

Admit One
By
Mike Shelton

Copyright 2009

shelton.mike@gmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

A cool, crisp day, with a subtle wind blowing through the trees. The sky is a little gray, but far from gloomy, as the sun peeks ever so slightly through the clouds.

At a bench along a concrete path sits JILL, an early thirties woman, dressed in business attire.

She takes the occasional bite from a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, enjoying the lunchtime tranquility around her.

As she surveys the scene, she spots VICTOR, a late thirties man with long scraggly hair, a full on beard, and grimy clothes, coming toward her.

Jill pays no mind after the initial glance, going back to the PB&J and serenity.

She watches Victor take a seat at the opposite end of the bench, through the corner of her eye. She's uncomfortable.

Jill turns her head slightly for a better look, and sees Victor looking right at her.

Victor nods.

VICTOR

Hey.

Jill forces a small, insincere smile.

JILL

Hello.

VICTOR

What have you got there?

JILL

A sandwich.

VICTOR

I know it's a sandwich. What kind?

JILL

Peanut butter and jelly.

VICTOR

Not bad.

An uncomfortable silence.

VICTOR
So, what are you doing in the park?

JILL
I'm eating my lunch.

Victor raises a curious, yet creepy eyebrow.

VICTOR
All alone?

Jill shifts.

JILL
Uh...yeah?

VICTOR
Good.

Victor smiles deviously as he reaches into his jacket pocket, slowly.

Jill watches his movement, eyes wide, scared. Not sure what's happening.

The tension builds as she shifts her glance between his sinister smile and his hand creeping into his jacket.

With a sudden yank and a gasp from Jill, Victor gets what he wants. A newspaper.

He calmly unfolds it, crosses his legs, and starts reading.

Jill breathes a sigh of relief. and looks down at her hand.

The stress was so much she crushed the PB&J between her fingers.

She tosses the sandwich in the trash and cleans her hand with a napkin.

Victor reaches into his jacket, causing Jill momentarily alarm. No harm here either, just a worn flask.

He pops it open, takes a sip, and offers it to Jill.

VICTOR
Wanna nip?

JILL
No thanks. Bit early for me.

VICTOR
It's like they say. It's five
o'clock somewhere.

Victor smiles and offers it to her again.

JILL
I'll pass just the same.

VICTOR
Suit yourself.

They sit in silence eating, drinking, and looking straight ahead. Victor leans over a little bit.

VICTOR
Thanks for not running away.

JILL
Thanks for not killing me.

VICTOR
Excuse me?

Jill catches her slip.

JILL
Huh? Oh, nothing. What makes you
think I'd run away?

VICTOR
Everybody does. Either as soon as
they see me coming, or not long
after I sit down.

JILL
You haven't given me a reason to
leave.

VICTOR
And I don't intend to. It's just
the stigma, you know? Dirty on the
outside must mean dirty on the
inside too.

JILL
That's silly.

VICTOR
It is, but that doesn't keep it
from happening to me every
day. Well, at least till today.

Victor smiles.

JILL
I understand. I get the same thing
myself. Well, not exactly the
same, but close enough.

Victor turns toward her, intrigued.

VICTOR
How so?

JILL
I work not far from here,
right? Office setting, and I have
to dress like this on a daily
basis...

VICTOR
I'm with ya.

JILL
...and sometimes I get stuck
working late, and I'll stop off for
a drink after work. You know,
happy hour, singles
night. Something like that.

VICTOR
Sure.

JILL
Well, since I come straight from
work usually, I'm normally dressed
like this. And I can't help but
think people are avoiding me
because of it.

Victor gives her a once over.

VICTOR
What's wrong with what you're
wearing?

JILL
Nothing, as far as I can tell, but
I get the feeling that people see
me as a snob, like I'm too good for
them or something, so I don't talk
to too many people.

VICTOR
I can see that being a problem, but
look at the bright side. At least
you can get into those

VICTOR
places. Heck, I'm lucky if I can
milk a cup of coffee in some dive
restaurant for a couple hours a
day.

JILL
Yeah, I guess I don't have it all
that bad when you think about it.

VICTOR
Well, you do and you don't. Like I
said, you can get into those
places, but you don't meet
anybody. I can't get into those
places, and I meet all kinds of
people out on the street. It's all
a trade off.

Jill nods, taking in his statement.

JILL
That's pretty profound.

VICTOR
I got a way of keeping things
simple.

JILL
Can I ask you something?

VICTOR
Lemme guess. How'd I end up like
this?

JILL
Yeah, I mean you seem like a pretty
smart man. I'm sure you must have
had something at some point.

VICTOR
Sure I did. I was an actor.

JILL
Really? An actor?

VICTOR
Don't believe me?

JILL
No, it's not that. You just
don't...look like an actor.

VICTOR
Well, of course not. Now, I look
like a bum. I'm talking about
before. Here, I'll show you.

Victor stands.

JILL
You don't have to do that.

VICTOR
I want to. Wanna see if I still
got it.

Victor shuts his eyes, concentrating for a moment.

Jill watches him, a little weirded out and looking around to
see if anyone else is in the area.

Victor opens his eyes, fury present in them.

VICTOR
You think I'm dirt, don't
you? That I can't possibly be any
kind of respectable man?

Jill looks around even more now.

JILL
Well, I...I--

VICTOR
Well you listen to me, cause I am a
respectable man. I'm respectable
and your refuse. You hear
me? Refuse. Garbage! And all
your fancy clothes and lunchtimes
in the park aren't going to change
that!

Victor stares her down as she rushes to gather her things.

JILL
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend
you. We were just talking and I
thought I'd ask. I--

Victor laughs at her. Jill freezes.

JILL
What's so funny?

VICTOR
Guess I still got it.

Victor sits back down, still smiling brightly.

JILL
That...that was acting?

VICTOR
Sure. You didn't think I was
really mad at you, did you?

JILL
A little yeah.

Victor mocks her putting her sandwich away.

VICTOR
I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Another hearty laugh. Jill joins in.

JILL
Okay, you got me.

VICTOR
That's gonna give me a good laugh
for months.

JILL
So, you obviously know how to
act. What happened?

Victor flashes his flask.

VICTOR
Fell into a bottle and never came
up for air.

JILL
That bad?

VICTOR
Not at first, but when you start
missing rehearsals and showing up
drunk to auditions, directors kinda
frown down on that.

JILL
I'm sorry.

VICTOR

Hell, it's not your fault. And besides, it's not all that bad anyway. I do what I want, when I want. I don't answer to nobody. There's a whole lotta peace to be had in that.

JILL

You know, I never really thought about it like that.

VICTOR

Of course not. No sense in looking at the upside of something you've never had to experience. When you end up where I'm at after living on other people's schedules, you see things differently.

JILL

True.

VICTOR

I got a lot of time to think out here, and those thoughts are always my own. Not trying to figure out some way to save some stranger a few bucks on the price of light bulbs, or when I have to be back from my lunch break.

This hits Jill, and she looks at her watch.

JILL

Oh, I totally lost track of time.

VICTOR

I didn't. That big clock on the bank across the street won't let me, and I noticed it's almost one.

They share a smile.

JILL

Thanks.

VICTOR

Don't mention it.

Jill gathers her things and gets up.

JILL
Well, I guess I'll be seeing you
around, uh...

VICTOR
It's Victor, and not if I see you
first.

Victor chuckles.

JILL
Nice to meet you, Victor. I'm
Jill.

VICTOR
Well, Jill, it was really nice
meeting you too.

Jill reaches into her purse and takes out a few dollar
bills. She holds them out to Victor.

JILL
It's not much, but I'd like for you
to have it.

Victor waves a disregarding hand.

VICTOR
Please, put your money away. I
don't need it.

JILL
It's okay, really. I insist.

VICTOR
Put it away, Jill. I'll be doing
the giving here.

JILL
You?

VICTOR
Sure.

Victor reaches into his jacket, taking out two slips of
paper that he hands to Jill. Tickets.

Victor gets up from the bench.

JILL
What is this?

VICTOR
It's a new play down at the Audubon
Theater.

JILL
How'd you get these?

VICTOR
Let's just say I'm friends with the
lead actor.

Victor takes a step to walk away, but Jill stops him.

JILL
What's it about?

VICTOR
It's about an actor who becomes
homeless after falling into a
bottle and never coming up for air.

Jill puts two and two together. She's speechless, pointing
back and forth between the tickets and Victor.

VICTOR
Supposed to be top notch
stuff. The lead actor really gets
into his roles. Hope you can make
it.

Victor moves again, getting a few steps before Jill calls
out to him.

JILL
You! It's you!

Victor turns, hands out at his sides, and a sly grin on his
face. He's busted, but happy about it.

JILL
But, why all the whole act? Why go
through all the trouble of
convincing me you're homeless when
you're not?

VICTOR
You'd be surprised how quickly you
get to know somebody when you're
dressed like this. Will I see you
tonight?

JILL
You tell me. You're the one that
knows me so well.

Jill smiles.

VICTOR
I'll see ya.

JILL
Count on it.

Victor smiles and heads off, leaving Jill to marvel over the
tickets.

JILL
Unbelievable.

FADE OUT.

THE END