

Cleopatra and Caesarion

written by

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INT. BACKSTAGE - DOG SHOW - DAY

GREAT DANES. Young, massive, good boys and girls.

They stand in a row, face their HANDLERS (ages varying), as they are brushed and pampered.

ENTHUSIASTS AND DOG-BREEDERS alike stand around, watch the handlers, CONVERSE, mingle.

CAESARION (2), a Great Dane, stoic and towering, offers his paw to the outstretched hand of TERRANCE (35).

TERRANCE

Such a good boy, you are.

Terrance CLIPS Caesarion's nails.

SADIE (O.S.)

Well, congratulations Terrance.

Terrance looks up, sighs.

TERRANCE

Hey mom.

Terrance turns around, sees SADIE (70), a spunky woman in a purple business suit and a matching purse, and

CLEOPATRA (7), an old, yet regal Great Dane, on Sadie's leash.

SADIE

Hey there, squirt.

TERRANCE

You brought the grand champion with you?

Terrance reaches down and pets Cleopatra. Sadie grins.

SADIE

Figured I'd give the old bitch a chance to see her future champion offspring.

Terrance watches Caesarion sniff Cleopatra's hind end.

TERRANCE

Think they recognize each other?

Cleopatra returns the greeting to Caesarion.

Sadie and Terrance remain feet apart.

SADIE

Not sure. I reckon it's been a few years since he was her baby.

Cleopatra and Caesarian PANT, appear to smile.

Caesarion's tail waggles.

TERRANCE

It's good to see you, mom.

Cleopatra's eyes brighten.

SADIE

Yeah?

Terrance nods.

TERRANCE

It's a long trip just for Cleo to see Caesarion.

Cleopatra and Caesarion rub against one another.

SADIE

Well, I wasn't gonna deprive the girl of seeing her only son win Best of Breed, was I?

Terrance shrugs.

TERRANCE

Well, he certainly has the pedigree. Though I'm shocked to see her.

Sadie sighs, looks Terrance in his eyes.

SADIE

She's an old girl. Old, and tired. Too tired to keep competing out there. Bad knees. Bad hips.

TERRANCE

She carried a lot of greatness for a lot of years.

SADIE

Yeah. I'm sure she wishes she carried her pup a little more than she did.

Terrance nods.

TERRANCE

But she didn't.

Sadie inhales, nods. Looks down at Cleopatra. Cleopatra and Caesarion both sit, calm, smiling.

SADIE

Be that as it may, she's proud of him.

Terrance looks at the dogs, looks back up at Sadie.

TERRANCE

Think so?

Sadie reaches out, grasps Terrance's shoulder. Terrance stiffens. Sadie withdraws her hand.

SADIE

Yeah, I do. I'm gonna show her one more time next weekend. A small show, nothing like this one. Reckon she'll ride off into the sunset after that.

She reaches in her purse, withdraws a pair of sunglasses. Gaudy, large, purple. Puts them on.

SADIE (CONT'D)

Wonder if the sunset is nearly as pretty when you never stopped to see the sun rise, or to enjoy your time with it.

Terrance inhales sharply through his nose, looks away. Places his hands on his hips.

TERRANCE

Look at them.

The dogs lay down next to each other.

SADIE

Yeah, they're sweet.

TERRANCE

Maybe she is proud of him. Maybe part of her recognizes her own pup. But she doesn't know him. What food he likes, his favorite toys. It's a shame she can't express it, that pride of pedigree. Even if she is proud, Caesarion has no idea, does he?

Terrance looks at Sadie. Sadie gulps, frowns.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

I mean, sure, there's something between them. But that something is a gulf of experiences that neither has shared with the other.

Cleopatra lays her head on top of Caesarion, huffs. They close their eyes.

Sadie's lip quivers.

Terrance kneels down and pets Cleo's head, looks up at Sadie.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

But, proud or not, Cleo worked very hard. Didn't she? She deserves that sunset, and she deserves it to be pretty. And if that sunset is hers and hers alone, well, she deserves that too.

Sadie snuffles. Nods.

SADIE

It's been nice to see you, Terrance.

Terrance stands up, sticks his hand out to Sadie.

TERRANCE

Take care, Mom.

Sadie reaches out, shakes Terrance's hand. She forces a smile through her frown.

Sadie walks away, tugs at Cleo's leash. Cleo gets up and follows Sadie.

Neither look back at their offspring.

Terrance looks down at Caesarion. Caesarion looks up at him, eyes brighten.

TERRANCE (CONT'D)

Who's a good boy?

Caesarion wags his tail.