

Shopping Cart

By Steven Burton

FADE IN

EXT. URBAN RESIDENTIAL STREET - MORNING

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

EXT. STAIR STEPS - FOLLOWING

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

INT. KITCHEN - FOLLOWING

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

EXT. STORAGE SPACE - FOLLOWING

Jan approaches under stair steps, and then opens the lattice door to look for something familiar.

INT. STORAGE SPACE - FOLLOWING

Garden tools along with other outdoor objects are inside.

With instant frustration, she rushes away.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - FOLLOWING

Jan looks around and then moves quickly on the path next to the front steps towards the street.

She focuses on something nearby.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

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

JAN

That's my shopping cart! Give it back!

Charley turns.

JAN

My cart is gone from behind my steps!  
You took it! It's mine and I  
need it!

Charley stands motionless.

From the cart, he takes a blanket, a ragged teddy bear, a small bag of cans, and then stuffs them into a large plastic bag.

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

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Charley walks down the street.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - FOLLOWING

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 - FOLLOWING

Charley walks off into the distance, but does not respond.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - FOLLOWING

Jan waves the flowers.

JAN (Louder)

Did you hear me? These flowers.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Charley continues without response.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - FOLLOWING

A confused Jan carefully puts the flowers on a step.

She moves away with the cart.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Charley and Jan walk in opposite directions down the same street.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATER

Jan pushes the cart with groceries inside.

A wobbling WHEEL causes her to stop for closer look, and then continues with irritation.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - FOLLOWING

She moves along the pathway next to them.

EXT. KITCHEN DOOR - FOLLOWING

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

INT. KITCHEN - FOLLOWING

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

SUSAN, Jan's middle-aged daughter, walks into the kitchen.

JAN

I forgot you borrowed my cart!

SUSAN

Ok, but I'm here now.

JAN

You don't understand! I've been terrible!

An upset Jan speaks with Susan which seems to calm her.

Later, they share lunch at the table.

JAN  
Excuse me, this is a strange  
day.

SUSAN  
This is a rough time of the  
year when it happened. Thank God, we are  
still here for each other.

JAN  
Yes.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Jan picks up a framed photograph of a man with a young girl  
and boy from a dresser.

She puts the photograph back.

INT. CLOSET - FOLLOWING

Jan takes a blanket from the shelf.

INT. KITCHEN - FOLLOWING

Jan puts the blanket on the table, takes money out of her  
purse, and then puts it in an envelope.

The blanket gets wrapped around the envelope.

EXT. KITCHEN - FOLLOWING

Jan puts the blanket into the man's cart with Jan's cart in  
the background.

She pushes the cart away, and then stops suddenly to look  
back at her cart with a quick decision.

EXT. STORAGE SPACE - FOLLOWING

The cart is pushed into the storage space, and then the  
blanket is taken out.

EXT. KITCHEN - FOLLOWING

Jan puts the blanket into her cart, and then moves away with new vigor.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Jan pushes the cart.

EXT. PARK - LATER

Jan walks to be greeted by a variety of SCENES.

EXT. CHURCH - LATER

A sign reads, "Our Savior Community Hall"

INT. COMMUNITY HALL - FOLLOWING

Jan enters with the blanket and envelope, and then looks around the room.

Elderly people eat, converse, and play games.

She leaves her donations with a volunteer.

EXT. PARK - FOLLOWING

Jan walks with cart when something catches her attention.

EXT. BENCH - FOLLOWING

STEPHEN, a man in his thirties, sits in profile.

An excited Jan interrupts him.

JAN

Danny? Is that you?

He turns to look at Jan.

JAN

Oh no.....

STEPHEN

What?

JAN

I thought you may have been someone else.

STEPHEN

That's ok, no problem. I hope you find him.

JAN

Yes, thanks. Hopefully, he is somewhere near.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Jan walks with the cart.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - LATER

Jan leaves with flowers and a small plant in the shopping cart.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Jan walks in a daze when she notices Charley as he walks with a bag on the other side of the street.

EXT. CROSSWALK - FOLLOWING

Jan moves quickly across the street.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Jan catches up to Charley from behind.

JAN

Please sir, I have been trying to find you.

He turns towards her.

JAN  
I'm sorry about this morning.  
I just assumed. They looked alike.

CHARLEY  
Oh, all right.

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

CHARLEY  
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?

CHARLEY  
OK.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Jan and Charley walk together.

EXT. JAN'S HOME - FOLLOWING

Jan leads Charley on the path to the stairs.

She stops to take the plants and flowers out and then puts  
them on the bench.

Jan 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.

CHARLEY  
No, mine is fine.

JAN

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

CHARLEY

I can always get another one too.

JAN

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

CHARLEY

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

JAN

All right, I want yours.

CHARLEY

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

JAN

No, I'm not!

CHARLEY

Yes, you are.

JAN

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

CHARLEY

O.k., I'll take this one.

JAN

Good! And don't come back here again!

Jan begins to sob uncontrollably, and then sits down on the bench.

Charley walks towards the street with the cart, as Jan continues to sob in the background.

Just before the sidewalk, he stops and then turns to look back at her.

CHARLEY

Damn!

He leaves the cart, and then walks towards Jan.

CHARLEY

I forgot my things.

He picks up the bag off the ground.

After he looks at the upset Jan for a moment, he fumbles around in the bag to find a small package of Kleenex.

Charley sits next to Jan on the bench, and then offers some tissue.

CHARLEY

Here you go.

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

He remains seated next to her.

JAN

Come back.

CHARLEY

You want me back?

JAN

No, my son Danny.

CHARLEY

What happened?

JAN

He disappeared many years ago when he was a teen.

CHARLEY

I'm sorry about that.

JAN

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

CHARLEY

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?

CHARLEY

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

JAN

Where?

CHARLEY

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.

CHARLEY

I think we all do.

He reaches into the bag, and then takes out a small bottle  
of soda.

CHARLEY

This is all I have to offer right now.  
Why don't you have a good swallow?  
Clear your throat. My name is Charley.

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

JAN

Thank you, Charley. My name is Jan.

FADE OUT