

What Goes Around ...

One day a man saw an old lady stranded on the side of the road. Even in the dim light he could see that she needed help, so he pulled over in front of her Mercedes and got out. His old Pontiac was still sputtering when he approached her. Notwithstanding the smile on his face, she was worried. No one had stopped to help for the last hour or so. Was he going to hurt her? He didn't look safe. He looked poor and hungry.

The man could see that she was frightened, and cold, too, standing out in the chill evening air. He knew exactly how she felt. It was the kind of chill which only fear can put in you. "I'm here to help you, ma'am," he said, as cheerfully as he could. "Why don't you wait in your car where it's warm? By the way, my name is Bryan Anderson." The woman, still a bit suspicious, said nothing and got back in her car.

All she had was a flat tire, but for an old lady that was bad enough. Bryan crawled under her car looking for a place to put the jack, skinning his knuckles in the process. Pretty soon he was able to change the tire, though he got dirty in the process and his hands hurt.

As he was tightening the lug nuts, she rolled down the window and began to talk to him. She was slowly realizing that he was, indeed, a good Samaritan. She told him that she was from St. Louis and was just passing through. She couldn't thank him enough for coming to her aid. Bryan just smiled as he closed her trunk.

The lady asked how much she owed him. Any amount would have been fine with her. She had repeatedly imagined all of the awful things that could have happened had he not stopped. But Bryan never thought twice about being paid. This wasn't a job to him; he was just helping someone in need. God knows, there were plenty of folks who had given him a hand in the past. He had lived his whole life that way, and it never occurred to him to act in any other fashion. He told her that if she really wanted to pay him back, the next time she saw someone who needed help she could give that person the assistance they needed. "And think of me," he added.

Bryan waited until she had started her car and driven off. It had been a cold and depressing day, but he felt good as he headed for home, disappearing into the twilight.

A few miles down the road the lady saw a small cafe. It was a dingy-looking place. Outside were two old gas pumps. The scene was wholly unfamiliar to her. But, hungry and still a bit cold, she decided to grab a bite and take the chill off before making the last leg of her trip home.

The waitress came promptly. She had a sweet smile, one that even being on her feet for the last ten hours couldn't erase. She seemed about eight months pregnant, but took the lady's order and brought her food with cheerfulness, never letting the strain and aches change her attitude. The lady wondered how someone who apparently had so little could be so giving to a stranger.

Then she remembered Bryan.

When the lady finished her meal, she paid with a \$100 bill. The waitress quickly went to get change, but the lady quietly slipped out the door and was gone by the time the waitress returned. The waitress wondered where the lady could be, and then noticed something written on the napkin.

There were tears in her eyes when she read what the lady had written: "You don't owe me anything. I've been there, too. Somebody once helped me out, the way I'm helping you. If you really want to pay me back, here's what you can do: Don't let this chain of love end with you."

Under the napkin were four more \$100 bills.

Well, there were tables to clear, sugar bowls to fill, and people to serve. The waitress made it through the rest of her long workday. That night, when she got home from work and climbed into bed, she was thinking about the money and what the lady had written. How could the lady have known how much she and her husband needed it? With the baby due next month, it was going to be hard. She knew how worried her husband was, and, as he lay sleeping next to her, she gave him a gentle kiss and whispered softly, "Everything's going to be all right. I love you, Bryan Anderson."