Just a moment, I'm coming !

KNOCK, KNOCK. She goes to open the door and finds Basile at the door.

BASILE

Hello, madam.

MIRETTE

How many times have I told you not to call me madam ?

BASILE

Sorry. Is Charles here ?

MIRETTE

Yes, but he's not in great shape. He hasn't left his bed since yesterday. Come in, I'll tell him you're here. He might come down.

BASILE

Okay.

INT. CHARLES'S ROOM

Mirette enters the room, and Charles has his back to her.

MIRETTE

Basile is here to see you, my dear. Come on, come down.

CHARLES

No, I don't want to see anyone.

MIRETTE

But it's Basile.

CHARLES

I don't want to talk to him. Let him go.

MIRETTE

But it's... !

CHARLES

I want to be alone, Mom.

MIRETTE

Okay, but you're coming down to eat something afterward, understood ?

Without a word, she exits and joins Basile in the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM

BASILE

Is he coming down ?

MIRETTE

No, he still doesn't want to come down.

BASILE

Let me go talk to him. Maybe he'll listen to me.

INT. CHARLES'S ROOM

Basile enters the room.

BASILE

How are you doing, little brother ?

No response.

BASILE

You know, Charles...

CUT TO :

INT. LIVING ROOM

Basile arrives in the living room. He and Mirette exchange a glance before Basile shakes his head to say no.

INT. CHARLES'S ROOM - NIGHT

MIRETTE

Come on, my dear, let's eat.

CHARLES

I'm not really hungry, Mom.

MIRETTE

But it's been a long time since you've eaten anything. Come on, let's eat.

CHARLES

No thanks, Mom. I'm not hungry.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Charles sits dejectedly under a tree in the garden. Nino, not far away, sees Malt and gestures to him. Nino joins him.

MALT

What are you doing lying there ? Don't you have better things to do ?

RITCH

You have a race in a few days, and you're not even training.

BEAUCE

I knew this defeat would shake you a bit, but not this much.

MALT

How long has it been since you trained ?

NINO

I don't remember.

ON THE OTHER SIDE : Mirette joins Charles under the tree.

MIRETTE

What are you doing, my dear ? (Pausing)
You can't just stay here like this. I know you're disappointed right now, but you have to get up and move forward. It's not over yet, and Nino needs you right now. Do you really think that by moping around every day, you can win this final ?

BACK TO NINO

MALT

You think lying down like this will help you beat Max ?

BEAUCE

If you ask me, he completely crushed you on that track. You were just a hair's breadth away from losing that dream you've held on to so tightly. This technical failure gives you a chance, and what are you doing ?

RITCH

If I were in your place, I'd be moving heaven and earth, training like crazy to compete and even surpass Max in the next race.

BACK TO CHARLES

CHARLES

But did you see the gap between us ? Max is way too strong for Nino. He won't be able to beat him. I might as well not show up for the next race.

MIRETTE

Have you even tried ?

Charles looks at Mirette.

MIRETTE (cont'd)

Sometimes, defeat is just a step towards victory. You have to have faith in Nino and yourself.

BACK TO NINO

MALT

I've known you to be more tenacious than this. You're not going to tell me you're going to let this little defeat take you down.

BEAUCE

Enough playing around. It's really time to get to work and go win us that championship.

BACK TO CHARLES

MIRETTE

It's in these moments that we recognize the strong, those who win, those who rise up after a great defeat, and the weak, those who stay down after a loss. So, are you a winner or a loser? (Pausing) If you want to win this final, get up and do what it takes to win.

Charles stands up and hugs his mom.

CHARLES

Thank you, mom. I don't know what I would have done without you.

BACK TO NINO

NINO

Thank you, guys, you're the best.

MALT

It's always free for a friend.

Suddenly enlightened, Nino remembers Alexander's last words.

ALEXANDER (V.O.)

Come back to me when you feel it's the right time.

Nino rushes over to Charles.

NINO (as he leaves)

Thanks a lot, guys, I'll repay you someday.

MALT

What's gotten into him all of a sudden?

RITCH

No idea.

BEAUCE (watching him leave)

I hope he'll be up to the task.

Nino arrives by Charles' side.

NINO
WOUAF ! WOUAF !

CHARLES
What's wrong, Nino ?

Nino pulls on his leg.

CHARLES
What's wrong ?

MIRETTE
He wants you to follow him. Maybe he has something to show you.

NINO
WOUAF ! WOUAF !

CHARLES
Alright, I'm coming.

He rushes to grab his bike and follows Nino. Mirette, feeling pleased, makes a call.

MIRETTE (on the phone)
Hello, Kevin ?

KEVIN (V.O.)
Yes, hello Mirette, did it work ?

MIRETTE (on the phone)
Yes, thank you so much for your advice, Kevin.
(Pausing)
I repeated word for word everything you told me, and it worked.

Basile enters the frame.

BASILE
Hello, mom.

MIRETTE (on the phone)
Okay, I'll call you back later, I have company. Thank you so much.

KEVIN (V.O.)
No problem. Always free for colleagues.

She hangs up.

BASILE
Is he still inside ?

MIRETTE
No, not anymore.

BASILE
Oh really ! But where is he ?

MIRETTE
You just missed him.

BASILE
Didn't he tell you where he was going ?

MIRETTE
No, he followed Nino.

BASILE
Nino ?

MIRETTE
Yes ! Come on, I'll cook something for you.

BASILE
Okay.

He heads towards the house.

CUT TO :

EXT. SOMEWHERE FAR FROM THE CITY - AFTERNOON

Charles and Nino arrive in front of Alexander's house.

CHARLES
Is this where you wanted us to come ?

NINO
WOUAF ! WOUAF !

CHARLES
Come on. We have better things to do than waste our
time here. He won't help us.

He moves ahead, but Nino stays in place.

NINO
WOUAF ! WOUAF !

CHARLES

Come on, Nino. I don't know what's gotten into you, but let me remind you that he clearly told us he won't help us. If you want to stay, stay. I'm leaving.

He takes a few steps, Nino barks before Alexander's door opens.

ALEXANDER

I was starting to get impatient.
(Pausing, rubbing Nino's head)
How are you, buddy ? You were great.

NINO

Thank you, sir.

CHARLES

Alexander, finally... I mean, Mr. Alex..

ALEXANDER (interrupting him)

I thought you weren't coming back. Come on, let's get down to business.

CHARLES

How ? You want to train Nino ?

ALEXANDER

You've proven yourself. I think it's time to give you a little boost. (Beating)
Come on, let's start. We've wasted enough time like this.

All three of them enter Alexander's house.

CUT TO :

INT. CYNODROME - DAY

A cheering crowd fills the cynodrome, with banners and flags in bright colors.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)

The cynodrome is packed to the brim. Everyone is here—men, women, children—all come to witness this final.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)

I didn't understand the name of this cynodrome at first, but now it's easy to see why.

VARIOUS SHOTS OF THE CYNODROME.

WIDE SHOT : The stands arranged in a semicircle around the tracks, filled with enthusiastic spectators.

CLOSE SHOT : Sand-carved arches adorned with motifs of greyhounds in full sprint.

OVERALL SHOT : The elegant architecture reminiscent of ancient amphitheaters, offering a stunning view of the track.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)

The stands, arranged in a semicircle around the tracks, offer an unobstructed view of the races. Its architecture recalls the elegance of ancient amphitheaters, with sand-carved arches and columns adorned with motifs depicting greyhounds in full sprint. (Beating)

This cynodrome truly deserves its name, the Sand Cynodrome.

TITLE CARD : SAND CYNODROME.

ON OUR ANNOUNCERS

ADIXIA MAELYS

Hello, ladies and gentlemen. Thrilled to see so many of you for this final, following the accident at the Nolwenn cynodrome.

A presentation of the last meters run by Max, leading up to the explosion of the lure's engine, in an insert.

ADIXIA MAELYS (CONT'D)

Max literally crushed Nino, showing the huge gap between them. He was ahead of the scene, but this technical failure happened at the last moment, stealing this easy victory from him and giving Nino a chance to catch up. (Beating)

But the question is, will Nino seize this opportunity ?

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

Of course not. Given the huge skill gap between the two, there's no way he'll do it.

LISANDRO SATILMIS

Don't talk nonsense, Abdelhafid. Even though he was beaten in the last race, he can make up for it in this one. And don't forget he has proven himself so far.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

Even if he's proven himself, he won't be able to beat Max. We're talking about a rookie against a professional here, and not just any professional, it's Max, the demon of the tracks. Be a little realistic.

A photo of Alexander and Charles training Nino appears in an insert.

LISANDRO SATILMIS

I know, but there's new information, apparently, people have spotted Alexander, the former king of the tracks, assisting little Charles with Nino's training.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD

Alexander, you mean Alexander Swift, the one who hasn't been seen for years ?

LISANDRO SATILMIS

Exactly ! That's the one ! (Beating)
He's even here today.

CAMERA ON : ALEXANDER SWIFT, comfortably seated in one of the best spots in the cynodrome.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)

This is going to complicate things. But Max remains the best of the two.

ADIXIA MAELYS (V.O.)

Well, we'll find out right away.

ON THE TRACK : Charles and Crépin bring in their greyhounds and close the starting box.

CREPIN

So, you finally showed up. Wasn't the beating you took last time enough ? You like humiliation, don't you ?

CHARLES

Today is a new day.

CREPIN

Don't tell me you think your stray dog has a chance against Max.

The lure starts moving and takes the lead.

CHARLES

What if we watch the race in silence ?

ADIXIA MAELYS (V.O.)

And here we go, it's starting.

The starting boxes open, releasing the greyhounds who sprint onto the sandy track.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)

It's the start of this second race, pitting Max against Nino.

The crowd grows loud, cheering for their favorites.

ON THE TRACK : The paws of the greyhounds dig into the sand with impressive precision. Their eyes are fixed on the winding path of the track. They're in a frantic race, leaving a cloud of dust behind. The cheers of the crowd blend with the sound of the greyhounds' footsteps, creating an electric atmosphere.

CREPIN

It seems your little dog is holding on, but don't get too excited. It won't last long.

Max starts to pull ahead of Nino, but Nino isn't falling too far behind.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)

And there you have it, Max is taking the lead, just as expected. It was obvious.

CREPIN

Ah ! What did I tell you ? (Beating, to Max)
Yes, crush him, Max, crush him !

Charles stays focused, saying nothing.

ON THE TRACK : The graceful strides of the greyhounds propel them forward, their elegant silhouettes clearly defined against the sandy background. The barks mix with the noise of the crowd, creating a thrilling ambiance.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)

Max, leads the dance, but Nino is giving him no respite ! What a rivalry, what intensity, what determination.

A tight turn is ahead.

ADIXIA MAELYS (V.O.)

We're approaching the final turn, the tightest bend of the track.

Max navigates it with agility, closely followed by Nino. Their bodies lean into the curve, but they don't slow down, determined to reach the finish line. The cameras capture every movement of the greyhounds, documenting the intensity of the race from all angles.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)

Wow ! Look at them negotiate that turn. Perfect mastery of their trajectory ! These greyhounds are simply exceptional.

The finish line is in sight, but Max is still in the lead.

ADIXIA MAELYS (V.O.)

The finish line is just ahead, and it's Max pulling the strings of this race. But Nino, just behind him, is not giving up.

CREPIN

It's in the bag. (Beating, to Charles)
This time, no technical failure is going to save your face. Ah !

CHARLES (to himself)

Come on, Nino, this is the moment.

Suddenly, time seems to freeze on the track. Nino glances toward the stands. He sees Alexander smiling at him, Mirette giving him a thumbs-up, Bella, nodding her head, his three stray friends smiling at him too ; and finally, Charles nodding before dashing off at full speed. Time resumes its normal course, and Nino stretches his strides.

INT. COMMENTATOR STUDIO

Lisandro stands up in one swift motion.

LISANDRO SATILMIS (astonished)

What's happening ?

ON THE TRACK : Nino accelerates, his paws pounding the sand with renewed energy. He quickly closes the gap on Max.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD (V.O.)

Nino is speeding up ! They are now neck and neck. Who will cross the finish line first ?

CREPIN (shocked)

What ?! How is that possible ?

LISANDRO SATILMIS (V.O.)

What an extraordinary comeback from Nino ! He's matching stride for stride, it's truly impressive.

ON THE TRACK : Nino pulls ahead of Max. In a final sprint, he crosses the finish line ahead of Max, stopping in a cloud of dust. Witnessing his incredible performance, the crowd erupts in cheers, celebrating the grandeur of this epic race.

ADIXIA MAELYS (V.O.)

And it's Nino who wins ! Nino takes this final against Max, the demon of the tracks. A whole new era is opening for him.

CREPIN (in shock)

No... how is this possible ? How could I lose this race ? It was in my favor !

IN THE STANDS : Charles bursts with joy as he runs through the greyhound track before breaking down in tears, overwhelmed with emotion.

MALT (excited)

He did it ! Nino did it, Beauce !

RITCH

He succeeded, he is the champion of France.

BEAUCE

I knew he would make it.

Borne smiles discreetly before stepping away. Bella rushes toward Nino.

ON THE TRACK : Nino and Max exchange a long look.

MAX

Congratulations. I never thought you could beat me.

NINO (catching his breath)

No, I should thank you. It's because of you that I was able to surpass myself.

BELLA

Congratulations, Nino ! I knew you could beat him, and you did !

NINO

Thank you, and it's all thanks to you.

Charles comes running to embrace Nino, tears in his eyes.

CHARLES (Hugging him tightly)

Thank you so much, Nino... thank you.

Crépin arrives with tears in his eyes.

CHARLES

So, what were you saying ?

CREPIN

You, I'm not done with you yet. It's not over.

(Turning to Max)

And you, don't follow me, okay ? I don't hang out with losers.

He exits the frame, leaving Charles and the dogs exchanging a knowing glance. The crowd remains loud.

CUT TO :

INT. CENTRE OF THE GREYHOUND TRACK - ELEVATED PODIUM

Charles, Nino, Basile, Mirette, and Alexander are on the podium, proud and radiant.

PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION

It is with immense pride that I present you with this medal. It symbolizes your bravery and the determination you have shown throughout this competition.

The president places the medal around Charles's neck, then crowns Nino with a laurel wreath.

PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION (continued)

And it is with great pleasure that I present you with this trophy for the champion of France in greyhound racing.

He hands the trophy to Charles, who lifts it in joy.

Nino looks up at the sky and recalls the crowning of GOLDIE DRAVE, which he had watched on TV.

NINO (with determination)
Get ready, I'm coming. I will realize my dream.

The family surrounds Charles and Nino, sharing this moment of glory with their loyal companion. The crowd continues to applaud, recognizing the greatness of this victory. Cameras capture every moment of this unforgettable time.

RETURN TO OUR ANNOUNCERS.

LISANDRO SATILMIS
Who would have believed it ? It was truly amazing !

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAS
This race offered us a spectacle of rare intensity. Their determination and agility captivated the crowd at the greyhound track and viewers worldwide.

ADIXIA MAELYS
Nino finishes this competition with the title of champion of France. His journey to the podium has been marked by unwavering determination. He fully deserves this gold medal.

LISANDRO SATILMIS
Without a doubt, Adixia. Nino showed remarkable grace and power. This victory will remain etched in memory as a moment of pure canine elegance.

ADIXIA MAELYS
And that concludes this memorable day for greyhound racing. Thank you to all our viewers for joining us for this incredible adventure. We look forward to bringing you more thrilling moments in the world of canine sports.

ABDELHAFID ABDESSAMAD
Exactly, Adixia. Stay tuned for more exciting moments and exceptional performances. In the meantime, that's all for today. See you soon !

CUT TO :

EXT. IN FRONT OF CHARLES'S HOUSE - DAY

TITLE CARD : ONE MONTH LATER.

Vehicles are parked in front of Charles's house.

INT. CHARLES'S HOUSE

Everyone is present : Charles, Nino, Basile, Alexander, Mirette, and impeccably dressed men in suits.

THE MAN IN SUIT #1

As I was saying, we have come in person to give you this invitation to the grand tournament of the best greyhounds from each country, to elect the new KING OF THE TRACKS.

He hands a card to Charles.

CHARLES

Thank you.

THE MAN IN SUIT #2

I hope you will accept and represent France in this grand tournament.

Charles and the others exchange glances and all nod. Charles turns to Mirette, who takes a moment before agreeing.

CHARLES (to the men)

Alright, it's settled. I will be happy to represent France at this tournament.

THE MAN IN SUIT #1

Well, we are done. Thank you for agreeing to participate. Congratulations on your victory.

Charles and our champion, Nino, stand tall and follow the men in suits. Charles and Nino simultaneously.

CHARLES AND NINO (Turning to the camera)

Get ready, we're coming. The next to be crowned KING OF THE TRACKS will be us.

CUT TO : Charles and Nino's words.

THE END.

TO BE CONTINUED.