

A SMALL, SIMPLE KINDNESS

By Bradley Walton

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A SMALL, SIMPLE KINDNESS

A Ten Minute Dramatic Monologue

By Bradley Walton

SYNOPSIS: Every day, we're surrounded by negativity. News headlines scream for our attention with ugly stories about terrible things, and social networking enables everyone to complain about everything. It's easy for small, good things to get lost in the shuffle. But they matter. Because you don't have to rescue a child from a burning building or cure a disease to have a positive impact on someone's life. All it takes is *A Small, Simple Kindness*.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 either; gender flexible)

NARRATOR (m/f) A sheltered, middle-class teenager from a good home.

SETTING: Bare stage.

COSTUMES: Nice casual clothing.

AUTHOR NOTES

I have heard, on more than one occasion, rounds of serious dramatic interpretation described as one story of rape or death after the other. Admittedly, it's serious dramatic interpretation, so there are going to be a lot of those kinds of things. And yes, I have written my fair share of monologues having to do with death. And I have no doubt that I will write more in the future. But as a response to that observation, I felt challenged to write something that was positive without being dark, depressing, or gross. This script is the result.

NARRATOR: Everybody has a story. If it's about battling an addiction or a disease, or going through some kind of terrible experience, then most people would probably think it's an interesting story. The more awful things get, the more the audience is usually drawn in. And sometimes people think that because a story is about something horrible, it must be a good story. Stories about small acts of kindness don't scream for our attention like those other stories. But what they can do is inspire us and give us hope. So that's the kind of story I'm going to tell. Not because it'll make you cry or squirm in your seat, but because small, good things...they matter. First, though, I need to tell you a little about myself. I come from a middle class family. I make good grades, and I don't get into trouble. My parents are happily married to each other. We live in a pretty nice house. And nobody close to me has ever died. I'm really lucky and I know it. If you're cynical, you might think I'm spoiled. Up until a couple of months ago, I'd have said you were wrong.

For most of my life, I never had empathy for other people's problems. I had sympathy, sure. One of my friends, his grandmother died, and I felt bad for him. Another one of my friends, his dad was laid off, and they lost their home. I felt bad for them, too. But I didn't feel any compulsion to try to help them or make them feel better. I didn't offer a shoulder to cry on or say, "Hey, let's go to a movie. My treat." If anything, I sort of kept those friends at a distance because I was uncomfortable being around their problems. I'd never had real problems, so I didn't have any empathy for people who did. I just couldn't relate. So yeah, I was spoiled. But then this thing happened. It was really small, but to me, it was important. I'm not going to say that it changed me in some huge way, because it didn't. But it made me realize that I wanted to be a better person.

My big thing is, I love to read. That probably makes me a huge nerd, but I don't care. I love books. Actual, physical books that I can hold in my hands and feel the paper when I turn the pages. I blow all my allowance on books every month. Science fiction. Fantasy. Suspense. Graphic novels. All kinds of stuff. And I read fast. I go through way more than what my allowance covers, so I borrow a lot of books from my school library. Anyway, my three favorite authors all had new novels coming out the same month. In hardcover. I only had enough allowance money to buy two...meaning I was going to have to wait a whole extra month for one of them. Which I did not want to do. Now normally, the school library wouldn't be a good source for instant gratification on a new book—they only buy stuff a couple times a year. But one of these was an exception. It was the third volume of a really popular series. Tons of students were dying to get their hands on it, so the library had placed a special order to get two copies on the day the book came out, and they were going to rush them through processing, so they'd be ready to circulate when school was over that afternoon. They weren't doing any advance holds, so if I wanted a copy, I had to be there as soon as the bell rang.

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