

Change

Alec 46

Josh 31

Midday, on a street - we see Alec sat on a cardboard box with a big heavy coat on. He looks around with sadness in his eyes; the sound of cars passing is heard. People pass by and don't acknowledge him.

Alec reaches for his can of change in front of him to survey its' contents - blocking the path in doing so. A woman passes and stops, her path is blocked; she waits as he retracts his arm clutching at the can. woman continues on her way.

Josh is in a suit, he walks rather anxiously to work, and in passing Alec he accidentally kicks the can of money, sending it everywhere. He stops.

Josh Oh shit, I'm sorry.

Josh kneels down to help pick up the loose change.

Alec Don't.

Josh No, let me help.

Josh picks up the spare change with Alec.

Alec You don't have to.

Josh It was my fault.

Josh frantically places the coins in the can.

Alec I said you don't have too! You're busy, just leave it!

Alec shoos Josh away with his hand.

Josh Look, I'm just trying to help you.

Alec I don't need your help.

Josh Fine.

As Josh walks away he hears the struggled breath and sniffing of Alec behind him. He checks his watch; he works out in his head if he has time. He turns. Approaches him and stands over the can, peering in.

Is that all you've got?

Alec What?

Josh The money, is this it?

Alec looks up at Josh with puzzled eyes.

Sorry, I didn't mean anything by it. I... just thought...you'd. (Sighs) Never mind.

Josh reaches into his pocket to bring out some change.

Alec Stop. I don't want your money.
Josh What? Of course you...
Alec No.
Josh You've got the can out, you need...
Alec Not from you.
Josh I don't understand I'm just trying to give you something.
Alec And are you giving it to me out of pity or kindness?
Josh I...its kindness, I'm helping you.
Alec Do you think I need help?
Josh Look buddy, I'm just trying to do the right thing.
Alec And who decided this was the right thing to do?

Josh looks perplexed

I'm not ungrateful for people's charity; people pass by me every day, some glance down, some give away money, the odd kid gives away food. But most just walk by, oblivious.

Josh Just take the money.
Alec And what am I supposed to spend this on?
Josh Food, water, I don't know?
Alec Something to get by, right?
Josh Look mate, I don't need a lecture, just take my money I'm running late.
Alec Don't let me keep you.
Josh What's your problem?
Alec *(Laughs)* That's rich.
Josh What is it you want from me?
Alec Take a guess.
Josh You want me to leave?
Alec No.
Josh You want me to stay and look after you?
Alec *(Sharply)* No! –I want to be able to take care of myself. I sit here and watch the world go by, and every single *ding* from that can is another voice shedding their problems. They feel better for it. And that's just a perk in their day. They think "I've done a good thing". I want to be a member of this world, not a spectator of it.
Josh So, what do you want?
Alec ...All I want is a change; I want access to a shower, a hot meal, a fucking old suit with a tie. *(Holds up a penny)* And this is what I get. Society's perception of 'change' - what is this good for? I don't want the fucking middle man, I want my life back.
Josh You have your life.
Alec *(Gestures around him)* You call this living?

Beat

Josh What can I do to help?

Alec This (*gestures to Josh and back to him*), a conversation, the acknowledgement that I exist, someone who can see me.
Josh We can all see you.
Alec Yes, you can.

They both glance at one another and smile, Josh in understanding.

Josh I'm sorry about the can.
Alec Don't be, you were in a rush, to work?
Josh Yeah I've got this interview at...(*looks at watch*). One.
Alec Well you better get going if you want to make it.

Josh looks around, and back to Alec.

Josh Nah, fuck it
Alec What?
Josh Fuck it. (*Laughs*) Yeah, fuck it. It doesn't matter, it's not even for a job I even want, who the fuck wants to be in marketing for the rest of their life?
Alec Won't you get more money?
Josh I would. But I want change too. (*Smiles*) If I wanted that job I'd get money, I'd have my place, I'd have people higher than me and people lower than me. I'd have my place, and that's all they'd see of me.
Alec So what are you going to do?
Josh I don't know. Might just walk, get some lunch. You want something?
Alec I'm fine, thank you.
Josh Nice to meet you.
Alec Thank you for your time.

Josh turns away and walks in the direction he was originally going, he is now less anxious than before. Alec sits back against the wall, and smiles. A couple pass, laughing. A teenager listening to music passes. A woman passes and throws a coin into the can, the can clinks.

Alec staring out into the centre, as more people pass and throw money into the can. Clink, clink, clink. Blackout.

- End -