

CHOOSE KINDNESS

Anara Taylor was a poor girl from a poor family. Every evening after school she went to the dumpster to find food for her family. She worked a part time job even with the heavy pressure from school, and had been saving up for a proper meal for her family since two months ago.

Anara walked down the hallway, holding the science quiz she'd gotten an A plus on. Her studying had really paid off and she was so happy! She was going to go home and celebrate with her parents with the apple slice she found in the dumpster yesterday.

"Hey, *peasant*." A mean girl bumped into Anara, eyeing her worn, faded clothes that were a size too small. They were torn and found in the dumpster. "What'd you get for Christmas? Coal?"

Anara bit her tongue. She didn't get anything, let alone a piece of coal. She walked on, ignoring the mean remarks behind her.

One day, she was at the market and she saw a great deal for a bento box. She grabbed four and headed to the cashier. She finally had enough money to get a decent meal for her family, and it was perfect timing, because of her amazing grade!

As Anara walked into the line for checkout with a pep in her step, she saw an elderly woman pleading with the cashier.

"Please, can you just give me a discount? I only need *two* dollars off! My grandchildren are starving! Please, I need this!" The elderly woman begged, tears in her eyes.

"I'm sorry, I won't and I can't. And can you hurry up? There are people waiting in line behind you. If you can't pay, just let others pay." The cashier said, aggravated.

There were angry grumbles of agreement behind her.

"*Please*." The elderly woman said.

"I said no, ma'am. Please step out—" The cashier was interrupted by Anara.

"Hey, I'll pay the two dollars." Anara said, taking out the money she'd worked countless hours for. "I'll just share a bento box with my brother." She felt sad to give up some food, but if it was for a good cause, she would do it.

Anara handed the two dollars to the cashier and they finished the order.

“Thank you so much, my dear. What’s your name?” The elderly woman said, a smile forming on her face.

“Anara,” she said. At the sight of the smile, Anara felt her heart warm and she smiled back.

That night, Anara celebrated her grade happily with family and had a proper meal.

The next day...

Anara went to the market again because they were running out of water. Her family had to scrape the last of their family savings to buy the water.

Suddenly, Anara bumped into the elderly woman.

“Oh hi, my dear.” The elderly woman said. “Here, I have something for you.” She pulled a piece of paper from her pocket.

It was...a check.

One. Million. Dollars.