

OF NO REAL IMPORTANCE

"Hello, love, are you lost?"

"I'm not sure he can hear us, Joyce. I say, lad, can you hear us? Are you lost?"

There was a brief pause before David turned to the concerned couple.

"Are you ok, love? You've been sat here for a long time. You know, on your own."

David got up. Oh, I'm sorry, did you want to sit on the bench?"

"No, no," said Harold. "We are worried about you. How long have you been sat here?"

David brushed down his threadbare jacket and straightened his hair with his hands.

"Have you been here all night?"

"I'm not sure," said David quietly. He looked around the station. "What station is this?"

"Waterloo, love. Would you like something to eat?"

"I haven't any money."

"Don't you worry about that. What's your name?"

"David"

"Well, David. Let's go and grab a sandwich and a brew. What d'say?"

David looked at Harold and Joyce. His eyes were watering, but he held back the tears. "Please, that is so kind."

"C'mon, love," said Joyce. "We've got an hour before our train leaves."

Up in the station café, Harold and Joyce persuaded David to tell his story. How does a young teenager end up at Waterloo not really knowing why? Over a bacon sandwich and strong tea, David slowly revealed his story.

"I couldn't stay at the home any longer. I was orphaned back five years ago. My mother had died, and my father took off to sea. That was it. I was picked up on the streets of Shoreditch. I couldn't take any more punishment. I had to get out."

"And what now?"

"Dorset. They won't capture me there."

Harold and Joyce looked at each other. They had not been blessed with children and lived a frugal life not lacking in love and sensibility, just no joy of children.

"David," said Harold, "we live in Winchester. Is that far enough for you?"

"I've heard of Winchester. It has a hall where King Arthur's round table used to meet?"

"Where did you learn that, David?"

"I found a book in the home's library and there was a drawing of King Arthur and his trusted knights sat around the table and it said, Winchester."

“Why Dorset?” said Joyce. “What is so special about Dorset?”

“I have a friend who lives in a cottage in Shaftesbury. There’s a hill. She lives in a cottage on the hill.”

“Who is this friend?”

“Jim. His name is Jim. His parents came to fetch him from the home and they moved to a cottage on the hill in Shaftesbury. Jim said to me that I could visit any time I wanted.”

Harold looked at Joyce. Joyce nodded.

“Why don’t we travel with you to Shaftesbury? You know, just to make sure you are safe. If things don’t work out, we have a home in Winchester waiting for you.”

Joyce held out her hand. David began to cry.

.....