

## Gifted

*"We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves."* - Romans 15:1-2.

The Uber driver sets up the destination in his GPS, "How's your day going?" Asked him in a disinterest tone. None is heard from the boy, that is still adjusting himself in the backseat. He carries a pink backpack that appears to be empty.

They were in a nice neighborhood and the boy was sitting in a swing at the playground when his ride arrived. It is a sunny beautiful summer day, and the streets were empty. Probably because of the holiday; nobody wanted to work on the 4th of July. *But people still need to go places*, thought the driver.

As he drove, he kept looking at the boy from the rear mirror from time to time. The boy was staring at the street with his head lying on the window, still speechless. "Almost there," tried the driver one more time, but still no response. One block away from the final destination and the driver's phone suggested another race, but he wanted to make sure this boy arrived safely at the *Town Bank*. He couldn't stop wondering, *what is he doing here?*

"Wait here and keep the engine running," said the boy, grabbing his backpack and slamming the car's door. He headed for the main entrance but went around the building instead.

Astounded, the driver observed the boy going to back part of the bank. His phone ringed several more times, but he kept silencing it quickly, concentrating on what is happening behind the bank.

*He is to young too own someone money. Drugs? It's early for drugs, and not in this place. Maybe he's just meeting his parents.*

It was at that moment, almost five minutes after the boy left, that he reappeared on the backseat again, out of nowhere. Only this time, his backpack was filled with money till the very top.

“Drive.” said the boy. “Now!” he shouted again.

The bank alarm triggered. His phone ringed one more time and the boy kept screaming on the back seat. *There’s not enough time to think*, so he changed the gear, and drove as fast as he could.

They knew it was a matter of time until the police would go after them. They would have to go far away, possibly leave town. *This is not how I thought this day was gonna go*, thought himself repeatedly.

The boy’s age only makes it worst. The driver avoided looking at him, and especially at the money, that is now falling off the backpack.

One hour later, they parked in an IHOP, still no word from the boy. They both get out of the car. “Take that inside,” said the driver with a deep strong voice.

Seated at the table they stared at each other. The boy was drinking a chocolate milkshake, the driver was only giving him the stare. From time to time the boy would look at the TV just to check if they were on the news.

“Listen,” said the driver, “I know what you-”

“Shut up,” replied the boy.

Silence.

“You’re gonna listen to what I am going to say.” Said the driver. “I know what you’re going through right now, but you can’t do that. You can’t use your ‘gift’ to steal other people.”

“What do you know about teleporting?”

“Enough so I can teach you a lesson. We live in an era and a place where people like you and me are not heroes anymore. You can’t just walk in the streets exhibiting your ‘gift’ like it is some kind of toy. You shouldn’t use it at all. Unless you wanna end up in bad places.”

“You know nothing about me. You don’t know what I had to do to-”

“I know that you spent your whole life in the orphanage. The one a few blocks away from the playground I picked you up. I know your parents thought that leaving you behind would be easier than raising a ‘gifted’ children, and nobody ever wanted to adopt you because of the same reason. I understand that you need this money to move on with your life, I’m not gonna take it from you. But I’m gonna ask you to never use your ‘gifts’ for stuff like this again.”

“You can read minds,” said the boy, astonished.

“Yes, I do, but I didn’t have to read yours to figure all that out. I just had to connect the dots.”

Silence again, then the news started popping up on the TV.

The boy took one thousand dollars from his backpack and left it on the table. Drinking two more long gulps of the milkshake before leaving the restaurant.

On the next morning, the driver woke up in a hotel room.

Outside, when ready to leave, he stepped on the boy's backpack, but without any money in it. Only a newspaper with the headline 'MONEY STOLEN MIRACULOUSLY RETURNED'. He looked around and spotted the boy sitting in the same place inside his car, looking directly at him.

He knew that their lives would be no different if they were apart. That he was the only thing that little boy had. And more importantly, he knew that he would have to drive far away in order to get away with what they did. They didn't know each other, but they had a couple of miles ahead to figure that out, and for the first time in a while, he knew exactly what to do.

