

# The man who won

Word count: 746

Imagine finding it at the bus stop.

Stumbling along on a cracked tarmac road, feeling the wind blow through your clothes, feeling every drop of rain chill you to the bone. This man would trip as he walked, constantly trying to grasp hold of something to keep him upright. As he blew cold puffs of air through cracked lips, and as he reached the minimal shelter the local bus stop had to offer, he collapsed onto the ground, his legs giving out under him. He stared at the thin plastic sheet sheltering him from the rain, the large droplets sliding down, and watched as they would fall and land with a quiet *splash*. He had just recently felt the cold and frigid grasp of death. A car had hit him and fled, and left him bruised and battered, with no one to bear witness. While others would now be in a hospital, surrounded by worried faces of those they love, he was on the brink of death in a bus stop, where the rain so thickly surrounded him. He painfully grinned at the irony of it all. It was so dramatic. The pouring rain, the frightening fact that death was staring him in the eye.

And then

Finding it. In the corner, where used cigarettes and chewed gum lie, a single slip of paper, one seeming strangely familiar. He pulled himself up and grasped it with shaking fingers. It was a lottery ticket, with a sticky note attached. The man read the neat, clean handwriting, and paused. It was as if time itself had stopped for a second, with bewilderment and confusion contorting the poor man's features. Then, everything resumed, and the *splash* of the raindrops continued. He laughed. It was a laugh, filled with agony and sorrow. He laughed louder, with contempt filling his voice. All this man wanted was to die. His life had been harsh, people leaving him, looking down on him, and he knew he deserved it. And now, at his final moments someone thought it would be

fine to torture him like that, taunting him even. He felt no happiness, no joy. Just harsh, empty laughter filled him.

The note was simple. It stated this was the winning combination for the lottery, and whoever finds it can use it to turn their lives around. Most people would take it as a sign of change, they would thank and praise this kind hearted person. They might doubt it, but nonetheless they would keep it. But when this man looked down at the crisp ticket and note, shining so brightly against the grime of the place, all he felt was disgust. How *dare* someone take pity on him, how dare they mock him, ridiculing him under the guise of kindness. A large car drove past, splashing water everywhere, and the man felt rage boil through him, emotions he had kept bottled up for so long coursing through his blood. He didn't understand why he was so greatly angered, perhaps the last shreds of pride he had were insisting that this cruel joke was an act of scorn, looking down on him, looking down on the *weak*. He knew he was being unreasonable, the person who had placed that ticket there was trying to be generous, they wouldn't have known anything. But seeing that shining ticket amongst all the rubble and trash, seeing a new chance at life, imagining that he could buy an actual house, actual food, actual clothes, yet knowing that it was ever so out of reach due to the painful wounds covering his body. He didn't even bother trying to do something about it. I mean, what was there to do? He was old now, one of those invisible people that slept on benches in parks, and walked in the shadows of those around them. His life had been a steady descent into despair, the promises he made were all broken, the people he loved all gone. He knew exactly what he was. Pitiful, and weak. Those were the words he felt as he would look into the gazes of all those who laid eyes on him. He could feel the emotions masked behind false faces of pity.

He sat there,

Wallowing in his own despair

And as he sat, in a cold, wet, and empty bus stop, with a lottery ticket he might never use, he closed his eyes, and cursed the world for having brought him such misery.