

# SPEAK

Written by

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INT. ANIMAL SHELTER DAY

Down the long corridor of cages, the whimpering and barks of dogs waiting for adoption fill the echoing walls. Sad, optimistic, silly, wonderful and anguished dogs. We see their faces behind the cages.

SHELTER WORKER (O.S.)

Any cage that has a red tag means the pup has already been claimed. Any green tags mean the pup is available for a new home.

DOUG, mid thirties violently straight, and SHELTER WORKER, cool alt twenties, are walking down the first row of cages.

SHELTER WORKER (CONT'D)

Will this be your first dog?

DOUG

Yeah. Kinda. I had a dog growing up but that was a long time ago.

SHELTER WORKER

I'm glad you're open to having another. These dogs need forever homes so you opening yours is very kind.

A beat

DOUG

My girlfriend dumped me.

A beat.

SHELTER WORKER

I'm sorry to hear that.

DOUG

It's been so quiet at home. I mean, why have a girlfriend when you can have a dog?

Shelter Worker shuts off.

They continue down the walkway. Some dogs are jumping excitedly at them as they pass.

They pass a cage with a green tag. Doug reads it closely.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Lily.

He looks into the cage. Sitting astutely and and uncharacteristically human like at the back of the kennel is a border collie. Not panting or whining. Just sitting.

SHELTER WORKER

Lily?

DOUG

It says Lily on the tag.

The Shelter Worker inspects the tag.

SHELTER WORKER

Okay. Lily. Must have missed her intake. (to Lily) Come here, sweetie.

Lily stands and walks to the front of the cage. She sits, staring straight up at the two of them.

DOUG

Wow, she really listens to commands. (to Lily) Lay down!

Lily lays on her stomach.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Do you do returns.

SHELTER WORKER

Sir, she's not a sweater you don't like.

DOUG

Okay, yeah, sure but if it just isn't working out for me, would I be able to bring her back?

SHELTER WORKER

We only take back adopted pets under specific circumstances. Otherwise we encourage you to re-home them.

Doug kneels down, face against the cage. Lily stares into his eyes.

DOUG

Lily...

Doug opens his mouth to say 'speak'. We seen the mouth shape of an 'S' but we...

CUT TO BLACK. As big as the screen itself, we see the title boldly displayed.

**SPEAK**

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Doug is sitting on the couch, slumping while Lily sits astute on the carpet. Lily stares directly at Doug. Doug has his phone on speaker while the phone rings. He's calling someone. A femme-voiced answering machine picks up.

ANSWERING MACHINE (V.O.)

Hi, you've reached Amy.  
Unfortunately I can't come to the phone right now, but if you leave your name and number I'll try to get back to you as soon as I can. K thanks, bye.

BEEP

DOUG

Ames, I know you're probably sick of me calling. I miss you. Maybe we can meet up and talk about things. I'm sorry for whatever I did that made you hate me.

A decent pause.

DOUG (CONT'D)

I got a dog. I know how much you love dogs. You can meet her when we meet up. Call me back. Bye.

Doug hangs up the phone and throws it to the opposite side of the couch. Lily remains stuck in a stare.

DOUG (CONT'D)

What? Stop looking at me like that.

She keeps staring.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Now you decide not to listen?

She doesn't stir. They sit in silence. Doug is unnerved.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Are you hungry?

Lily lets out a SMALL BARK.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
You want food?

Lily lets out a BIG BARK.

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - KITCHEN NIGHT

Doug forks spam out of the can and onto a regular plate on the floor. Lily starts eating from it. Doug scrapes the can and takes a bite himself.

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - BEDROOM NIGHT

Doug is laying in bed with the low hum of his tv in the background. He scrolls on his phone. Occasionally, he lets out a chuckle. From behind his phone, he notices Lily sitting stoically in the doorway. She isn't in the room.

DOUG  
Come here.

She doesn't listen.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Come here!

He tries again. Still, nothing moves her.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Lily. Come.

Lily quietly and confidently walks into the room. She hops on the bed and curls up at the end, intentionally not touching Doug. On Doug's phone, we hear a TIK TOK AUDIO of a dog using one of those button communication devices. Doug LAUGHS.

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - BEDROOM LATER

Jump cut to early that morning. Still dark. Doug opens his eyes in the total blackness of the room. In the doorway a black mass is framed. He rubs his eyes again. The low hum of a rabid growl begins.

DOUG  
Lily?

The growl increases. He feels around his bed and touches Lily lying next to him. The growling intensifies. As His vision acclimates to the darkness, none of the features of this shape can be made out. Only the sound of danger at his doorway.

Slowly, the mass grows higher and higher until it has to duck down under the top of the doorway. A long extremity reaches through to hold itself against the ceiling.

The growling stops.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
(whimpering in fear)

In an instant, the shape lunges into the room at Doug. Doug tries out let out a cry for help but no sounds comes out.

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - BEDROOM A MOMENT LATER

Doug shoots up from his slumber. It was a dream? He looks around the room heaving. Catching his breathe. He looks to Lily, sitting up at attention staring at the doorway. Theres nothing there. He pets Lily and pulls the covers over his head.

EXT. RESTAURANT - PATIO DAY

Doug and AMY, cool as fuck, are sitting on the patio of a restaurant while Lilly sits politely next to the table. Stoic and unmoving.

AMY  
She's obviously had training.

DOUG  
Yeah, no shit.

Beat of insecurity.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry.

AMY  
Yeah? No shit!

Amy leans down to pet Lily. She strokes the back of her ears.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Did you buy all the stuff she needs?

DOUG  
Of course. She's got the leash, the collar...

Amy waits for more.

AMY

And?

DOUG

And she loves them, (to lily) don't you girl?

AMY

What about food, crate, toys. Any enrichment.

DOUG

I just make her a plate of whatever I'm having. What's good for me should be good for her.

AMY

Jesus. You can't just feed her people food. No high sodium or highly processed foods. What has she been eating the last few days?

Doug is reluctant to speak.

DOUG

Spam.

AMY

Doug! What the fuck?

DOUG

How am I supposed to know what's good for a dog? I'm not a dog.

AMY

You are pathetic.

DOUG

I'm learning.

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Amy and Doug walk into the apartment carrying bags or groceries. Amy is carrying most of the bags while Doug carries two. Lily trails in behind them. She sets down her bags on the couch.

DOUG

Can you bring those to the kitchen.

AMY

No, but they'll be here whenever you're ready to get them.

She sits back into the couch.

AMY (CONT'D)  
(to Lily) Come here.

Lily jumps onto the couch and cozies up on her lap.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Good girl.

Doug is putting away groceries. Amy is petting Lily on the couch. As she rubs her ears she feels something. Pulling back her ear she sees a scar shaped like moon? Or maybe a cross?

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Doug walks to the front door and opens it. A MAILMAN waves as he walks away from the front door. Doug kneels down and picks up a package.

DOUG  
Yes!

Doug shuts the door.

AMY  
What is it?

Doug begins opening the box.

DOUG  
You're gonna love this. I saw this thing on tik tok a few days ago.

He pulls something out of the box.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
It's like a translator for your dog. They press these buttons when they want something. It's super freaky.

Doug presses on of the buttons.

BUTTON VOICE (V.O.)  
Treat.

Lily perks up her ears.

DOUG  
It takes out the hard part of owning a dog. When she needs something, she can just press one of these.



Doug puts them on the ground.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Come here, Lily.

Lily doesn't move.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Lily, come.

Nothing.

AMY  
Come, on Lily.

Amy moves to the ground and Lily follows.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Lily, press.

Amy gestures to the button and taps the top without activating the noise. Lily steps forward and presses her weight on the button.

BUTTON VOICE (V.O.)  
Outside.

AMY  
Good girl!

Amy gets up and opens the door to the backyard. Lily walks through.

AMY (CONT'D)  
You have to make sure you reinforce the behavior with the sound. So she knows that 'outside' means outside.

DOUG  
Seems like she already does. Lily, come.

Lily continues to wander outside.

AMY  
Lily, come.

Lily comes back inside.

DOUG  
Why isn't she listening to me?

AMY  
Maybe she doesn't like you.

DOUG  
 She loves me. I'm her dad. She has  
 to.

Amy pretends to vomit. Lily sits next to Amy politely.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
 What are you doing later?

AMY  
 Why are you asking?

DOUG  
 What? I'm just asking what you're  
 doing later.

AMY  
 Just ask what you're going to ask  
 so I can say no.

DOUG  
 Can I cook you dinner?

Amy pulls out her phone and looks at it.

AMY  
 (sucks teeth) Geez, you know what?  
 It look's like I'm busy doing  
 literally anything else.

She puts her phone back in her pocket.

DOUG  
 You could just say no. You don't  
 have to---

AMY  
 Be a bitch? Yes I do. And you know  
 why? You don't listen.

Amy heads to the door. Lily follows.

AMY (CONT'D)  
 I'll be back in a couple days to  
 make sure you haven't killed this  
 perfect angel.

Amy kneels down and gives Lily a big pet on the neck. Amy  
 leaves. Lily stares at the door.

**OVER BLACK**

The sound of one of the dog buttons echoes over nothing.

BUTTON VOICE (V.O.)

Outside. Outside. Outside.

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - BEDROOM NIGHT

Doug opens his eyes. Disoriented, he sits up. A voice from the other room.

BUTTON VOICE (V.O.)

Outside

DOUG

Not right now.

BUTTON VOICE (V.O.)

Outside. Outside.

DOUG

Lily! Come here.

Lily sits up beside him. He is startled. He reaches for her and taps her back.

Panic.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Who the fuck is that!

Silence

Doug hurries to his bedside table and pulls a knife from the drawer.

DOUG (CONT'D)

I have a knife! And a dog!

Silence.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Lily go get---

BUTTON VOICE (V.O.)

Outside.

Frozen

BUTTON VOICE (V.O.)

Outside. Outside. Outside.

The button quickly gets faster and faster MANIACALLY. Doug jumps from the bed still holding the knife and runs into the...

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM CONTINUOUS

Doug lunges into the darkness knife first in the direction of the buttons. He falls through and onto the couch.

His HEAVY BREATHING is the only sound.

As he glances around the room, a SOURCELESS SHADOW travels along his living room wall towards the hallway to his bedroom. It disappears. Doug hops off the couch and chases it back into his room.

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - BEDROOM CONTINUOUS

Running into the bedroom he swings the knife wildly.

DOUG  
Lily! Sick 'em!

Doug continues to swing until he realizes that nothing is coming of it. He breathes hard until he eventually relaxes.

From the other room, the button echoes.

BUTTON VOICE (V.O.)  
Again.

That's not what the button says.

BUTTON VOICE (V.O.)  
Again. Again. Again.

Doug rushes out of the bedroom once more.

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM CONTINUOUS

Doug turns the corner to see Lily, sitting as stoically as she does, next to the button. She is staring right at Doug.

DOUG  
Useless fucking dog.

He turns to look towards the bedroom. Lily presses the button with her paw.

BUTTON VOICE  
Outside.

Doug reaches down and picks up the button. He inspects with vigor.

Looking down at Lily, he KICKS her. Lily YELPS.

DOUG  
Way to protect me, shithead.

He walks to the door and lets Lily out. She leaves into the backyard. Doug unlatches the bottom of the button, pulls out the batteries and drops the button on the floor.

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM DAY

Doug is playing video games on the couch while Lily lies next to him.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK ...

DOUG  
You can leave it at the door.

Doug keeps playing.

Another...

KNOCK...

KNOCK...

KNOCK...

DOUG (CONT'D)  
I said Leave it at the door!

No response.

Doug gets up and opens the front door. Nobody and nothing waiting for him.

From inside the house, another KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

Doug spins. Leaving the front door open, he walks to the back slowly. As he inspects the back door, he hears somebody behind him. In the doorway. another short series of knocks.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

Doug spins.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
What the---

It's the Mailman.

MAILMAN  
Sign for a package.

DOUG  
Jesus christ! What's your problem?

MAILMAN  
I just need somebody to sign for  
this.

DOUG  
I told you to leave it.

The Mailman swishes a pen motion in the air.

MAILMAN  
Signature.

Doug signs the Mailman's pad. The Mailman gives Doug a  
package and heads back to his car.

DOUG  
Next time don't go into my  
backyard.

Unbothered, the Mailman waves.

MAILMAN  
Have a good day!

Doug shuts the door and begins opening his package. He  
reveals a small black box. Taking the packaging, he throws it  
away.

As the garbage can lid opens we see *the button in the trash*.  
The new trash covers it.

On the couch, next to Lily, he opens the black box revealing  
a small pistol. Doug inspects the gun. Suggestively sexual,  
he rubs the base, the shaft and softly fingers to barrel end.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

DOUG  
You've gotta be fucking joking.

Doug opens the front door. It's Amy.

AMY  
Ding Dong.

Amy comes inside.

AMY (CONT'D)  
How's my perfect angel?

Lily sits up from the couch and comes straight to Amy. She softly rubs against the side of her leg while Amy gives her pets.

DOUG

I guess she just doesn't like me.

Amy notices the gun.

AMY

What the fuck is that?

DOUG

Somebody broke into my house.

AMY

When!?

DOUG

A couple of nights ago.

AMY

Are you okay? Did they hurt you?  
What did Lily do?

DOUG

I'm fine. Nothing happened. Lily acted like she didn't even notice. She treated them like she treats me.

Amy goes to sit on the couch. She pinches the handle of the gun uncomfortably.

AMY

Do something with this.

Doug takes the gun and tries to shove it in his pants.

AMY (CONT'D)

Not in your pants.

Doug walks to the kitchen and puts it away in a drawer.

AMY (CONT'D)

What did this person look like?

Doug returns.

DOUG

I don't know. I was half asleep and they moved pretty quick. I tried to stab them but they jumped out of the way.

(MORE)

DOUG (CONT'D)

They almost didn't even make a sound. I only heard them because they kept pressing Lily's talk button.

AMY

What do you mean?

DOUG

From the living room, the button kept going off. They kept hitting it over and over.

AMY

So somebody broke in and antagonized you. Did you call the police?

DOUG

It's whatever.

Amy let's out a heavy sigh.

AMY

Okay, Doug. It's *whatever*.

DOUG

I took care of it. I can protect myself.

AMY

With the gun you almost shot your dick off with?

DOUG

Fuck off! It's not even loaded.

AMY

Did you check?

Doug goes to sit down on the couch. He looks grumpy in a baby way.

DOUG

Maybe it's a good thing you broke up with me. Ya know? You're always such an asshole whenever I'm around.

AMY

Yes, it's why I did it.



DOUG

See! Even that is like 'I'm smarter than you and you're stupid.' I'm not stupid, Amy!

Amy lets out a deep sigh.

AMY

I wouldn't say that you inviting other girls over to our house while I'm home so you could cheat on me from the other room isn't stupid behavior.

Doug pouts and looks like he's about to cry.

He's silent.

AMY (CONT'D)

Remember? You said I came to you in a dream and said 'I'm so down with you fucking other chicks.' That was it, right?

Doug mutters something under his breathe.

DOUG

(too quietly) It was only one time.

AMY

What? I can't hear you.

DOUG

It was only once!

Amy stands up from the couch.

AMY

It happened three times.

DOUG

Yeah, but only one girl!

AMY

That you kept bringing back!

DOUG

I. Thought. We. Were. Open.

AMY

Because you only ever listen to yourself!

Amy collects her things.

AMY (CONT'D)

The only reason I hang out with you now is because of your dog who you got to get me to come around again, so, congrats on your successful plan.

DOUG

I didn't get---

Amy reaches her finger to Dougs lips.

AMY

Shhhh. Stop. You lying isn't hurtful anymore. It's just annoying.

Amy walks to the door.

AMY (CONT'D)

When you're tired of attempting to take care of someone that isn't yourself, I can take her.

Lily gets up and follows Amy to the door. Amy kneels down and pets Lily.

AMY (CONT'D)

(to Lily) You can always come with me.

DOUG

Leave my dog alone and just go.

AMY

I hope to see you as little as possible in the future.

DOUG

Whatever, bitch.

Amy winces.

A beat.

Amy exits and closes the door.

Lily stays seated at the door, waiting.

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - BEDROOM LATER

Doug is laying in bed staring at his phone. The phone light beaming off of his face in the dark room. His eyes are puffy. He looks mad as he types against the glass.

We see a picture of Amy on his phone. He's on her instagram. We watch as he types a comment.

F...a.t...b...it..c.h.

He hits *post*.

He scrolls down to another photo and begins typing another comment. We watch him wallow in this pitiful display for a little longer than we need to. We SMASH CUT to...

LATER

Same shot. Hours later, Doug is asleep in his bed.

Something rustling from the other room.

...rustle...

.....Rustle...

.....RUSTLE...

BOOM! Something big is moving.

Doug jumps up from a dead sleep. He doesn't say a word.

Quietly more rustling from the other room.

They're back.

Doug reaches over to his bedside table and quietly opens the drawer. He reaches in and pulls out his new pistol. He fumbles with the bullets as his hands shake. A couple fall to the ground.

.....Ping.....ping..

The sound from the other room stops. Doug notices.

He finally puts the bullets in the gun and cocks back the hammer. He gets out of bed and begins walking towards his door.

DOUG

You think you can fuck with me  
twice!? Huh?

No response.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
You think I wouldn't be ready!?  
Waiting for you this time?

He walks into the...

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM CONTINUOUS

In the middle of the living room sits Lily. Stoically and confidently. Next to her paw is the button.

DOUG  
Lily come!

She doesn't flinch.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Lily! Come!

Doug continues looking around.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Come out and I won't shoot! I have  
a gun.

Doug keeps looking around. Waiting.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Lily! Get over here! Now!

A big ol beat.

Lily slowly lifts her paw and presses the button.

BUTTON VOICE  
No.

He notices the button. And the response.

DOUG  
What?

Lily presses again.

BUTTON VOICE  
No.

DOUG  
It's not supposed to say that.

Lily presses.

BUTTON VOICE  
And yet, it does.

Doug steps back. His breathing, frantic.

DOUG  
Lily, stop!

Another press of the paw.

BUTTON VOICE  
No. You stop.

Doug's arm holding the pistol tenses up. It begins to shake.

His voice is trembling.

Press.

BUTTON VOICE (CONT'D)  
Now, be a good boy.

Doug's arm begins rising slowly. Doug is breaking down.

DOUG  
What are you doing!? Stop!

Tears are welling up. Panic.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Please stop!

His arm is now straight above his head.

Press.

BUTTON VOICE  
Down, boy.

Doug's elbow begins bending slowly. The barrel of the gun coming closer and closer to his head.

DOUG  
Stop! Please Stop!

He is begging for his life. Doug's arm lowers into place. With his elbow high, the gun is resting at his temple. Snot and saliva spewing from his face.

Press.

BUTTON VOICE  
Quiet.

As Doug's physical mannerisms continue, no sound is coming from him. His facial contortions get worse as he notices his stifled voice.

Press.

BUTTON VOICE (CONT'D)

Good boy.

A heavy beat.

Lily staring into Doug's eyes.

Press.

BUTTON VOICE (CONT'D)

Now, speak.

Still nothing. No sound.

Doug writhes trying to get sound out. Like a broken toy, Doug's body is pulling from his frozen arm.

He keeps trying to scream and nothing. Complete silence.

Press.

BUTTON VOICE (CONT'D)

Bad dog.

Eyes wide, Doug's index finger pulls the trigger.

EXT. DOUG'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

SMASH CUT to outside the house. In that instant we hear a POP and a concurrent FLASH OF LIGHT from the window.

INT. AMY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM DAY

Amy sits on the couch with her phone to ear. The TV hums in the background.

AMY

I'm okay.

Quiet murmurs from the phone.

AMY (CONT'D)

Yes, I will be there.

Response.

AMY (CONT'D)

No, he wasn't in his right mind. He would never say that to me.

Response.

AMY (CONT'D)

I know.

Lily walks into the room and hops onto the couch with Amy. Amy rubs the back of her ears while she continues her conversation.

**FADE TO BLACK**

END