

Grievances of the Poor:  
The Homeless

*"We all have it.  
And it's what we will get us through to the end.  
Until we achieve the dream."*

## SCENE 1: The Search

EXT: City sidewalk

Crowded city street. People wrapped up in clothing. It's wintertime and it's almost Christmas. Not much snow on the ground, but cold air lingers with the sun shining in the sky.

We see people walking in groups and alone, but the jovial atmosphere stays.

There's one person with a stiff limp walking against the current. He's easily visible due to the amount of people avoiding to go near him. A well dressed man who blatantly avoids him. A woman in yellow walks briskly past the limping man. We stay with him as he limps through the crowded sidewalk. This is Harold.

Harold (V.O= Voice Over)

"I didn't always have this limp. Got it overseas in the war trying to save a friend."

Harold speaks in a gruff and experienced voice. You feel the weight of the decisions and pain in his voice.

Harold (V.O)

"Unfortunately I couldn't save him and I was left injured. And now I can't even save myself."

Harold continues to limp down the street. He stops to rest by a building. He slumps in exhaustion and pulls out a small box of coins asking for donations from any passerby. He lies beside a glass building. A large glass tower.

Harold(V.O)

"They told me I was a hero. And that my country was grateful."

No one gives Harold money or any attention. They avoid him like he's contagious.

Harold(V.O)

"Gave me a pat on the back and pushed me off into the cold. I used to be a doctor before they sent me to the front lines, but I couldn't go back. The sounds of the tools and machines brought up terrors."

The same woman in yellow tosses a coin into his box when she exited the glass tower. Harold gives her a weak smile and nod. He is visibly exhausted. A type of tiredness you feel in your bones.

Harold(V.O)

"They didn't give me any help. Only medications until I developed an addiction. Soon I woke up on the street."

A kid walks up to Harold and give as him a coin. The kid smiles at Harold. A genuine smile. And walks back to her parents. Harold notices the sun dropping lower in the sky. He slowly stands on his wobbly leg

and limps further down the street.

Harold (V.O)

"I'm fortunate enough to be in a city where there's plenty of food. I'm always exhausted because the crap I find is carb-loaded, hardly any nourishment. I have to scrounge in the trash to find fruit or nourishment before the rats get to it."

## **SCENE 2: The Kitchen**

Harold arrives a soup kitchen. Other homeless people are there. It's warm inside and filled with apathetic people helping. Harold limps his way to the counter to pick up his soup.

Gladys, today's cook, is one of the few people happy to see Harold.

Gladys

"Here's your meal, Harold. How you holding up tonight?"

Harold

"A few people donated coins. Tried going to a job interview earlier today 10 blocks up town. When I got there, they threatened to call the police for begging."

Gladys (surprised)

"Didn't they see your resume?! It's one of the best I've seen"

Harold

"They didn't believe me."

Gladys

"Oh."

Both stood in silence. This isn't a unique case. Harold and Gladys have known people with similar outcomes when looking for unemployment.

Harold

"It's tough. How are the others fairing?"

Harold gestured to his companions at the table

Gladys

"Paul's doing well. He got a job as a guard for a museum, so he's pretty excited about that. Marissa has had a few run-ins with the law and..... what am I doing? I'll let them tell you."

Harold

"Thank you Gladys."

Gladys

"Thank YOU Harold."

Harold limps over to his friends.

Paul

"Harold! Glad you could make buddy! How's it going?"

Marissa

"Yeah, Gladys showed us your resume. I can't believe you don't have a job yet."

Harold

"Unfortunately, I didn't get the job."

Marissa

"Not even as an intern?"

Harold

"No."

Marissa

"Aw damn Harold. That's rough."

Paul

"Is there anything we can do?"

Harold

"No."

### **SCENE 3: Reconciliation**

Winter has come. Snow drifts fill the streets. Children play outside on their day off of school. People trudge through the snow going home or to work. Harold is no where to be seen. We find him curled up in a ball and wrapped in whatever clothing and materials he could find to keep warm. He's curled up against the side of the building.

Harold (V.O)

"I never liked the winter. Ever year I wonder if I'm going to survive. They get worse each time."

Harold sees the children playing outside, enjoying the snow. Their parents watch from inside the house. They're playing in the park beside Harold's building. A ball lands near Harold and a child comes to get the ball. He stays curled up for warmth.

The child gets the ball and smiles at Harold. Harold smiles back.

CUT TO:

Next we see Harold limping down the familiar sidewalk. He's going to the soup kitchen for warmth and food.

Harold (V.O)

"Many of the volunteers don't come days like these, so the kitchen is always crowded and understaffed. Too lazy to help the poor because they would be uncomfortable in this weather. Many of us just try to stay warm. Trying to stay alive. I try to listen in on weather reports to avoid the dangerous nights. The westerly winds from the river has killed

a few friends of mine. At least they died in their sleep."

Harold arrives at the empty kitchen. It's warm at least. Marissa and Paul are there at the benches. Harold goes towards them.

Paul

"In before the storm Harold?"

Harold

"Yeah, I'll be staying the night. I thought you had the night shift"

Paul (standing up)

"I do. Just about to head out."

Marissa

"I can't believe they're forcing you to go out in this cold."

Paul (to Marissa)

"I need the money. If I suffer a little cold to get a my own home, then that's what I'll do."

Paul (to Harold, pats him on the back)

"I'll see you later buddy."

Paul walks to the exit. Harold and Marisa stare at their friend. His footsteps echo in the empty room. The room anticipates his approach to the door. The storm rages outside banging on the doors to be let into the room. Paul opens the door, facing the wintry beast with unyielding bravery. He begins his journey into the storm.

Harold (V.O)

"I always wondered if I should've stopped my friend from leaving and if that would've changed things. But I've seen that look before. The gleam in his eyes. The insatiable desire for comfort and permanence. No one could stop Paul because we all understood the drive. We all have it. And it's what we will get us through to the end. Until we achieve the dream."

THE END