

The Kind Act

It's the 24th of December and the snow is falling steadily and making a crisp, white bedsheet of the pavements and roads. There is so much joy in the city -children ecstatic that for once there is snow on Christmas Eve. But not everyone is full of joy, as many homeless people try and block out the cold on this bone chilling winter's night.

As Joe merrily walks through the streets of London he is overwhelmed with happiness, not only because of the unexpected snowfall but because this will be his first Christmas with his girlfriend. Then, to his left he sees a man propped up against the wall of JD Sports. He has long pepper and salt coloured hair which is naturally curly and he is holding a tatty piece of cardboard with big black writing on it, which reads:

“Anything, anything at all, spare change or food”

Joe's heart is instantly broken in two. He hates it that there is such inequality in the world; everyone deserves the right to a hot meal and a roof over their head. He especially resents the ridiculous amounts of money footballers get just to kick a ball around. Joe snaps himself out of this train of thought and carries out his own personal life motto

‘Don't think about acting – just act!’

He rushes over to the man and says:

“Are you alright?”

“What?” says the man “What do you want? I don't have anything to steal”

“No, I'm not going to steal anything from you. I know this is sudden, but what food do you prefer?” Joe questions

“Anything hot” the man replies, clearly exhausted and discombobulated.

“Ok” Joe replies “I'll be right back, don't worry.”

The old man wonders whether the young man will be back or not, because lots have people have said they will get him food, but they never come back. Joe rushes down the street and slingshots himself into a Greggs. As it is near closing time he quickly orders a steak pie and rushes out, telling the lady at the counter to keep the change. He then charges into Starbucks and orders a large cappuccino to go, once again telling the person at the till to keep the change. He then bolts into Tesco and gets a ham and cheese sandwich and a packet of Walkers ready salted crisps. On an impulse he races over to the national lottery stand, grabs a scratch card and a lottery ticket and quickly circles 6 numbers. Joe pays, asks for a bag and hastily puts all his gatherings into it. The lady at the till gives him his receipt and a jolly ‘Merry Christmas!’ and he flies out of Tesco – his whole focus on returning to the

old man with a hot meal. As he retraces his steps he tries to recall where he saw him huddled.

'JD Sports' he screams in his head. He snaps his whole body 180 degrees and sprints down the street where he can finally see the man. Joe kneels down beside him and says:

"This is what I got for you - I hope it's ok"

The old man looks baffled as he unpacks the bag. He eyes the coffee like it's something divine and grabs it, holding it with both hands, letting the heat transfer to his frozen fingers.

"Be careful it's..." the man takes a sip and his eyes widen with alarm before he swallows "hot." Joe finishes with a compassionate smile.

"Ahhhhhh, that's the nicest coffee I've ever had," says the old man. Then his eyes flick to the steaming Greggs bag, like a predator spying its prey. He places the coffee on the crisp white ground and picks up the bag with the steak pie in; his tongue becomes a snake, prodding the food, but the snake recoils back due to the heat! The man then blows robustly on the pie for a full thirty seconds and when he finally takes a bite, you can see he is in heaven.

"Thank you, thank you so much" he says between mouthfuls. Joe checks the time on his phone - 8:00 -and realises the lottery numbers are being drawn.

'Look' says Joe 'I bought you a scratch card and a lottery ticket too – you never know! They're doing the draw any second.'

Joe quickly searches for the results on the internet. Thank god for 4G he thinks to himself.

While they wait for the lottery, sitting side by side on the wet cold pavement, they do the scratch card, sadly there was nothing. Then they, watch in eager anticipation, like a child opening presents from Mr. Claus, as the first number is drawn... match, the second, also a match, then the third and the fourth... and the fifth... Joe realises that that they are both holding their breath As the sixth ball appears they both look at each other in disbelief, stunned, overcome. Then they leap to their feet with a shout of delight. Joe looks over at the man and there are tears in his eyes he looks at him and says "I would hug you but you probably don't want my filth"

"It doesn't matter, bring it in" says Joe.

And they embrace and Joe starts to cry as his heart realises he has helped someone who had literally nothing become a millionaire. And what Joes loves most is that he is not jealous that it's not him, because he has everything that he needs in life, a home, a family and someone who loves him. He feels overjoyed that this poor gentle man can make a fresh start for himself.

2 months later

Joe still keeps in touch with the man, whose name is also Joe coincidentally, and he has told Joe that he has donated £500,000 to lots of different charities that help homeless people. He now has a nice house and a job. He had always had really good qualifications but was made redundant and as things spiralled downwards out of control, he just gave up. When he gave the money to the charities the local and national press were all over him. He remembers the one question he got asked time and time again:

“Why did you give half your money away?”

“A kind act made me a millionaire so I needed to pay it forward and do a kind act for someone else” the millionaire replies.

**Sometimes I think if we commit ourselves to one kind act every day
it could impact on a local, national or maybe, just maybe, even
global scale.**

Word Count (including title): 1,104