

Kindness Story

(by Louise Burfitt-Dons, founder of UK Kindness Movement)

A few years ago I was giving an assembly in a primary school. It was Writer's Week and I was talking about how I wrote the play *The Christmas Riddle*. At question time lots of hands went up. 'Have you written other things?' 'Yes'. 'Have you met any famous people?' 'Yes'. 'Who's the best person you've met?' asked a little girl. Into my mind flashed an image. 'The people that I remember most are not the famous or rich people I've met. They are the kind ones.' And I told this story about one such person.

'One stormy Friday night in 1982 I was travelling back from a hospital in Norwich. I'd been visiting my father who'd undertaken a life-saving cancer operation but had just been told he would still die. I was grief struck, still in shock. My mother had died a year earlier. I left around eleven 'clock to drive the thirty miles home and break the news to my only brother. It was a pitch black moonless sky. The road was narrow and slippery and the rain intensifying. I could barely see the traffic ahead. Trees were hurling branches and then there was a cloudburst.

There was a light explosion. My car skidded out of control. Within seconds I came to a halt, thankful that I'd not had a head-on collision. My heart was in my mouth. I got out into the pounding rain to see that my front tyre had blown. It was the days before mobile phones existed!. I stood by my car not knowing what to do, feeling helpless and alone, miles from anywhere. I was actually terrified. The wind was whistling so hard around me I didn't notice a car pull up. A man got out and said, 'Need some help?' He'd seen the 'blow-out'. 'I was lucky I hadn't hit anything, in fact lucky to be alive,' he told me. He proceeded to change my tyre for me. He seemed completely unperturbed that his clothes were soaked through by the time he'd finished. I thanked him. I told him it had been the worst night of my life. He smiled. 'No really, I've just heard my father is dying,' I said, but he ignored it. Maybe he didn't believe me or he didn't know what to say. He replaced the shot tyre and rushed away into the night. I have no idea who he was, where he came from.

This act of kindness was one I never forgot. It was like 'an angel coming out of the blue'. That display of humanity gave me the courage to carry on when I felt at my lowest ebb.'

(Feel free to add here your own examples of similar situations you have been through or made aware of. Perhaps for example, you may be able to talk about a time when someone did something kind out of the blue and how it affected you.)