

The Black Dog

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A car drives along the road. There is no other traffic.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

An elderly couple are in the car. The husband is driving. He is CHARLES RENFREW. In the passenger seat sits his wife EMILY RENFREW.

Charles sighs and looks at the clock. It reads 1AM.

CHARLES
Bloody ridiculous time.

EMILY
Oh come on you know how it always is.

CHARLES
Yeah. Every damn year.

EMILY
It's her birthday!

CHARLES
I understand that but she doesn't have to keep us there till one AM, filling you with gin.

Emily looks at him offended.

EMILY
You had some too!

CHARLES
Yes but not nearly as much as you. One of us has to drive remember.

Emily looks away and out the window.

EMILY
I can drive fine well.

CHARLES
Clearly.

Emily looks out of the window. Charles focuses on the road. His head starts to droop and his eyelids start to shut.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY
(o.s.)
Oh my god!

Charles is startled awake.

CHARLES
What? What is it?

EMILY
There was a dog.

CHARLES
What?

EMILY
It was a great big black dog.
Running alongside the car.

CHARLES
Don't be ridiculous.

EMILY
I saw it!

CHARLES
You've had too much to drink.

EMILY
I know what I saw!

CHARLES
What breed was it then?

EMILY
...I don't know.

CHARLES
Exactly. Because you didn't see it!

Emily glares at him.

CHARLES
Just, go to sleep or something.

Emily turns away as Charles sighs. She keeps looking out the window. Charles' head starts to sag again. His eyelids drop...and then close.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

The car starts to veer off the road.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Emily turns to Charles.

EMILY
Charles!

Charles wakes up too late and turns the wheel wildly.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

The car swerves off the road - and smashes into a at the side of the road. The car is wrecked. Inside both Charles and Emily are dead.

Somewhere in the distance a dog howls.

EXT. MANSION ESTATE - DAY

A car drives along the road.

INT. CAR - DAY

Two women are in it. In the passenger seat is JENNIFER RENFREW. Her friend HANNAH WILLIAMS drives the car. Jennifer looks out of the window deep in thought.

HANNAH
You okay?

Jennifer looks over and nods. Hannah smiles.

INT. DRIVE - DAY

The car pulls up in the drive of a large mansion. Several other vans and cars are parked there. Tradesmen come and go out of the main doors.

Jennifer and Hannah step out of the car.

HANNAH
Well they certainly had a nice place.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

Yeah.

HANNAH

Where's Richard?

JENNIFER

Inside probably.

They head for the entrance.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

RICHARD RENFREW stands in the main lobby giving the tradesmen orders. The lobby looks like it's being redecorated. He looks up at a TRADESMAN on the balcony.

RICHARD

Look just get rid of it.

TRADESMAN

Are you sure?

RICHARD

Yeah, that bloody chandelier's just going to get in the way. Just get rid of it.

Behind him Hannah and Jennifer walk in.

HANNAH

I see you've already started.

Richard turns to greet them.

RICHARD

Hello Hannah. Yeah well the place wasn't exactly the most inviting. Reflected the old git's personality.

Jennifer walks up to him. He hugs her. He looks over to Hannah.

RICHARD

So where's John?

HANNAH

Picking up those tools you asked him to get.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Ah good man.

He walks over to the staircase.

RICHARD

Hey take a look around. Have you ever seen our parents house?

HANNAH

No.

JENNIFER

You're lucky.

They laugh.

RICHARD

Come on I'll show you the guest quarters.

HANNAH

Oh, they have guest quarters?

RICHARD

I know. You'd never think they had anyone round they were so miserable.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

They walk down a long hallway. Various paintings are lined on the wall.

HANNAH

They sure liked their art.

RICHARD

That was mum's. She always liked art.

They walk past a bedroom. Jennifer lags behind and looks into it.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A child's room. Stuffed toys are lined perfectly on the bed. It doesn't look like anyone's used it in years. Jennifer walks over and picks up one the dolls. She stares at it.

Something moves quickly behind her. Almost like a shadow. Jennifer turns to look.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

Hello?

A small clicking sound is heard. Almost like animal footsteps.

JENNIFER

Hello?

There is a noise from the other side of the bed. Jennifer jumps, looking over. Something growls from the other side, an animalistic, primal growl.

Jennifer steps closer to the bed...closer...

RICHARD

(o.s.)

Jennifer?

Jennifer nearly jumps out of her skin. The growling stops. Richard stands in the doorway looking at her oddly.

RICHARD

Are you coming or what?

JENNIFER

Yeah sorry.

Jennifer puts the doll back on the bed and leaves the room.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Richard, Jennifer, Hannah and JOHN HOUGH all sit around a table. Empty carry out packets lie beside them.

RICHARD

So get this. Dad comes in and he's practically tearing the house apart because he can't find a pen for the life of him.

JENNIFER

And he needs it to sign a very important deal by midday.

RICHARD

Right so he goes half mad looking for one, and then runs out of the house and drives to the shops looking for one. And then Mum walks over to a drawer and finds like twenty of them all in a box.

(CONTINUED)

The group laugh.

RICHARD

First place she looked as well. He would have been lost without her.

JENNIFER

Yeah...they were good together.

RICHARD

Yeah, they just weren't good with others.

JOHN

They were nice enough to leave you the house though.

RICHARD

True, although I wouldn't have put it past the old man to go and change the will on the fly. He was like that.

They sit in silence.

RICHARD

Still, it's our house now.

He motions to Jennifer.

RICHARD

And we're gonna make it good.

Jennifer nods.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer walks out of the en-suite bathroom and heads over to her bed. She gets in and starts reading a book. She gets drawn into it.

A low growl drifts into the room. She doesn't hear it for a few seconds, but then notices it as it gets louder. She looks around the room.

A shadow can be seen from under the bedroom door. Something is standing outside. The growling starts again. Jennifer moves to sit on the edge of the bed.

JENNIFER

Who's there?

The growl comes again - and then the shadow moves off down the hall. Jennifer stands up and walks to the door.

EXT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer opens the door and looks into the hall. She looks both ways. Nothing. She closes the door.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

John washes a cereal bowl in the sink as Jennifer walks in.

JOHN
Morning.

JENNIFER
Morning. Uh, John?

JOHN
Yeah?

JENNIFER
Did you hear anything last night?

JOHN
How do you mean?

JENNIFER
Like...anything in the hall?

John shakes his head.

JOHN
No. Why?

JENNIFER
I could swear I heard an animal in the hall last night.

JOHN
What kind of animal?

JENNIFER
Like a dog. I don't know, it was probably nothing.

She walks over to the table.

JENNIFER
So what are you doing today then?

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Richard and I are going to work on the other wing. With any luck the whole house will be done in a few weeks.

JENNIFER

Nice.

JOHN

Yeah.

He leaves and Jennifer sits down at the table, unnerved.

INT. CONSERVATORY - DAY

Rain thunders down outside. Richard and John stand in overalls painting the wall.

JOHN

You sure we shouldn't get the professionals to do this?

RICHARD

It's just a paint job.

JOHN

Yeah you're right.

Richard looks on the ground for something.

RICHARD

Hey Jen?

Jennifer walks into the room.

JENNIFER

Yeah?

RICHARD

Can you get me the roller? I think I left it in the kitchen.

JENNIFER

Sure.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jennifer walks into the kitchen. The door at the back is open leading out into the garden. Rain droplets come in. Jennifer walks over and closes it. She walks over to the counter and picks up the roller.

Behind her the door creaks open. The wind picks up and it opens further. Jennifer sighs and walks over, closing it again. She walks away.

The door opens again, the hinges creaking as it does. Jennifer turns and looks at it, frightened. She stands perfectly still. Nothing moves. The only sound is that of the wind outside.

Sighing she walks back over to the door and starts to close it again.

Suddenly the door is blown open again by a huge force. Jennifer screams as she falls backwards onto the floor. A dog snarls and barks at her. She looks up at it in horror.

Richard and John run into the room, hearing the noise. The barking stops.

RICHARD

Jen!

He runs over and helps up a terrified Jennifer.

RICHARD

What happened?

JENNIFER

A dog!

RICHARD

What?

JENNIFER

A huge, black dog! It tried to kill me!

RICHARD

John check the garden.

JOHN

Right.

He runs out as Richard sits Jennifer down at the table.

INT. GARDEN - DAY

John runs out into the garden. He looks around. Wind and rain howl around him. Nothing else. No black dog. Nothing.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

John walks back in.

JOHN
There's nothing there.

Richard turns to Jennifer.

RICHARD
Are you sure it was a dog?

JENNIFER
Yes! It was huge and it threw the door open!

RICHARD
That's a pretty sturdy door Jen,
are you sure it wasn't just the
wind?

JENNIFER
Yes I'm sure! It came right at me!

RICHARD
But there's nothing out there.

Jennifer gets up and leaves the room. Richard sighs.

RICHARD
Must have been the wind.

John leaves the room. Richard goes to follow him. Something catches his eye.

Several muddy paw prints stain the floor.

EXT. SHOPPING CENTRE - DAY

Jennifer walks down a street with several bags of shopping. Several people move around with their own business. Jennifer turns into a car park.

INT. CAR PARK - DAY

Jennifer walks along the aisles of cars. Suddenly a woman grabs her arm. Jennifer struggles against her and looks at her. She is RACHEL ADAMS.

RACHEL
I know what haunts you!

JENNIFER
What? Let me go!

RACHEL
I know why it's after you!

JENNIFER
I don't know what you're talking
about now leave me alone.

She pulls herself free and walks away fast.

RACHEL
The black dog!

Jennifer stops.

RACHEL
I know why it's tormenting you.

Jennifer turns around.

JENNIFER
Why?

RICHARD
(o.s.)
Hey!

He walks up and grabs Jennifer. He looks at Rachel.

RICHARD
Leave her alone!

He leads Jennifer away.

RICHARD
Come on.

RACHEL
I know the truth!

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Shut up!

He leads Jennifer back to his car.

JENNIFER

Who is she?

RICHARD

Some local nutter who runs a
psychic shop nearby. Just ignore
her.

They get into the car.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Jennifer grabs her coat and puts it on. She moves for the
door.

RICHARD

(o.s.)

Where are you going?

She turns to see Richard sitting in a chair watching her.

JENNIFER

Into town. I need to get some
things.

RICHARD

What things?

JENNIFER

I need to get some food.

RICHARD

We've got plenty of food here in
the house. Our house.

JENNIFER

It's not our house.

RICHARD

It is now.

JENNIFER

We didn't exactly get it the right
way did we?

Richard glares at her.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

I don't know what you're talking
about.

Jennifer turns away and leaves. Richard watches her as she goes.

INT. STREET - DAY

Jennifer walks down the street. She looks around at all the shops, looking for one in particular.

Rachel stands outside of one of them. Her store.

They make eye contact. Rachel walks back inside. Jennifer heads towards it.

INT. SHOP - DAY

Jennifer enters the dark shop. Several occult objects are hanging on the walls. One has a picture of a large, shaggy black dog.

Rachel stands in the corner next to a doorway.

RACHEL

Come in.

She walks through. Jennifer follows.

INT. ROOM - TIMELESS

Rachel turns on a lamp and lights the room. It's a small room with a table in the middle. Two chairs are beside it.

RACHEL

Sit.

Jennifer sits down on the chair.

JENNIFER

I don't usually do this. How much
do I pay?

RACHEL

I'm not charging you.

She sits down opposite Jennifer.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL
I know it's been...visiting you.

JENNIFER
How do you know?

RACHEL
Call it an unwelcome gift.

JENNIFER
Why is it coming after me? Why me?

RACHEL
You're not going to like this.

JENNIFER
Just tell me.

Rachel straightens up.

RACHEL
Okay. Black dogs are a death omen.

JENNIFER
What?

RACHEL
In all the lore surrounding them
everyone who comes into contact
with one of them dies soon after.
No one else sees it, only the
victim.

JENNIFER
No...

RACHEL
I'm sorry but that's the truth.

JENNIFER
Why me? Why is it coming after me?!
Why does it want to kill me?!

RACHEL
Well here's the thing. They don't
just go after anyone. They go after
people who are responsible for
death...

JENNIFER
What?

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL

Yeah. Call it an act of karma if you will. They appear to those about to die, and then they appear to those responsible.

JENNIFER

No...

RACHEL

What did you do Jennifer?

JENNIFER

No...

RACHEL

Who did you kill?

JENNIFER

No!

Suddenly Richard barges into the room.

RICHARD

I knew it! Come on!

He grabs Jennifer and leads her from the shop. Rachel gets up and walks after them.

RACHEL

You can't escape this!

Richard turns on her.

RICHARD

You! You stay the hell from my sister!

He and Jennifer leave the shop.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Jennifer sits in a chair. Richard sits opposite her. A fire is lit in the fireplace behind them.

RICHARD

What's going on with you?

Jennifer looks at him.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

We finally have everything we've ever wanted, and you start babbling about black dogs.

JENNIFER

It's after us.

RICHARD

No it's not.

JENNIFER

It knows what we did!

RICHARD

Knows what?

JENNIFER

It knows what we did that night.

RICHARD

We did nothing.

He stands up and starts walking away.

JENNIFER

That's not true!

RICHARD

Nothing was proved. If nothing was proved then nothing happened.

JENNIFER

It knows. It knows that we drugged his drink.

RICHARD

Oh for Christ's sake!

JENNIFER

It knows that we caused him to crash!

RICHARD

Look!

He bears down on her.

RICHARD

I have waited too long to get to where I am now! And I will not let you fuck this up for me!

Jennifer sobs up at him.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

I'll have you committed if I have to.

He walks away leaving her crying in the chair.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Richard walks into the kitchen. Hannah and John sit solemnly at the table. Richard looks away and stares at the wall.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jennifer walks along the hallway, still sobbing. She walks towards her room. Suddenly there is a growl behind her. She turns - and then runs terrified down the hall.

The dog chases after her, barking as it goes.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer runs into the bedroom and slams the door shut behind her. She locks it. The dog starts banging against it from the other side.

Jennifer backs away into the centre of the room. She is near hysterics.

JENNIFER

What do you want from me!?

The dog growls again, and bangs on the door. It starts to give. Jennifer looks around terrified. She looks over - and sees the window.

She runs over to it and opens it. The door starts to break. She climbs out of the window and onto the ledge outside. The dog bangs on the door again.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

Jennifer climbs out onto the ledge. She looks down and sees a three story drop to the bottom. She clings on tighter. She starts to edge along it.

Suddenly her foot slips and she falls screaming from the ledge.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bedroom door bursts open - and Richard, Hannah and John run in.

HANNAH

Jen?!

They see the open window and run over to it.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

They lean out over the window. Hannah gasps in horror.

Jennifer lies dead on the ground.

JOHN

Oh god.

Hannah starts to cry as Richard looks down at Jennifer's body.

INT. CEMETERY - DAY

Fog clouds the air. Richard stands alone in front of a grave. The head stone reads **JENNIFER RENFREW 1980-2009**. Richard turns around.

Rachel watches him beside a bench. He sees her.

She stares at him.

He looks away and leaves.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Richard sits in front of the fire with a glass of whisky. He takes a sip of it and sighs.

A deep growl starts to drift through the room. Richard looks over at the direction of the noise, fear on his face.

The dog barks.

FADE OUT.