

The Widow's Mite



By Dan Moore

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1. EXTERIOR – GRAVEYARD

Winter or Early Spring. **JENNY CARD**, a simply dressed working woman approaches a grave. The stone reads, "Beloved Husband." She is somber, but not grief stricken. She lays a single red rose on the stone.

2. INTERIOR – OFFICE

SARAH JAMISON, a middle class, middle management professional woman, is at her desk. We see pictures of children and family. Sarah is a serious person. She doesn't smile at all.

Sarah (on phone):

Yes, Mrs. Avery, it's all done. I had Margaret take care of it this morning.

(beat as she listens)

Sarah (on phone):

I'll see to it. Thanks.

Sarah hangs up the phone and presses the intercom button.

Sarah (into intercom):

Margaret?

Margaret (voice from intercom speaker):

Yes, Ms. Jamison?

Sarah (into intercom):

Would you interoffice a copy of the Hughes report to Mrs. Avery, please?

Margaret (voice from intercom speaker):

Right away, Ms. Johnson.

Sarah (into intercom):

Thank you, Margaret.

Sarah turns to her computer and types.

3. EXTERIOR - CITY STREET

*Jenny Card is walking along sidewalk. She is on her way to work. Old boots and shabby coat. She ignores shop windows. **Opening Titles.***

4. EXTERIOR – OFFICE BUILDING

Jenny Card approaches and enters.

5. INTERIOR – SAME OFFICE BUILDING – HOUSEKEEPING

*Jenny removes coat to reveal her housekeeping uniform, which is fresh and clean.
She gets her cleaning cart ready for work.*

6. INTERIOR – SARAH'S OFFICE

Sarah closes a file folder and checks her watch. She pushes the intercom button on her phone. Still serious.

Sarah (into intercom):

Margaret? I'm leaving for the day. I'll see you in the morning.

Margaret (from speaker):

Have a good evening, Ms. Jamison.

Sarah starts packing up her briefcase to go home.

7. INTERIOR – HALLWAY OUTSIDE SARAH'S OFFICE

Jenny is mopping the floor.

8. INTERIOR – SARAH'S OFFICE

Sarah puts on her coat, takes her briefcase and exits.

9. INTERIOR – HALLWAY OUTSIDE SARAH'S OFFICE

Sarah exits her office and walks toward Jenny. As she approaches, Jenny pauses and looks up. She offers a smile in greeting, but Sarah ignores her, lost in her own world.

10. EXTERIOR – OFFICE BUILDING, SAME TIME

Sarah exits the building.

11. EXTERIOR – DOWNTOWN SHOPPING DISTRICT

*Sarah is window shopping. After an establishing shot, we see her window shopping “natural” POV. She is enjoying herself. A street woman, **Sarah Noone**, watches her approach and appeals to Sarah for help. She is cold and shivering.*

Sarah Noone:

Pardon me, ma'am. Can you spare some change?

Sarah Jamison keeps walking, now intent on getting away from her.

Sarah Noone:

I'm hungry, ma'am!

Sarah Jamison shuns her and continues to window shop. Sarah pauses in front of a store and enters.

12. INTERIOR – STORE

*Sarah enters and begins wandering through the store. She sees a beautiful pitcher. The **Store Clerk** approaches.*

Clerk:

Can I help you?

Sarah:

This pitcher. It's beautiful.

Clerk:

We just put it out this afternoon. I think it will sell quickly.

Sarah looks at the tag. It says \$199.

Clerk:

It's a steal at that price.

Sarah:

I have just the place for it.

Sarah looks at the pitcher, turning it in her hands, she smiles for the first time.

Sarah:

I'll take it!

13. EXTERIOR STREET

Sarah walks down the street with the new pitcher wrapped in a package. She is smiling for the first time.

14. INTERIOR – SARAH'S HOME

Sarah's home is a very comfortable middle class home that has a number of expensive knickknacks. Sarah enters the house with the package. She sets it down and removes her coat. She takes the package to the dining room, removes the pitcher, and places it on her dining room table. She steps back and admires it with a big smile. Another trophy for her collection.

Sarah sits down at the table by the pitcher and takes out her cell phone. She dials and gazes at the pitcher as the connection goes through.

Sarah (into cell phone):

Hey, Ash? Guess what? I was window shopping downtown and found this amazing pitcher. You've got to see it! I walked into the store that there it was. I just had to buy it.

(pause as Ashley asks her what she's going to do with it)

Sarah (into cell phone):

Oh. I'll find some use for it.

15. EXTERIOR – STREET AT NIGHT

Jenny Card walks home from work in her shabby coat and worn out boots.

16. EXTERIOR – JENNY'S APARTMENT

Jenny arrives home and finds a package on her doorstep. She's surprised. She picks it up and enters her apartment.

17. INTERIOR – JENNY'S APARTMENT

Jenny's apartment is simple and neat. There are no luxuries here. The package is on the kitchen table. Jenny opens the note and reads it. It says, "From your friends." She sets down the note and opens the package. She removes a pair of nice lady's boots. She tries them on. They are very comfortable.

18. INTERIOR – SARAH'S KITCHEN

Sarah is preparing dinner, checks oven, cutting veggies, etc.

19. INTERIOR – JENNY'S APARTMENT

Later that night, Jenny is sitting at the kitchen table doing her bills by the envelope method. The new boots are off to one side. She takes a few dollars and puts them into an envelope, seals it, and writes "For the Needy" on the outside of the envelope. As she does so, she looks at the shoes.

20. INTERIOR – SARAH'S HOME OFFICE

Sarah is shopping online. We see her click on the "Purchase Now" button and insert her credit card info.

21. INTERIOR – JENNY'S APARTMENT

Later still, we see Jenny sitting in a rocking chair, knitting a scarf. The new boots and the box are sitting on the coffee table in front of her.

22. EXTERIOR – CHURCH

It is the next morning. Jenny is out walking in her old boots and worn out coat. She has an envelope in her hand. She walks up to the church door and slides the envelope into the mail slot. She turns and walks away without entering or knocking.

23. INTERIOR – CHURCH HALLWAY

*The envelop slides through the mail slot and falls to the floor as the cover snaps shut over the slot. **Rev. John Benson** walks over to the door and picks up the envelope. He glances out the window by the door and sees Jenny walking way. He looks down at the envelope, flips it over, and reads "For the Needy." He shakes his head with a smile.*

24. INTERCUTTING BETWEEN INTERIOR – PHONE DESK AT HOME OF STEWARDSHIP CHAIR AND SARAH'S OFFICE

Samuel Wood, the Stewardship Chair at Sarah's church dials the phone and waits for the connection.

Sam (on phone):

Hello, this is Sam Wood. May I speak with Sarah Jamison, please? *(beat)* Yes, I'll hold.

Sarah is working at her desk when Margaret's voice comes over the intercom.

Margaret (on intercom):

Ms. Jamison? You have a call from a Sam Wood on line one. Do you want to take it?

Sarah makes a face. She doesn't want to speak with him.

Sarah (into intercom):

I'll take it.

She picks up the phone.

Sarah (into phone):

This is Sarah Jamison.

Sam (into phone):

Hi Sarah! Sam Wood from the church. Thanks for taking my call.

Sarah (into phone):

No problem, Mr. Wood. What is it?

Sarah continues to work at her computer as she talks on the phone.

Sam (into phone):

We're working on the stewardship drive at church and need some help.

Sarah (into phone):

It's been a hard year, Sam. I don't think I can afford to give much to the church.

Sam (into phone):

That's not why I'm calling. I need your help with our neighborhood gatherings.

Sarah stops working to listen more closely.

Sarah (into phone):

What are those?

Sam (into phone):

We're having everyone in the church meet in small groups in members' homes to talk about stewardship. I was wondering if you would host one of the meetings?

Sarah (into phone):

I don't think I'd be very good at leading a church meeting.

Sam (into phone):

No, no, you just host the meeting. I'll be there to run it.

Sarah (into phone):

Well, I don't know...

Sam (into phone):

It would be two weeks from tomorrow, Sarah. It'll be easy. And you have such a nice home...

Sarah (into phone):

Well, I guess I can. Okay, put me down for it.

Sam (into phone):

Great! Oh, a couple more things.

Sarah rolls her eyes.

Sarah (into phone):

Yes?

Sam (into phone):

You would provide dessert for about ten people.

Sarah (into phone, nodding):

I can do that.

Sam (into phone):

And...

Sarah (into phone):

What else, Mr. Wood?

Sam (into phone):

You'll be expected to invite church members in your neighborhood. I'll get a list to you...

Sarah has a look of stunned horror on her face as she hangs up the phone.

Sarah (to herself):

I don't need this!

25. INTERIOR – HALLWAY OUTSIDE SARAH'S OFFICE

It is later the same day and Jenny is again mopping the hall floor. Sarah leaves her office, coat on, briefcase in hand. Jenny looks up as Sarah approaches.

Jenny (smiling):

Good afternoon, Ms. Jamison.

Sarah (coolly):

Do I know you?

Jenny:

I'm Jenny Card. We both go to St. Andrew's church.

Sarah:

Oh, yeah. I guess I've seen you.

Sarah doesn't want to talk to her. She turns to leave.

Jenny:

Have a nice evening, Ms. Jamison.

Sarah leaves without returning the courtesy. Jenny shakes her head with a knowing smile and goes back to her mopping.

26. EXTERIOR – CHURCH

It is evening. Jenny is in her worn out coat and old boots. She is carrying a Bible. She approaches and enters the church.

27. INTERIOR – CHURCH

It is a few minutes later. Jenny is sitting with a small group of people in a circle. It is a Bible study. They all have Bibles on their laps.

(Note for DP: perhaps this can include a WS and then a trucking shot from behind several of the people, intermittently revealing the reader, then reaction shots, ending with Jenny on the last line.)

Reader:

Mark 12, 41 through 44. "Jesus watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins. Then he called his disciples and said, 'this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had.'"

28. INTERIOR – CHURCH

The Bible Study is over, Rev. Benson and Jenny are the last ones to leave. They are standing at the church door. Both have coats on and are ready to leave for the night.

Rev. Benson:

Jenny, I saw you leave that envelope this morning.

Jenny is uncomfortable.

Rev. Benson:

I want to thank you for your gift.

Jenny:

Don't thank me, Reverend Benson. It was my pleasure.

Jenny leaves and Rev. Benson watches her retreat down the walk through the same window from scene 21.

29. EXTERIOR – SARAH'S HOME

It's a Saturday morning and Sarah exits her home and walks to the mailbox to get her mail. She takes a stack of mail out of the box and closes it.

30. INTERIOR – SARAH'S HOME

Sarah sets the mail on the dining room table. The pitcher is there in its place. She sits and sorts the mail. She selects a piece from the church with a frown. She opens it, revealing a cover letter and a list of names and phone numbers for her neighborhood gathering. She gets up and walks away, leaving the pile of mail.

31. EXTERIOR OF SARAH'S OFFICE BUILDING

32. INTERIOR – HALLWAY OUTSIDE SARAH'S OFFICE

Jenny is once again mopping the floor in the hallway. She is humming a hymn while she's working.

33. INTERIOR – SARAH'S OFFICE

Sarah is again working at her desk. Her briefcase is open on the desk. Her intercom beeps.

Sarah (into intercom):

Yes, Margaret?

Margaret (through intercom):

Mr. Sam Wood on line one.

Sarah (into intercom):

Thank you Margaret.

Sarah selects line one on the phone.

Sarah (into the phone):

Hello Mr. Wood.

Sam (through the phone):

Hi Sarah! I was just calling to make sure you got the list of people to invite to your neighborhood gathering.

Sarah frowns as he says this and reaches into her briefcase for the list.

Sarah (into the phone):

Yes, I've got it.

Sam (through phone, pleasantly):

Please call the people on your list right away. It's important that we get as many people out to these meetings as possible.

Sarah (into the phone, bothered):

I'll get to it, Mr. Wood.

Sam (through phone):

Thank you, Sarah. I really appreciate what you are doing.

Sarah (into the phone):

Okay. Have a good day, Mr. Wood.

Sam (through phone):

Goodbye.

Sarah hangs up the phone and glances at the list. She notices Jenny Card's name on her list of guests.

34. INTERIOR – HALLWAY OUTSIDE SARAH'S OFFICE

Jenny is mopping the floor as Sarah enters the hallway. She is wearing her coat and has her briefcase. Sarah looks up and smiles, then returns to her work, not wanting to create an uncomfortable moment for Sarah. Sarah approaches Jenny somewhat tentatively.

Sarah:

Ah, Ms. Card?

Jenny is pleasantly surprised.

Jenny:

It's Mrs., but Jenny's fine.

Sarah:

Okay. (awkwardly) I didn't know if you were married or not.

Jenny:

My husband died a few years ago.

Sarah:

Oh, I'm sorry Mrs. Card.

Jenny (smiling):

Jenny.

Sarah (uncomfortable):

Jenny.

Jenny:

You wanted to ask me something?

Sarah:

Oh. Yes. Next Wednesday night I'm hosting a neighborhood gathering for church. It's at 7 o'clock. You're on my guest list. Would you like to come?

Jenny:

I'd love to! Yes!

Sarah (withdrawing):

Okay. Good.

Jenny:

Can I bring anything?

Sarah:

No, just yourself. Ah, got to be going. Have a nice evening.

Jenny:

Thanks. You, too.

Sarah turns to leave. She is frowning. Jenny gets back to mopping with a big smile on her face.

35. EXTERIOR – SARAH'S HOME

People are arriving for the neighborhood gathering.

36. INTERIOR – SARAH'S HOME

People have gathered in the living room. Sam Wood, the stewardship chair is leading the meeting.

Sam:

Welcome to this neighborhood gathering. As you know, we're in the middle of our stewardship campaign at church. God has given us so much. We're here tonight to talk about how we can give something back to God...

Shots of people talking and sharing with a music bed rather than natural sound to denote the passage of time.

37. INTERIOR – SARAH'S HOME

There is a break in the meeting and everyone is having their dessert and coffee. Jenny is in the dining room, admiring the pitcher on the table. Sarah is keeping an eye on her. Jenny reaches out to touch the pitcher. Sarah steps in and takes it, holding it in a protective manner.

Sarah:

It's very valuable.

Jenny:

Oh! I'm sorry Mrs. Jamison.

Sarah:

I shouldn't have left it out...

There is a very awkward silence for a beat.

Sam (from the living room):

Let's all get back together, folks.

The guests move toward the living room. Jenny watches Sarah disappear into the kitchen with the pitcher.

38. INTERIOR – SARAH'S HOME

The meeting is back in session.

Sam:

...tonight we are thinking about generosity. Do any of you have any thoughts on what makes someone generous?

(beat)

Anybody?

There is a pause while folks think, then Jenny, full of joy speaks.

Jenny:

I think it's about joy. My favorite scripture puts it this way: "Each one of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work."

People nod in agreement. Music comes up. There is another passage of time and we see pledge cards being distributed around the group. Hand to hand to hand.

39. INTERIOR – SARAH'S HOME

The meeting is over, Sarah is standing at the front door, saying goodnight to her guests. Jenny is the last one to leave.

Sarah:

Goodnight Mrs. Card.

Jenny:

Thank you for inviting me.

(beat)

Jenny:

May I call you Sarah?

Sarah:

No.

(Jenny is surprised)

Jenny:

Well, goodnight, Mrs. Jamison.

Jenny turns to leave and then pauses. She turns back to Sarah.

Jenny:

Can I ask you something, Mrs. Jamison?

Sarah doesn't respond.

Jenny:

Why do you hold things so tightly?

Sarah:

Goodnight, Mrs. Card.

Jenny exits and Sarah closes the front door. She is shaken by the question. She turns back into the living room, busying herself with picking up the extra pledge cards and napkins. She dumps them all in a wastebasket in the front hall. She straightens up and is startled to be staring at herself in the front hallway mirror.

40. EXTERIOR – DOWNTOWN SHOPPING DISTRICT

Sarah is window shopping with less enthusiasm than before. As she turns from a store window, she sees Jenny in her worn out boots and coat walking in her direction. She has a paper bag with handles. Sarah ducks into a doorway to avoid Jenny.

Jenny passes by without noticing Sarah. Sarah is about to step out of the doorway when she hears Sarah speaking her name.

Jenny:

Hello Sarah!

Sarah looks out, expecting Jenny to be speaking to her. Instead, Jenny is talking to Sarah Noone, the same street woman who asked Sarah for a handout previously. Sarah inches closer so she can eavesdrop on the conversation.

Sarah Noone:

Who is it?

Jenny:

It's me, Jenny Card.

Sarah Noone:

Oh, Jenny, I'm sorry I didn't recognize you. The eyes aren't so good, you know.

Jenny:

It's okay, Sarah.

(beat)

Jenny:

I have something for you.

Sarah Noone:

For me?

Jenny pulls the box from her paper bag.

Jenny:

Here. These are for you. You're a size 8 aren't you?

Sarah Noone:

I think so.

Jenny:

They'll fit just fine, then.

Sarah Noone looks at the new boots.

Sarah Noone:

Bless you, Jenny! Bless you!

Jenny (ignoring the thank you):

I've got something else for you.

Sarah Jamison is taking all this in. Jenny reaches into the paper bag and pulls out the scarf she was making. She unfolds it and carefully puts it over Sarah Noone's head and wraps it lovingly around her neck.

Jenny:

This'll help keep you warm.

Sarah Noone embraces Jenny with tears of joy. Sarah Jamison, who has been watching all this, turns away. She is deeply touched. She continues walking past shops, pretending to window shop, but she can't any longer.

41. EXTERIOR OF SARAH JAMISON'S OFFICE BUILDING

42. INTERIOR – HALLWAY OUTSIDE SARAH'S OFFICE

Jenny is mopping the floor. She is humming a hymn as she works. Sarah has approached her without her realizing it.

Sarah:

Jenny?

Jenny looks up, but doesn't smile. She's not sure what to expect.

Jenny:

Yes, Ms. Jamison?

Sarah:

I saw you give those things to that street woman.

Jenny:

Her name is Sarah.

Sarah:

Yes, I know. I heard you talking to her. For a minute, I thought you were talking to me.

Jenny doesn't respond, simply waits.

Sarah:

Ah, about last night.

(beat)

Sarah:

I'm sorry about the pitcher.

Jenny:

It's okay.

Sarah:

No. It's not okay. I was wrong.

Jenny:

You're forgiven, Ms. Jamison.

Sarah:

Would you call me Sarah?

Jenny:

Are you sure?

Sarah:

Yes.

Jenny:

Sarah.

(beat)

Sarah:

What did you mean when you asked why I held things so tightly?

Jenny looks down at her mop handle and grasps it tightly.

Jenny:

I used to hold things tightly. I don't know when – maybe when I lost my husband – but through the years I've come to understand that all the things I held so tightly weren't mine to begin with.

Jenny relaxes her grip on the mop handle.

Jenny:

Everything is God's and God is in control.

Jenny smiles at Sarah.

43. EXTERIOR – SARAH'S HOME

Sarah drives into her driveway.

44. INTERIOR – SARAH'S HOME

The pitcher is on the dining room table. It is out of focus. Sarah enters the frame in focus and the focus racks to bring the pitcher into share detail. Sarah approaches the pitcher and picks it up. She grasps it very tightly. She realizes what she is doing and loosens her grip, keeping the pitcher in her hands.

Sarah (prayerfully):

Jenny was right.

45. EXTERIOR – CHURCH

Sarah parks at the church and exits her car with a box under her arm. It is the same box the pitcher came in.

46. INTERIOR – CHURCH

Sarah enters the church.

Sarah:

Hello?

(beat)

Sarah:

Anybody here?

No one answers. Sarah has wandered in by the sanctuary. She looks down at the box and then at the communion table. She enters the sanctuary and places the box on the table. She opens her purse, takes out a pen and writes: "Given for the glory of God" on the box.

47. INTERIOR – CHURCH

Sarah walks out of the empty sanctuary and pauses by a table in the hallway. She looks at the pledge cards that are there. She picks one up and departs.

48. EXTERIOR – CHURCH

It is Sunday morning and people are arriving for church.

49. INTERIOR – CHURCH SANCTUARY

Sam Wood is speaking to the congregation.

Sam:

God has given us so much and because of that, we offer our gifts back to God. Since it's pledge Sunday, I am going to ask you to bring your pledge cards with you when you come forward for communion.

50. INTERIOR – CHURCH SANCTUARY

People are going forward for communion. Jenny and Sarah end up side by side at the rail. They kneel together, placing their pledge cards on the rail.

Rev. Benson stands behind the communion table. There is the bread and cup. Sarah's pitcher is also there. In a montage, the bread is broken, the juice is poured from the pitcher into the cup.

Jenny sees the pitcher and then turns and looks at Sarah, who's head is bowed in prayer. She smiles. Rev. Benson offers the elements to the congregation.

Sarah and Jenny take communion. They rise from the rail and pause together. Sarah smiles at Jenny and mouths, "Thank You," to her.

51. EXTERIOR DOWNTOWN SHOPPING DISTRICT

Sarah is walking down the street, but she isn't looking into the shop windows. Sarah Noone, the street woman is crouched in her regular spot. She is wearing the new boots and scarf that Jenny gave her. Sarah walks up and stoops down to speak to her.

Sarah:

Sarah?

Sarah Noone:

Who is it?

Sarah:

We have the same name. You can call me Sarah, too.

Sarah Noone:

How do you know me?

Sarah:

Jenny told me about you.

Sarah Noone:

Oh that Jenny! She's an angel.

Sarah:

Would you like a cup of coffee?

52. EXTERIOR – DOWNTOWN SHOPPING DISTRICT

From a high shot we see Sarah Jamison help Sarah Noone up. Together they walk arm and arm down the street.

Sarah (in WS):

I know this great place right up the street...

The music swells as the two figures walk off in the WS. Credits Roll.