

Grievances of the Poor:
The Lower Class

*"It's like a disease.
And I intend to cure myself of it.
To 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 in the same direction as the well dressed man. We follow the woman in yellow. This is Charlotte.

Charlotte (V.O)

"My first call back in weeks. This could be the break I'm looking for. If I land this gig, it could snowball into something larger."

Charlotte speaks gleefully and hopefully. She's dressed well for the interview as she runs through the crowd. In her voice, there is a certain doubt.

Charlotte (V.O)

"Of course, I've had 8 auditions before and none worked. So why should this one?"

She looks at her watch.

Charlotte (V.O)

"If everything runs on time, that should give me enough time to head downtown to Joe Allen's before my shift starts."

She briskly walks to her interview in a large glass building filled with corporate culture and stale coffee. Charlotte walks into the glass tower and approaches the counter.

Charlotte

"Hi, I'm here for an audition for the Rienbach movie.

Clerk

"Sure. Follow me and I'll take you to the waiting room."

Charlotte follows the clerk to an empty waiting. Shouting can be heard in the distance behind the closed office doors. It's a heated conversation. The waiting room is bland room with uncomfortable chairs.

Clerk

"I'll let her know that you're here."

The clerk walked to the closed doors. He opened the doors. The shouting can clearly be heard. She's shouting at a person on the phone. He

gestures 'there's someone here'. She nods.

Clerk waves towards Charlotte asking her to walk into the office. She walks to the clerk. Before she walks through the doorway, the clerk stops here. The screaming woman stops for a minute and scans Charlotte up and down. She nods no.

The clerk gestures for Charlotte to leave.

Charlotte exits the glass building. A homeless man sits outside with a box for donations. She is about to leave, but stops. Rummaging through her purse, she tosses a coin to the homeless man. He gives her a weak smile.

Charlotte (quietly to self)

"I know what it's like. I hope things get better for you."

Charlotte walks down the street to her job.

Charlotte (to self, determination)

"One failure to the next. Forward."

SCENE 2: The Kitchen

Charlotte is at Joe Allen's restaurant. The restaurant is hectic. It's almost Christmas. Friends and family dining together. George Gershwin's 'The Man I love' plays in the background of the afternoon chatter. Charlotte tied her hair in a ponytail and walks up to a man and a woman at a table.

Charlotte

"Anything I can get to get you started?"

Customer (to Charlotte)

"Waitress! You got my drink wrong!"

A customer yells from across the room.

The couple sees the Charlotte being stressed out from the rude customer.

Man

"It's ok."

Woman

"We'll look at the menu for now. Thank you."

Charlotte hands the couple their menus.

Charlotte

"Thank you. I'll be back when you're ready to order."

Charlotte quickly walks over to the yelling customer.

Charlotte

"I'm sorry sir. I'll get you your drink again. It's on the house. It was the Frappato right?"

Rude Customer
"No. It was the Mono Airen."

Charlotte
"I'm sorry sir. I'll get that for you now."

Charlotte turns around beginning to walk away.

Rude Customer (indignant)
"Try not to forget that during your 2 ft walk."

Before Charlotte walks away, another waiter comes. His name is Daniel.

Daniel
"I'm sorry sir. If you have any suggestions for us to improve our service, please write a suggestion on the notepad on the table. If you shout again like that, I'm going to have to ask you to leave."

Rude Customer
"No. I'm sorry."

Daniel
"Apologize to her"

Daniel pointed to Charlotte.

Rude Customer
"I'm sorry for my outrage. I had a rough day."

Charlotte nods. Accepting his apology.
Charlotte and Daniel walk away from the table. They could hear the table burst in conversation. The customer put his head in his hands in shame.

Charlotte (to Daniel)
"thanks. I don't think I could've done that without getting fired."

Daniel
"Don't mention it."

The snow picks up outside.

Daniel
"It's getting ugly outside. How is it at home? Were you able to get the acting gig?"

Charlotte is getting the drink.

Charlotte
"No. Got one look from her and rejected."

Daniel

"That's rough. If there's anything I can do, let me know."

Charlotte

"Thank you."

Charlotte goes to the rude customer's table and hands him his drink.

Charlotte

"Here's your drink sir. Sorry for the mixup."

Rude Customer (calmer)

"No. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have reacted like that. I'm sure you already have it tough as it is."

Charlotte stands in silence. His apology was sincere.

Rude Customer

"Thank YOU for the service."

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. Charlotte is watching over her son, Thomas, play on the playground. Everyone is wrapped up warmly.

Thomas is playing catch with his friends. The ball is thrown to Thomas and he misses the ball.

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.

Thomas gets the ball and notices the homeless man.

Thomas smiles at the man. The man smiles back though shivering. Thomas comes back to Charlotte.

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

CUT TO: Charlotte and Thomas are walking home in the winter wind. Thomas looks up to his mother.

Thomas

"Mommy why was that man sitting outside in the cold?"

Charlotte

"Some people are stuck in tough situations. Just like us."

Thomas

"Why? Is he outside but we have a home?"

Charlotte & Thomas arrive at their broken down apartment building. Their apartment is small with paint peeling from the walls. Charlotte collapses on the couch. Thomas persists.

Thomas
"Why doesn't he have a home?"

Charlotte is exhausted and doesn't reply.

Thomas
"Mom. Why doesn't he?"

Thomas continues to pester his mom.

Charlotte (annoyed)
"Because he doesn't deserve one."

Thomas
"What does that mean?"

Charlotte
"Some people are born poor."

Thomas walked away. Grappling with his mother's answer. Charlotte stays on the couch. Exhausted from her day. Her eyes are closed. Trapped in thought. A cold breeze goes through her apartment. The Heater isn't working in this broken room.

Charlotte (V.O)
"Of course I didn't mean it. But sometimes I wonder if I did mean some of it. My parents were poor. And their parents before them. And their parents before them. It's like a disease passed down.'

Charlotte opens her eyes and looks for Thomas. She sees him playing with his toys in the corner of the room. He's building a mini city with blocks, his shoe as a car, and coats as tunnels.

Charlotte (V.O)
"And I intend to cure myself of this disease. That's what will get me through this. To achieve the dream."

THE END