

RESTORING GELBERT GROTH

By

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a Screenplay for Stop-Motion or CGI Animation

WGA Registered

EXT. MEGALOPOLIS - TWILIGHT (FOGGY)

Megalopolis is a marginally dystopic society with pockets of revitalization.

EXT. SHANTYTOWN - NIGHT

GELBERT, 40's, average stature, unkempt, carrying a rucksack, carefully negotiates the path through shantytown to -

EXT. RESCUE MISSION, COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

He passes through a heavy metal gate, entering the mission's tidy courtyard.

An unblinking, motionless, ANDROID - a bastardized human mimicry - staffs the unlit customer service window.

Gelbert takes a few hesitant steps toward the android. He slowly waves his hand in front of its face.

Gelbert notices why the android is static. Next to the shelter's main entrance is an INDUSTRIAL MESSAGE DISPLAY that reads: No Beds Available.

Gelbert, with a dishearten sigh, exits the courtyard.

EXT. HELPING HANDS - NIGHT

The men's shelter, Helping Hands, is in a neglected industrial park near a defunct rail yard.

P.O.V. - THROUGH SECOND FLOOR WINDOWS

Gelbert walks behind NADINE, a state of the art android.

INT. HELPING HANDS - SAME

Nadine, petite, wears a white medical uniform, and her brunette hair is styled in a tidy bun. She looks nearly human. Her subtle jerky head and neck gestures give her away.

They come to a door that sweeps open automatically. Nadine extends a hand inviting Gelbert to enter. He does.

INT. HELPING HANDS DORM - SAME

Several SHELTER GUESTS are brawling. Gelbert, a nonparticipant, is transfixed. When two entangled men tumble onto his bunk, Gelbert leaps out of the way, grabs his rucksack, and bolts for the exit.

INT. HELPING HANDS, ENTRYWAY - SAME

Nadine watches from the glass entryway,

LIGHTNING FLASHES

as Gelbert heads out into the lonely night.

INT. HELPING HANDS, UPSTAIRS HALL - SAME

Two indestructible SECURITY ROBOTS force their way into the dormitory, as LIGHTNING flashes and distant THUNDER rumbles.

EXT. DOORWAY - NIGHT (RAIN)

Gelbert shelters in an unlit DOORWAY across the street from SAMMY'S CONVENIENCE STORE.

Gelbert uses a sleeve to wipe away the tears from his exhausted eyes with a shaking hand.

An AUTOMOBILE passes.

ARCHIE, an outmoded railway porter robot in need of an overhaul, steps into Sammy's.

Another AUTOMOBILE, traveling in the opposite direction, crosses through.

INT. SAMMY'S - NIGHT

ARCHIE'S HAND removes four puppy food CANS from the shelf, and places them in a hand-held BASKET.

P.O.V. - CONVEX SECURITY MIRROR

Archie, basket in hand, makes his way from the pet food shelf to checkout. He sets the basket on the counter for the brooding CLERK to ring up.

EXT. DOORWAY - NIGHT

A shivering Gelbert crosses his arms and rubs his upper arms and shoulders vigorously. Archie, cloth grocery bag in hand, exits the store.

When Archie steps off the curb and onto the crosswalk, a self-driving GARBAGE TRUCK, appears from nowhere, breezing through the intersection.

TRAFFIC CAM P.O.V. - INTERSECTION

Archie is nailed by the garbage truck.

EXT. INTERSECTION - SAME

The violent, dismantling, impact catapults Archie. Gelbert, mouth agape, watches as Archie sails through the air.

Archie lands in the gutter. The puppy food cans roll into the street.

Gelbert rushes to him.

TRAFFIC CAM P.O.V. - GELBERT

Traffic cam ZOOMS IN on Gelbert to establish his identity. His DRIVER LICENSE PHOTO appears in conjunction with the following CURSOR REVEALING statistics.

SUPER:

NAME: Gelbert Groth, CRIMINAL RECORD: None; EDUCATION: High School Graduate; TRADE: Mechanic; EMPLOYMENT STATUS: N/A; RESIDENCE: N/A.

RETURN TO SCENE

Gelbert carefully moves Archie to the -

EXT. DOORWAY - SAME

INTERCUTTING AS NEEDED - TRAFFIC CAM P.O.V./DOORWAY

Gelbert rifles through his rucksack, removing a miniature CAMPING LAMP. LIGHT reveals the extent of Archie's damage: exposed sparking wires, spurting hydraulic fluid, rattling, compressed and bent endoskeleton, dislocated limbs.

MONTAGE:

(CONTINUED)

- Gelbert, using the TOOLS he totes in his rucksack, tends to Archie's injuries like a skilled surgeon.
- An unexpected cascade failure, equivalent to a cardiac event in a human, hampers Gelbert's effort to preserve life.
- Gelbert is successful, and Archie quickly recovers.
- The necessary repairs complete, Gelbert turns his attention toward Archie's aesthetics.

EXT. DOORWAY - LATER

INTERCUTTING AS NEEDED - TRAFFIC CAM P.O.V./DOORWAY

When the restorative work is complete, Archie looks assembly line new.

As Gelbert admires his handiwork, Archie stands and extends a hand to Gelbert. Gelbert accepts with a nod and smile. They gather up the cans of puppy food and head off into the night.

EXT. UNION STATION - NIGHT

Archie and Gelbert arrive at what was a rail transportation hub. Now the impressive Beaux-Art, boarded up, building is occupied by the city's transient robots and androids. They are antique machines who no longer serve a function within the human society.

Four ANDROIDS stand around a steel drum fire. At a distance, they look like homeless humans; but, as Gelbert and Archie get closer, the androids' physical defects are apparent.

Gelbert follows Archie into Union Station.

SECURITY CAMERA -

tracks their arrival.

INT. UNION STATION/GRAND HALL - SAME

Gelbert is awestruck by its dramatic vaulted ceiling, statues, marble tile floor, and its robot and android DENIZENS who work collaborative to restore the station to its early twentieth century grandeur.

SECURITY CAMERA P.O.V. - GELBERT AND ARCHIE

entering.

(CONTINUED)

RETURN TO SCENE

The old machines turn and lock their gaze on the human.

Archie and Gelbert are summoned by a booming MECHANICAL VOICE speaking to them in a robotic language. They head in its direction.

As they make their way through the grand hall, PLAYBACK traffic camera VIDEO FOOTAGE of Gelbert's heroism are display on monitors for all to see.

Two MANNEQUIN-ANDROID CHILDREN, a BOY and GIRL, chase after a beagle PUPPY. The girl mannequin catches the energetic pup.

Archie hands the cloth grocery bag to the boy. He and girl run off with their puppy.

Gelbert and Archie arrive at an old-fashioned -

TILE DEPARTURE BOARD

Gelbert is confused as to why they are there. Meanwhile, machines quietly gather around Archie and his guest.

Suddenly, the tiles spin. They create the FACE OF GOD - a highly advanced artificial being who benevolently presides over Union Station and its A.I. population.

Gelbert backs away from the godly figure staring down at him. Seeing Gelbert's trepidation, the austere face offers Gelbert a welcoming, child-like, smile that puts Gelbert at ease.

INT. UNION STATION/BARBER SHOP - SAME

A CREAKING security gate rises like a theatrical drape revealing a traditional barber shop.

BARBER, a robot with a handlebar mustache painted on his static face, welcomes Gelbert to his chair.

Gelbert is treated to a hot shave.

INT. UNION/MEN'S CLOTHIER - SAME

Beagle chows down on puppy food, while MANNEQUIN-ANDROIDS - MAN, WOMAN, Boy and Girl - select clothes for Gelbert.

As Woman looks over flannel pajamas, Boy shows her a fashionable blanket scarf with fringe. She nods.

Man, with Girl's help, puts together three striking casual ensembles. Man thanks Girl by resting an arm over her shoulder and giving her a fatherly squeeze. She looks up at him admiringly.

INT. UNION/BARBER SHOP - SAME

Barber shampoos Gelbert's scalp.

EXT. RAIL YARD - SAME

A LOCOMOTIVE nudges a SLEEPER toward the station. This carefully orchestrated maneuver is overseen by RAIL WORKER ROBOTS.

A SWITCH RAIL -

transfers the locomotive and sleeper onto -

TRACK 9 -

occupied by a DINING CAR. When the two cars make contact, they are coupled. The locomotive deliver the cars to -

EXT. BAY PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

CLANKING LOCOMOTIVE BELL

Locomotive, sleeper and dining cars come to a standstill at platform 9.

INT. UNION/BARBER SHOP - SAME

Barber hands Gelbert a mirror. Gelbert studies his handsome reflection. He offers Barber a smile. Barber rests a hand on Gelbert's shoulder, as a sign of friendship.

Archie enters. He again invites Gelbert to follow him.

INT. DINING CAR - SAME

The dining car - modern, elegant, art deco twist - is comparable to any five star dining establishment.

The noticeably famished guest enjoys butternut squash bisque complimented by artisan bread.

INT. DINING CAR/KITCHEN - SAME

The EXECUTIVE CHEF - a pair of durable robotic hands attached to sleek white arms - masterfully prepares the main course consisting of fillet mignon, a sauteed vegetable medley, and a mysterious potato dish.

INT. DINING CAR - SAME

Gelbert sops up the last bit of bisque with a piece of bread, as a snappily dressed WAITER ANDROID serves the entree that includes Duchess Potatoes. Gelbert's eyes grow wider.

Waiter steps away. When he returns, he holds an open bottle of red wine. Waiter fills Gelbert's wine glass.

INT. DINING CAR - SAME, LATER

While Gelbert finishes his meal, Waiter, table-side, makes strawberry topped crepes sprinkled with powdered sugar. He clears the dinner plate and serves dessert.

Waiter briefly steps away, returning with the coffee service.

INT. SLEEPER - NIGHT

Gelbert follows Archie from the DINING CAR, down a narrow PASSAGEWAY, to -

INT. VIP BERTH - CONTINUOUS

Gelbert is gobsmacked. His personal possessions, including family photographs, decorate walls and shelves. The machines went out of their way to transform the spacious berth into a home.

INT. GELBERT SHOWER - SAME, LATER

Soapy black grime swirls down the drain. Gelbert, lathering himself, grins from ear to ear.

INT. VIP BERTH - SAME

Gelbert, in his new FLANNEL PAJAMAS, climbs under the bed covers. He falls asleep the moment his head hits the pillow.

Archie tucks Gelbert in. Puppy makes a quizzical NOISE. Archie shushes her. She cocks her head and blinks. Archie smiles, turns on heel, and exits with puppy close in tow.

The berth door slides shut.

CUT TO:

Black.