

THE COIN COLLECTOR

1 EXT. THE STREET - NIGHT**1**

On a dark, empty sidewalk, shines a single lamppost. Down the walkway comes a boy, alone. Casually he strolls under the lamppost. Walking past and away from the white light, there suddenly drops a single quarter onto the pavement behind him. The echo of the coin seemingly rings in the air. The boy turns around. Slowly he walks towards it. He kneels down to pick it up. He grabs it, turning it over in his hand, and then stands back up.

And down the street the boy sees *him*. The shadow. The silhouette is darting towards him, and the boy's heart begins to race. He takes a step backward, but BOOM he trips and falls flat on his back. The boy reawakens. And there staring right at him is the man they whisper about.

The Coin Collector. The heavy canister of coins on his back clangs as he steps forward, punctuating each of his motions. He stops. The boy is petrified. Then, the streetlight flickers off into blackness.

OFFICER CHARLES (V.O.)

And like that. He was gone.

DANIEL (V.O.)

No way.

CUT TO:

2 INT. THE DINER - NIGHT**2**

OFFICER CHARLES

And that's only one of them.
Hundreds of sightings just like it.

DANIEL

Wow...

MARK

Please, so hyperbolic.

OFFICER CHARLES

I'm just reporting the truth...

The Diner is warm, with dirty plates and unfinished coffees decorating the countertops. Receipts are stacked on the front counter, next to a jar marked "Tips" filled with bills and spare change. OFFICER CHARLES and MARK sit in a booth. The barista DANIEL sits with them in amazement. His manager JENNY watches from afar, amused.

DANIEL
Are the people missing?

MARK
No, Charles just likes making shit
up.

OFFICER CHARLES
Watch yourself. Never know when
you'll be Coin Collector's next
victim.
(Dramatically turns
towards DANIEL to make him
flinch)

JENNY
(walking past)
Stop scaring my employees, they have
enough problems as is.

OFFICER CHARLES
Actually, Daniel, get me more coffee
if you will.

DANIEL
Ah, yes.

MARK
He's just a bum. Guys like him are a
dime a dozen around here.

OFFICER CHARLES
Dime you say?

OFFICER CHARLES looks at JENNY across the room. She smirks
and returns to wiping down a table.

MARK
Give me a break. I've seen him
around.

DANIEL
Yeah?

MARK
Yeah. Exact kind of deadbeat you'd
expect to see.

JENNY rolls her eyes.

DANIEL
What he look like?

MARK

Well.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. THE ROOFTOP BY THE ALLEY - DUSK

3

MARK (V.O.)

I was wrapping up an afternoon in the lab, so I went out on the rooftop to take a break.

MARK exits from the side door to an outside balcony. He's frustrated and reaches into his pocket to pull out a vape.

CUT TO:

OFFICER CHARLES

(Judgemental)

To smoke.

MARK

Don't interrupt.

CUT TO:

Returning to the flashback, MARK takes a puff and looks down from the balcony.

MARK (V.O.)

So, I look down, and I see *him*.

MARK's eyebrows furrow as he stares down at the alley. There, THE COIN COLLECTOR stumbles behind trash cans and wreckage, not entirely visible.

MARK (V.O.)

I think he had a huge green coat and long hair. I figured he was homeless. Guy had a pretty big setup.

DANIEL

Did he actually have a canister of coins on his back?

MARK

Looked more like a bucket to me.

In a closer shot, THE COIN COLLECTOR grabs a pile of coins. Holding a hose, he shoots water at the pile. MARK stares.

MARK (V.O.)

He was rinsing the coins... But then
he stops, shuts the water off. And
he looks straight up, right at me.
Like he sensed I was there.

From afar, THE COIN COLLECTOR stands, directly looking at
MARK. MARK tries to glance in different directions,
pretending to casually look around. But when he looks back
down, Mark still sees him, staring

MARK
I couldn't get a good read of his
face, but he was... creepy.

MARK, uncomfortable, walks back inside.

CUT TO:

4 INT. THE DINER - NIGHT

4

DANIEL returns with a refill.

OFFICER CHARLES
Perhaps you offended him.

MARK
Uhuh, I don't really care. Guy's
bizarre.

JENNY
(passing by)
You're one to talk.

MARK
Look, the guy's got drug addict
written all over him.

OFFICER CHARLES & JENNY
(Talking over each other)
Woahh! - Hey - Okay no.

CUSTOMER JUNE
Umm, 'scuse me.

From the booth adjacent sits the scatterbrained woman JUNE.
She peaks over the wall where MARK and CHARLES sit.

CUSTOMER JUNE
You have the man pegged all wrong.

OFFICER CHARLES
(chuckling)
Here we go.

CUSTOMER JUNE
 Don't laugh Chuck, I know what I
 saw.

DANIEL
 (to JENNY)
 Chuck?

JENNY flips a coin.

JENNY
 Just listen.

CUSTOMER JUNE gets up and moves towards MARK's side of the
 booth.

CUSTOMER JUNE
 Move over. Look, Chuck and the rest
 of the media will tell you *all* about
 how ominous this guy is, right?

MARK
 Uhuh.

CUSTOMER JUNE
 But! I know what he really is.

DANIEL
 What?

CUSTOMER JUNE
 (lowering her voice)
 ...He's a vig-i-lan-te!

CUT TO:

A random guy in his office opens up a newspaper, the camera
 zooming in on a small article in the corner: "COIN COLLECTOR
 IS A SUPERHERO?"

CUSTOMER JUNE (V.O.)
 You probably missed my segment over
 it in my very own editorial, but I
 assure you it was a riveting story!
 It began on a night not unlike this
 one, one of my staff members was
 walking home...

CUT TO:

A young woman is walking down the street of a suburban neighborhood, approaching her door and unlocking it.

CUSTOMER JUNE (V.O.)

But when she entered, she found two robbers standing right there in her own living room.

Light cascades into the room dramatically, the flashback lit like a noir film. The robbers dart towards her. She drops her bags and screams, the camera cheesily closing in on her.

CUSTOMER JUNE (V.O.)

The hooligans began destroying her house, holding her at gunpoint until she'd give em everything she had.

The masked criminals break objects on the floor, she and them fighting about. And then a bag of coins falls onto the floor.

CUSTOMER JUNE (V.O.)

But just when all hope is lost...

The sound of loud footsteps approach the door. The criminals freeze. Silence... Then BOOM, THE COIN COLLECTOR kicks the door open, backlit by an unknown heroic beam of light. The criminals glance at each other. They throw the woman to the floor and point their guns at THE COIN COLLECTOR.

CUSTOMER JUNE (V.O.)

The details get a little confusing after that. But the story goes that he pulled out coin shooters, electric cords strapped to the canister on his back!

The firearms he pulls out connect to his backpack like a Ghosbuster's blaster. He wields two.

CUSTOMER JUNE (V.O.)

And so a shootout commences.

A sequence of slow-mo gun close-ups follows. THE COIN COLLECTOR dives to the floor. Papers are thrown in the air. The woman covers her ears and yells. And lastly, coins are shot across the screen.

CUT TO:

And thus, her life was saved that day...

DANIEL stares. MARK is a tad amused. CHARLES is unimpressed.

OFFICER CHARLES
Yeah? And tell me, where'd the criminals go? Did he kill em? Why was none of this reported?

CUSTOMER JUNE
She's clearly protecting his secret identity.

OFFICER CHARLES
Bet none of that even happened.

CUSTOMER JUNE
Heroism is *meant* to be dramatized! What's your excuse?

OFFICER CHARLES
I'm just telling ghost stories. You're out here just-
(taking a sip)
Smearing the good name of factual reporting.

CUSTOMER JUNE
Wannabe detective.

OFFICER CHARLES
Quack journalist.

DANIEL
More coffee?

OFFICER CHARLES & CUSTOMER JUNE
Please.

MARK
(to Charles)
Don't you have *real* missing people to get back to?

CUSTOMER JUNE
Who's the new guy?

OFFICER CHARLES
Intern in forensics. You'd like him.

MARK
This is the worst bread I've had in my life.

OFFICER CHARLES
Then spit it out.

MARK
No, I'm committed.

DANNY returns and refills CHARLES and JUNE's mugs.

CUSTOMER JUNE
Danny, how new are you?

DANIEL
Uh, started about 3 days ago.

MARK
Hmph. That explains a lot.
(takes another bite of his
bread)

OFFICER CHARLES
Hope you aren't already tired of
seeing our faces, let alone hers.
(motions to JUNE)

CUSTOMER JUNE
Screw off.

DANIEL
Actually, I was kinda wondering...

OFFICER CHARLES
Yeah?

DANIEL
...Why *do* you come in here so often?

MARK
It's definitely not for the food.

OFFICER CHARLES takes another sip of his coffee.

CUSTOMER JUNE
It's 'cause this place reminds him
of The Coin Collector.

DANIEL
What?

OFFICER CHARLES sets his mug back on the table.

MARK
What are you not telling us?

OFFICER CHARLES sits and ponders for a moment longer.

OFFICER CHARLES
 (motioning towards JENNY)
 Her.

DANIEL
 Jenny?

MARK
 She your weird crush or something?

OFFICER CHARLES shakes his head. He plays with a coin on the table.

OFFICER CHARLES
 She's one of the only people to have
 ever known him. Really known him.

JENNY stands at the window in the back, wiping down a mug.

DANIEL
 No.

CUSTOMER JUNE
 Was he her long lost father or
 something?

OFFICER CHARLES
 ...She's never told me the full
 story. You know that bus stop on 4th
 Street?

MARK
 Yeah?

JENNY
 Apparently, one night Jen's closing
 up shop. Walks to the bus station to
 catch the 12AM. And that's when she
 see's him...

CUT TO:

7 EXT. THE BUS STOP - NIGHT

7

THE COIN COLLECTOR sits alone at the bench by the bus stop.

OFFICER CHARLES (V.O.)
 ...And she sits down with him.

JENNY sits down on the other side of the bench. The wide shot of the two makes it unclear what they say to one another. But they talk for a bit. Like normal people.

CUT TO:

8 INT. THE DINER - NIGHT**8**

DANIEL

So? What was he *really* like?

JENNY enters abruptly, leaning against the booth.

JENNY

He was just a normal man. A man that preferred being by himself.

MARK

...That it?

JENNY

And I miss him.

OFFICER CHARLES

You're never gonna tell me more than that, are you?

JENNY

Yeah? Well why don't you tell them an important detail *you're* leaving out?

JENNY walks away.

MARK

What's she mean?

CHARLES says nothing.

CUSTOMER JUNE

...Coin Collector's gone.

OFFICER CHARLES

Aye.

MARK plays with his coffee. Daniel stares. There's regret in CHARLES' eyes.

OFFICER CHARLES

Four months ago. I was on the hunt to find out more about this guy.

DANIEL

Why?

OFFICER CHARLES

...Townsfolk didn't like him. People were scared.

DANIEL looks baffled. MARK is unsurprised. JUNE shakes her head.

OFFICER CHARLES

We started putting up bulletins, telling people to watch out for the guy. That he was a high-profile threat. Course a lot of it was just rumors... I just wanted to find him. So, one night we get a report of some hate crime. Which was... odd.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. STREETSIDE - NIGHT

9

CHARLES walks down a dark street, searching with a flashlight.

OFFICER CHARLES (V.O.)

And I could hear someone trying to yell for help. Someone struggling.

CHARLES begins to walk faster, his flashlight can just barely make out the shadows of two men beating THE COIN COLLECTOR on the street.

OFFICER CHARLES

HEY!

The two men freeze and then dart away. THE COIN COLLECTOR is weezing in pain. CHARLES tries to run to him, but THE COIN COLLECTOR is startled, still in shock from the people who hurt him. He scrambles up and begins to dart towards the bridge.

OFFICER CHARLES

I tried to catch up with him.

CHARLES loses sight of him, catching up to bridge, now following a trail of coins.

OFFICER CHARLES (V.O.)

But... I was too late.

As CHARLES gets closer to the bridge-crossing, he begins to see a trail of blood. He gets to the crossing and approaches the ledge - where the blood trail ends. He looks down. Beneath is a small ravine, a stream of water flowing under. Coins float down.

CUT TO:

10 INT. THE DINER - NIGHT

10

OFFICER CHARLES
We never saw him again.

CUSTOMER JUNE
And Chuck still feels responsible.

CHARLES nods at JUNE.

DANIEL
And... that's it?

MARK
Sounds like case closed to me. The
psycho offed himself.

JENNY re-enters.

JENNY
(scoffing)
People like you are the problem.

She begins picking up empty plates.

MARK
What? Am I wrong?

CUSTOMER JUNE
So he was weird. You saying he got
what he deserved?

MARK
Well no but-

OFFICER CHARLES
It's exactly what you're implying.

MARK
Well excuse me, the guy had to have
known what was coming.

CUSTOMER JUNE
Jesus, have a shred of *humanity*.

MARK shuts up.

DANIEL
...Why were people scared of him?

OFFICER CHARLES

Easy. People hate what they don't understand.

CHARLES looks over at JENNY, who stands at the window.

OFFICER CHARLES

If I had only gotten there a moment sooner or... just left him alone in the first place.

(pause)

I hope he's still out there.

JENNY isn't staring at anything in particular. Just thinking.

CUT TO a glimpse of the time she first encountered THE COIN COLLECTOR, JENNY walking down the street, crying.

CUT BACK TO the present. JENNY looks down at the tip jar, filled with dollars and coins...

CUT TO:

11 EXT. THE BUS STOP - NIGHT

11

Entering the flashback, JENNY remembers the night she hit rock bottom. But as she marches towards the bus stop, she pauses at the sight of *him* at the bench, baggy clothes and head cocked forward. Beside him is his canister of coins. For some reason, curiosity struck JENNY that night, as she slowly takes a seat on the other side of the bench. She's still sniffling, slowly composing herself.

THE COIN COLLECTOR

...Are you sad?

JENNY

(beat)

What?

THE COIN COLLECTOR

You look sad.

JENNY

...Yeah well. It hasn't been- today was- I don't know.

(sighing)

It doesn't matter.

THE COIN COLLECTOR

Yes it does.

JENNY

(beat)

It's my job. And my life. I'm always just so tired... And then I get tired of being tired. And then it just keeps going, and everyone keeps moving, and I- I don't know. God, I don't know why I'm telling you any of this, sorry, forget it... I really am fine.

THE COIN COLLECTOR stares at her. She looks away. He turns to his canister, slowly taking out a penny.

THE COIN COLLECTOR
Take a penny.

JENNY
Uhh. Okay.
(takes the coin)
Why do you do it?

THE COIN COLLECTOR
Do what?

JENNY
The coins.

THE COIN COLLECTOR
Oh. I've always really liked coins. Each one has a special story to it. Like this nickel here. I don't know where it's been, but I'd like to think it's just about seen the world. Passing through so many pockets. Or this one here. 1966. That's the year my ma was born.

JENNY turns the penny in her hand.

JENNY
Can I ask you something?

THE COIN COLLECTOR
(nods)

JENNY
You ever get lonely?

THE COIN COLLECTOR
No. I don't really like people too much. They're kinda scary.

JENNY
(chuckling)
Yeah.

THE COIN COLLECTOR

But sometimes... I like seeing people pick up coins. I don't like seeing coins all alone. Getting to see people get excited to find a lucky penny - that makes me happy.

The two sit quietly for a moment.

JENNY

What's your name?

THE COIN COLLECTOR

...You know, you're the first person to ask that in a long time.

(beat)

It's Franklin.

JENNY

(nodding)

I'm Jenny.

THE COIN COLLECTOR

Heh, sounds like Penny.

JENNY goes in for a handshake. THE COIN COLLECTOR shakes.

JENNY

It's nice to meet you, Franklin...

CUT TO:

12 INT. THE DINER - NIGHT

12

JENNY fondly grins. CHARLES, MARK, and JUNE are beginning to make their leave. DANIEL holds the door open for them, tipping his hat as JUNE and MARK exit. CHARLES pauses before leaving. He looks at JENNY. She stares back, followed by a nod and a smile. CHARLES nods back, exiting.

JENNY continues to close up, turning a few lights off.

DANIEL

Hey, Jenny? ...Is it actually true?
That Coin Collector's gone?

Jenny says nothing for a moment. She sighs and sits down at a booth. DANIEL joins her.

JENNY

I used to see him once a week...

CUT TO:

13 EXT. THE BUST STOP - NIGHT

13

Flashback again. JENNY sits alone at the bus stop, waiting for THE COIN COLLECTOR.

JENNY (V.O.)
 We'd talk about our days. Where we
 came from. What we wanted to do in
 life... We were friends.

JENNY looks around. Still waiting. Until finally she sees him. THE COIN COLLECTOR is limping towards the bus stop. She bolts up, terrified.

JENNY
 Oh my god, what happened? Franklin!

She puts an arm around him to hold him up, His face is bloody. Her shouts become muffled as JENNY's voice-over continues.

JENNY (V.O.)
 And one night... He lost everything.

Ringling rises. JENNY's words in the flashback are completely indiscernible.

CUT TO THE PRESENT:

DANIEL
 Oh my God.

JENNY
 He was...

CUT TO THE FLASHBACK:

JENNY sits with THE COIN COLLECTOR. You can hear her explaining that she's going to call an ambulance. He shakes his head.

JENNY (V.O.)
 ...broken.

She pulls out her phone. He shakes his head more. The ringing is getting louder. He grabs her arm.

THE COIN COLLECTOR
 NO!

The ringing stops. JENNY freezes.

THE COIN COLLECTOR

No. I won't go to a hospital. I can't. Please, Jenny. I'm fine. I just...

He sits still for a moment, JENNY patiently waiting.

THE COIN COLLECTOR
I don't think I can be here anymore.

JENNY
(pause)
Who did this to you?

THE COIN COLLECTOR
...People.

JENNY puts her phone away, thinking.

JENNY
Why don't I help you get something to eat? Then maybe we can get back your-

THE COIN COLLECTOR
No. Forget it.
(sighing)
I think it's time I go.

JENNY
To where?

THE COIN COLLECTOR
Somewhere where I can live in peace.

JENNY reaches over to hold his hand.

JENNY
I'm so sorry, I-

THE COIN COLLECTOR
There's nothing you could have done. It's no one's fault, really.

JENNY
I just... What if this happens again? What if someone kills you? What if everything's completely hopeless? W-

THE COIN COLLECTOR
No. Stop... Things are never hopeless. And if it happens again, guess I'll just have to start over and find more coins.

JENNY

But... You need help. How can you just... trust that you'll be okay? There's so many bad people out there.

THE COIN COLLECTOR

Some bad people. But,
(standing up)
there's some good people too.

JENNY stares up at him.

THE COIN COLLECTOR

Like you.

The bus slowly pulls up to the station. It stops, and THE COIN COLLECTOR turns to the opening doors. He steps aboard. JENNY stands up. THE COIN COLLECTOR turns back to face her once more.

THE COIN COLLECTOR

Thanks.

THE COIN COLLECTOR flips a quarter at JENNY. She catches it. The door closes. And the bus drives away.

JENNY

Bye. Coin Collector.

CUT TO:

14 INT. THE DINER - NIGHT

14

JENNY sits with DANIEL, her story finally done. They breathe for a moment, and JENNY gets up to walk away.

DANIEL

Where'd he go?

JENNY walks over to the receipt holder by the register, dozens and dozens of slips stacked on the spike.

JENNY

I don't really know.

She removes the stack of receipts.

JENNY

But he's happier now, exploring new places.

Flipping through the receipts, she finds the one she's searching for: A receipt for a single cup of black coffee. Signed, *Franklin* :)

DANIEL

So... We'll never see him again.

JENNY

Hm.

JENNY picks up the jar of tips, half full of coins and change.

JENNY

I wouldn't be so sure.

DANIEL joins JENNY. He looks at the receipt she has, raising his eyebrows. The chime of the entrance door is heard from off screen. DANIEL and JENNY look towards it, almost directly at the camera. DANIEL's jaw drops. And JENNY smiles.

CUT TO BLACK