

THE COAT...AND ITS CURIOUS TRAVELS
By Nikki Harmon

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AUDITION 1- 3 players

In this scene, the Mayor and the Banker believe the Homeless Man is rich and ready to invest in the city.

(AT RISE: Main Street. The MAYOR and the BANKER are in conversation.)

MAYOR: How can you be sure that's what he's here for?

BANKER: We have no hotels, no museums, absolutely no sights to see, and all our roads are full of holes. Would a man with such obvious wealth come to our town for any other reason?

MAYOR: I guess not.

BANKER: Well, there it is then.

MAYOR: And your bank would underwrite his investments?

BANKER: To the hilt, if your office supports his endeavors.

MAYOR: As mayor, appointed by the Provincial Governor, without any say whatsoever from the people... *(Producing an official document.)* ...I am authorized by this official decree, given to me personally by the Prime Minister himself, to guaranty one hundred and ten percent support if you're sure he'll choose our town to invest in.

BANKER: If not, he would never have come so unheralded. He's quite obviously here on a fact-finding trip. So, it's imperative we make a good impression, convince him that we are worthy of his attention.

MAYOR: Without letting on that we know why he's here.

BANKER: Of course.

(HOMELESS MAN enters.)

MAYOR: Sir, you grace our town with your presence.

HOMELESS MAN: *(Aside.)* A politician, no doubt.

BANKER: And bring great possibilities to our economy.

HOMELESS MAN: *(Aside.)* The banker, again. *(To the TWO.)*
Hello.

MAYOR: *(To BANKER.)* Such manners.

BANKER: *(To MAYOR.)* Obviously well-bred.

MAYOR: We wish to thank you for choosing our town...
(Catching HIMSELF.) ...to visit. Will your stay be a long one? If I may be so bold.

HOMELESS MAN: It could be.

BANKER: *(To MAYOR.)* He's asking for a bribe.

MAYOR: *(To BANKER.)* I know that. Do you think I'm a complete idiot?

BANKER: Of course not. *(To HIMSELF.)* Not complete.

MAYOR: *(To HOMELESS MAN.)* I want to assure you that our humble town is one hundred percent at your disposal.
(BANKER gives MAYOR a "look.") One-hundred and *ten* percent.

HOMELESS MAN: Thank you.

(A strained silence as THEY look at each other.)

BANKER: *(To MAYOR.)* He's waiting for us to start the bidding.

MAYOR: *(To BANKER.)* I know that. *(To HOMELESS MAN.)*
Now, sir, to get down to business.

BANKER: *(To MAYOR.)* Too brazen!

MAYOR: Are your accommodations comfortable?

BANKER: *(To MAYOR.)* Too subtle. I'll do it!

(The BANKER takes out a wad of money and palms it to HOMELESS MAN as they shake hands.)

BANKER: *(Cont'd.)* The people of our town are very, very happy that you're here.

(The BANKER steps back, smiling, as HOMELESS MAN stares at the money.)

MAYOR: *(To BANKER.)* He's just looking at it. It's not enough. He'll take offense and leave. You've done it all wrong!

BANKER: It's the same amount we always bribe. Do you think I'd offer less? Do you think I'm a complete idiot?

MAYOR: Of course not. *(To HIMSELF.)* Not complete. *(To BANKER.)* Try again.

BANKER: We know that sometimes visitors arrive in our country when all the Money Changers are closed. May I be so bold as to lend you funds to tide you over?

MAYOR: *(To BANKER.)* Lend?!

BANKER: *(To MAYOR.)* He knows what I mean. *(To HOMELESS MAN.)* You know what I mean.

HOMELESS MAN: *(Sensing this is the right answer.)* Of course.

BANKER: *(To MAYOR.)* You have to know how to negotiate with men of his stature. His position in life is so much higher than ours that there's an entirely different way of doing things.

(Another pause as they ALL grin at each other.)

MAYOR: Nothing's happening.

BANKER: You have no understanding of the ways of international commerce.

(BANKER nods and grins broadly at HOMELESS MAN, who smiles and nods back.)

BANKER: *(Cont'd.)* See! There! He just communicated to me that he's going to invest millions in our town.

MAYOR: I didn't hear anything.

BANKER: *(Still grinning at HOMELESS MAN but speaking to MAYOR.)* That's because you aren't used to dealing with serious money. I, on the other hand, have had many dealings of this sort. You give a little. You get back more.

MAYOR: That's all well and good, but what exactly are we going to get back?

BANKER: Buildings and bridges, of course. Our roads repaved. Historical monuments built.

BANKER: *(Cont'd.)* New furnishing for all government offices. Museums galore. And kickbacks for everyone!

(BOTH look at HOMELESS MAN and wait for him to say something. A prolonged pause follows.)

MAYOR: He's not saying anything. Why isn't he saying anything? We have to give him more money. Go ahead, give him more money.

BANKER: I'm over my bank's limit. *You* give it to him.

(The MAYOR takes out a wad of money and presses it into HOMELESS MAN'S palm as they shake hands.)

MAYOR: *(To HOMELESS MAN.)* Again, let us say how happy we are that you're visiting our town.

HOMELESS MAN: It's nice to be here.

MAYOR: And the length of your stay will be?

HOMELESS MAN: *(Pocketing the second wad of money.)* Longer than I'd expected.

(MAYOR grins at BANKER.)

BANKER: *(To MAYOR.)* I defer to your negotiating skills.

(BOTH nod and grin at HOMELESS MAN.)

MAYOR / BANKER: Welcome to our town!

(BANKER and MAYOR exit, content with themselves.)

HOMELESS MAN: *(Aside.)* Here, madness is at home and sanity the visitor. But, their lunacy is quite profitable.

(LIGHTS crossfade.)

AUDITION 2- 3 players

In this scene, Mr. Poosch hits rock bottom.

(AT RISE: Main street. POOSCH is sitting on the sidewalk, feeling pretty down. DOG NEEDING FOOD enters. He sits down next to POOSCH, pressing up against him for warmth, and leaning and leaning and leaning until Poosch tips over.)

POOSCH: Hey! What are you doing?

DOG: It's cold and you're warm. All I want is some of your warmth...and maybe some food. You got food?

POOSCH: You're talking.

DOG: Talking, yeah. I need food. You got food? Gimmie food.

POOSCH: Do all dogs in the North talk?

DOG: I don't know all dogs. I need food.

POOSCH: I'm afraid I don't have any food. I need food, too.

(DOG growls and POOSCH recoils.)

DOG: I don't believe you.

POOSCH: It's true. I'm just as hungry as you are.

DOG: No food?

POOSCH: No. None.

DOG: *(Considering this.)* Hmm.

POOSCH: I didn't know dogs could talk.

DOG: Yeah, yeah, we talk. No food, eh?

POOSCH: No food. Are there other dogs around here who can talk?

DOG: Lots of them. Only they got food and I don't, and I got a hole in my belly that goes down so deep it comes out on the other side of me, and it's makin' me crazy.

(DOG licks his chops as he sizes up POOSCH who pulls back.)

DOG: *(Cont'd.)* It's makin' me think about meat...six feet worth of it.

POOSCH: Maybe if you didn't think about it so much you wouldn't be so hungry.

DOG: What are you, one of those nuts that starves himself?

POOSCH: No. I like to eat as much as the next guy, only I don't have any money left to buy food.

DOG: Look, if we partner up we can make a killing. Now, you sit there and just hold out your hand.

(POOSCH does, but palm down.)

DOG: *(Cont'd.)* No! No! Turn it up. Like this.

(DOG demonstrates and POOSCH forms a cup with his palm.)

DOG: *(Cont'd.)* Yeah. Yeah. Now I do this. *(Rolls over and groans.)*

POOSCH: Are you okay?

DOG: Yeah, yeah. Now you beg to save your dying dog.

POOSCH: Are you dying?

DOG: No, you idiot!

POOSCH: Oh.

DOG: Ya got it now?

POOSCH: My dog needs food. My dog needs food.

DOG: But ya gotta look like ya mean it, or we ain't gonna get nothin'.

POOSCH: *(Really meaning it.)* My dog needs food. My dog needs food. Please help my dog!

DOG: That's good. Now, here comes someone. Lay it on thick, 'cause I'm really starvin'!

(TOWNSPERSON THREE enters carrying shopping bags.)

POOSCH: My dog needs food. My dog needs food. Please help my dog.

TOWNSPERSON THREE: Oh my, your poor dog. He looks so sick.

POOSCH: He's hungry and I don't have any money to feed him. And without some food soon I don't know how long he'll last.

TOWNSPERSON THREE: *(Dropping money into POOSCH'S hand and petting DOG.)* Aw, poor, poor dog. *(Exits.)*

POOSCH: It worked. She gave us money.

DOG: What do you mean us?

(DOG shoves POOSCH, grabs the money and takes off.)

POOSCH: Wait!

DOG: So long, sucker!

(DOG exits laughing as POOSCH sits back on the sidewalk.)

POOSCH: Mugged by a dog. How much worse can it get?

(A moment later POOSCH feels something wet and warm on his head. He looks up and cringes as the "pigeon" flies off.)

From: *The Coat...and Its Curious Travels* - By Nikki Harmon

Published by: Eldridge Publishing Co.

<http://www.histage.com/playdetails.asp?PID=2682>