

A Life Changed by Small Gestures

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“Beep, beep, beep.” A world of smattering noise brings Chris to his senses. He looks at the clock. It reads 6:00 a.m. He gets up from bed and prepares for his shift as a cleaner at the local hospital. He shakes off the lingering drowsiness as his body moves out of the threshold of his home. Across the hallway, Chris sees something - the neighbour’s cat, scratching the wall.

“The little troublemaker has escaped his warm bed for another adventure again last night,” Chris thinks. He’s never actually seen his neighbour, and no one has ever answered the door when he rang the doorbell. Chris is used to it and brings the fluffy pet some food and water. Then he goes on his way and leaves the little cat in the hallway munching on its meal. It’s seven in the morning by the time he leaves.

Chris leaves the building. Around 15 minutes of waiting follows until the bus arrives. He hops on board and takes a seat. While sitting, he notices a young boy who seems to be struggling. So, he leaves his seat, pretending to be leaving. The young boy sees this and sits down, giving Chris a smile to show his appreciation.

Chris enters the hospital and changes into his work clothes. He begins his shift by sweeping the main lobby. After he’s finished, he moves to clean the patients’ rooms outside. He sees falling leaves and wilting flowers. The first thing Chris notices is the young boy lying in the hospital bed. The poor, skinny boy is connected to several machines. Lying on the bed, the young lad looks to be devoid of any life, like a living corpse waiting to be taken by the Grim Reaper, and he is staring out the window. Chris approaches him and says, “There’s nothing colourful there, but it won’t always be like that. In the coming spring, it will be a whole world of colours.” The patient, still staring blankly at the window, responds by struggling and says, “I might not make it until spring.” Hearing this, Chris quickly cleans the room and leaves the boy to think.

The next day, Chris returns to the boy’s room once more. With him, he brings several things to try and cheer him up. Though they’re all small - a stuffed toy to cuddle or a little magic show for his entertainment - the dejected boy seems to enjoy it. Day after day, Chris visits the boy and the other children in the hospital, wanting to give them hope to keep going. As the white landscape melts into

a beautiful green sea, Chris finds out that several of the kids have been discharged, fully recovered from their illnesses. This puts a smile on Chris's face. However, not everything is all sunshine and rainbows. There are still many children who aren't able to leave the hospital. This feeling of hopelessness doesn't deter Chris from helping the children. Instead, he doubles his efforts to cheer them up and give them hope for the future. More determined than ever, Chris continues his acts of kindness.

A year later, a mysterious knock awakes Chris from his deep slumber. When he gets up to answer the door, he finds a stranger standing in front of him. He asks the man his purpose for knocking at his door at six in the morning on a Saturday. After some explanation, he finds out the man's name is James, and he is actually the neighbour living next door. James has come to personally thank Chris for taking care of his pet. He explains that he works during the night and sleeps in the mornings, so he doesn't have much time to properly care for the animal. He adds, "Don't worry, I've just asked the company to change my schedule so I'll have time to take care of him from now on." To show his gratitude, James offers to take Chris out for a meal. Over the years, Chris and James become great friends, helping each other in times of need. Chris also continues his work at the hospital.

Years later, Chris prepares for another normal shift. As he opens his front door, something flies towards his face. After he removes the object, more come his way. Looking closely, he realises the objects are envelopes. He carefully opens one, finding it to be a letter of gratitude addressed to him from a boy he helped on the bus. The next is from the little boy he met in the hospital. In the letter, he describes his new life, free from the illness that had plagued him all his life. He also thanks Chris for his help, which gave him hope to live on. Chris sits on the floor, reaching for each letter one by one. By the time he finishes, the floor is littered with empty envelopes and scattered letters, tears streaming down his face. The letters had been sent by his employer, at the persistent request of those Chris had helped. For the first time in his life, he feels he has done something truly remarkable, something to be proud of. He will never know the full extent of what he has achieved, but deep down, he knows he has found his true purpose in life - to continue showing love and care to others.