

The Warmest Scarf

Emmie, who had big brown eyes, light tanned skin and soft brown hair, skipped alongside her mum as they wandered through the town centre late one chilly afternoon. A pale winter sun flickered behind grey clouds, and tiny raindrops pattered gently on the pavement. Shops glowed with warm golden light, and Emmie pressed her face against a window filled with dazzling scarves, hats and sparkling decorations.

Inside the shop, Emmie held up a woolly hat. "Do you like this one, Mum?" she asked cheerfully.

"It's lovely," her mum replied, smiling. "Are you thinking of buying it with your pocket money?"

Before Emmie could answer, something outside caught her eye. Across the street, near a doorway, a man sat on the cold wet ground. He looked tired, his clothes old and worn. A soggy cardboard sign lay beside him.

"Mum," Emmie whispered, tugging her coat sleeve, "why is that man sitting on the floor? It's wet. Won't he get poorly?"

Her mum hesitated. Emmie was only nine, and very sensitive. "Well... I think he might not have a home to go to," she answered softly.

Emmie frowned. "But that can't be right. Everybody has a home."

Her mum didn't know how to respond. She simply squeezed Emmie's hand, and together they walked on, the winter drizzle following them all the way home.

That evening, after dinner, Mum and Dad spoke quietly in the kitchen. Emmie listened from the doorway until Dad invited her to sit down with them. They explained, as gently as they could, that some people didn't have houses or warm beds, and that life could be very difficult indeed.

Emmie's big brown eyes filled with tears. "But what can I do? I don't want him to be cold."

Mum stroked her hair. "Being kind is a wonderful start," she said warmly.

Suddenly Emmie remembered something she had learned at school camp. She ran upstairs and fetched her knitting needles and some soft wool she had been saving.

For the rest of the evening, she knitted carefully, stitch by stitch, creating the warmest scarf she could possibly make.

The very next afternoon, she asked Mum if they could go back to the shopping street. The drizzle had stopped, and the town glimmered with evening lights. The man was still there, but this time Emmie walked up to him. Her voice shook a little as she held out the scarf.

“I made this,” she said, “so you won’t be cold.”

The man looked surprised, then very touched. “Thank you,” he replied gently.

“People’s kindness has helped me more than you might imagine. I’m actually going to a nice warm place tonight, thanks to charities that help people like me. And not just money—warm things like scarves too.”

Emmie beamed. Her heart felt full and glowing, as though she had discovered that even small hands could make a very big difference indeed.

Comprehension Questions

1. Why did Emmie stop looking at the hats in the shop?

- A. She realised she didn't have enough pocket money.
- B. She saw something unusual outside the window.
- C. Her mum told her to hurry up.
- D. She didn't like the hats after all.

2. Why did Emmie's mum hesitate when answering her question?

- A. She didn't know the man.
- B. She was embarrassed by Emmie.
- C. She found it difficult to explain homelessness to her sensitive daughter.
- D. She thought the man was dangerous.

3. What caused Emmie to become upset after speaking with her parents?

- A. She thought she had done something wrong.
- B. She believed the man was pretending.
- C. She realised that some people didn't have warm homes.
- D. She knew she would never see the man again.

4. Which of the following best shows Emmie's kindness?

- A. She asked her mum to buy a scarf for the man.
- B. She knitted a scarf herself and gave it to him.
- C. She ignored the man because she felt sad.
- D. She told other children at school about him.

5. What message does the ending of the story give the reader?

- A. Small acts of kindness can make a big difference.
- B. Cold weather always causes illness.
- C. Only adults can help people who are homeless.
- D. Charity donations should only be money.

Answers

1. **B**

2. **C**

3. **C**

4. **B**

5. **A**