

Tale of the Unexpected

by Anonymous, aged 17

I was lost. Walking alone down the empty, dark streets through the alleyways. I tiptoed, almost scared to be heard amongst the sirens that drowned out my sister's whimpers. I carried her, all wrapped up in her old, damp rags as her fingertips began to turn icy blue. I was worried. It was an unwelcoming, chilly night. I was not prepared to stay on the abandoned streets.

In the distance I spotted two men. The first man was a tall, large man, covered in tattoos from the head downwards. The other was a lot smaller; he wore a hat - his menacing face was visible underneath. The two men glared at me with their piercing eyes. I felt uneasy.

I saw a rusty, old bench that was struggling to stand. As I lowered my frightened sister onto the bench to give my weak arms a rest, I caught a distinctive whiff of food. A combination of: burgers, chips and garlic bread. It felt like hours since we last ate, maybe days, and as the ambrosial smell became stronger, the toddler's drowning screams stopped. The look of fear in her twinkling, ocean-blue eyes was painful to see; she looked as hungry as an abandoned puppy waiting for her owner to find her.

Millions of thoughts rushed through my head like trains arriving and departing at a busy station. I zoned out, dreaming about a happier future. The two men had stopped. It also felt like we were being watched by the swaying trees that were towering overhead. Whoosh, the wind was picking up. I was frightened; I was homeless. My mother had once told me before she died, "Keep your brave face on, tomorrow is another day full of new adventures." I regularly repeated this to myself and Emily (my little sister). I wiped a tear from my face using the sleeve of my worn-out jumper.

As I sat slouched down and gazed aimlessly into the distance, the sirens stopped and the empty air returned to silence, apart from the occasional gust of wind and the whispering of the suspicious men who were still lurking.

I sat hopelessly with my sister in my arms; she started chewing on her bottom lip and her eyes swelled up with tears. I wondered whether we were going to eat that night. Bins surrounded us overflowing with empty bottles, wrappers and junk.

The men began to stroll towards us and as they did, my emotions danced around my body. I was panicking. As they approached, one of the men got close; he whispered in my ear, "Do you have a place to sleep?" I told him I did, although I clearly didn't. He told me, "Our father owns a block of flats just over the field if you would like to stay in one? No charge." I was in utter shock. Was this a trick? I couldn't believe my ears. A man that I had never met before was offering us a roof over our heads...for free.

I carelessly ran with my sister in my arms, towards where he told me his father was waiting. I instantly regretted my decision. But it was too late. All too soon, it was over in a gunshot...