

Years 7 & 8

1st Place and Overall Winner: Aydee Bull

Year 7, Kelmscott Senior High School

City Streets

The man ran across the city streets, taking in every aspect of it. He had been on this path thousands of times, never failing to reach his destination. Never had he been late though! As he was walking along the sidewalk, he noticed an old woman, sitting alone. Her eyes were clouded and her smile seemed so fragile, as if it could break at any moment and turn into a frustrated scream. He stopped quickly and pulled a five dollar note out of his pocket. He dropped it in front of her. Her smile grew larger as she said "Failure is not the opposite of success, it is a part of it". The man smiled half-heartedly as he turned towards the tall office building. *What a strange woman, her age must be getting to her!* He laughed quietly to himself as he ran across the road, leaving the memory of the old woman behind.

Maddy walked stylishly out of the change rooms, her friends applauding on how good she looked. This was how it had been forever, shopping for clothes, hanging out. She couldn't remember a time when her Saturday had not been spent up with buying things. She huddled tightly with her friends as they strolled out the door, the chilled wind biting her face. Her scarf fluttered wildly behind her, making her seem almost like a princess from a story book.

"Hey Maddy, you're a good girl huh? Give that old lady some cash. I think she's blind or something."

Maddy rolled her eyes and snatched the ten dollar note from her friend's hand. She ran towards the woman, approaching hesitantly. She tossed the note towards her, staying long enough only to hear, "A false friend and a shadow attend only when the sun rises." Maddy ran towards her friends, shaking off the nagging feeling that the lady was right.

The teenage boy slumped across the path. How could his day get any worse? He had woken up with a horrible headache and nothing seemed to be going his way. His blue-black hair hung over his eyes, hiding him from the world that seemed to be intent on destroying his mood. Listening to his favourite song, he crossed the road onto a crowded walkway. An old woman was sitting right in front of him. *Can this day get any worse?* Sighing loudly, he fished a small two-dollar coin from his pocket and tossed it towards the old woman, laughing as it landed on heads. The old woman looked towards him with smiling eyes. "You must have bad days to know what a good day feels like." Her voice cracked, sounding as sincere as possible. He held back a surprised look and turned towards the mall. Deciding not to question the fact that she knew how he was feeling, he jogged slowly towards his destination, grimacing.

The construction worker walked out of the uncomplete building, smiling as he took it in. He and his men had done a good job on layering the bricks of the suburban house. He couldn't help but laugh over the amount of time it took to do it. Walking towards his car, he thought about his family. The boss was still holding onto that little bit of money that he needed. His smile fading, he realized the hard hours and the expectations of his family. How was he meant to provide for them if he didn't have the money? Cursing himself about his foolishness, he crossed the path to see an old woman sitting alone. He couldn't help but feel sympathetic. Where was her family? Had they just abandoned her to sit here? He emptied his bag of its contents to find a crinkled five dollar note. Laying it down in front her, he and the woman exchanged smiles. "It is the things that we work hardest for that reward us the most," she murmured. Smiling again at the woman, the man retreated to his car, wondering what the lady meant.

The woman stumbled across the concrete, her crutches swinging wildly in front of her. She was heading for the medical centre for, what seemed like, the one hundredth time. Her leg was crippled, and they believed that it would never heal. Looking back to her youth, she saw how her leg had influenced everything she had done. She had never tried, not for anything, believing that it wasn't worth it. Her life was almost shattered when she learned that it would never heal. But somewhere, deep inside of her, she almost believed that it was healing. That her leg was slowly becoming better with each passing day. She knew that it was impossible, but she couldn't help it. As she approached the medical building, she noticed an elderly woman sitting on the pavement. Reaching into her old track pants, she found a solitary dollar lying at the very bottom. Tossing it to the woman she almost winced as it hit the ground with a large thud.

"I'm sorry that's all I can give you."

The old woman just nodded in response, then opened her mouth to speak. "Believe in miracles, because in times of hardship that is all you can do."

The woman smiled as she walked to the centre, holding those words as close to her as she possibly could.

That evening, a business man hung his head in shame and disappointment. After arriving late to work that morning, he had been fired from his high position in the company. He was now jobless. After a few minutes of mourning, the man started to think. Perhaps this was an opportunity to pursue his true passion, cooking. He had always been fascinated by the culinary arts, and perhaps he could make this half-hearted dream become a reality. Perhaps this was not a curse, but a blessing.

Maddy ran across the road, tears running across her cheeks. She was alone, abandoned. She became increasingly aware of her scarf that had tangled across her body. She slowly unwrapped herself and allowed herself to look back on what had happened. She and her friends had gone to the club, simply to have a bit of fun, that's all. But pretty much as soon as they got there her friends had abandoned her

for a group of popular people, leaving her alone and afraid. She ran out of that place as soon as she could, and now she had no transport home. She pulled a two-dollar coin out of her pocket and headed towards the nearest bus stop, realizing that perhaps these people were not her true friends at all.

The teenage boy skipped along the sidewalk, humming a merry tune. His day had gone from horrible to amazing. He had met new friends, possibly even a love interest and even found himself a better job than the horrible one at the DVD store. His day seemed to be getting better and better. He had to admit, this day was actually pretty average. This was just what he would normally do any day. But if he had not have had a pretty bad start of the day, he too would have thought it was average. The train stopped at the station and he jumped on, thinking of how eventful that day was.

The construction worker jogged merrily back towards his car, sighing with relief. His boss had finally paid him for his services, and it was even more than he had expected. He thought of all the things that his large family could buy with this, a car, a new house, maybe even a holiday to Bali. Smiling to himself, he thought of his wife and child, of how happy they would be to finally have enough money to pay for things. The heavy weight that he was not aware of lifted off his shoulders and he hopped in, sighing with relief.

The woman skipped joyfully towards the train station, the weight of the world immediately lifted off her shoulders. It was truly a miracle! The doctors said that she could never walk again, but after seeing the shocked expressions on their usually grave faces, she knew that was no longer the case. The doctors said that at this rate, she would be able to walk within a year! She was so happy that all of her wishes on stars, birthday cakes and four-leaf clovers had finally amounted to something. She would be able to live her childhood, experience what she never was able to do. Go to the beach, play cricket, splash around in the pool. Oh, how much fun she would have with her friend now! As she stepped onto the train, she smiled as her troubles were left behind her.

That night, five strangers stalked towards their houses, oblivious to the outside world. The businessman, the diva, the moody teenager, the construction worker and the crippled woman. Looking back at their days with fresh eyes, they thought back to the old woman, sitting alone on the pavement. And realized that the crazy old woman, was perhaps the wisest of them all.