

SHOPPING CART

BY STEVEN BURTON

email: sburton900@gmail.com

#### FADE IN

EXT. URBAN RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

On a bright spring morning, a row of affluent Brownstones appears.

EXT. STAIR STEPS - DAY

They lead up to the front door of a manicured home.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

JAN CLINTON, a casually well-dressed elderly woman with purse in hand, exits through a door outside.

She locks it.

EXT. STORAGE SPACE - DAY

Jan approaches under stair steps.

She opens the lattice door to look for something familiar.

INT. STORAGE SPACE - DAY

Garden tools along with other outdoor objects are inside.

With instant frustration, she rushes away.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - DAY

Jan looks around.

She moves quickly on the path next to the front steps towards the street.

She focuses on something nearby.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

In front of Jan's home, a disheveled MAN reaches down into a fold able shopping cart.

JAN That's my shopping cart! Give it back!

The man turns.

JAN (CONT'D) My cart is gone from behind my steps! (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

## JAN (CONT'D)

You took it. I'll call the police! I'm not afraid of you. You can't come on my property and take. I want it back. It's mine and I need it.

The man stands motionless.

From the cart, he takes a blanket, a ragged teddy bear, a small bag of cans.

He stuffs them into a large plastic bag.

He walks away with the bag to leave the cart behind.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

The man walks down the street.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - DAY

Jan stands near the cart in which a wilted bouquet of flowers remains.

She picks up the flowers and then waves them.

JAN Do you want your flowers?

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

The man walks off into the distance but does not respond.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - DAY

Jan waves the flowers.

# JAN (louder)

Did you hear me? These flowers.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

The man continues without response.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - DAY

A confused Jan carefully puts the flowers on a step.

She moves away with the cart.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

The man and Jan Walk in opposite directions down the same street.

EXT. SIDEWALK

A concerned Jan pushes the cart past a WOMAN.

## WOMAN Hello Jan.

JAN Oh, hi Ellen. I'm sorry, but I'm in a hurry. I'll talk to you later.

INT. UPSCALE GROCERY STORE - DAY

A more relaxed Jan consults a list to choose items from various shelves.

INT. PRODUCE SECTION - DAY

Jan continues the selective routine.

INT. MEAT SECTION - DAY

Jan continues the selective routine.

INT. CHECK OUT COUNTER - DAY

A friendly female CHECKER rings up Jan's groceries.

CHECKER That's a pretty scarf.

JAN Thank you.

CHECKER Is it rayon?

JAN

No, silk.

CHECKER Well then, don't give it to me. I never want anything that has to be dry-cleaned. JAN You can hand wash it.

CHECKER Not me. If I can't throw it in a machine, with some soap, I'm not interested. I like to relax at home.

## JAN

Oh.

## CHECKER

In fact, don't tell anybody, but when I'm at home alone, I like to take off all my clothes and lounge around while the laundry is being done. It makes me feel free. Have you ever tried that?

# JAN

No.

CHECKER Well, try it. You might like it.

JAN Maybe. I've got to get going. How much is it?

CHECKER Oh, sorry. It's 42.92.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Jan pushes the cart with groceries.

A wobbling WHEEL causes her to stop for closer look.

She continues with irritation.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - DAY

She moves along the pathway next to them.

EXT. KITCHEN DOOR - DAY

Jan is surprised to see another cart like hers parked nearby.

She pauses for a closer look.

She is struck with a thought.

JAN Oh my God! That's my cart. (Pause) Then whose is?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A stunned Jan puts a bag of groceries on the table.

She sits in a chair when a voice interrupts with "hi mom".

SUSAN, a pretty middle-aged woman walks into the kitchen from another room.

JAN

What?

SUSAN Hello mother.

JAN What are you doing here?

SUSAN To see you. What else?

Susan kisses Jan on the cheek.

JAN Oh, hello dear. Excuse me.

SUSAN Did you carry this home?

She points towards the groceries.

JAN

No.

SUSAN Delivered?

JAN No, I used a cart.

SUSAN But I had yours.

JAN Well actually I forgot, so, I borrowed one. SUSAN Oh, from Lydia next door?

JAN No, from a man down the street. I'll have to return it.

## SUSAN

Who? Come on, are you holding out on me?

JAN Don't be so nosy!

## SUSAN

OK. Anyway, thanks for the cart. That plant from Jane fit beautifully. Then, all I had to do was wheel it down to my place. You were right. It was too heavy to carry. If I'd known you were going shopping this morning, I would have returned it sooner.

JAN Don't worry about it. What kind of plant is it?

SUSAN

A big, beautiful jade. You've got to see it.

JAN Yes, I will.

SUSAN Do you want me to return the cart for you?

JAN No, I'll take care of it.

## SUSAN

You sure?

JAN Yes. I'm going to lay down now. I didn't sleep well last night.

SUSAN Well, this is a rough time of the year when it happened. I'll never forget it (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN (CONT'D) either. Thank God, we are still here to support and love each other.

JAN

Yes.

They hug.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jan lays on the bed.

She stares up towards the ceiling with concern.

She pulls a blanket up over her.

She closes her eyes to dose off.

EXT. TULIP FIELDS - DAY DREAM

An expansive multi-colored field of spring tulips is idyllic and exquisitely beautiful.

A young GIRL dressed in play clothes runs and jumps playfully down a trail in the tulips with glee and total abandonment.

A little BOY soon follows with the same spirit.

The two children stand together to look in the same direction with eager contentment.

They are speechless as they look up at the sky.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jan opens her eyes from this DREAM.

She slowly rises off the bed.

INT. DRESSER - DAY

Jan picks up to look at a framed photograph of a man with a young girl and boy.

She puts the photograph back on the dresser.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jan wears a pretty spring dress, while she primps in the mirror.

INT. CLOSET - DAY

Jan takes a blanket from the shelf.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jan puts the blanket on the table.

She takes money out of her purse, and then puts it in an envelope.

The blanket gets wrapped around the envelope.

She quickly eats a sandwich.

EXT. KITCHEN DOOR - DAY

Jan puts the blanket into the man's cart.

Jan's cart is in the background.

She pushes the cart away.

She stops suddenly to look back at her cart.

A quick decision is made.

EXT. STORAGE SPACE - DAY

The cart is pushed into the storage space.

The blanket is taken out.

EXT. KITCHEN DOOR - DAY

Jan puts the blanket into her cart.

She moves away with new vigor.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY.

Jan pushes the cart.

The voice of ALICE, an elderly woman, interrupts.

ALICE (V.O.)

Hi, Jan.

Jan looks in the direction of the voice, and then stops. Alice stands in front of a Brownstone house.

JAN Hello, Alice. ALICE How are you feeling? JAN Quite good, thank you. It's spring. ALICE I know, it's lovely out. JAN Yes, I'm going to get some fresh tulips for the house. ALICE Say no more. I have plenty in the backyard. I'll get you some. JAN No. Thank you, anyway. I need the exercise. ALICE Are you sure? JAN Oh yes. Save them for yourself. ALICE How about a cup of Tea? JAN No, not right now, but maybe on the way back. ALICE Well, then I'll come with you. JAN No, Alice. Not today. ALICE Oh, I see. Well, have a good time. I understand. I need to be alone sometimes too. JAN

I know. I'll talk to you later.

Jan moves away.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Jan pushes the cart.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Jan walks to be greeted by a few scenes.

FLASH on a woman and a man as they sit on a bench near one another to both read their copies of "The National Enquirer".

FLASH on a woman as she pushes a wheelchair with five dogs in it.

EXT. BENCH - DAY

Jan sits as she looks around.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

A sign reads, OUR SAVIOR COMMUNITY HALL.

INT. COMMUNITY HALL - DAY

Jan enters with the blanket and envelope as she looks around the room.

Elderly people eat, converse, and play games.

ED, an elderly man, sits at a check in table near the entrance.

WALTER, an elderly man, approaches.

ED Hello Walter. How are you doing? It's been awhile.

WALTER Not bad. And yourself?

ED Good. You look like you've lost some weight.

WALTER Yes, my doctor wants me to get down to my original weight.

ED What's that?

WALTER Seven pounds, six inches.

They both laugh.

ED Good luck.

WALTER Yeah, I'll need it.

Jan approaches.

JAN

Excuse me.

ED Yes miss.

JAN I would like to make a contribution.

WALTER This is the man to see.

ED Yes, may I help you?

JAN I want to leave this blanket and some money.

She puts the blanket and the envelope on the table.

ED Thank you. It's greatly appreciated.

WALTER

Yes.

JAN You're welcome. I've heard some very good things about this place.

ED Well, we're working at it.

JAN I've got to go now. Best of luck with everything.

ED Likewise, and thanks again.

## WALTER

Bye now.

Jan moves away.

ED Nice lady.

WALTER Yes. Do you think? Oh hell, I'll find out myself.

Walter quickly moves away.

INT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

Jan exits.

#### WALTER

Excuse me?

Jan turns around to see Walter.

Walter quickly approaches.

WALTER (CONT'D) I'm sorry, but what's your name again?

JAN I don't think I ever told you.

WALTER Could you tell me for the first time then?

JAN Jan Clinton.

WALTER I'm Walter Barton.

JAN

Hello.

WALTER

I don't want to beat around the bush. I'm too old. Are you a widow?

JAN

Yes.

WALTER

Remarried?

JAN

No.

WALTER Good. Do you like to dance?

JAN

I haven't in years.

## WALTER

That doesn't matter. It'll all come back. We have dances here every Thursday. I love to dance, but there aren't too many women around here with much get up and go. You look like you have some spunk, so it would be fun if you could come. How about it?

JAN

Well...

## WALTER

Look, I'm not trying to make this lead to something else, unless you want to. I just like to dance. Especially, the slow dances. My wife liked those too. Did your husband like to dance?

JAN

No, not really.

WALTER Oh, that's too bad. I guess you've been deprived.

JAN No, I wouldn't say that.

WALTER Well how about it? Does this sound like a plan? JAN I'll think about it.

WALTER OK. I hope to see you next Thursday at two. Don't worry, I'm a great dancer.

JAN

I...

WALTER Nice meeting you Jan.

JAN

Yes.

Walter moves away as Jan is pleasantly puzzled.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Jan walks with the shopping cart.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Jan sits on a bench.

A MOTHER and a young GIRL play nearby, while Jan watches.

EXT. OCEAN BEACH - FLASHBACK

A younger Jan runs with Susan, her young daughter.

Jan and Susan have fun, as they approach their things set up on a blanket.

ALBERT, Jan's husband and young son DANNY are nearby.

Albert reads a book as Danny quietly builds something in the sand.

Jan and Susan dry off.

Later, Jan watches Danny still at work in the sand by himself.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Jan looks off into the distance while seated on the bench. The mother with the young girl plays together.

The girl looks up at Jan.

She walks towards Jan.

MOTHER Where are you going honey?

GIRL To say something to this lady.

MOTHER Maybe, you shouldn't bother her.

JAN Oh, it's fine. No problem.

GIRL

Hi.

JAN Hello. How are you?

GIRL

Fine.

JAN How old are you?

GIRL Five. (Pause) I want to be older. Do you want to be older?

JAN No, not really.

The girl looks up at the sky.

GIRL Are we inside or outside of the world?

JAN Outside, or on the world. On earth.

GIRL But the sky goes around like a ball, and we are inside the ball.

Jan looks up.

JAN Well, it does sort of look like that. (MORE)

# JAN (CONT'D) But, I'm pretty sure we are on the

outside, at least that's what I've always thought. Because, the way to go to the moon is by going up in the sky.

GIRL I've been to the moon and I didn't go in the sky.

JAN Is that right? Maybe there are other ways.

EXT. TREE - DAY

A mysterious MAN with sunglasses leans up against a tree nearby.

He looks towards Jan and the girl.

He walks.

Jan and the girl are not aware of him as he gets closer.

MYSTERY MAN Excuse me, madam.

Jan is startled.

JAN

Yes.

MYSTERY MAN Where is State Street from here?

JAN Well, it's three blocks that way. You can't miss it. It's busy.

MYSTERY MAN Thank you. You have been most kind. I would like to repay you.

JAN Oh, no, that's not necessary. If we can't help...

The mystery man quickly moves towards her.

He plants a kiss on her lips.

Jan pushes at him.

The mystery man runs off, as others react.

```
JAN (CONT'D)
```

Oh my God!

FLASH on a headline that reads, KISSING BANDIT STRIKES AGAIN.

JAN (CONT'D) What? I don't believe...

The stunned girl is joined by her mother along with other PEOPLE.

MOTHER Are you all right? What happened?

JAN That man just came up and kissed me.

BY STANDER #1 It looked like the guy in the news.

BY STANDER #2 I didn't get a good look.

BY STANDER #1 I did. I'm sure it's him.

MOTHER Can I help you home?

JAN (laughs) No, no. It was just a kiss.

JAN (CONT'D) I hope he enjoyed it.

Jan continues to laugh.

Jan walks away, with a crowd, police etc. in the background.

Jan is more relaxed, tuned in, and full of humor.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Jan walks as something attracts her attention.

EXT. BENCH - DAY

A MAN lays on his side with his back towards Jan.

He uses a Teddy Bear as a pillow.

Jan looks at him with curiosity.

She approaches.

#### JAN

Excuse me. (no answer) Hello.

The man turns over and then looks up.

JAN (CONT'D) Are you the man I saw at my house this morning?

TEDDY MAN No, I don't think so.

JAN Oh, maybe not. No, now that I see you. It's just that the Teddy Bear looks familiar.

TEDDY MAN Oh, is it yours?

JAN

No.

#### TEDDY MAN

Wait a minute. I'm a little slow when I first wake up. What was I doing with a Teddy Bear at your place this morning?

JAN

No, you're not him. I saw a man with a Teddy Bear this morning on my street.

TEDDY MAN What was he doing with a Teddy Bear?

JAN Oh, I don't know. Maybe, the same thing you're doing. As a pillow.

TEDDY MAN Yeah, I found it this morning. It was working fine. JAN Sorry, I woke you up. TEDDY MAN That's O.K. Do you know the time? She looks at her watch. JAN Yes, it's four thirty. TEDDY MAN Good, I've got a while before dinner. JAN How or where did you find the bear? TEDDY MAN Next to a tree on the other side of the park. JAN Near state street? TEDDY MAN Yes. JAN Thanks for the information. She reaches into her purse. Here's something for your trouble. She gives him some money. TEDDY MAN Oh thanks. No problem. He quickly counts the money.

Could I have five more?

JAN

What?

#### TEDDY MAN

This is the way I figure it. With five more I can buy two 7.95 dinner specials at this coffee shop I like. It's meatloaf today, lasagna tomorrow night. The lasagna is great! Better than the meatloaf, but it ain't bad. Then, with the three bucks left over, I can buy juice, coffee, and a bagel for breakfast. That will take care of today and tomorrow.

JAN

Well sure.

She gives him five more.

TEDDY MAN Thanks a lot. I got to get going on order to get that early bird special before six.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Jan and Teddy man walk together.

TEDDY MAN Well, here's where I make my turn.

Jan with Teddy man stop and then stand together.

TEDDY MAN (CONT'D) You come on by anytime. I'm usually around that area where you found me.

JAN All right. Good luck to you.

TEDDY MAN Thanks, you too. I hope you find what you want.

JAN

Yes.

They walk off in different directions.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Jan walks with her cart with various people in the background.

Something catches her attention.

EXT. BENCH - DAY

A handsome well-dressed MAN in his thirties sits in profile.

An excited Jan interrupts him.

JAN Danny? Is that you?

He turns to look at Jan.

JAN (CONT'D)

Oh no...

HANDSOME MAN

What?

JAN I thought you were someone else.

HANDSOME MAN Oh sure, I've heard that before. That's an old line.

JAN

No, I...

#### HANDSOME MAN

Oh, I know. It's just an excuse to meet me, and take advantage of my good looks, money, and charm.

JAN No, I thought. I'm sorry.

#### HANDSOME MAN

It's OK. It's an honest mistake. Who is this person you thought I was?

JAN His name is Danny. You sort of look like him, or what he could have looked like.

HANDSOME MAN Could have looked like?

JAN Well, it's been a while since I've (MORE) JAN (CONT'D) seen him. It's a long story.

HANDSOME MAN Oh, maybe I'm his double.

JAN

Could be.

HANDSOME MAN Was he family or a friend?

JAN Family, but didn't get a chance to know him that well...

HANDSOME MAN I hope you find him if that's what you want.

JAN

Thank you.

Jan is more worried and intense as she walks away.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - FLASHBACK

On the main floor, DANNY, Jan's son, is with a group of Cub Scouts at a pack meeting.

They get a pep talk from the den leader.

DEN LEADER All right boys, it's our turn to carry the flag around for the opening ceremony. I want you all to go out there and make your selves proud. So, let's line up like we practiced.

The boys get into their uniform positions.

DEN LEADER (CONT'D)

Ready?

BOYS

Yes.

DEN LEADER Now, get out there and march!

Following, the boys circle the auditorium with the flag.

Danny stands out somewhat, because he marches in a high step military style. He has taken the den leader's "march" orders literally. The other boys march in a much more subtle manner. INT. AUDIENCE SECTION - DAY The spectators react with humor at Danny's high step march. Jan, with her husband, is uneasy and embarrassed. INT. MAIN FLOOR - DAY The boy next to Danny nudges him with disapproval which breaks his concentration. Danny stops. He meekly gets in step with the other boys. The boys continue to move around the court more in synch. EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY Jan walks with the cart. EXT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY Jan leaves with flowers and a small plant in the shopping cart. EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY Jan walks with the cart. EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - DAY Jan sits at a table with a cup of tea deep in thought. She opens her purse to look at a picture of her teenage son Danny. INT. SCHOOL STAGE - FLASHBACK A twelve-year-old Danny dressed in costume takes a bow center stage with other kids in a play.

INT. THEATER AUDIENCE - NIGHT

Jan and Albert applaud with enthusiasm among others.

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - DAY

Jan is deep in thought.

WAITRESS Would you like something else?

## JAN

Yes... Oh no, thank you.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Jan walks in a daze with the cart.

EXT. BENCH - DAY

An intense Jan sits near a store with street noise as cars pass by in the background.

INT. CAR - FLASHBACK

Jan drives with twelve-year-old with Danny as a passenger.

JAN You didn't eat much of your lunch. Did you like that restaurant?

DANNY It was all right. I just wasn't that hungry.

JAN Maybe it's those new braces. It's hard to eat with them, isn't it?

DANNY

No, because I take them out before eating.

JAN Every time?

DANNY

Yes.

JAN Are they in now? DANNY Why all the questions? What's the big deal?

JAN Just answer the question.

## DANNY

No!

JAN Then, put them in. The dentist said to wear them as much as possible.

DANNY All right, I know.

JAN I was just trying to help you. Danny reaches in his jacket pocket to find it empty.

A quick switch to the other pocket finds the same.

Jan looks towards Danny as she continues to drive.

JAN (CONT'D) Did you find them?

#### DANNY

No, I thought they were in my pocket. Maybe, they fell out.

JAN

Fell out?

EXT. CAR - DAY

Jan's car pulls over to the side of the road.

INT. CAR - DAY

Danny looks all around.

JAN Did you find them?

DANNY No, not yet, but they've got to be here.

JAN Just step out of the car a minute and let me look. Danny opens the door and then steps out.

Jan frantically looks, feels on the seat, and under it.

She finds nothing.

JAN (CONT'D) Check your pockets again.

DANNY (panicked) I did. I think I left them back at the restaurant.

JAN What? Where?

DANNY In a napkin on the table. I forgot to pick it up, when we left.

JAN Are you sure?

DANNY

Yeah.

JAN What a dumb thing to do! They cost a lot of money! I told you to be careful with them. Well, get in the car. We're going back to that restaurant and search through the garbage if we have to.

EXT. BENCH - DAY

Jan is deep in thought as she gets up.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Jan walks with the cart.

She notices the man from that morning.

He walks with a bag on the other side of the street.

## EXT. CROSSWALK - DAY

Jan moves quickly across the street.

EXT. SIDEWALK

Jan catches up to the man from behind.

JAN Please sir, I have been trying to find you.

He turns towards her.

JAN (CONT'D) I'm sorry about this morning. I just assumed. They looked alike.

MAN Oh, all right.

JAN Why didn't you tell me it wasn't mine?

MAN It could be yours, because I found it. And I thought you needed it more than me.

JAN

No, I have one. I forgot this morning that it was being borrowed. So, I'll just empty out these things and then it's yours again. Please?

MAN

OK.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Jan and the man walk together.

EXT. JAN'S HOME - DAY

Jan leads the man on the path to the stairs.

She stops to take the plants and flowers out.

She puts them on the bench.

She points towards her empty cart.

JAN

Now go ahead and take mine. We'll trade. The wheels are going bad on yours which is in the storage room.

MAN No, mine is fine.

JAN

Look, I can always get another one. It's no problem. I don't use it that much anyway.

MAN I can always get another one too.

JAN

Please, just take it. I've caused you a lot of trouble.

MAN

You don't have to pay for this. It's just a mistake. It's OK now. I don't want yours. Unless of course, you really want mine.

JAN All right, I want yours.

MAN

No you don't. You're just trying to feel better.

JAN No, I'm not!

MAN Yes, you are.

## JAN

No, I can't feel better! I haven't felt better in a long time. So, it doesn't matter. Why are you doing this? Take my cart! Take your cart! Both of them!

MAN OK, I'll take this one.

JAN

Good! And don't come back here again!

Jan begins to sob uncontrollably. She sits down on the bench.

The man walks towards the street with the cart.

Jan continues to sob in the background.

He stops just before the sidewalk.

He turns to look back at her.

# MAN

Damn!

He leaves the cart, and then walks towards Jan.

MAN (CONT'D) I forgot my things.

He picks up the bag off the ground.

He looks at the upset Jan for a moment.

He fumbles around in the bag to find a small package of Kleenex.

He sits next to Jan on the bench.

He offers some tissue to her.

MAN (CONT'D) Here you go.

Jan takes the tissue to her eyes as she continues to sob.

He remains seated next to her.

JAN Come back.

MAN You want me back?

JAN No, my son Danny.

MAN What happened? JAN He disappeared many years ago when he was a teen.

MAN I'm sorry about that.

## JAN

We tried everything to find him. My husband passed away a few years ago. I understood that. I don't understand what happened to Danny. He could still be alive, dead, crazy, sick, happy, sad.... I don't know. I didn't get to know him. And maybe I caused this!

#### MAN

But, you don't know that. Maybe, it's just one of those bad things that life throws at you. No rhyme or reason.

JAN But, how and why?

MAN

There is no answer, so maybe it would be better to let all these feelings go.

#### JAN

Where?

#### MAN

I don't know, but it ain't doing any good here. (pause) Throw it up in the sky. Let it fly away.

JAN Sometimes, I want to just fly away.

## MAN

I think we all do.

He reaches into the bag to take out a small bottle of soda.

MAN (CONT'D) This is all I have to offer right now. Why don't you have a good swallow? Clear your throat.

He opens the soda, gives it to Jan, and then she takes a

(CONTINUED)

careful sip.

JAN

Thank you.

EXT. SUNSET - DUSK

A beautiful end to the day.

FADE OUT