

# A Little Compassion

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A short story about good deeds and their sometimes not so kind rewards.

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The sunrise was about an hour away. The air was full of skunk gunk and bushes rummaging with the sounds of hungry raccoons. I loved early morning walks. It was peaceful. No cars, except for the occasional police car or railroad maintenance

vehicle. Strolling along, I approached a bridge and took a quick peek over the expressway. To my surprise I saw two young children playing tag. Both had blonde hair and blue eyes. They looked like a male pair of identical twins. I quietly shouted,

â Psssst what are you kids doing out so late? Where are your parents?â

The two children looked up at me surprised, and continued playing.

I went around the bridge and quickly rushed down the expressway ramp to where the children were playing.

Again, with frustration I said,

â Where are you parents, kids?â

The two kids looked at me and pointed to a sleeping man accompanied by a really large sleeping bag. From what I could see, he had a large, gray beard and wore steel toe boots.

The thought struck me rather quickly: these were two homeless children frolicking early in the morning, while their father slept.

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“Are you guys hungry?”

“Sure.” Said one of the children.

“Alright, I’ll run over to the coffee shop.”

“My dad likes coffee.”

I gave a quick smile and took off towards the coffee shop.

I couldn’t believe what I had run into. I rarely saw homeless people. I mean it wasn’t the first time, but kids; that was definitely a first. The amount of compassion I felt for them made my heart pound ferociously. Their innocent young faces running around like nothing was wrong.

I returned to the expressway with a dozen sandwiches, a dozen doughnuts, coffee and tea. The children were still playing tag. The father was awake. He was quite tall with his steel toe boots. He did not look happy.

“Good morning.” I said.

He looked at me with a frown.

“I saw your children playing, and thought I’d bring you guys some breakfast.”

He looked at me with beady blues eyes and said nothing.

As I handed him the breakfast he said,

“Thanks a lot. We appreciate it very much, if only more people like you existed, the world would be a much happier place.”

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“ Thanks a lot, just doing a good deed.” I said.

His voice was clear, and his wording seemed quite concise. There was a moment of silence until I broke it.

“ Well I must be off now, time for work.”

“ Oh, no please don’t go yet, have some coffee, this must be a fresh batch, either that or they don’t like giving homeless people fresh coffee.”

“ Well sure why not?” I said.

He poured me a cup of coffee with some sugar and cream on the side. I turned away to see what the kids were up to. They were nowhere in sight.

I could hear childish laughter, but couldn’t spot it. I looked up and there were the two children waving to me from the bridge. I waved back. Suddenly I felt a big thump on my head. It was the homeless man. He had hit me with a brick. I was nearly unconscious. He kicked my face and ribs with his steel toe boots until I started coughing up blood. I could hear his two children laughing and cheering him on. He took off after then minutes.

From a distance I could see him gather his sleeping bag and other supplies and head up the ramp. I held my stomach in severe pain, and waited until someone had enough compassion to stop and call an ambulance. What was compassion worth these days?

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