Home

By Amelia L
Written at the end of Year 7, then aged 11

I walked past her every day – she was always there.

My parents had always told me to stay away from strangers or people who didn't look approachable; I always assumed this was because they were dangerous, that it wasn't safe to be around them. However, this all changed one day.

It was a perfectly normal morning and I was walking to school, the same as I always did. But so engrossed was I within the pages of my book that I strode passed the zebra crossing that I used every day. The beeping, indicating that it was safe for everyone to walk across, broke my focus; my head darted up and I realised what I had done. "Urgh" I said, frustrated with myself. I looked around, "never mind, I can cross further up the road." Little did I know, this course of action would change my life forever.

 Pitter patter, pitter patter… It was raining. I put my beloved book away and pulled my hood over my head and thought nothing of this predictable English weather. Unable to lose myself in my tale, I became more aware of my surroundings. I was able to hear someone sigh and weep. My hooded head down, the sound became louder as I continued up the road; in my peripheral vision I noticed someone. An upset, lonely and dirty young lady. A homeless young lady. I stared at her and saw the sorrow in her ocean-blue eyes; I saw how fragile and thin she was; how she shivered in the crisp, morning air. But what could I do? I heard my parents' warning words echoing in my mind…. My eyes dropped to the ground, my heart felt heavy, uncomfortable almost, ashamed as I recalled how, moments earlier, I'd rolled out of my soft bed, thrown on my clean, crisp uniform, stumbled into the kitchen to be greeted by a delicious breakfast, and hugged my caring family goodbye. I realised how much we take for granted. Looking at her, I could sense she wasn't dangerous, she was sad. She was desperate. She was barely older than me. I smiled at the lady - and then I ran…. Glancing over my shoulder, I saw the hope in her heart fade as she assumed that just like every other person, I was horrified, I was running from her. What she didn't know was that, in my pocket, I felt the shiny texture of the £5 note my dad had given me as I left for school. I clutched it tightly as I darted up the high street, determined to make a change.

Flinging open the door to the nearest café, I used all the money to buy a hot coffee and sandwich. I thanked the barista as I dashed back to where the woman was waiting, careful not spill the drink. My thoughts raced faster than my legs, what would I say to her? What if she didn't want my charity? What if she didn't like the food? Shaking my head to clear my frantic mind, I took a deep breath. Seeing her shivering on the pavement new thoughts entered my head. I had to do this; I wasn't scared anymore.

Her eyes lit up when she noticed me return to her *home*. She welcomed me into her living space as she cleared a patch on her damp cardboard for me to sit. "Thank you! Here you go," I sat down and handed over her meal. "I'm Amelia."

"Thanks," she whispered nervously, showing me a faint smile. "I'm Ella."

"What a lovely name!" I replied enthusiastically.

There was an awkward silence for a minute until I asked, "if you could have any two things in the whole world, what would you wish for?"

She thought for a minute, "every day I watch as people snarl at me, or ignore me as they return to the comfort of their warm, cosy, safe houses. No one has ever done what you have done for me before. So, if I could have any two things, I would wish for the world to be filled with kinder people, people like you and… for a *home.*"

"That's a great wish!" I said with a big, friendly grin. Suddenly my phone buzzed and I noticed the time, "oh gosh! I'm going to be late for school! Sorry I'm leaving in a rush, it was lovely to talk to you, I'll see you tomorrow!"

That was the first time I spoke to her.

"A home." Her words circulated in my mind all throughout the day.

Fast forward to the next morning, I had my £5 and a plan to spend it on something else. A blanket, clean and dry. I ran down the road back to my new friend's home. "Good morning! I bought you something!" I exclaimed as I sat down, handing her the gift. She smiled, "thank you so much! You didn't have to get me this!"

"Yes, I did. Your wish was to have a home, so, I will do everything I can to make that happen!"

She smiled; I had never seen her look happier.

One thing you should know about me is that I always keep my promises. Every morning I brought her something new to add to her *home*: a pillow, an umbrella, a waterproof rug and many more things. Since I moved away from that city I haven't seen Ella and I don't know if I ever will again. All I know is that one small act of kindness can change someone's life.