

JACK
I'm Jack Benko. I'm a dog judge, an
all-rounder. I'd love to help with
your canine project.

His hand is still out. Everyone is just openly watching now.

DARIA
Maxine.

MAXINE
What are your qualifications?

JACK
I've been Best in Show Judge at dozens
of shows, including Westminster, three
times.

Maxine is speechless. Her mouth falls open.

DARIA
Woah.

MAXINE
Great, well, we are considering
several applicants, so-

AJ
We are?

MAXINE
-so if you just. We. Will call you.

JACK
...ok

He turns to go.

Then he turns back. He pulls out a card.

JACK
Don't you need my number?

MAXINE
Right. Yes. Thank you so much.

She takes the card. Their hands touch. She hurriedly puts the
card and her hand in her pocket.

At the door Jack turns back and does a little salute to the
staring room. He leaves. Silence.

MAXINE
God, what a jerk, right?

Literally everyone stares at Maxine.

DARIA
No.

A chorus of people saying how he seems nice/is hot.

MAXINE
Ok, no. He's a jerk he said so
himself. Back to work, people!
Homozygosity! Anyone!

AJ
(bored)
The more inbred the dog, the more
similar the two X chromosomes are to
each other, the more similar the dose
for sequencing.

MAXINE
Does anyone have any idea where we
might find the most inbred dog, Susan?

Susan is immediately super anxious and teary under pressure.

SUSAN
Ummmm...

JONAH
(covering. very loudly)
UHMMMMMMMMMM...

DION
Dude.

MAXINE
Jonah?

JONAH
Raffle?

MAXINE
Is this a school spaghetti dinner?

AJ
A dog show.

MAXINE

That's why you're my favorite.

AJ puts his feet up on a table rather smugly, causing the roll-y chair he's sitting in to roll back and he almost falls. He rights himself.

Maxine smiles like she just won the lottery.

MAXINE

And guess who just became a member of the committee that approves animal sampling protocols.

SUSAN

You?

Maxine does an excited point-y hand gesture at Susan.

MAXINE

Ding Ding Ding!

AJ

We're going to need a lot of swabs.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

--AJ fills a plastic bin with tons of cotton swabs, small plastic bags, tape measures, dozens of pens, sharpies.

--Daria's hands roll up a large banner.

--Maxine tosses in the box a sack of dog treats.

--AJ straightens his tie.

--Daria straightens her tie.

--Maxine straightens Genome's tie.

--Maxine straightens her ponytail.

--They all simultaneously clip on plastic name tags.

MAXINE

Let's go.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. SEATTLE DOG SHOW - DAY

A huge convention center with a sign over the door: "2002 Seattle Kennel Club Dog Show."

EXPENSIVELY DRESSED PEOPLE walk in with expensive dogs.

INT. DOG SHOW - DAY

A madly fluffy OLD ENGLISH SHEEPDOG with fur so huge and round you can't see his eyes pants a big happy dog face with his tongue lolling out.

The Sheepdog's HANDLER fluffs his fur with a dainty comb. They stand in a line of other fluffy SHEEPDOGS accompanied by their HANDLERS in flamboyant trainer formal-wear.

At the edges of the arena is a crowd of handlers and ENTHUSIASTS, CUTE DOGS on leashes milling about, all of whom are immaculately brushed and styled.

Maxine, AJ, and Daria stand by their booth, which has a banner that says "Canine Genomics: Support Science. Donate Spit." It has a logo from Maxine's lab on it, as well as the Cancer Research Center logo.

They are surrounded by other booths. To one side: doggie manicures. Further down: gourmet dog treats.

They look out at the crowd. Maxine and AJ grin manically.

Genome stands next to the table in her tie, looking out excitedly at all the cute pooches. She wags.

Maxine looks over at the booth next to them. There is a long line of HANDLERS with their MALE DOGS, waiting. One Great Dane has exceptionally large balls.

The booth's sign reads: "SIREN ON ICE."

MAXINE

Looks like we have some stiff competition.

Daria and AJ look over.

DARIA

Is that...

MAXINE

Doggy sperm bank.

AJ

Noooooo.

SIBYLL (O.S.)

Ooooh, yes.

SIBYLL, in wild yet flattering show gear, approaches the table with two well-behaved AFGHAN HOUNDS on a double leash.

SIBYLL

Freezing canine jizz is common practice in the industry.

A flourescent light is behind her head, creating an ugly yet charming halo effect. Daria looks over, and does a double take. She stares at SIBYLL.

SIBYLL

I've been using frozen sperm since 1997. If you want five-time best-in-show semen and you want it at exactly the moment a bitch is in heat, you need to be prepared.

MAXINE

Sibyll!

SIBYLL

Maxine!

Maxine and SIBYLL hug. Daria stares at SIBYLL some more. SIBYLL stares back a little. AJ leaps toward the two dogs and pets them aggressively.

SIBYLL

Don't muss them. We show in an hour.

He pets them very very gently. They stand very still.

SIBYLL

Better.

(to Maxine)

Have you seen Jack? He's here somewhere.

MAXINE

Jack?

SIBYLL

Didn't he come by your office? Canine expert? Boyish yet virile?

Maxine rolls her eyes.

DARIA
Maxine didn't like him.

SIBYLL
Are you kidding?! I have never met any
dog or human who disliked Jack.

DARIA
He thought Maxine would be Max.

SIBYLL
I see how it is.

Sibyll and Daria exchange knowing Maxine-related glances.

MAXINE
Sibyll. Daria.

Daria steps very close to Sibyll.

DARIA
Hi.

Sibyll and Daria do some serious eye contact.

SIBYLL
Hello.
(to Maxine)
I insist you play nice with Jack. I
won't have him holding your strange
dislike of attractive men against my
hounds.

AJ lays on the ground under the Afghan Hounds and gently pets
their bellies.

MAXINE
I don't dislike attractive men! I
dislike Jack's smug face specifically.

SIBYLL
Darling. He's a highly regarded
expert. Use him. I must go brush.

Sibyll pecks Maxine on the cheek and takes a few steps. The
Afghan Hounds follow. Daria darts forward.

DARIA
Maybe you can show me around.

SIBYLL
 Maybe I can.

Eye contact! Sibyll and Daria start to walk off together.

MAXINE
 Daria!

Daria startles back into professional mode.

MAXINE
 Bring some consent forms.

DARIA
 Right.

Daria takes a stack of forms and a bag of swabs. As they walk away, AJ reaches out a hand after the hounds, longingly.

Then he is literally walked upon by a giant, fluffy, two-hundred pound BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG.

AJ
 Hi, you!!

He pets the dog while its owner, a stuffy BALD MAN in a suit, looks on, rather bemused.

AJ
 (From under the dog)
 Would you consider donating some dog spit and/or blood to science, sir?

BALD MAN
 ...Dog spit?

INT. DOG SHOW BOOTH - LATER

AJ stands near the jizz line and thumbs up back at Maxine, who is measuring a SCOTTISH TERRIER. He clutches a clipboard and approaches a TALL MAN in the dog jizz line.

AJ
 Excuse me! We're geneticists sequencing a complete dog genome for the first time. Would you be interested in donating a few minutes and a spit sample to help research both canine and human genetics?

TALL MAN
 (patting his GREYHOUND)
 After we show. Don't wanna throw her
 off her gait!

AJ
 We're at that booth right over there!

Maxine smiles aggressively at every person passing the booth.

MAXINE
 DNA?! ANYBODY?

A STERN WOMAN in a blazer hurries up to Maxine's booth.

MAXINE
 Good afternoon!

Stern Woman drops a tupperware of white goo on the table.

STERN WOMAN
 Sperm?

MAXINE
 Ah! Over there!

She points at the other line.

STERN WOMAN
 Are you sure you can't take it?

MAXINE
 We only take blood and spit.

STERN WOMAN
 Oh, fine!

Stern Woman takes her sperm and strides off in a huff.

INT. DOG SHOW - SIBYLL'S STALL - DAY

SIBYLL massages the ears of a fluffy SAMOYED dog. Daria
 measures the dog.

SIBYLL
 We look at the shape, length, and
 position of the ears...Sasha here has
 ideal ear position, though the length
 is a little short.

DARIA

I see.

Daria makes a note.

SIBYLL

She makes up for it with her height.

Daria measures Sasha from toe to shoulder.

DARIA

Twenty-three inches at the withers.
Noble.

SIBYLL

She also has very muscular haunches.

SIBYLL massages Sasha's upper butt-back fur which is very fluffy. Daria reaches out to pet Sasha's puppy butt also. Their hands touch. They look at each other.

SIBYLL

Feel that?

DARIA

I do.

Eye contact. Sexual tension everywhere. They pet the dog.

INT. DOG SHOW BOOTH - DAY

AJ stands out front of the table, doing an announcer voice. A line of HANDLERS with their DOGS has formed at the booth.

AJ

Step right up, folks, and get the
chance for YOUR DOG to be THE FIRST
DOG to ever have a completely
sequenced genetic code!

Maxine happily takes a consent form from the owner of a CHIHUAHUA, and places it in a growing pile of them. A bagged spit swab joins a large box of other swabs.

AJ

Your DOG could be a genetic celebrity!
Not only will you be on the cover of
DOG FANCY maybe. You MIGHT be on the
cover of SCIENCE, too!

Maxine looks up from the CANE CORSO she is measuring.

MAXINE
You can't promise that!

AJ
I said "maybe"!

Just then, Jack passes by, super dashing in a suit complete with pocket square.

He shakes hands with a HANDLER and scratches her PEKINGESE on the ears.

AJ
Hey, it's the expert!

AJ excitedly approaches Jack, who is now shaking hands with ANOTHER HANDLER in a hot pink suit.

AJ
It's you!

JACK
(no idea who AJ is)
Uh, hi.

Jack notices Maxine, who acts like she was not looking.

AJ
I'm-the genetics thing? You're-

JACK
Excuse me.

Jack walks a few steps toward Maxine, but he's intercepted by a PLUMP BREEDER with an AFFENPINSCHER.

PLUMP BREEDER
Jack!

Jack shakes the Plump Breeder's hand and pets the dog.

JACK
Reg! Congrats on Bony Princess! It must be record time she made champion.

Jack gives Plump Breeder an affable pat on the back and walks a few more steps toward Maxine.

Maxine attentively measures an AKITA.

Jack approaches the table.

JACK
Doctor Harper.

Maxine acts startled.

MAXINE
Oh! Mr. Benko.

JACK
Call me Jack.

Maxine hands the AKITA a treat.

MAXINE
(to the AKITA'S HANDLER)
Thanks so much!

The Akita and her Handler walk away from the table.

JACK
'Are you stalking me?'

MAXINE
No!

JACK
I'm kidding. Because...you had said-

MAXINE
Right. Ha.

AJ edges up behind Jack and mouths things at Maxine, pointing at Jack and doing "thumbs up" gestures.

JACK
Have you had an opportunity to interview any other candidates?

MAXINE
What? Oh! Um-

AJ
They were all duds. Total losers.

JACK
I see! Well. I know we got off on the wrong foot, but-

An AUSTERE LADY BREEDER in a gray suit approaches, walking a shining gray AUSTRALIAN STUMPY TAIL CATTLE DOG in a glittering silver harness.

AUSTERE LADY BREEDER
 Jack Benko, just the man I want to
 see!

Jack turns.

JACK
 Amelia!

AUSTERE LADY BREEDER
 Jack. A word.

JACK
 Of course.

They step a few feet away, and the Lady Breeder speaks in
 hushed tones. Jack listens attentively.

AJ edges up to Maxine.

AJ
 I think he's great. He's great, right?

MAXINE
 No. Maybe? I don't know.

AJ
 Look at him.

As Jack speaks to Lady Breeder, another breeder walks by and
 gives Jack a deferential nod. Jack nods back, while still
 giving Lady Breeder his full attention.

AJ
 He's like a dog celebrity.

Maxine straightens her ponytail.

AUSTERE LADY BREEDER
 (raising her voice slightly)
 The whole health committee is out of
 their minds!

JACK
 You know that's an issue for the
 Australian Stumpy Tail Breed Club. I
 can't get in the middle.

AUSTERE LADY BREEDER
 (sighs)
 Of course you're right.

AJ turns to Maxine and raises an eyebrow.

MAXINE

OK! He's great and I hate it.

AJ grins.

Jack pats Lady Breeder's arm and turns back toward Maxine.

MAXINE

Mr. Benko, we would love you-love. to have you...on the team.

AJ barely suppresses a laugh.

MAXINE

AJ will send you the paperwork.

Jack smiles and shakes her hand vigorously.

JACK

Wonderful! This is going to be fun!

Jack walks away toward another clump of BREEDERS. He lifts a hand in greeting as several smiling faces turn toward him.

AJ grins at Maxine.

MAXINE

Don't start.

Daria and Sibyll approach, carrying a small stack of consent forms and bags of spit samples.

DARIA

Was that Jack?

AJ does a thumbs up at Daria which Maxine ignores. Maxine riffles through the pile of consent forms.

MAXINE

Afghan Hound, Afghan Hound, Samoyed, Afghan Hound, Samoyed-did you only get samples from one breeder?

DARIA

No! Why would you think that?

SIBYLL

I introduced Daria to all the Afghan Hound breeders I know.

MAXINE
 (Looking at the forms)
 So....you, you, you, you...

Maxine looks from Sibyll to Daria.

Daria grabs Maxine's arm and drags her back to the booth.

DARIA
 Lots to do! Thanks for your totally
 professional help, Sibyll!

SIBYLL
 Any time. I mean. ANY. TIME.

AJ and Maxine look at Daria.

AJ
 So....ANY time, huh?

DARIA
 Wow, you got a lot of samples!

Maxine hold up her box of spit samples.

MAXINE
 We did, right!?

EXT. MURIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

A MAILMAN stuffs magazines into a mailbox shaped like a house. On the top of the stack: Dog fancy magazine, with a picture of a be-ribboned poodle, and in big letters: "MAP YOUR CANINE'S GENOME (maybe)".

Muffled barking from three crazy-eyed FRENCH BULLDOGS in the window of the house, which looks exactly like the mailbox.

MURIEL shuffles out in a bathrobe and curlers and waves to the mailman.

Muriel pages through DOG FANCY as she walks back to her door, and finds a full-page ad: "YOUR DOG could be THE FIRST DOG to be Genetically Sequenced! Write or email for a sample kit!"

Muriel looks up excitedly at her FRENCHIES in the window.

MURIEL
 Agnes! Look at this!

INT. MAXINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Maxine sits in her office, door closed. She presses PLAY on a large square voicemail box.

BEEP!

IRENE'S VOICE

Heeey, honey, it's your mom! Did you get my postcard?

Maxine frowns. She snatches the framed picture of Bobo off the bookshelf and fiddles with the hinged stand on the back.

IRENE'S VOICE

I was thinking we should make some holiday plans-maybe a cruise? You need to take a break once a decade or so, right? Call me back!

Maxine's fingers smash the "delete" button on the box.

She takes a deep breath, puts the frame back on the shelf, pastes a huge smile on her face, and bursts out into the lab.

INT. MAXINE'S LAB - DAY

Piles of spit samples litter every surface of the lab. Open bubble-mailers fill boxes and bins. AJ hums as he organizes rows of plastic bags with spit inside, numbered, labeled, and stacked in standing freezers. Susan and Jonah help.

AJ

(to the tune of "Soak Up The Sun")
*Hmm, hmm..got a freezer of spit...la,
 la, la freezer of dog spit aaaand dog
 bloodd...hmmm*

Maxine bursts in.

MAXINE

What's happening?!

AJ

Citizen science! Little old ladies got an AOL just to email us! We've gotten seventy-five emails and sixteen letters from people asking us to map THEIR dog's genome.

Genome runs over to her dog bed but it's covered in bubble mailers. She lays uncomfortably on top of them.