

Bottom

Written by

Owen Kerner

Phone: 917.821.7607

email: [owenkerner@gmail.com](mailto:owenkerner@gmail.com)

EXT. STREET - DAY

KEITH (45) sits outside a 7-Eleven holding a Big Gulp half full of loose change from passers-by. People walk by as if they can't see him.

KEITH  
Spare a buck?

Rolling his eyes and setting the cup down next to him, he brandishes a cardboard sign that reads: "HOMELESS AND HUNGRY"

Someone tosses a nickel in his cup.

FADE TO

EXT. ST. MARKS - DAY

Keith finishes taking a piss and zips his fly.

He hears a distant voice call his name -- "Keith" -- and looks around. No one. Must have been in his head.

He surveils the block and sees SIN (35) and BEAVER (65) sitting on a stoop fifty yards away.

A man shakes Sin's hand, discreetly passing him a twenty dollar bill in exchange for a small plastic bag.

FADE TO

INT. 7-ELEVEN - DAY

Keith is caught by the store CLERK (39) stealing a few candy bars and a beer.

CLERK  
Get the fuck outta here, out! I told  
you never come back here!

The clerk grabs a broom and jumps the counter, chasing Keith out.

Keith lifts a middle finger to the man's face and waves around the beer he stole to taunt him.

The clerk tries to slam the door in Keith's face but it is a slow-closing door.

Keith laughs obnoxiously but as he starts turning to walk away a large SKINHEAD bumps into him, shattering the beer

bottle on the pavement.

The clerk laughs aggressively.

FADE TO

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK - NIGHT

The distant voice calls again, putting a jarred expression on Keith's face. It keeps calling but is eventually drowned out by the sound of a saxophone.

Keith sits on a park bench next to the SAX MAN (53).

SAX MAN

How ya doin'?

KEITH

Please just keep playing.

SAX MAN

Pardon?

KEITH

C'mon man, don't give me a hard time just act like I'm not here.

SAX MAN

I don't take orders, bud. This music ain't for you.

KEITH

Then who's it for? There's no one here.

SAX MAN

There's plenty o' life around. There's me, the squirrels...the rats, the bugs, the germs...

A young couple, BENNY (16) and ROSA (16), stroll through the park. They take notice of Keith and Sax Man.

ROSA

What about them?

BENNY

I dunno babe.

ROSA

They definitely smoke.

BENNY

I know but they're grown ass adults,  
they're not gonna want our shit.

ROSA

So? Worst they'll do is say no.

BENNY

Eh... Alright fuck it, worth a shot.

The couple begin to approach the men.

Back to Keith and Sax Man.

SAX MAN (CONT.)

The trees... Uh... The pigeons...

KEITH

Yeah, yeah, I get it.

SAX MAN

The moon, the sun, I play for all the  
cosmos... And the nebulas. And ooh how  
'bout them?

Sax Man gestures towards the couple.

The couple halts an awkward five feet from the men.

BENNY

Sup.

Keith and Sax Man stare blankly at him.

BENNY (CONT.)

Either of you looking to buy?

SAX MAN

(Sarcastically)  
What're you, a cop?

KEITH

What're you sellin'?

BENNY

Got eighths for twenty-five.

KEITH

Of what?

BENNY

Pot.

KEITH

(Disappointed)

Just pot?

BENNY

Yeah.

SAX MAN

I got twenty, that cut it?

BENNY

Uh, alright... Sure.

SAX MAN

How 'bout fifteen?

Benny has the look on his face of a deer in headlights.

SAX MAN

I'm just bustin' ya balls kid, here  
take the twenty.

Sax Man hands Benny a crumpled twenty. Keith stares at the bill with insatiable hunger. Benny hands him an eighth.

BENNY

(Keith)

How 'bout you?

Keith shakes his head no and the couple takes off.

SAX MAN

Everyone has that one thing that gets  
'em through the day, keeps 'em alive  
to see tomorrow. That's why I play the  
saxophone. She's all I got.

Watching the couple saunter off, Keith hears the voice again. He is struck with an idea and jogs to catch up with them.

KEITH

Hey! Wait up!

The couple stop to turn around. Keith catches up.

BENNY

What's up?

KEITH  
Mind if I take a look at your stuff?

BENNY  
Sure.

Benny removes an eighth from his pocket and the three begin to walk again.

BENNY (CONT.)  
How much ya want?

KEITH  
(Stalling)  
Probably just... Probably just one of those, yeah.

BENNY  
Alright... You got the money?

Keith digs through his pockets, pretending to look for money.

KEITH  
Twenty, right?

BENNY  
Twenty-five.

KEITH  
Alright...

Keith discreetly pulls a syringe from his pocket.

KEITH (CONT.)  
This needle has H.I.V.

He flaunts the syringe in front of Benny's face.

BENNY  
JESUS CHRIST- ROSA, RUN!

They begin to run but Keith catches up to Benny and tackles him to the ground. Benny punches him in the face, throws him off and runs for his life, catching back up to Rosa.

As he sits up, Keith touches his hand to his cheek and notices his quarters have spilled all over the floor. He picks them up languidly and puts them back into his cup.

FADE TO

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

KEITH lies awake in bed. The distant voice calls his name -- "Keith" -- and he sits up abruptly. Glancing around the room full of sleeping men he shakes his head.

The only empty bed in the room is directly beside him, and a cockroach crawls along the mattress.

CUT TO

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Keith finds a half-smoked cigarette butt by a fire hydrant and lights it with a match.

SUIT (O.S)  
Help... Someone please...

Keith follows this voice into an alley where he sees a man in a SUIT (27) bleeding from his stomach.

SUIT  
Hey! Please help me man.

Keith silently crouches over the man.

SUIT (CONT.)  
Call an ambulance, please! Some  
fucking junky stabbed me!

Keith rifles through the man's pockets. Nothing. The man grabs onto his collar and Keith shakes him off. He hears a groaning from further down the alley and follows it.

Noticing ice on the ground, he finds a MAN (22) on his back bleeding from his head. Next to him is the Suit's wallet. Opening the wallet, Keith continues down through the alley to the other side of the street. Four twenty dollar bills. He tosses the empty wallet.

SUIT (O.S)  
Hey! Wait! Please!

Keith halts for a second. He finds a payphone and uses a quarter from his cup to call an ambulance. Then he continues walking.

The voice calls his name again as he paces downtown, occasionally peering back over his shoulder.

CUT TO

EXT. ST MARKS - NIGHT

Sin and Beaver sit on a stoop drinking 40's and chain smoking.

SIN

What are you talking about? Johnny's not dead, I sold him a tenner on Tuesday.

BEAVER

Died Tuesday night. You think it was your stuff that-

SIN

I don't know.

(Beat)

Hell no! Johnny copped from everyone. Besides that's the gamble with H. Ya don't stare down the barrel of a loaded gun if ya don't wanna bite the bullet. Junkies don't know how to use the fuckin' product and BOOM they bite the dust. It's sad honestly.

Keith approaches them.

SIN

Oh, look who it is, the night stalker! Back for more?

KEITH

Yeah, yeah.

SIN

How much ya got?

Keith rummages through his bag for the Big Gulp and tears the lid off it.

SIN

What'd I tell ya man, no more quarters, change 'em for bills at the deli, don't bring 'em to me.

KEITH

Nothing's open right now.

SIN

It's the city that never sleeps, the fuck do ya mean nothing's open? Go down the corner to the 7-Eleven-

KEITH

They don't let me in there.

SIN

Caught you stealing, huh?

KEITH

Look, I got cash too but how much can I get for this? Can I get a sixteenth or what?

SIN

You can have jack shit for da coins. How much cash ya got?

Keith hands him a twenty.

SIN

Well don't be rude, ain't ya gonna say hello to my friend?

Keith extends a hand. Beaver shakes it and doesn't let go.

KEITH

Keith.

BEAVER

Beaver.

SIN

Check this guy out- tell 'em why they call you beaver.

BEAVER

When I was fifteen I killed a man with nothin' but my teeth.

SIN

(Laughing)

Nothin' but his teeth...

Keith withdraws his hand and sticks it in his pocket, hiding a grimace. Beaver clicks his teeth twice and smirks.

Sin hands Keith a baggy.

SIN (CONT.)  
Stay safe.

Keith takes off.

CUT TO

INT. CHASE BANK - NIGHT

Keith sits across from the ATMs with a tourniquet around his arm and a syringe in his hand.

Tightening the rubber hose with his teeth he finds a vein to plunge the needle into but before he can there is a knocking on the window behind him.

The voice calls his name again. He turns around, sees no one, and drives the needle home. His eyes close. He begins to rattle with increasing fervency. The knocking ceases.

SALTER (19) enters wearing a suit and tie. Keith stops rattling.

SALTER  
Keith...

Keith's eyes remain closed as he shakes his head.

SALTER (CONT.)  
Keith!

Keith opens his eyes slightly and wrinkles his brow at Salter.

KEITH  
Do I... Know... You?

SALTER  
Ya mean to tell me you don't recognize me?

KEITH shakes his head no.

SALTER (CONT.)  
Well I never thought I'd see you here, but I guess the years didn't treat you too kind. But then again, neither did I.

KEITH

Salter?

SALTER

Oh good, you remember your own brother.

KEITH

No... No!.. You're dead. You-

SALTER

Killed myself? Yeah, yeah, I've spent the last twenty-nine years repenting.

KEITH

None of this makes any sense... Why are you wearing a suit?

SALTER

That's what you're wondering? Why I'm wearin' a- You're dead older brother's standin' in front of you at nineteen-years-old and you're asking me why I'm wearin' a suit? I'm wearing a suit because that's what ya last saw me wearing.

Keith fights the urge to nod off.

SALTER (CONT.)

Remember?

KEITH

Yeah... The funeral... I've been trying to forget.

Salter turns to face him revealing a bullet-hole in his cheek.

SALTER

Now that should've been a closed casket but then again that wasn't my call.

KEITH

Jesus Christ.

SALTER

Listen, Keith, I'm sorry you're in this mess. You were a good kid and I know your life only went downhill

because of the things I put you through.

KEITH

You broke my fucking arm. Both of them! You tried to drown me -- really fucking drown me!

SALTER

I'm sorry. But this time I'm finally looking out for you. I set up a plea deal with the big man upstairs to get you out of this-

KEITH

Fuck you, Salter! You were the worst brother anyone could've asked for. This is the shit I've been trying my whole life to forget- I must be losing my mind-

SALTER

You're not losing your mind, kid. You're dying. And we're in agreement about me being a shitty brother- I know. That's why I'm trying to help you.

KEITH

I'm dying?

SALTER

Yeah, bud. I'm sorry. But listen, the plea deal-

KEITH

Alright. What is it?

SALTER

You get to re-live your life as-

KEITH

Oh I don't care. My life was fucked from the start. Won't I just wind up like this again?

SALTER

No, ya didn't let me finish...

Long overdrawn beat.

KEITH

Okay well what the fuck, are you gonna say it or not?

SALTER

You'd get to re-live your life as an only child.

KEITH

So what do I gotta do?

SALTER

All you gotta do is forgive me.

KEITH

What? Man, fuck this shit! You think I'm ever gonna forgive you? What's the other option?

SALTER

You're not gonna like the other option.

KEITH

Fuck you, Salter.

SALTER

Alright, I tried.

Salter crouches over Keith.

SALTER (CONT.)

Can you hear me sir? Can you hear me?

KEITH

Huh?

FADE TO

INT. CHASE BANK - CONT

Keith is being revived with Naloxone by an EMT (23), while another EMT (24) stands nearby.

KEITH

No... No... Salter? Come back.

EMT

He's conscious.

KEITH  
Salter! I forgive you!

EMT  
Sir, can you hear me!

KEITH  
SALTER!

The EMTs exchange glances.

EMT  
There's no one here named Salter.

The EMT standing nearby prepares a stretcher.

Keith bites the EMT crouching over him.

EMT  
OW! FUCK!

EMT #2  
Did he just?

EMT  
He fucking bit me!

The EMT attempts to restrain Keith but is knocked back with a right hook to the jaw. The second EMT lunges for him but Keith dodges and runs out of the bank.

The EMTs chase Keith to the Brooklyn Bridge, one falling slightly behind the other. Keith stops running and catches his breath, staring into the water.

EMT #2  
WAIT! DON'T JUMP!

Keith looks at the EMTs who are still forty or so yards away, losing momentum. He looks back to the water, then back to the EMTs again.

KEITH  
(Shouting)  
I think I'm gonna do it!

EMT  
(Shouting)  
You have so much to live for!

KEITH  
 (Shouting)  
 No, not really.

The EMT sucks air through his teeth and looks to the second.

EMT  
 Shit, what do I say now?

EMT #2  
 Don't jump!

Keith jumps.

EMT #2  
 And- he jumped.

FADE TO

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A mother, AMELIA (32) holds her newborn baby. Her husband MARK (33) sits beside her.

AMELIA  
 Look at him!  
 (Baby voice)  
 Hello! Hello little Keith! We waited  
 so long for you! Yes we did! We've  
 wanted a baby for so long.  
 (To MARK)  
 I was so worried.

MARK  
 Why hon?

AMELIA  
 Well y'know... After what happened  
 when we tried before. I didn't think  
 I'd even be able to-

MARK  
 Oh, I knew he'd come out just fine.  
 Look at him, now isn't that little  
 face worth all the love in the world?

FADE TO BLACK