

Finding Kindness

By K.C. May

Smashwords Edition

* * * * *

Copyright 2010 by K.C. May at Smashwords.com
All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book or portions thereof in any form whatsoever.

This book is entirely a work of fiction. The names, characters, places, and incidents depicted herein are either products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Smashwords Edition License Notes

This ebook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. This ebook may not be re-sold or given away to other people. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each person you share it with. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it, or it was not purchased for your use only, then you should return to Smashwords.com and purchase your own copy. Thank you for respecting the author's work.

* * * * *

"Hurry, children. We don't want to miss the morning rush." Binna Rae took Jasi's hand to urge her faster. They walked quickly across the dewy grass toward the park entrance. In the distance, a man riding a machine circled one of the dozens of maple trees and continued making his way across the lawn, leaving the sweet smell of cut grass in his wake.

"I'm hungry," Jilshon said.

Binna put an arm around his shoulders as they walked. "We'll find someone soon, Sweetheart. Don't worry."

Jilshon rubbed his runny nose on the sleeve of his tunic. "We're going to starve, aren't we? People are so cold-hearted."

Binna wondered when her son had started to read minds. "The world is more complicated these days. They have their own worries, that's all."

"I wish we could go to a smaller city," Jasi said. "My friend Leeta says they're nicer in small cities."

"But this is our home," Binna said. Soon they came upon a square where a large fountain in the shape of three angels sprayed water into the air.

"Here," Binna said. "Surely we'll find someone among the angels. Smile, children. It helps when we smile."

Jilshon sighed and stomped off, shoulders already sagging in defeat. Jasi looked up at Binna. Hope had long faded from her once-bright eyes. She turned and shuffled away, kicking at a leaf on the ground.

Kindness wasn't dead. It was just... at home, sick in bed. Binna smiled and approached a smartly dressed man holding a rectangular silver object to his ear.

"Johnson, you're an idiot. ... Just shut up. I don't give a damn who's in the hospital. I care about the contracts. You'd better make sure they're on my desk by noon." With a snap, he folded the gadget and put it in his coat pocket. He looked at a dial strapped to his wrist and muttered a curse.

Binna put her hand on his arm. "A small bit of kindness?"

He shook her off and started away, clutching a black case by its handle.

Binna sighed as she watched him leave. She shouldn't have expected to find someone so early. She looked around, sizing up the others walking across the square or sitting on the benches. To her right, Jasi

approached a boy squatting on the ground near a small gray lump. She leaned down to him, hands on her knees. The gray lump flopped -- a bird. An injured bird. The boy took it by one wing and ran to the fountain.

"Wait!" Jasi called out as she hurried after him. "Don't!"

Binna's heart sank as the boy tossed the bird into the fountain.

Jasi looked over at her mother with a dejected twist to her mouth.

Binna looked for Jilshon and found him with his hand out, reaching for people as they hurried by. One after another shrugged off his touch without so much as a pause and continued on their way.

Something brushed Binna's foot. She looked down to see a black and brown puppy gazing up at her, its little stump-tail wiggling as fast as it could go. His ribs showed plainly through a dull coat patchy with mange. It put a tiny paw on her shin.

"Well, hello, little one," Binna said as she squatted down. "I wish I had something to give you, but I'm not much better off than you are." She stroked his soft head and delighted at the warm tongue lapping her hand. "You're just darling, aren't you?"

He yipped once and started to run away, turning to look at her over his shoulder. When she made no move to follow, he took a bounding step toward her and yipped again.

"What is it?" she asked. She followed him to a grassy area where a gray-haired, heavy-set woman reclined against a tree, reading a book. Spread under her was a red and white checkered blanket, and a basket sat beside her.

"Well, hi there," the woman said. "Oh, look at you, poor dear. Doesn't anyone love you?"

The puppy jumped into her lap, put his front paws on her chest, and licked her face with great enthusiasm. The woman shut her eyes and laughed while the puppy bathed her face with his wet kisses. He cast a glance at Binna and returned to his affections.

Binna hurried over and knelt beside the woman. "We could use little kindness." She lightly touched the woman's arm. Instantly, warmth spread through her, filling her so suddenly and intensely that she gasped. Mary, Binna thought. Her name was Mary and, like the pup, she was on her own.

Mary looked up. For an instant, Binna thought their eyes had met. Then Mary gazed back down at the puppy. "How would you like something to eat, Poochy?" she asked, reaching into the basket.

"Jilshon, Jasi, come here! Quickly," Binna said, waving her arm. Her children ran over and fell to their knees at Mary's side. When they put their hands on her arm and shoulder and Binna touched her head, Mary smiled broadly and stroked the hungry pup.

"It's wonderful!" Jasi said.

"She likes it, Mama," Jilshon said.

"People forget that kindness feels as good to give as it does to receive," Binna replied.

The puppy looked up from his treat and wagged his little stump-tail.

Jasi turned to Binna with bright eyes. "She likes flowers. I'm going to touch her garden with many blooms this spring."

Jilshon sat up taller now, his shoulders square. "I'm going to show her where her lost wallet is."

"What are you going to do, Mama?" Jasi asked.

"I'm going to touch her landlord with some of her own kindness so he'll let her keep the puppy."