

30 DAY GAMBLE

Written by

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An adaptation based upon the novel The Gift of Magi

EXT. CITY STREET - NEW YORK CITY, NY - DAY

JACK LIMETIZO, tall, overweight, male in 60's, wears heavy construction attire and overalls while he stands outside a hotel high rise's external exit and entrance - breezeway.

Pacing back and forth, Jack mumbles and snarls under his breath while MATT LIMETIZO, skinny, 17, dressed in torn blue jeans and red sweatshirt, just waits and watches.

Both stand upon an elevated, concrete platform, whereas stairs lead down in all directions; busy streets and sidewalks await below.

JACK LIMETIZO

That bitch! Social services might think we're still related but we are not - previous marriage only!

Jack turns and scowl at Matt, who just looks down.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)

Want an offer? I'll give you a new one, because you're not staying alone in my place or truck during the day and then steal all my shit!

Jack's head snaps left, quickly turning his attention across the way; across the street sits a nearby construction site occupying an entire city block, forked off by heavy gating.

Heavy equipment within, including oversized concrete trucks, the construction area appears like a sea of yellow hard hats and orange drums, as workers scramble in all directions.

Steam rises. Smoke encircles. Jack hammers POUND.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)

(Peering back at Matt)

Only times you can stay with me are nights - one meal and a floor, nothing else, no handouts here boy.

Matt slowly looks up to view the area before him. Cars dash from left to right, HONKING, as brakes SCREECH; people yell.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)

(sarcastic laugh)

Yea, welcome to the real world. If I have to be out here all day, so do you; otherwise - deal's off.

Matt's eyes sink - sidewalks below team with heavy crowds rushing about in heavy, winter attire, as the wind HOWLS.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)
 Yea, its winter deaf mute. So,
 we'll see how long you last.

Matt looks up as Jack walks away and then turns once more.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)
 Stay right there mute, where I can
 always see you in case I finish
 early. If I to leave and you're not
 there, you're on your own.

Jack quickly departs, scales city steps below, crosses the busy streets with both hands flailing in all direction at oncoming traffic and then into the awaiting construction area

Matt's head lowers as he watches Jack, then shifts right to a small, brick storefront and sign reading "ACCU - Ashanti's Commercial Clothing & Uniforms".

Matt peers inside ACCU and sees five different people sitting, working casually, as a woman - ASHANTI MOORE, African-American, 50's, braids, walks about.

Matt rubs his hands together, blows upon them, pulls his sweatshirt hood overtop, sits, and starts to rock forward.

MOMENTS LATER

Traffic intensifies, both upon city streets and sidewalks below, as Matt remains still sitting, shivering; Ashanti's attention suddenly shifts to catch such, across the street.

INT. ASHANTI'S COMMERCIAL CLOTHING STORE - DAY

ASHANTI MOORE
 (To self)
 Do we have a new bum or beggar?

Across the street, Matt's head raises; Ashanti gasps.

ASHANTI MOORE (CONT'D)
 ...ah!

Matt's face appears a vividly flushed, ghostly white, nose running, mouth trembling as he sits and shivers.

ASHANTI MOORE (CONT'D)
 It's just a kid. You lost?

Ashanti's head snaps around in all directions outside.

ASHANTI MOORE (CONT'D)
Who, or what are you waiting for?

Matt's eyes affix on Jack, as Ashanti's eyes follow. Jack looks, devilishly smiles at Matt, and raises a middle finger.

ASHANTI MOORE (CONT'D)
...mother fucker, you piece of
shit! No father would do this!

POUND - Ashanti's fist strikes the counter as her staff GASPS. Ashanti looks at Matt, back to Jack, then behind her, into the darkness of a rear storeroom; an eyebrow raises.

ASHANTI MOORE (CONT'D)
Has to be something...I can do.

EXT. CITY STREET - NEW YORK CITY, NY - MOMENTS LATER

Tears fall, as they and the mucus from Matt's nose streams, all before Matt can try to unsuccessfully wipe them all away.

Matt starts to cough and stand, as Jack looks on - smiling.

Matt looks desperately about, everywhere. He finally pauses, looks across at Jack, shivers, cringes and bows, starting to descend the stairs to below, a look of defeat upon his face.

SCREECH - go the brakes; a delivery truck suddenly arrives and parks, right below the hotel, in between Jack and Matt.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION AREA - ONE CITY BLOCK - DAY

Jack hands are suddenly thrown in the air, as he scrambles to see around the now parked, delivery truck; flashers FLICKER.

JACK LIMETIZO
What the fuck is this now? Get out
the way! I want to see if that
little mute gave up yet or not!

EXT. CITY STREET - NEW YORK CITY, NY - CONTINUED

Matt scales the final step to turn and try to cut around the parked delivery truck when CRACK, Ashanti smacks both hands upon his back and pulls him back around from behind.

ASHANTI MOORE
Stop! HI! Sorry! I'm Ashanti. Put
these clothes on underneath, quick!

Ashanti speedily hands Matt clothes, as Matt's mouth drops.

ASHANTI MOORE (CONT'D)
Go! I don't have time to explain!

Matt pauses, looks at Ashanti, then around to all the pedestrians passing by, and back at Ashanti again - cringing.

ASHANTI MOORE (CONT'D)
I DON'T CARE! They been watching
all morning and did nothing. So,
now they can continue to watch!

Matt pauses, looks back around panicked, back to Ashanti and BOOM, hits the ground and starts stripping.

Ashanti steps in front of Matt, blocking people's views, as she strains to see around the delivery truck.

ASHANTI MOORE (CONT'D)
Can'tttttt see us, perfect!

VROOM, delivery truck's ignition starts, flashers back off.

ASHANTI MOORE (CONT'D)
...oh shit.

Ashanti freezes as the delivery truck GRINDS into gear. Ashanti's starting to scream back over her shoulder to Matt.

ASHANTI MOORE (CONT'D)
Out of time kid! Finish now - go!

BLINKERS flash as the delivery truck starts to slowly pull away, exhaust smoke filling the air. Ashanti's eyes BULGE.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION AREA - ONE CITY BLOCK - CONTINUED

JACK LIMETIZO
Ahhhhh, here we go...

Jack intently stairs across to suddenly starts to strain, as a dark billow of smoke still remains.

SECONDS PASS

Smoke clears and all that remains are a look of horror upon Jack's face, and Matt standing across the way looking at him, from the hotel, upon the same elevated platform as before.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)
Little shit! Whatever! You'll give
up sooner or later mute!

Jack angrily turns and POUNDS a sledgehammer down. Matt remains standing, watching, as his glance slowly shifts right, to Ashanti, who's just reached her store's entrance.

ASHANTI MOORE
(stammers, out of breath)
Can't...believe...that...worked.

Ashanti stares across at Matt, wipes her brow, grabs her back, grimaces, and slowly disappears into her store once more, Matt struggling to fight back a nod and sudden grin.

HOURS LATER

BLOW from whistle overhead from within the construction area as workers flood busy streets below, Jack included; and, as he does, looks over to see Matt still standing, waiting.

Jack snarls, looks down and methodical marches on, down the street, and away, finally motioning back overhead to Matt to hurry up and follow. Matt does, as Ashanti looks on.

EXT. CITY STREET - NEW YORK CITY, NY - NEXT DAY

HONK, HONK goes morning traffic as Matt's eyes suddenly open, revealing Jack and him standing back in front of the hotel.

JACK LIMETIZO
I don't know what you did you
little mute; but someone must have
helped you when I wasn't looking.

Jack turns and scans the area, across the street, as Matt does out of the corner of his eye and to Ashanti's store.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)
I'll find out; then the deal's off!

Jack spits in front of Matt and departs, as Matt stares at such and then to Ashanti's store, whereas she does the same.

A coffee cup raises as a coy grin follows - Ashanti to Matt. Ashanti returns back to the confines of her store again as Matt smirks, stops, looks around and then scratches his head.

INT. ASHANTI'S COMMERCIAL CLOTHING STORE - HOURS LATER

As Ashanti paces about her store watching her staff hurriedly working, she suddenly stops in her tracks and looks outside.

ASHANTI MOORE

(gasp)

...what's going on here?

Matt can be seen racing back and forth in front of the hotel, holding doors for those entering, nodding enthusiastically.

ASHANTI MOORE (CONT'D)

Ah! Did...someone create a job?

Matt races back to the hotel's front doors to beat every oncoming patrons to the entrance, open the doors, stand back, grin and give a solemn nod from an imaginary hat.

Ashanti's mouth drops, along with her clipboard - SMACK; her staff startle, giving a sudden GASP overhead once again.

SECONDS LATER

Matt ushers in one last group of people and finally pauses, looks up and across at Ashanti, waits, then grins, gives the imaginary nod and quickly returns back once more to his work.

Ashanti freezes in place, flushed and about to faint, while Jack, in contrast, next door, fumes, teeth starting to grind.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION AREA - ONE CITY BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

JACK LIMETIZO

I knew it! Someone helped you!

Jack sees Ashanti watching Matt; but, just as Jack does, Matt stops, holds something to his front, back remaining facing Ashanti and Jack - who both lean in to strain and see what.

SECONDS PASS

Matt finally turns, slowly, revealing a dead look upon his face, and three dollar bills of some sort, within his hand.

INT. ASHANTI'S COMMERCIAL CLOTHING STORE - CONTINUOUS

ASHANTI MOORE

Ah, someone earned a tip! AH!

Ashanti SCREAMS, as he staff startles and - GASPS once more. Matt starts to smile as Jack goes beat red, next door.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION AREA - ONE CITY BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

JACK LIMETIZO

You robbed that last couple! You
little thief! And, I bet that bitch
put you up to it next door too!

Jack darts forward, out of the worksite, towards Matt.

EXT. CITY STREET - NEW YORK CITY, NY

Just as Matt finally looks back down at the dollar bills,
SNATCH, they are immediately ripped from his hands by Jack.

JACK LIMETIZO

You little thief! I saw you take
that money from that hotel people!

Jack quickly turns over to look directly at Ashanti.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)

And, I bet it was that bitch that
put you up to it too! Wasn't it?

Matt's unresponsive, as Ashanti freezes once more. Jack
quickly turns, enters traffic, then over into Ashanti's
store. SLAM goes the door behind JACK as Matt's mouth drops.

MINUTES LATER

Jack emerges and makes his way back across the street to Matt

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)

We're going now! I have something I
have to have done; let's go!

Matt recoils; but, Jack takes off, quickly down the road and
yelling back over his shoulder to Matt as he does.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)

Now mute, or no ride, meal or
lodging, just sit there and freeze!

Matt waits, mouth trembling, quickly looking over to
Ashanti's store and within it, whereas nothing can now be
seen - shades pulled, nothing stirring there.

Matt's head slowly lowers, a look of desperation upon his
face, as he finally turns and starts to follow Jack away.
Darkness starts to creep in overhead as they do, sun setting.

EXT. CITY STREET - NEW YORK CITY, NY - NEXT DAY

BEEP, BEEP sound the horns of oncoming traffic once more, as Matt and Jack can be seen in front of the hotel breezeway, Matt looking down, sad, Jack looking up and smiling outward.

JACK LIMETIZO

So, what happened to your buddy's
building next door little thief?

Matt's head SNAPS up and over to Ashanti's store; but, nothing there remains, only rubble, everything burnt to the ground, fire trucks, EMS and police personnel on site only.

Matt GASPS, falls to his knees; hands cover his mouth.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)

No one's reporting Jack to social
services and ruining this contract!
Nope, some just need to learn the
hard way.

Jack turns towards Matt.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)

(whispering)
Including you,...little thief.

Jack departs as Matt remains, scanning all of Ashanti's store

SECONDS PASS

Matt's look of confusion, sadness and paranoia sudden dissipates; his glance shifts left, seeing Jack across the way smiling, shaking hands and celebrating at his work site.

Matt lips piece; his head cocks, as Jack turns to see Matt, still smiling. A stare down ensues between both.

SECONDS PASS

Jack finally laughs, turns and returns to work, as Matt remains steadfast, watching.

SECONDS PASS

A tongue suddenly appears - within Matt's mouth, and is bit down upon. A glance shifts left, then right, then back around to the hotel and finally once more back to Jack, from Matt.

Just as Jack looks back up to see Matt again, Matt swings all the way back around, races to catch the door for an oncoming couple and turns to grin back at Jack again as he completes.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION AREA - ONE CITY BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

JACK LIMETIZO
 ...little shit-he's doing it again!

As Matt ushers in the next set of people, quickly turns, smiles back over to Jack and raises four dollar bills now.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)
 YOU'RE DEAD!

Jack grabs his pocket sledgehammer and dashes towards Matt.

EXT. CITY STREET - NEW YORK CITY, NY - CONTINUOUS

Just as Matt receives another tip and turns, SMACK goes a punch to his face from a blindsided punch from Jack, sending Matt to the ground - THUD, wriggling in pain, squinting.

JACK LIMETIZO
 I told you to stop, didn't I? Huh?

Jack mounts Matt, punching him wildly as Matt tries to cover.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)
 Next step - jail for you and I'll
 tell them everything little mute
 and you won't be able to, huh?!

As Matt wriggles in pain, people pass by, watch & shutter.

Jack suddenly grabs for his hammer on the ground next to him.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)
 Jeopardize my contract! No sir!

Just as Jack's hand raises over his head - BOOM, he is tackled from behind by an EMS PERSONNEL, sending both to the ground, Jack's hammer spinning off to the side.

JACK LIMETIZO (CONT'D)
 Get off me mother fucker!

Jack yells, frees his hands, and swings, and BAM, hits the EMS PERSONNEL now, sending him flying across the ground, as Jack sees his sledge, grabs it and looks back up at Matt now.

POLICE OFFICER 1
 FREEZE! Don't you fucking move
 mother fucker! Put it down now. I
 will shoot you where you stand!

Jack turns in shock to now see two police officers arrive.

POLICE OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)
Now! Put it down! Get on the
ground! Hands behind your back now!

MONTAGE - JACK'S ARREST - SLOW MOTION

-- Jack is thrown to the ground, handcuffed, taken away.
-- Other EMS personnel arrive to address Matt and other.
-- Matt just sits and bleeds, watching as Jack is taken away.

END MONTAGE

INT. DISTRICT COURT - NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK - DAY

Final sentencing for Jack Limetiz is presented by the judge.

JUDGE
Jack Limetiz, two years for
aggravated assault with a deadly
weapon, to serve consecutively with
10 more-conspiracy to commit arson.

HUSH from the crowd, as Jack is escorted out, a look of
confidence still upon his face till he reaches the final
exit, looks across the courtroom and suddenly stops, in shock

Matt and Ashanti sit, staring back.

Jack's mouth drops. Ashanti's middle finger raises; and, Matt
quickly stands.

MATT LIMETIZO
...keep up the great work Jack!

END