

Exploring the Theme of Compassion: An Ethical Perspective in the Fictional World of Manoj Das

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to explore the theme of compassion in the short stories of Manoj Das, one of India's renowned literary figures. The short stories of Manoj Das are highly appreciated for several typical attributes in them, and the portrayal of the theme of compassion is one of them. Manoj Das is unquestioningly an untiring advocate of the ethical reform of society. Human lives in general become meaningful through the adoption of empathy, kindness, and compassion. The characters in Das's selected short stories, in particular, are no exception to this. The characters in Das's short stories exhibit their sense of compassion with kind deeds and words. Through an analytical study of his selected works, it is evident that Das depicts compassion as a force that influences his narrative dynamics. Through a careful literature review, it is discovered that this invaluable aspect of the short stories of Manoj Das has not been studied. Keeping the gradual decay of the ethical sense, i.e., compassion, in the present world and keeping the significance of the concept of compassion in view, the study of this aspect is the need of the hour for creating a sane society.

Keywords: compassion, concept, empathy, feeling, love, sanity, story, sympathy.

INTRODUCTION

Ethics is a major branch of philosophy that deals with moral values. Buddhism lays utmost importance on ethics. It is also called an ethical religion. The ethical values in this creed are based on the teachings of Gautama Buddha. His moral instructions are incorporated in Buddhist scriptures and handed down from generation to generation. S. Radhakrishnan has depicted such ethical aspects in the book *Indian Philosophy*: "In the collapse of creeds and the disintegration of systems, it was the task of Buddha to provide a firm foundation of morality" (357). "The Psychology of Buddhism is elaborated in the interests of ethicsBuddhism analyses the moral personality of a man and finds the principles of moral causations operating in its growth" (418). According to Buddha, there are four sublime moods (Brahma Viharas): *compassion (karuna)*, *cheerfulness (mudita)*, *loving-kindness/true love (maitri)*, and *impartiality (upeksa)*. Laying emphasis on *compassion (Karuna)*, S. Radhakrishnan says the following words in the book *Indian Philosophy*: "Without humility, charity and love, life is death at the core" (431). *Compassion* is an empathetic feeling and a selfless act of mitigating the suffering of others. Compassionate people feel kindness and empathy for the sufferers. Compassion is not only about feeling sad for the sufferers but also about taking action to make a positive difference in their lives. A sense of compassion is borne in those who have the feeling of true love for others. Keeping the ethical idealism of Buddhism in view, S. Radhakrishnan says the following words in the book *Indian Philosophy* in the elaboration of 'compassion' and 'true love': "Compassion for the suffering of others is the impelling motive of altruism" (430). "Buddha does not want a suppression of emotion and desire but asks for the cultivation of true love for all creation. This glowing emotion must fill the whole universe and result in an outflow of abounding goodwill" (433). Buddhist philosophy also underscores the significance of 'love' and 'compassion' in the way that one can achieve perfection in life by nurturing love and compassion for others. Manoj Das also casts light on the significance of 'love' and

‘compassion’ while discussing Buddhist philosophy in the book *Myths, Legends, Concepts, and Literary Antiquities of India*: “If one has love and compassion for all, one can be liberated from the cycle of birth and death and achieve nirvana” (212). The *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* defines the term ‘compassion’ with the following words: “Approving a strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for the suffering or bad luck of others and a wish to help them” (302). It is a fact that Buddhist philosophy lays utmost emphasis on the understanding of the values of compassion. In this connection, Pamela Bloom says the following words in the book *The Healing Power of Compassion: The Essence of Buddhist Acts*: “In the Buddhist teachings, compassion is universal... And yet there is a very special favour that the Buddhist teachings can bring to the understanding and experience of compassion, no matter what one’s religious affiliation may be” (1). R.N. Tagore underscores the need for humanity. He does not directly use the term ‘compassion’, but the very word ‘humanity’ that he has used in the book *Creative Unity* is a clear indication of the feeling and act of compassion. R.N. Tagore says the following words in the book *Creative Unity*: “Society suffers from a profound feeling of unhappiness, not so much when it is in material poverty as when its members are deprived of a large part of their humanity. This unhappiness goes on smouldering in the subconscious mind of the community until its life is reduced to ashes or a sudden combustion is produced. The repressed personality of man generates an inflammable moral gas deadly in its explosive force” (65). Dr. R.N. Sharma says the following words in the book *Indian Ethics*: “... Buddha has also stressed the adoption of friendliness towards everyone and sympathy towards suffering” (189). Moreover, Boobalan Nagendran says the following words about the importance of *compassion* in the book *The Red Book of Love and Compassion*: “People with average intelligence but with tremendous compassion can make a massive difference in the world” (221).

In Das’s stories, the characters, whether mystical or realistic, often find solace through acts of compassion. The feeling of compassion in Das’s stories is seen to be generated in a human character for a sad person, endangered animal, or victimised bird. From the benevolent woman in “The Submerged Valley” to the loving man in “Catching a Thief,” Das portrays the compassionate characters in an exquisite manner.

Literature Review:

The article entitled “Social Vision in the Short Stories of Mulk Raj Anand and Manoj Das,” written by Dr. Durga Prashad Dash, casts light on ideas like supernatural elements, exploitation, the helplessness of women, and feudalism. Moreover, the article entitled “The Depiction of Social Fidelity and Humanism in the Short Stories of Manoj Das: A Review Analysis,” written by Sailabhanu Sahoo and Dr. Subash Chandra Roy, casts light on themes like religious diversity, simplicity of people, rural life, and transformation of rural communities. The article entitled “A Study of Nature in the Works of Manoj Das,” written by Dr. U.G. Tayade, highlights the role of nature in the short stories of Manoj Das. The article entitled “Treatment of Rural India in the Short Stories of Manoj Das,” written by Dr. Ambuj Sharma, explores the role of nature in the short stories of Manoj Das. The article entitled “The Glorification of Nature in the Select Short Stories of Manoj Das,” written by Dr. Snehal Ratnakar Hegiste, highlights rural landscapes, eco-friendly environments, etc. in the short stories of Manoj Das. The article entitled “Indian Psyche in the Writings of Manoj Das,” written by Chinmopritam Muduli, exhibits issues like identity crisis, freedom struggle, terrorism, and things like history, myth, temple, etc. The article entitled “Depiction of Rural Fiction in the Selected Short Stories of Manoj Das” by Dr. Shaifali R. Puri makes an analysis of satires and also highlights the dominant features of rural culture. The article entitled “Manoj Das: An Incredible Bridge between Literature and Philosophy,” written by Dr. Santosh Nayak, explores the artistry of Manoj Das and the bridge of alliance between Manoj Das’s stories and philosophy. The thesis entitled “The Spiritual and Psychic Elements in the Stories of Manoj Das,” written by Sukanti Dash, highlights man’s inner growth and progress as well as spiritual elements in the short stories of Manoj Das. The article entitled “Quintessence of Indianness in the Fiction of Manoj” by Dr. Monika Jaiswal highlights Indianness, Indian perceptions of reality, etc. The article entitled “Writing the Village, Becoming the Nation: The Work of Manoj Das,” written by Manav Ratti, highlights rural life, mingling realism and everyday experience with elements of mystery and mysticism. The article entitled “Folk Elements in the Short Stories of Manoj Das: A Critical Study,” written by Dr. Manoranjan Behera, highlights folk tales of Odisha, nature and features of folk culture, etc. The article is entitled “The Short Stories of Manoj Das and R.K. Narayan: A Brief Comparative Study,” written by Jitendra Kumar Samal, highlights cultural values such as joy, pain, and sorrow of the common man: the regional overtones; cultural values, etc. The article entitled “The Narrative Study of Manoj Das’s Akasara Isara (Odia) and The Escapist (English),” written by Aswini Kumar Sahu, highlights issues of translation and cultural aspects through comparative realities combined with philosophical messages. The article entitled “SIGNIFICANCE OF RURAL CULTURE IN THE SHORT FICTION OF MANOJ DAS,” written by M. Narasimah Rao highlights the simple way of life of rural communities. The article entitled “The Depiction of Social Fidelity and Humanism in the Short Stories of Khushwant Singh and Manoj Das: A Critical Study,” written by Dr. Mayur Wadhvaniya, exhibits ideology, social fidelity, social consciousness, social belief, social traditions, superstitions, rituals, etc. The article entitled “A Retelling of the Abolkara Trope in Manoj Das’s ‘The Lady Who Died One and a Half Times and Other Fantasies from Folklore to Theory,’” written by Shatarupa Mishra, highlights how folklore contributes to different theoretical

perspectives by making a study of the Abolkara character. The article entitled “Humanism in the Stories of Manoj Das,” written by Mr. Narendra Sonu Tayade, depicts humanism in the selected works of Manoj Das. In addition, the book “Manoj Das: A Critical Study,” written by Dr. Sarbeswar Samal, puts forth the realism, fantasy, use of irony, symbolism, satire, humour, and narrative style in the works of Manoj Das. The book “Many Worlds of Manoj Das,” written by P. Raja highlights Indian sensibility, psychic growth, relationships with death, faces of transition, national and universal ethos, humour, etc.

Through a meticulous literature review, it has been observed that the compassion dynamics in the short stories of Manoj Das have not been traced in previous studies. Keeping it in mind, the researcher has taken a keen interest in working on it.

Research Methodology: The present research is philological in orientation and based on a qualitative approach. Text has been selected for conducting the research. Close reading, textual analysis, and biographical studies are the methods used in this research. Furthermore, behavioural aspects like compassion, feelings, attitudes, and actions to explore themes, motifs, etc. of the characters are the important tools of the present research.

Research Objectives:

- I. To examine the various ways in which the theme of compassion is represented through characters, plot development, and narrative style.
- II. To explore how compassion influences moral and ethical decision-making among characters and how it reflects broader societal values.
- III. To analyse how the ethical message of compassion resonates with modern societal issues and values.

Rationale of the Research:

The ethical dimension of compassion as depicted in the fictional world of Manoj Das has profound implications for societal values and behaviours. Understanding how compassion is represented in Das’s stories can illuminate its potential impact on readers’ ethical perspectives and social attitudes. This analysis can contribute to broader discussions about ethical reform and the promotion of empathy and kindness in society.

Compassion for the Suffering Animals & Birds in Das’s Short Stories: “Return of the Cat,” is such a short story of Manoj Das that depicts the sense of love and compassion of both Mahendra Mishra and his mother for a cat. Mahendra Mishra is portrayed as one of the major characters in the story. He felt jealous of a cat well nurtured by his mother. But later, a moment came when he felt compassion for the cat. Sometimes he was chasing the cat. Later, when he was drawn into the difficulties in life, he felt the pain of the cat. To the utter amazement, Mahendra’s stern attitude towards the cat was completely changed. The following words can be cited in this context to showcase Mahendra’s empathy with the cat: “And he discovered suddenly the hidden similarity between the cat’s plight when chased by him and his own movement in real life” (26). It is really so strange that the cat went suddenly missing after the demise of Mahendra’s mother. After a long time, it was seen in Mahendra’s kitchen. On seeing the neglected condition of the cat, Mahendra Mishra felt so embarrassed. The sense of compassion that arose in Mahendra is stated in the following words:

“Suddenly one day he heard a familiar mew on the wall of her kitchen, below the thatch. It was his mother’s cat. The neighbours had taken over the dead woman’s property all right, but nobody had cared to take charge of the cat” (28).

Mahendra’s mother had much love and compassion for the cat. Mahendra once lost his temper at the cat because he failed to realise the very miserable condition of the cat. But his mother realised it well. His mother’s sense of compassion for the cat is expressed with the following words: “Mother stood undone. First, the cat was not familiar with her son’s temper. Secondly, it was pregnant. Mother alone understood its unseemly attraction for delicacies” (29).

“The Bull of Babulpur,” is one of such short stories of Manoj Das which exhibits Boral’s compassion for a goat. Boral is portrayed as the central character in the story. He was a criminal lawyer by profession. On his way back from court to home, when he saw a speedy jeep hitting a goat, a sense of compassion arose in him for the goat. The narrator highlights the precarious situation with the following words:

“It was far from expected, but Boral, the well-known criminal lawyer, suddenly felt overwhelmed with melancholy on his way home from the court... The strange feeling came when a jeep speeding ahead of his car knocked down a goat that had strayed into the crowded street” (129).

The very incident shocked him. The death of the goat traumatised him. Boral’s compassionate feeling is expressed with the following words: “Boral looked at the goat again. It was dying. Its closing eyes gave out an expression of total disillusionment with the world” (129).

In “Birds at Twilight,” Roy is portrayed as the central character. Though he was initially portrayed as a hunter in the story but later there was a change of his attitude toward birds and animals. He had once captured a parrot and encaged it. Later the encagement of the parrot caused melancholy in him. He decided to liberate the parrot. His

very act of liberating the parrot from the cage gave him much pleasure. The narrator throws light on the very incident with the following words:

“He had captured an elegantly green parrot only a week ago. In the morning, he served it with breakfast, a banana, and opened its cage. It hopped experimentally and took to wings in no time. It circled twice or thrice over Roy’s head and then disappeared in a headlong flight towards the woods. Roy smiled and wished that he had many birds to free, or rather, he had the power to make every creature on earth run or fly to its heart’s content towards God-knows-where freedom” (11)

He subsequently liberated the tiger from the cage out of compassion. In the final section of the story, it is seen that the tiger died after killing Roy. Giloo is one of the characters in the story. Roy was his stepbrother, and they had much intimacy. The tiger was brought up by Giloo himself. It’s said that Giloo must feel sad due to the deaths of both Roy and the tiger. It’s the narrator’s sense of compassion towards Giloo. The narrator says the following words for Giloo: “Pity! Giloo will weep. Both were so dear to him!” (14)!

“Mystery of the Missing Cap”, is such a story of Das which depicts the sense of compassion and love of Shri Moharana for a baby monkey. Shri Moharana had nurtured a monkey and its baby. During his absence from the house, his servant had killed the monkey. On his return, when he came to know about the death of the monkey, he felt pity for the motherless baby monkey and nurtured the baby monkey with the utmost care. The sense of compassion of Shri Moharana for the baby monkey is expressed with the following words:

“He was a monkey not in any figurative sense, but a real one. When he was an infant, his mother had taken shelter under Shri Moharana’s roof in order to save her male child from the usual wrath of the male leader of her troop. Shri Moharana had not been at home and his servants killed the mother monkey. Shri Moharana felt extremely upset, did not eat for one and half days, and, to compensate for the wrong done, nurtured the baby monkey, christened Jhandoo, with great affection” (7).

“The Owl” is one of the short stories of Das in which he exhibits love and compassion of the villagers for an owl. As the narrator says the following words in connection with the love of the villagers for the bird: “But all the adult villagers were familiar with the hooting and that itself was considered important. Nobody asked why” (23) When there was a rumour that the owl was no more, the villagers felt melancholy and compassion for the owl. Finally when the owl produced the sound ‘T-whit!’, Balabhadra Das spoke out “ O’ God ! the owl is not dead , after all !” (28)

Das’s short story "The Old Man and the Camel" illuminates Basu's sense of compassion for a camel. On one occasion, Basu couldn’t even check the tears in his eyes when he heard a shocking narration from a jail mate about how the camel is mercilessly exploited by human beings. Tears rolled from Basu's eyes on hearing it. Since his childhood, Basu has had a wish to see a camel with his naked eyes. The following words in the story reflect Basu’s sense of compassion for the camel:

“It was in his despair and desolation in jail that the camel returned to his memory. And when a jail mate narrated to him how the camel never showed any sign of protest against being mercilessly overloaded except through sighing and shedding quiet tears, Basu had to make an effort to check his own tears” (191).

In the context of all the above short stories, the following words of Swami Raghaveshananda from the book *Value Oriented Moral Lessons* can be cited: “Compassion manifests as a spontaneous reaction or response to seeing or coming to know of another’s suffering—be it a man, animal or even a plant. It creates a feeling of sympathy and pity. It also results in an immediate urge to help the suffering person” (33).

Compassion for the Suffering Humans: In “Mystery of the Missing Cap,” the narrator feels compassion for both the characters: Shri Moharana and Babu Virkishore. The narrator expresses that he has no intention to jeer at the two personalities. His very intention is to share his sympathy, which has been enshrined in his mind for many years. The narrator says the following words to express his compassionate feelings for both of the characters:

“It is certainly not my motive, in recounting this episode from two decades ago, to raise a laugh at the expense of Shri Moharana or Babu Virkishore, then the Hon’ble Minister of Fisheries and Fine Arts of my State. On the contrary, I wish my friends and readers to share the sympathy I have secretly nurtured in my heart for these two gentlemen over the years past” (1).

In an incident, Babu Virkishore placed his heavy hand around the neck of Shri Moharana. It was too difficult on his part to bear such a heavy load, so he felt so uneasy. The very incident generated a feeling of compassion in the narrator’s mind for Shri Moharana. The narrator says the following words in this context:

“... The minister, double the size of an average man in our village, plodded through the street, it seemed to us, to the embarrassment of the poor, naked earth. And I still remember the look of Shri Moharana when the minister’s long, round arm rested on his shrunken neck, a look that I have seen only once or twice later in life on the faces of dying people who had lived a contented and complete life. Shri Moharana’s look suggested: ‘What more, what more, O mortal me, could you expect from life? My, my!’” (3).

When Shri Moharana came to know that the cap of Babu Virkishore was stolen, he felt so embarrassed. He was

shaking out of extreme fear. The very incident created a feeling of pity in the narrator for Shri Moharana. The following words reflect the narrator's sense of compassion towards Sri Moharana: "I could see Shri Moharana literally shaking. He was sweating like an ice cream stick, so much so that I was afraid that, at that rate, he might completely melt away in a few hours" (4). A welcome ceremony was arranged in honour of Shri Moharana, and so many people assembled to make it a grand success. After all the formalities, when Shri Moharana was asked to speak a few words, he felt so uneasy. His mind was filled with nervousness. The incident is expressed in the following words: "Now it was Shri Moharana's turn to say a few words of welcome. I saw him (I stood just in front of the stage) moving his legs and hands in a very awkward manner. That was certainly nervousness" (5). On another occasion, Moharana wanted to hide the fact that the minister's cap had been stolen by the monkey. When he appeared on the stage, he looked so depressed. The very sad appearance of Moharana created compassion in the mind of the narrator. The following words shed light on it: "My heartbeats had trebled. Looking at Shri Moharana's face I saw an extremely pitiable image – pale as death" (8). At last, both Babu Virkishore and Shri Moharana wept due to the occurrence of the heart-wrenching incidents. The very incident made Sri Moharana so upset. Both of them cut a sorry figure for each other. The incident is expressed in the following words: "But Shri Moharana was in no condition to say anything more. He broke into tears. Next moment I saw the Hon'ble Minister of Fisheries and Fine Arts weeping too" (8).

In the story "Catching a Thief," Raghunath is portrayed as the protagonist. The landlord, popularly known as Mahasay, is portrayed as a kind person. During the drought, people were suffering due to an intense crisis. Among all those sufferers, old Raghunath was one. During his acute crisis, the landlord stood by him and helped him get a bag full of rice. This is an act of compassion on the part of the landlord towards Raghunath. The very compassion of the landlord touched his heart and generated tears in his eyes. The narrator casts light on the incident with the following words:

"No wonder that the old Raghunath should be moved to tears at the compassion of the Mahasay (a popular second surname assumed by landlords and other aspirants to aristocracy, the term meaning 'great man') who had granted him a full bag of rice. Certain terms assume a special connotation during crises. If only one gave away a bag or two of rice in exchange for a full acre of your land, one's gesture constituted an act of compassion" (22).

"The Submerged Valley" is a short story that depicts the sense of compassion of the narrator's parents towards Abolkara. Abolkara was a foolish boy. As he was foolish, he failed to understand the reality of several phenomena. When he was searched and not found, both the narrator's father and mother became so restless. With the effort of the narrator's father, he was later rescued from being submerged in water. On seeing him shiver like a wet squirrel, the narrator's father's heart was moved. He felt compassion for helpless Abolkara and gave an order to give Abolkara some garments and blankets kept in the almirah. The very compassion of the narrator's father is put forth in the words as follows:

"There stood Abolkara, shivering like a wet squirrel, but smiling. Give him clothes to change and a pair of blankets from the bungalow's stock in the almirah" (33).

The narrator's mother was very affectionate by nature. She showed her compassion for the sad villagers in general and the helpless Abolkara in particular. She procured food to feed the hungry Abolkara. She took pleasure in feeding the boy in his acute, desolate condition. While feeding him, she looked like a goddess in the eyes of the narrator. The following words show the narrator's mother's sense of compassion for a foolish and helpless Abolkara: "While feeding Abolkara, Mother looked glorious as a goddess" (34). In the context of this short story, the Dalai Lama's words in the book *The Book of Love & Compassion* can be cited for a better understanding of the concept of compassion: "Compassion naturally creates a positive atmosphere, and as a result, you feel peaceful and content. Wherever there lives a compassionate person, there is always a pleasant atmosphere" (30).

In "The Murderer," Binu is portrayed as the central character. He was falsely accused of being a murderer. After being declared a murderer, he was to abscond himself. He was to remain hungry. The narrator's mother in the story shows compassion for Binu. Binu's distress moved her heart. She shows motherly affection to Binu. Before serving food items to other members of the family, she had to keep some food items aside for Binu. The food items included dal, crushed potatoes, and boiled milk. This empathetic sense and the actual act of her kindness elevate her personality as a compassionate person. The narrator exhibits a sense of compassion in his mother towards a helpless person like Binu with the following words: "The moon rose rather late. We were still expecting the murderer. Mother had kept aside for him a quantity of rice, which ordinarily would have taken two men to finish, a matching quantity of dal and crushed potatoes, and even a cup of thickly boiled milk" (34). In this context, Dalai Lama's following words related to 'compassion' in *The Book of Love and Compassion* can be logically quoted:

"Genuine compassion should be unbiased. As I mentioned before, genuine compassion is based on the recognition that others have the right to happiness just like yourself, and therefore even your enemy is a human being with the same wish for happiness as you and the same right to happiness as you. A sense of concern developed on this basis is what we call compassion; it extends to everyone, irrespective of

whether the person's attitude towards you is hostile or friendly" (22-23). "The Poison Girl" is one of the outstanding short stories of Manoj Das, which casts light on the suffering of a young girl named Heera and the sense of compassion of her friend Landa. Heera satisfies the customers in a hotel by serving them liquor. When a heavy-bodied man portrayed as Coolie in the story tries to molest her, finding no way out, she calls out "Landa." Landa suddenly responded to her call. He drove away the coolie and felt very compassionate seeing her helpless. He offered her that he would render a mild massage to her backbone. The following words show Landa's compassion towards Heera: "'Landa!' shouted Heera. Lada comes rushing. 'Get lost, you brother-in-law of an ass!' Lada hoots the coolie out with his nasal accent of epithets. The man slinks away. Landa sits down near Heera. 'Should I give a tender massage to your backbone, Heera'?" (110). In the critical stage of Heera's life, only Landa was giving her physical and moral support. The wounds in the body of Heera gave him much pain. She sometimes felt breathless. Sometimes she shouted for Landa's company. He was giving her a massage and broke into tears, hiding his face under her sari. The following words of the story exhibit Landa's sympathy for Heera: "But the wounds begin to trouble her, and she feels suffocated towards the dawn. Tossing on her bed, sometimes she shouts for Lada. He is always prompt in his response. He would give her a message and then break into sobs, hiding his face under her sari" (111). Heera decided to start a new job after leaving the sinister profession of satisfying customers. The new job was to drive trucks. For driving trucks, a license was required. Later, the doctor examines her and declares that she is suffering from a serious disease. She smiles at the doctor, but Landa becomes so sympathetic towards her laughs while tears roll from her eyes. As per the advice of the doctor, Heera was to maintain abstinence. The following words manifest Landa's compassion for Heera:

"She knew that a license was necessary for driving lorries. Now she learns that she too must obtain a license to run her trade. The doctor who examines her pronounces her diseased. She smiles at the doctor meaningfully, but to no avail. Landa laughs while tears roll down his cheeks. Heera must practice abstinence and lead a maidenly life!" (113).

Conclusion:

In Manoj Das's short stories, the theme of compassion is put forth profoundly through the characters who exhibit empathy towards the physical and mental sufferers. Through stunning storytelling and finespun characterisation, Das narrates short stories where compassion serves as a guiding force amidst life's predicaments. In various short stories by Manoj Das, characters like Raghunath, Giloo, Mahendra, Mahendra's mother, Boral, Shri Moharana, Landa, and Basu embody the essence of humanity through their selfless deeds. By virtue of this transformative force, Das's short stories gain both aesthetic beauty and artistic excellence. Through his poignant narratives, readers are reminded of the inherent beauty in acts of kindness, fostering a deeper understanding of the human experience and our interconnectedness.

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