
SUNSET
PHENOMENA

Sunset Phenomena

A grove of Eucalyptus trees separates a bay from the nearby roadway. The homeless sometimes congregate there along with people who park in the lot alongside to ride their bicycles or jog on pathway. A well groomed man in a tailored blue short sleeve shirt, shorts and sneakers sits on a bench near the pathway. A homeless man sits on another bench across the trail, about 10 feet away. It is near sunset. The lighting between the trees is alluring and magical and the sun sinking fast. The sound of gulls can be heard in distance.

Man in Blue Shirt:

Did you see the seals today?

Man in Torn Shirt:

You mean, the sea lions.

Man in Blue Shirt:

Whatever. They were overwhelming.

Man in Torn Shirt:

They're teaching their young to fight.

Man in Blue Shirt:

Really? I thought they were all mating.

Man in Torn Shirt:

No, they swim down to Santa Barbara to do their fuckin'.

Man in Blue Shirt:

Is that right.

Man in torn shirt:

(*Nods)* So, what are you doing here? I mean, amongst the dead.

Man in Blue Shirt:

I always admired these trees and thought I'd get some fresh air. Forest bath, they call it.

Man in Torn Shirt:

Eucalyptus is supposed to be healing.

Man in Blue Shirt:

We could all use some. Healing.

Man in Torn Shirt:

Yep. Yep. (*short pause)...* So, why are ya here, really?

Man in Blue Shirt:

Excuse me?

Man in Torn Shirt:

You from Parks and Rec, the County, Navy, Veteran's Hospital? Just because I'm a Vietnam Vet, doesn't mean I need to be sheltered. You hear?

Man in Blue Shirt:

I told you I'm forest bathing right now. And trying to be polite.

Man in Torn Shirt:

Are ya taking a count of us vagrants here on public land or just offering more clothes, veggies, a bunk for the night. I'm not into giving head if that's what you're up for.

Man in Blue Shirt:

Oh goodness. I'm not any of those and especially not the last one you described. I'm here to get some fresh air, smell these magnificent trees and wonder what my next step is, that is, make a plan.

Man in Torn Shirt:

Plan? For what?

Man in Blue Shirt:

Well, my wife kicked me out of the house this morning. She has the keys to our car, made new ones for the house, stopped all the credit cards and reported fraud to our bank. All this while I went to get a cup of coffee.

Man in Torn Shirt:

Whoa. That sucks. Did you ever get your coffee?

Man in Blue Shirt:

I didn't see it coming.

Man in Torn Shirt:

First thing, call a locksmith, get into your house, and claim it. Then call the police and say your car was stolen

Man in Blue Shirt:

We co-own the car. And I can't call a locksmith.

Man in Torn Shirt:

Why the hell not?

Man in Blue Shirt:

You need to prepay these guys.

Man in torn shirt:

Let me see what I have on me. Just got a load of cans off my back. (*He looks inside his back pockets and takes out a wad of dollar bills).*

Man in Blue Shirt:

I could never. I mean...

Man in Torn Shirt:

But I'd like to help you. I know you don't want to camp out here. I knew you were in trouble. Makin' conversation, smellin' the trees, talkin' to me. Smellin' me, talkin' to the trees.

Man in Blue Shirt:

(*Angrily annoyed)* You knew *I* was in trouble?

Man in Torn Shirt:

Yeah, I did.

Man in Blue Shirt:

I'm going to take a walk. Thanks but no thanks. (*He starts walking away)*

Man in Torn Shirt:

Here, sir.

(The Man in Torn Shirt starts stuffing his dollar bills in the back pockets of the Man in Blue Shirt)

Man in Blue Shirt:

I said no, thank you.

(The Man in Torn Shirt doesn't listen to him and keeps stuffing the other's pockets. This time, his front pockets)

Man in Torn Shirt:

Just take it!

Man in Blue Shirt:

(He grabs the Man in Torn Shirt's hands forcefully, the dollar bills spread in the air and the sound

of crows screech in background up in the trees)

I said keep your money. Filthy dollar bills.

(He shoves the man away. The Man in Torn Shirt loses his balance, falls to the ground, hits his head on pavement, and lays stilll. The dollar bills cover part of his chest, as blood trickles down the side of his head onto the concrete).

Get up you goddamn fool. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to---

(*He looks around, sees no one on pathway and runs quickly into the woods).*

AS CROWS CHIRP WEEPILY IN BACKGROUND, LIGHTS FADE QUICKLY FROM ORANGE TO PURPLE TO BLACK. THE SOUND OF A TRUMPET SOFTLY PLAYS 'TAPS' FROM THE NEARBY NAVAL ACADEMY.

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