

BLACK DOG

'Gouzhen'

26th
Year!

Spring
Season
2025

Release: 2024
Cert (UK): 12A
Country: China
Language: In Mandarin with English subtitles
Runtime: 1 hour 50 mins
Director: Guan Hu
Written by: Rui Ge, Guan Hu
Cinematography: Weizhe Gao
Cast: Eddie Peng, Chu Bu Hua Jie, Youwei Da



Reading the reviews of *'Black Dog'* it soon comes over that everyone enjoyed it, almost against their will. What looks like a post-apocalyptic, Mad Max setting, or maybe a Clint Eastwood loner western, is in fact set on the fringes of the Gobi Desert in China, the loner here is Lang – just released from long-term jail and returning to his hometown. But the town is being destroyed to make ready for the 2008 Beijing Olympics; the population is being relocated and the only job he can find is as a dogcatcher helping to round up the seemingly endless pack of feral dogs... One of these, the Black Dog of the

title, becomes Lang's buddy of course.

The film picked up the coveted Un Certain Regard award at Cannes Film Festival and manages to be a drama and a thriller whilst leaving enough space for dry humour, especially around the dogs. It even manages to fit in some sideswipes at the state of China today.

'Hu sprinkles in dreamlike visions of life in flux. Solar eclipses, venomous snakes on the loose and stray animals spilling out of the town's ramshackle zoo offer surrealist stop-offs for Black Dog's journey of rediscovery. The presence of a flirty, effervescent circus performer called Grape suggests romance. But among these arid landscapes and the increasingly deserted cityscape, eerily beautiful as they all are, love can't easily blossom. The town is an abandoned playground for dreams that never quite came true' – Phil de Semlyen, Time Out. And, as he says, 'You'd be barking to miss it'...

