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***Witnessing homeless child at one mystifying night***

House is the biggest gift of God and this phenomenon can be understood only when we witness very closely, the feelings of people who live without home. The word 'shelter' has no importance in our daily life and we just keep on living our life the way we do. We see in news that "the thunderstorm made 50 people homeless", and our only response to this is "oho! That's sad; I hope authorities will take good care of them". It is a fact, that no one can understand any pain or joy until unless he/she witnesses it very closely or experience it in life. Likewise I took house as a guaranteed aspect of life and never imagined how important it is for our lives but just one experience of a single night made me understand the value of home and presently for me the word 'shelter' is not just a word anymore but it's something that is the roots of our happy living.

The story begins when I along with my four friends, planned to go to watch movie the previous weekend before Christmas last year. Each one of us were very excited and aimed at enjoying the whole night madly because after Christmas, one of my friends, Mike, was going to shift to Europe. The whole scenario was very sad for all of us as we have been living together since childhood. But we decided to not spend the few moments together with sadness and spend the whole week till Christmas with full joy. Hence following the strategy we planned a movie night out on Friday and made sure that we all see each other at the coffee spot sharp at 7pm.

On Friday morning I was very excited for the plan and managed finishing my work at home before 5:30pm. Luckily the day went well and I was free and ready to get dressed up

for the boys night out. We were going to spend quality time after such a long time because of the busy schedules of everybody and thus the get together was a source of great pleasure and happiness for all of us. I took shower, made myself comfortable in my favorite warm beige pants, long leather black boots, inner shirt and the cozy black jacket, and went out. As it was very cold outside total white out because of heavy snow fall, I also grabbed my coat, scarf and gloves. When I went out the chilled air hit my face hard, leaving my nose and eyes shut because of freezing atmosphere. The temperature would not have been more than negative 13, with the cold breeze, hitting our bones.

Anyways thankfully I managed to reach the coffee shop in time and found John already waiting there. Right before me Mike and Den entered the coffee shop and then we started walking on the road side towards the cinema. On the way to cinema we had an amazing conversation after such a long time. It was good to see each other after such a long time and laughing and rolling on the road side we finally reached cinema. As we entered cinema the movie was just beginning and the trailer of the movie that is played before it was being presented. Cinema from inside was very cozy and warm, and it took no time for us for being comfortable on the soft and velvety seats. The whole atmosphere was very relieved, satisfying, relaxing and hence we whole heartedly enjoyed the 2 hours movie.

At the time of interval break, we had hot cheesy French fries with finger licking sauce and also had classic, tasty and saucy hot dog. Although it was very cold outside, but the atmosphere inside the cinema forced us and we couldn't resist the icy chilled fizzy drink. In short we enjoyed the whole time and decided to move along at John's place for night stay. Our plan was not still ended but we decided to go at John's place, have coffee, play a match on Xbox and then late night go out for dinner if needed. But when we were going to John's place, I realized I forgot to mail my boss the details of the project he asked for, and the details were present on my personal laptop, resting at my home. Hence I had to rush to my home and

promised them to join them after a while. I went home, mailed to my boss and went out again for John's place. On my way to John's place almost at 11pm, I saw a little girl hiding behind a tree across the street. The girl looked very startled and was shaken. She was not even wearing something warm and her hands were without gloves. I decided to go to her and ask if she needs help. I went to her and asked if she is ok, the 10 year old, shivering girl got scared, hugged me and started crying abruptly. It felt like what has happened to her, I was so scared and had like 1000 thoughts in my mind within a second.

I sat down, asked her if she is ok or not, but because she was crying, she couldn't speak up and just held my hand tightly. Few minutes later she opened her little mouth and cried for help. She had cold feet and because of intense weather, her voice was shivering, making me worried. I gave her my gloves, put my scarf around her neck and asked if she wants to sit there. She forced me to get out of there and then on her insist I took her back to my place which was just across two streets. I called John and told him about the situation and asked them to come over at my place. After entering my house, I gave her quilt, set on the fire for her and made her a cup of hot smoky coffee. She was still terrified but felt comfortable with me to a great extent. I then asked about her family and home, and she told me that she only had a mother, as her father died 3 weeks ago. I asked about her address or contact number but her shocking reply completely disturbed me. She said she along with her mother was thrown out of their house for some money issue and since then she had been living with their neighbors. She took a sip of coffee from the mug, held by her tiny pink hands and continued her story. She said that her mother has been out of station from 3 days in

Order to arrange a place for them to live and left her with their neighbors as she had no one else, trustworthy in the city. I asked why was she was out in such a freezing night and hiding behind the log there. With her tearful eyes she said that she ran out of her neighborhood because they were harassing her. Almost 10 year old, cute little chubby girl

said that since her mother is out, her neighbors were forcing her to wash dishes, clean up the house, iron their clothes, clean the snow and wash clothes etc. Upon her complaint that she was tired of doing that much as she never performed all these tasks at home, they use to beat her, give her no food and water. It was sad to know that she was also sexually harassed by her neighbors as a punishment for not doing the task properly. She started crying loudly again while telling the story and said that these three days were like hell to her. I asked why she didn't call her mother or didn't she call you, upon which she replied that the man in the neighborhood always locked the phone and whenever my mother called him to ask if I am ok, he suddenly changed his attitude and showed as if I am living like a prince under their observation.

Suddenly the bell rang and the girl got terrified again, saying "don't open the door please. It will be him". I consoled her and looked from the peep hole, my friends were standing outside. I opened the door, made them enter in and told them her story. All of us were so sad after hearing her story and decided to call her mother as soon as possible. We called her mother and told her what has been happening over here. She was crying on the phone and asked us to keep her safe at our place until the next day as she will leave right after. We asked the girl to freshen up and sleep at my room comfortably and ensured her that she is safe with us. She slept and the next evening, her mother came at my house, thanked us and took the girl with her.

After that night we got to know the real importance of our house and wish that no one ever has to leave his/her house. That 10 year old girl was alone out in a freezing night, crying and terrified. She had no idea where to go because she had no house there. Such a feeling is awful and it could lead to adverse situations. That Friday night changed our whole perception and after that mysterious night, we really understand the significance of the word 'shelter'.