

MS. KORNBLUT - Scene 1 of 1

34.

JOHN

Oh, yeah, it's a big honor. I get to write about zoning laws and yard sales.

JENNY

I bet you make something out of it.

JOHN

It's only temporary until he finds someone else. I'm just trying to get something down for Tuesday.

She gives him a kiss, starts out of the room

JENNY

You'll think of something. And John, I'm serious about Marley. He wreaks havoc everywhere he goes. We gotta do something...

START
→

EXT. PARK- DAY

MS. KORNBLUT, weathered and stern, is studying John. Behind John, eight puppies and their owners are chatting before the class begins.

MS. KORNBLUT

Incorrigible? I don't believe in that. All dogs want to learn. But they can't when their owners are weak-willed.

JOHN

I'm very strong-willed.

MS. KORNBLUT

And where is your animal?

JOHN

He's over there. With my wife. He was a little excited. He usually needs a little time to calm down.

Ms. Kornblut looks at Jenny as she struggles up with Marley.

MS. KORNBLUT

I see. He calls the shots. Which of you will be the trainer?

JENNY

We thought we both would, since we want him to listen to both of us at home -

MS. KORNBLUT

A dog can only answer to one master. Which one of you has the most natural authority in your own relationship?

JOHN

(beat)

I'll watch.

MS. KORNBLUT

I thought so. We begin.

EXT. PARK - LATER

As Ms. Kornblut gestures, demonstrates the command:

MS. KORNBLUT

Sit!

The students order their dogs to sit, and most of them do. The ones that don't require only a little effort to get the idea. Whereas:

Jenny orders Marley to sit; instead Marley jumps up on her and puts his paws on her shoulders. She presses his butt to the ground, and he rolls over for a belly rub. She tries to tug him into place and he grabs the leash in his teeth, shaking it playfully.

MS. KORNBLUT (CONT'D)

That, class, is an example of a dog that has been foolishly allowed to believe he is the alpha male of his pack. And therefore he cannot be a happy animal.

JOHN

(from the sidelines)

Yeah, he looks really bummed.

Kornblut hears him, death stares John.

MS. KORNBLUT

You. Joker. Rotate in.

John looks at Jenny who shrugs, holds up the leash for him to take.

CUT TO: A HEAVY CHOKE CHAIN

As Ms. Kornblut demonstrates on her wrist.

MS. KORNBLUT (CONT'D)

The choke chain. When your animal walks properly by your side, there'll be slack. If he pulls, it tightens around his neck like a noose and loosens as soon as he stops pulling.

JOHN

Does it hurt them?

MS. KORNBLUT

Well, it's not called a hug chain. But they learn to like it. Go on, collar your dogs.

Everyone else quickly, easily gets the choke chain around their dogs' necks. Of course. Meanwhile:

John kneels down and struggles to put it around Marley's neck. Marley, liking its shiny jingling, tries to eat it. Much tussling, and John finally gets it around Marley's neck - but Marley still manages to grab it in his teeth.

JOHN

He likes it.

MS. KORNBLUT

That's because he's eating it... Get it out of his mouth. Class? Give your dogs the sit command.

All the dogs sit; John forces Marley's butt down.

MS. KORNBLUT (CONT'D)

The leash is held in two places. Loop around your right hand, left hand at waist level. Dog always on your left, of course.

JOHN

That means us, pal.

He rearranges Marley so he's on John's left.

MS. KORNBLUT

Now, when you give the heel command, step off with your left foot - I don't want to see any right foot first steppers - and walk. If your dog gets ahead, administer a correction by forcefully bring your left hand down and towards the right, and he'll respond. Shall we? One, two, three - now!

Just as the dogs and owners prepare to step off, Marley lurches ahead of the pack...

JOHN

Marley, heel!

Marley takes off like a fighter jet, dragging John behind.

MS. KORNBLUT

Correct him!

John gives a mighty yank on the leash. Marley coughs, hesitates. John loosens the leash - and Marley explodes forward again. John yanks, Marley stops, John releases, Marley explodes forward.

MS. KORNBLUT (CONT'D)

Rein in that dog! All right, everyone, line up again. Demonstration. Mr. Grogan? Pay attention.

She takes the leash from John and efficiently guides him into line with the other dogs.

MS. KORNBLUT (CONT'D)

It's a simple question of confidence in one's own authority. Shall I demonstrate a simple walk?

JOHN

Be my guest.

MS. KORNBLUT

Class? Even an unruly dog wants to obey his leader. Marley? Heel.

And she steps off confidently - but Marley is a bit more confident than she is. He lunges, she pulls, he falls back on his hind legs, then barrels up and lurches forward.

Ms. Kornblut half-stumbles, half rockets across the park. She manages to turn Marley around, and the whole process begins again as they make their way back to the line. Her face is flushed with embarrassment, anger, and exertion, but Marley, jowls frothing, is having a ball. It's like a walking tug-of-war.

With difficulty, Ms. Kornblut manages to return Marley to John, but not before, as a coup-de-grace, he starts humping her leg enthusiastically. She struggles, he knocks her down, and then he buries his face in her crotch and humps her knee.

John and Jenny rush over. John restrains Marley; Jenny helps up Mrs. Kornblut. She's livid.

MS. KORNBLUT (CONT'D)

That's it! He's out!

JOHN

He usually just does this with poodles.

(looking at her bad perm)
Maybe it's the hair.

MS. KORNBLUT

He's a bad influence on the others. Leg-humping is a virus. Once it takes hold in a group - he has to go!

END →

INT. 345 CHURCHILL ROAD - DAY

As they follow Marley back into the house.

JOHN

Well, that was fun.

(to the dog)

Congratulations, Marley. You flunked obedience school.

JENNY

You know, John, there is something else we can do--

JOHN

(looks at her)

No, no, I'm not doing that to him.

JENNY

It's painless. And he'll be a lot more comfortable. It'll calm him down.