

# 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:** Everyone has a story. Usually it's the gut-wrenching ones that get the most attention. If someone dies, or battles a drug addiction, or has something really horrific happen to them, then people consider that to be a compelling story. The worse, the better; bad things make for really interesting stories. And sometimes people think that because a story is about something awful, it must be a great story. Stories about good things...they don't get as much attention. They don't push our buttons like the stories about bad things. They don't get as much of a strong, immediate response. But they matter. They matter to the people they happened to. And they matter to people who want to believe that the world maybe isn't quite such a horrible place after all. So that's the kind of story I'm going to tell. Not because it'll make you cry or squirm in your seat—heck, parts of it'll probably make you laugh—but because small, good things...they can have a real impact.

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. They both have good jobs, and neither one is an alcoholic. We live in a pretty nice house. All four of my grandparents are still alive and in relatively good health. Nobody close to me has ever died. I've been really lucky so far. I know it won't stay that way forever, but I've got it good. I know it, and I'm thankful. If you were a cynical kind of person, you might think I'm probably spoiled. Up until a couple of months ago, I'd have said you were wrong.

But sometimes things happen that force us to grow and learn about ourselves. You see, even though I never threw temper tantrums when I didn't get my way...even though I never thought I was entitled to anything...my life was so good that I didn't have any 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. Not that I could bring somebody's grandmother back to life, or stop a bank from foreclosing. But 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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