

HOBO JOE:

Hey man, you alright?...all that commotion woke me up back there. I didn't know what was happening in here...

DEAC:

What in the hell you doing back there? You supposed to been gone hours ago!

HOBO JOE:

I know, after I cleaned myself up, I sat down on the sofa and must have nodded off...till I heard Sam raising all that hell...

DEAC:

Oh...so you heard hey .

HOBO JOE:

Yeah I did.

DEAC:

Well, I'm tired of Sam, trying to tell me what I should be doing.
He spends all day cutting people down, seems like he gets his rocks off by humiliating people...

HOBO JOE:

Yes he does.

DEAC:

Hell he even talks about you too...

HOBO JOE:

I know that too...

DEAC:

You do?

HOBO JOE
START 

HOBO JOE:

Sam talks simply because he got teeth and tongue...

DEAC:

It's got to hurt you to hear those things. People laughing at you, running away from you, yet you are always so kind and understanding.

Don't you want to live better than this. Your life reminds me of this neighborhood. Seems like all the goodness is running off the street like rainwater to the sewer these days.

HOBO JOE:

Not on this street. The rainwater from here runs to the canal, and the canal runs to the river, and you know what keeps the river clean don't you?

DEAC:

No I don't...

HOBO JOE:

The tide.

DEAC:

What?

HOBO JOE:

The tide. Yes sir. When its high tide, all the things wash in from the ocean to the river. Good stuff! Like shells, driftwood, bait fish. All the things that keep the ocean and river alive come in with the new water on high tide. But when its low tide, the water recedes back to the ocean taking everything back out, showing all the stuff that nobody sees and nobody wants, Stuff that settles at the bottom and rots...that's what's happening to this neighborhood. It's been low tide too long..But let me tell you a secret. I done walked these streets, from the river to the woods, I seen everything..and at the end of the day this place ain't got but two things...buildings and people. Folks see the buildings closed up, burned down, falling apart and think that this place is dying.. it ain't dead. It's just low tide.

(HE LEANS IN A WHISPERS SOMETHING
TO DEAC)

They see the people the same way ...hanging around, near the liquor store, no where to go...and when they look at me...they think we just about dead too...but we ain't... People got low tides too...I know, stuck in a foxhole in Germany...Hitler's boys trying to take us all out. Thirty-five years ago, I saw friends shot down like dogs, crying out but nobody could help 'em. Begging me to shoot 'em because the pain was too much but I couldn't. I felt guilty that I survived. I came back home to this,... nothing. So I gave up and started to drink so the pain from death wouldn't hurt me when it took me. Then I met you.

Deac, most people only notice the low tide, looking to see what's left after the water recedes and what's stuck in the mud of their lives rotting away..but, its a lot of gold found in the bottom of the river too...

You just got to hold on and have faith, cause just as sure as God almighty made the waters... the tides ain't never stopped coming and going.
Shhhhh.. It's time for something to happen...I can see it coming...The high tide! ...but it gotta start inside of you...you can't fix nothing in this neighborhood until you fix what's broke inside of you...once you do that the tide is going to rise up in you and bring something good and stable right here... and a rising tide raises all the boats.

You just hold on..the tide is rising.

END 

(HOBO JOE ADJUSTS HIS CLOTHING
AND SLOWLY TURNS TO HEAD
TOWARDS THE BACK OF THE SHOP)

DEAC:

Huh....I hope you're right. You ain't been wrong since I met you. Every time I find myself settling at the bottom you find a way to bring me back to the top. I'll toast to that. Hold on, let me get the phone...

(THE PHONE RINGS A FEW TIMES AND
HE GETS UP AND WALKS OVER AND
ANSWERS IT VERY SOMBERLY)

Russell's Barber Shop. Junior ain't here...how in the hell I know when he gone be here. Baby, no I ain't his assistant. Honey let me tell you one god da...wait a minute...

(SUDDENLY DEAC BEGINS TO PERK UP)

You say you got some money for Junior? One hundred dollars...well why you ain't say that in the first place... well honey you just bring that money on down here right now and ask for Deacon Joe Russell...that's right...I'm one of Juniors uh, colleagues...absolutely. I'll be looking for you. See you soon sweetheart. Take care.

(HE HANGS UP, WALKS TO THE CHAIR)

That ought to fix his no-good scheming ass...he owes me two hundred dollars anyway. You heard that Joe? Joe?