

"Spent"

by

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Spent

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CHARACTERS

Russell	A man easily parted from his money.
Spencer	Russell's friend.
Clown	A female pseudo-pauper.

SETTING

Outside of the Greyhound bus station, beside the Plaza Hotel, Downtown, Las Vegas, NV.

TIME

Now.

SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1 The Bus Station Now

"A man with money is no match against a man on a mission."

-- Doyle Brunson

ACT I

SCENE 1

Outside the Greyhound Depot, downtown Las Vegas, right next to the Plaza, stand RUSSELL and SPENCER, smoking cigarettes.

RUSSELL: ...get me away from these slot machines, Spence, before I spend all my winnings.

SPENCER: You just need to learn a little self-control, Russ.

RUSSELL: Forget that, man, just get this bus here ASAP.

SPENCER: Nearly there. Just smoke your cigarette and try not to spend any money.

Enter a female CLOWN, who plays the parts of all the paupers. She holds here a baby, wrapped in swaddling cloth. She has her hair up and wears a skirt, flip flops/thongs upon her feet.

CLOWN: Excuse me, mister?

SPENCER: Uh oh. Just ignore her bro.

RUSSELL: You can't just ignore people, Spencer. Yes, miss?

CLOWN: Sorry to bother you sir, and I don't intend to ask for any money...

SPENCER: Here it comes.

CLOWN: But I haven't eaten in a couple of days, and my baby's hungry. Could you find it in your heart to spare a few dollars so I can get something in her?

RUSSELL: *(pulling out his wallet)* Of course! Here's twenty dollars - go get something to eat.

CLOWN: *(taking the money)* Oh, thank you sir, thank you so much. You're a godsend. God bless you sir, God bless you.

RUSSELL: Not at all. You're welcome. Think nothing of it.

The Clown scurries off the opposite way she came.

Spencer watches her go as Russell takes a self-satisfactory drag off his cigarette.

SPENCER: Man, you just got played.

RUSSELL: What're you talking about?

SPENCER: There's no way that money is buying food.

RUSSELL: Spencer, you're ridiculous. She was holding a baby. Of course that money's going to feed her kid.

SPENCER: Dude, that baby didn't move at all or make a single noise: there was no baby in there. Or maybe there was a doll, tops. You just gave ten dollars to some crack head so she can go get high.

RUSSELL: Why are you so cynical?

SPENCER: Because I know this city, I was born and raised here before moving to LA. New York and Chicago ain't got nothing on Las Vegas (*editor's note: pronounced "Vey-gehn" not "Vee-gan"*) charlatans.

RUSSELL: Spence, sometimes you just have to take people at their word, at face value. I see a baby and a plea for food, I'm giving it.

SPENCER: You didn't give food, you gave money.

RUSSELL: To buy food!

SPENCER: All right, all right. The money's gone at any rate, just let it go.

Enter Clown from same side as previous exit. She has let her hair down and wears capri pants and the same footwear.

CLOWN: (*addressing Spencer, with a Southern accent*)
Excuse me sir?

SPENCER: I got nothing to spare.

The Clown gives a curt nod and moves on unceremoniously to Russell.

CLOWN: Excuse me, sir?

RUSSELL: Yes, miss?

CLOWN: I don't mean to bother you, sir, or to ask you for money or anything...

SPENCER: And yet you're going to anyway.

RUSSELL: Spence!

SPENCER: What? She is!

RUSSELL: *(to Clown)* Please, excuse my friend, miss.

CLOWN: Oh, no offense taken, sir, I don't know what I'd think if I were propositioned similarly. Now, my car's broken down a few blocks south of here. I've pushed it to a gas station but I'm all out of money. I'm headed to Phoenix and all I need's forty dollars to get there.

SPENCER: What kind of car do you drive?

CLOWN: '95 Ford Taurus.

SPENCER: You planning on running the A/C?

CLOWN: It's August in the desert, of course I am.

SPENCER: You'll never make it on forty dollars.

RUSSELL: *(taking out wallet, forking over money)* I suppose you're right about that. Here's eighty dollars, just to be on the safe side and so you can get something to eat.

CLOWN: Thank you kindly sir! This is such a help! Thank you! Thank you!

She kisses him on the cheek and scurries off in the direction of the original entrance.

SPENCER: You just got played again, Russ. What's worse, you got played by the same God damn person.

RUSSELL: You're insane, bro. That was not the same person!

SPENCER: She let her hair down, got rid of the skirt and the doll, but that was most certainly the same person.

RUSSELL: Look. You think you know this city like the back of your hand, that you know the people (MORE)

RUSSELL (CONT'D): within it and how corrupt they are, but you have to believe in the best of people.

SPENCER: Why? The human condition is a vile thing, a system of people using each other for their needs and means both minute and grandiose! People use each other, whether it's a croupier, the housekeeper, a girlfriend, everyone is doing something to stick something to the other guy. Con artists are the worst of the bunch, preying on idiots with hearts bigger than their heads. The only way to protect yourself from the evils of people is to presume the worst until they prove you otherwise.

RUSSELL: That's no way to live, Spencer.

The Clown enters again wearing African apparel.

CLOWN: *(ignoring Spencer, straight at Russ, in an African accent)* Excuse me sir, please forgive my intrusions. I am Maliki, a Nigerian Prince and or basketball player. My father, the king, put a rather large sum bet upon the outcome of my team's match against the United States at this past Olympics. Due to a confluence of legal circumstances, that amount is currently unobtainable via the parties within whom the wager was imparted...

SPENCER: That's enough! Get the hell out of here! Get away before I call the cops, you thieving liar!

The Clown races off hurriedly.

RUSSELL: What is your problem? That prince-slash-basketball player seemed nice.

SPENCER: Did you hit yourself in the head?

RUSSELL: What, you think Maliki's a con man too?

SPENCER: It was the same woman! She's no prince and certainly not a Nigerian basketball player! She was white!

RUSSELL: God, you know what? I'm not sitting on a bus back to LA with a racist. You get home however you want, I'm spending another night here, in the casino. Lose my number Russ, I'm serious, I don't want to hang out with you again.

Russell stalks off angrily. Spencer calls after him:

SPENCER: Fine! You lose my number too! All I was trying to do was save you from yourself and the crooks that stalk and prey on you and your gullible ilk! You stay here, you lose your shirt and pants in the most unprofitable way possible...

The Clown enters again, dressed in a sharp business skirt and blazer combination.

SPENCER: Literally giving away your money to charlatans and thieves...

The Clown pulls out the money she grifted off Russell and divides it in half. She gives Spencer his cut.

RUSSELL: (*counting his share*) There's a sucker born every day.