

The Angels

By

Will Hightower

Will Hightower (c)2014

Will Hightower
WillBHightower@gmail.com
EasierSaid.net

Sounds of a busy city. Paul, a millennial in an Ohio State hoodie and stylishly torn jeans, runs on stage in a full sprint. He almost runs into Rachel, a middle-aged and beautiful homeless woman.

PAUL

Sorry! Oh gosh, sorry!

RACHEL

They're gone.

PAUL

So sorry I have--

RACHEL

They're not chasing you.

PAUL

What?

RACHEL

Whatever you're running from, it gave up on you.

PAUL

Oh. Thank you. Sorry again by the way.

RACHEL

Eh, it's my fault, I'm the one sitting on the sidewalk.

PAUL

Well, I should have been paying attention. Sorry

RACHEL

Would you stop saying sorry? I accept your damn apology.

PAUL

Sor--...Thank you. Oh, gosh, I need to--Can I sit?

RACHEL

Sure, sure, I don't own the sidewalk ya know.

PAUL

It's kinda your home though, right?

RACHEL

No, no. I'm home-less. If the sidewalk was my home, I wouldn't be home-less. You see?

PAUL

Yeah, I guess you're right. I'm Paul by the way.

RACHEL

Nice to meet you Paul. Rachel.

PAUL

Rachel, that's a very pretty name. Hey, can I ask you a question?

She doesn't respond, she just looks at him. After a while she gives a small gesture.

PAUL

When was the last time you told someone your name? I mean, people just walk right past you without even acknowledging you're human, you know? There's no compassion anymore, just selfish... I mean, we should just love, and... Rachel. I'm very glad I got to meet you today. This is going to be great.

RACHEL

Okay what do you want?

PAUL

What?

RACHEL

I'm not buying what you're selling so you can just keep moving.

PAUL

I'm not selling anything.

RACHEL

Yeah, yeah, I've heard this all before. Is that why they were chasing you?

PAUL

I don't understand, I was just--

RACHEL

You tried to teach them about Jesus and they were about to teach you about life on Skid Row.

PAUL

That's not it at all! I wanted to help them.

RACHEL

With Jesus.

PAUL

Kinda?

RACHEL

Not everyone wants your enlightenment, kiddo.

PAUL

Not everyone but that leaves someone, right? How about you? Do you want my help?

RACHEL

There's a lot of things I want. Money yeah, shoes sure, an Almond Roca god yes. But your "help"? No thanks. Why would you want to help me anyway? I'm not anyone.

PAUL

You're Rachel. You're a polite woman who's talking to me instead of chasing me off.

RACHEL

Oh I'll get to that.

PAUL

I want to help you because it's the right thing to do. Besides, I'm determined to help at least one person, affect one person for the betterment of mankind. And because we all need compassion and I should do what I can to help others in need.

RACHEL

Should? What should? Who is telling you to go around "helping" people?

PAUL

Um. It's the right thing--

RACHEL

You said that, I'm not sure who made that judgment, but go on. Who?

PAUL

God, I guess?

RACHEL

God is telling you. Now can I ask you a question?

He now looks at her and gives a similar gesture.

RACHEL

If God wasn't telling you to help me, would you still want to help me?

PAUL

Yes.

RACHEL

No, don't answer quickly like that. Take a minute and really answer me. Would you be out here, getting chased and harassed, if God wasn't telling you to?

PAUL

I... Ah... I don't know, honestly. I mean, I want to help people. I want to...but--I can't--It's the...

RACHEL

Okay then. You go home and sort that out.

PAUL

I can't go home, I just got here.

Rachel looks at the holes in his jeans.

PAUL

Oh, I bought these like this. They were pretty expensive considering how they look.

RACHEL

Great, Skid Row is a gold mine of holy jeans.

PAUL

Like--

RACHEL

Not that kind of holy. Smartass.

PAUL

My church raised the money for all this and my wife was supposed to come but she just had our son and--

RACHEL

So that's what you're running from. Fatherhood.

PAUL

It's not like that at--

RACHEL

I get ya, I'm not here to judge. I had a son myself, scary stuff.

PAUL

You had a son? What happen--Where is he?

RACHEL

Nothing happened to him, he's safe. Little Ben. Foster-adopted or whatever. They changed his name though, Aaydyn (Aiden) with two Y's. Don't ask.

PAUL

Oh.

RACHEL

Yeah, unfit mother, they say anyway. Personally, I don't think I'm that out of shape.

PAUL

I don't think that's what--

RACHEL

Kidding. Jesus, Paul.

PAUL

Sorry.

Rachel shoots Paul a look.

PAUL

Sor--Not sorry.

RACHEL

It's a start.

PAUL

So, if you don't mind me asking, what evidence--why did they say unfit?

RACHEL

Oh, you know, the usual. Drug addict, though I prefer to be called a "drug enthusiast". And mentally ill, "delusional schizophrenic" they called it.

PAUL

Oh wow. I had no, I mean, should I, do I need to go?

RACHEL

No, no, no it's not--I mean, if you want, but I'm not dangerous, to you anyway.

PAUL

Okay, well I'm not sure how to help with that.

RACHEL

I wouldn't want you to. It would mean losing all my friends.

PAUL

Friends? Like other...residents of Skid Row?

RACHEL

Oh god no. The angels. The angels, Paul, they're all around. They keep me company, companionship, conversation, you know? They do everything but keep me warm.

PAUL

You see angels but you don't want to accept Jesus?

RACHEL

It's not real, hallucinations I mean, not Jesus. I'm not getting into that.

PAUL

Thank you.

RACHEL

I know the angels aren't "real", they're just for me. I don't mind them, but issue is I need the drugs to keep the devils away.

PAUL

Inner demons?

RACHEL

Maybe. But I see them as actual devils, horns and pitchforks and all. The drugs help me and the angels fight them off. Doesn't always work through. Doing okay for now.

PAUL

Is that--are you... high? Like, right now?

RACHEL

I wish, can't afford it.

PAUL

Are there devils now?

RACHEL

Doesn't look like it, they ran off 'bout the time you showed up.

PAUL

Maybe they fled from the power of Jesus!

RACHEL

Don't push it, kiddo.

He opens his mouth to say sorry then closes it.

RACHEL

So, whatcha think, am I savable?

PAUL

Well, you can be SAVED...

RACHEL

Helpable I mean, can I be helped you think?

PAUL

I'm sure we can find a way, I'm not giving up on you.

RACHEL

Well, you're the first.

He grabs her hand and he bows his head for a short prayer. She looks at him and allows it. Sounds of the city.

RACHEL

A wife and kid back home and here you are. How's she taking it?

PAUL

Not the best. The baby is a bit much, but the church is helping out when they can. "Takes a village" you know.

RACHEL

Takes a father, is what it takes. Not everyone gets one of those.

PAUL

I'll be back soon, when I'm done.

RACHEL

When's done? Look around, you're not going to "Save" Skid Row in a day, or a month, or ever.

PAUL

Maybe after I help just one person.

RACHEL

Oh Paul... It's okay to be scared, you can admit to running away, we all do it.

PAUL

I'm here to make the world better for my son, not to run away from him.

RACHEL

It doesn't matter why, gone is gone. Your son may not remember but your wife will. They always remember. Is there no one to help in Ohio? Just a Midwest winter wonderland up there?

PAUL

No, not at all. There's so many issues back home, the government programs lack funding, the community outreach is being stifled, but the church... Oh, I see.

RACHEL

Yeah.

PAUL

I guess I thought I was just doing the most good by going where the greater need is.

RACHEL

"Most good" eh? Yeah, there is a great need here, but who says it's greater? Greater than Kenya? Israel? Or even Ohio?

PAUL

Well there are statistics that say--

RACHEL

So numbers determine greater good? What do the numbers say about the amount of good being done by coming home every night instead of to a hostile.

PAUL

Hotel, actually.

RACHEL

Jesus, this church of yours.

PAUL

Okay, so maybe good is not quantifiable, but if I go back, run back home, I've wasted all of this money, church money.

RACHEL

Hey, ask for forgiveness, right? That's a churchy thing to do.

He sits and thinks. Sounds of the city. He takes a breath, pulls out his phone and looks at the background picture of his wife and son. He shows her the phone.

PAUL

Leah. And baby Skyler.

RACHEL

Very pretty girl. Shame about the boy's name though.

PAUL

What?

RACHEL

Nothing. Put the phone away, trust me. You don't wanna be flashing that thing around here. It's bad enough you look the way you do.

He quickly puts the phone away.
After a beat he flips his hood up.

RACHEL

Too much.

PAUL

Yeah, I thought so too.

He puts his hood back down.

PAUL

Okay... Okay. You...You're right. I should be home with my family, it's selfish to be out here alone when I have a family that needs me back home. I'm terrified. But I have...

RACHEL

What?

PAUL

I was going to say the confidence and safety of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But I didn't want to, you know, push it.

RACHEL

Well, thanks for trying.

PAUL

I wanted to help just one person. Hey! Why don't you come back with me to Ohio? We can get you the resources and help you need and I can be home with my family every night.

RACHEL

Really? You mean that?

PAUL

Definitely.

RACHEL

I'd love to.

PAUL

Really?

RACHEL

Nah, I'm just screwing with ya. Look at me. I'm not going to be saved by relocating to the Midwest. And there's already plenty of us in Ohio. Besides, if you're gonna be homeless, why not be homeless in paradise? I've got my angels--

PAUL

And devils.

RACHEL

But the devils allow me to appreciate the angels more. I know you're taking pity on me and my life, but it's my lot in life, it's not a lot, but it's my life.

PAUL

Did you... is that "A Bug's Life" quote?

RACHEL

Ah, you caught me. Great flick.

PAUL

Yeah, good stuff.

They stop and enjoy the temporary silence.

PAUL

I'm glad I ran into you Rachel. Literally, even.

RACHEL

Me too. But maybe next time you're running from something, try to keep looking forward instead of back.

PAUL

Sure thing.

He turns to leave then stops. He reaches into his pocket.

PAUL

One last thing. Let me give you some--

RACHEL

Don't. I'll buy drugs with it. Seriously. I always tell myself I won't, but I still do.

PAUL

There has to be something I can do to help you.

RACHEL

How about you let someone help you for a change?

PAUL

...Yeah.

He walks over to Rachel and puts his jacket around her. He gives her a hug.

RACHEL

Hey, leave a little room for Jesus, Paul.

PAUL
You too, Rachel. You too.

He exits.

Black out.

End of play.