

## *A Crime Turned Good*

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David nervously searched his pocket for his weapon as he speedily walked across the snow-covered sidewalks of Frederick Avenue. He mumbled to himself comments of reassurance and encouragement that went along the lines of, “Everything will be alright”. David, getting closer and closer to his destination, started to see his whole life flash right in front of his eyes.

David saw the bright neon flashing sign that read “Convenience Store” and observed the people inside. There were a couple of kids, but they were about to leave. The only other person visible was the cashier that looked around eighty years old. David contemplated over the circumstance that was given to him and thought that this was the perfect time to take advantage of it. He waited for the kids to leave to jump at his prey.

He opened the grimy, dirty door that led to his target. He didn’t want to seem too suspicious to the old man, so he plainly scanned over the dry pastries section before glancing over towards the cashier. He coolly strode over to the counter before asking the man, “Can I have a pack of Marlboro, please?” The man grunted simply in a sign of affirmativeness as he turned around to get it. When the man turned the other 180 degrees, he found a loaded gun pointed right at his chest. David spit out multiple threats towards the man he didn’t even know and was eventually given all of the money in the register.

He took the money and sped out of the store as fast as a speed runner. David found himself out of breath in a dark alley near City Hall. This was what David’s life had come to. He had nothing, nothing to look forward to or live for. This wasn’t what he wanted to do, but it was what he thought was needed.

“You, the defendant, David Robertson, plead guilty. Is this correct?” questioned the judge. David reluctantly answered, “Yes, Your Honor”. This was the arraignment for David after he was caught unconscious on a sidewalk not far from the store he robbed. He didn’t plan for this to happen; he was supposed to make a clean robbery and utilize that money for his daughter. His daughter was struggling terribly from a tumor and that money would’ve been used to help with the medical bills that were in the way. This wasn’t the way it should’ve been.

“Well, Mr. Robertson, I can see the cooperation with the court that you have presented before me. I understand the circumstances that you and your daughter are faced with, and I am terribly sorry. Despite this, your actions cannot be tolerated. The old man that you robbed, he also happens to be struggling...with cancer. I think as punishment you serve sixty days of community service. I’m assigning you to help out the man that you robbed; his name is Peter Schultz, and he will be expecting you in a couple days. Good bye, Mr. Robertson.”

Not only does David have to spend time with Peter, but he also has to cut down the time with his daughter. He can’t tell her about this, but how could he keep it a secret? He pondered over the subject; it was non-negotiable—it was to be kept a secret. He would tell her that he would be home late every day due to a new second job.

*Umk, umk, umk.* David’s old shoes wouldn’t stop making that infuriating noise. He already had enough things on his mind. He marched along the newly paved white sidewalks to Peter’s house in the gated, affluent community that he resided in. He didn’t know what to think of Peter; would he be kind or would he be a snob about this? He finally found the house—it was a new gray house with bushes and plants surrounding it and its luxuries.

David knocked the door hesitantly and found himself standing before an aged man with a stout nose and dark gray hair with plentiful wrinkles. “Alright, look, I know you’re probably overwhelmed with all of this and you most likely are thinking that I’m an obnoxious old guy, but I’m not. I know why you’re here and you know why you’re here. So let’s use this time that we have together in a way that’s mutually productive,” Peter stated monotonously. “Yeah, alright” David plainly replied.

“Now, David, I want you to know that I hold no grudge against you or whatever. I don’t want to make this awkward between us, so I think we should avoid talking about the robbery, alright?” started Peter. David already thought it was pretty awkward, but he chose to be mature and start off the sixty days right.

“Hey, ummm, David, I’m getting a little hungry myself. How about we cook something together for supper?” asked Peter. David sighed in annoyance, but agreed to the proposal. The pair walked over towards the nicely equipped kitchen to make a little something.

Peter showed him the ingredients for the spaghetti that they were going to cook. He turned on the stove. They went to work. David finally became comfortable and actually joined Peter and interacted with him. They exchanged laughter and enjoyed a good time. “You know Peter, that was really fun. I’m going to go home and get some rest, but we should definitely do something tomorrow” David concluded. Peter said his goodbyes and watched as David walked away into the darkness that he feared would absorb him and allow David to do something as awful as what he did to him. Peter was skeptical if this could actually work out, but little did he know that sixty days would be more than enough for this relationship to evolve.

After a month or so, David was obliged to visit Peter every day, but David began to feel as if it wasn't an obligation but instead an opportunity, an opportunity to start all over with Peter and begin a friendship that would last forever.

The last week of the order had finally arrived, and Peter and David found themselves reading magazines together in Peter's backyard. They both liked to read voraciously and discuss it afterwards—it was like a book club but just for two.

Surprisingly, David stopped reading and Peter noticed the stress on David's face. "What's wrong, David?" questioned Peter. David hesitated for a moment and then went on to say, "I don't want this to end. After two months, I feel like we've known each other for years. Whatever happened two months ago is now in the past, and it's like we have a completely different relationship. I fear that we won't continue it afterwards."

Peter smirked shyly and heartily said, "Did I ever tell you that I had cancer? Well, I do. I also have all the money in the world, but I can't treat the cancer altogether with it. You see, ever since I contracted this disease, I felt lost and couldn't find my way back. Now, you have helped me find my way back; I feel like I have a friend to talk to forever."

David told his daughter that he quit his "second job" when he started to come home more. He and his daughter were still in the same predicament with her cancer until a month later when an anonymous person sent enough money to David for their medical bills and more. David already knew that it was Peter, but he didn't want anybody to know. Peter would've wanted David to keep it a secret between them: a secret that would continue their friendship.