

HOME OF HAPPINESS

Imagine finding it at the bus stop. The key to all my problems. Would it provide a safe home for me? What would it look like? What would it feel like to have it? Could it be money? That would be so great.

All those hopeful thoughts were rapidly swimming throughout Winston's optimistic mind as he merrily made his way down the busy town street. He'd made this same walk, everyday, for the past 6 years. It was the speediest way to the bus stop which took him to his simple fast food job. Plus, it was on the same street he slept on. Winston was homeless. He had been for what seemed like forever. At age 19, his parents forcefully kicked him out of their house after a massive argument that he couldn't even remember. He started out at friends houses, but soon realized he needed to do things on his own.

So here he was now. On that same drab, concrete path he had walked on for years. He had memorized every sign that lined the road, every plant and when it blossomed, every store and even every crack in the dusty, old tarmac. He lived a simple, easy life. Every night he slept in the wooded area next to the active road. He owned a small camping tent, 2 sleeping pouches, a lamp and his mp3 player, which was jammed with the most chipper songs you could think of. Winston was homeless but Winston was happy. Now don't get me wrong, he would much rather cozy up on a pillow filled, warm, cotton-fitted bed instead of sleeping on the firm, damp

ground every night. The one thing that kept him going though, was the thought that everything was going to change for the better. And then one day, it did.

There was nothing special about this fine Tuesday morning. The sun was like fire behind the misty clouds, the birds were chirping their special songs, the air was crisp and the cars were zooming beside him. He passed by the old food market where he occasionally got produce. Coming up on his left was a newly added pizza market, selling new flavors of deep dish Winston couldn't fathom. He ran into Ms. Barnelli, who's always feeding the birds on the park bench outside the vintage clothing shop. He made his usual, friendly wave followed by an optimistic smile. On this morning, just like any other morning, Winston's heart was filled with joy and the hope of the upcoming events in his day.

As he continued his stroll down the street, he just couldn't shake the feeling that something good was coming his way. He felt like he was on top of the world. He made the last turn towards his usual bus stop when he noticed something on one of the seats inside. He ventured closer, but he still couldn't assess what it was. He was about 5 meters away now when he realized it was a box.

It was a grimmy, light brown, cardboard box. But wait! There was also a sign on this box. Winston was lightly jogging now, he was so excited to see what the sign said, even if it was

disappointing. He was close enough now to read the permanent marker words on the dirty piece of paper.

“Free dogs”

Free Dogs? Winston thought for a moment. “Who would ever give up such a playful buddy?” He wondered. His heart was racing. After standing there for a bit, he decided to take a glance into the box. As he shifted his gaze further into the box, he saw a pair of furry, brown ears, followed by the most adorable dog he had ever seen. She had only 1 eye and her face was a bit lumpy. Nonetheless, Winston loved her immediately. He carried the box all the way back to his tent and started making the puppy feel at home. He added 1 of his sleeping bags to the box and started feeding her the few bits of food he had left over.

He named her Daisy, after his childhood doll. Winston loved Daisy with his whole heart. She made him feel like he wasn't alone anymore. They would take walks together and look at all the nature surrounding them. Even though Daisy didn't provide Winston with a safe home or furniture, she was the source of extreme joy in his life and that's something money can't ever buy.