

Charity

written by

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EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - DUSK

Cold light. Damp pavement. The end of something.

A MAN (30s-40s), tightly wound in a museum staff jacket, limps down the sidewalk. He walks like he's avoiding drawing attention to an injury. There's something self-conscious in it.

Ahead, on a stoop, a VAGRANT (any age), hollowed out but sharp-eyed, rises.

VAGRANT

Hey-hey man. Can you spare 5 dollars?

The Man keeps walking. Doesn't answer. The Vagrant follows beside him now, not aggressive—just there.

VAGRANT (CONT'D)

Look, I just need five bucks. That's all. For the bus.

The Man stops.

Looks at the Vagrant with a sharp and cold stare.

MAN

Five bucks.

He unzips his jacket. Beneath it: a rigid spinal brace.

MAN (CONT'D)

It's funny. You ever notice how five dollars is never just five dollars?

The Vagrant doesn't answer. Just watches.

MAN (CONT'D)

Five dollars is nothing. But it's also everything. Right?

The Man pulls out his wallet from his jacket pocket -- pulling out a bill from said wallet; Holds it up. Crisp. New.

MAN (CONT'D)

You're sure you need this?

VAGRANT

Yeah. Just for the bus, man. Please.

The Man doesn't hand it over. He holds it between two fingers, just out of reach.

MAN

You ever wake up and realize you
spent more than you had on
something that made you feel
nothing?

(beat)

A bottle of whiskey? A lap dance?
Maybe some drug you've never heard
of beforehand?

VAGRANT

I don't drink.

MAN

Right. Of course you don't.

The MAN rolls up his sleeve. A lattice of bruises and cuts.
Some old. Some not.

MAN (CONT'D)

You think I'm rich?

VAGRANT

No.

MAN

You see the brace right? You're not
illiterate are you? I work at a
fucking museum. -- But you need \$5
for the bus. Right?

The Vagrant shakes his head.

The Man extends the bill. The Vagrant reaches--
--he pulls it back.

MAN (CONT'D)

You're not gonna blow this, right?
Not on something stupid?

VAGRANT

No. Just the bus.

MAN

Good. Because this bill--
(holds it up)
--this bill's worth more than five
dollars. It's a misprint.
(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)
Collectors pay for that kind of
thing.

Beat.

MAN (CONT'D)
It's the last one I've got.

He holds it out again.

The Vagrant reaches slowly.

The Man places the bill in his hand.

MAN (CONT'D)
Don't spend it all in one place.

The Vagrant stands still. Looks down at the bill as the Man
walks away into the distance.

FADE TO BLACK.