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A Battle for Food

There I sat, petrified at what was knocking at my Mustang's window. It was almost midnight, and whatever it was had followed me on foot from the intersection that I had just come through. It was a tall, ominous looking figure with torn up gloves, a black trench coat and a seemingly desperate facial expression. I hesitantly rolled my window down just enough to get a better glimpse of the person who, for whatever reason, wanted something from me.

It was sometime in January of last year in a very urban, run down area of Mobile. It was dark, dirty, and obviously not a good part of town. I had just left my sister's house and was trying to find my way to a grocery store to pick up a few items. When I stopped at a red light, I looked over and saw what seemed to be homeless people, mostly dressed in clothes that are not suitable for winter. The child was wearing a pair of red gym shorts which appeared more black than red from the dirt on them, along with a grungy white t-shirt and an old torn up jacket. The parents weren't dressed any better, wearing clothes that seemed to have been pulled out of the trash. As I looked, they did as well. I could only imagine the things they were thinking about me as they stared at me with a look of envy. As a kid, I was taught to not care about homeless people as I was told they usually bring the pain that they go through upon themselves, as they would

most likely go buy alcohol or drugs with the money you give them for food. So, there I sat, feeling pitiless for the family.

When the light changed to green, I realized that across the street was the grocery store I had been searching for. As I looked for a parking spot, I noticed that the homeless family was no longer on the corner. As I was about to shut my car off, I saw a dark and frightening man approaching my car.

I rolled the window down and the grungy, rough looking man spoke. "I need food for my family" he said. We are without money and food and we are hungry. As I told him that I had no money, which obviously was a lie, his face showed a look that I had never seen on a grown man. His face showed that he *really* needed food for his family, and that he was telling the honest truth. I told him that would take him in the store and would buy him food and that was it. As he looked at me with a look of amazement, I thought the same thing. I had never helped out someone I didn't know, never mind a man of this size that could easily rob me with his advantage in size.

As we walked into the store, I didn't know what to expect. I had no clue as to what he would try to buy, and how he would act. I followed him through the store as he picked up some non-tangibles and a few other items, then told me that was all he asked of me to get for him. When we checked out, it came out to less than twenty dollars. I had no problem doing such a good deed for less than twenty dollars, and I honestly felt rewarded about what I had done. As we exited the store, the man, whose name was Kevin, expressed his gratitude towards me for helping him and his family out.

We talked outside the store for quite a while, and that single conversation changed my outlook on so many things in just a short period of time. I realized that if I'm not helping others, than what good am I doing. I saw the good in someone that I didn't know and I felt bad for thinking the things that I did when I first saw him.

I became as close as one could with a homeless man for a few weeks. Ever since that night, I met up with Kevin once a week and bought him and his family groceries. I felt, strangely enough, obligated to take care of the family. I actually enjoyed buying them food, because it was rewarding and it changed the way I looked at homeless people. But then, after three weeks, he wasn't there. I may never know what happened to the family, but I could never repay them for the lessons that I learned and what I took away from helping the poor, homeless family that I saw on the corner that cold night.