



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Two Alms, or The Thanksgiving Day Gift

Unknown writer

Once upon a time a poor old woman stood shivering beside a road that led to a prosperous village. She hoped some traveler would take pity and give her a few pennies for food and firewood.

It had been snowing since early morning, and a sharp east wind made the evening bitterly cold. At the sound of footsteps, her face lit up with hope. A moment later it fell, because the traveler passed without giving her anything.

"Poor old woman," he said to himself. "What a bitter night to be begging by the road. I'm truly sorry for her."

As his steps faded, she whispered, "I mustn't give up. Perhaps the next one will help me."

Before long she heard wheels. It was the mayor's carriage, on its way to a Thanksgiving banquet. When his excellency saw the old woman, he ordered the carriage to stop, lowered the window, and took a coin from his pocket.

"Here you are!" he called, holding it out.

She hurried toward the window. Before she reached it, the mayor saw that he had pulled out a gold piece instead of a silver one.

"Wait a moment," he said. "I've made a mistake."

He meant to swap it for something smaller, but his sleeve caught on the window latch and the gold piece dropped into the snow. By now the woman stood at his window, and he saw that she was blind.

"I've dropped it, my good woman," he said, "but it's lying right there in the snow near you. I'm sure you'll find it."

"Thank you, sir, thank you," she said, and knelt to search.

On rolled the mayor to the banquet. "Foolish to give her gold," he thought, "but I'm a rich man, and I seldom make such mistakes."

That night, after the banquet, he sat in his comfortable chair before a blazing fire, and the picture of the old woman kneeling in the snow and fumbling for the

coin rose before his eyes.

"I hope she makes good use of my generous gift," he mused. "It was far too much to give. But no doubt I'll be rewarded for my charity."

Meanwhile the first traveler had reached the village inn, where a great wood fire crackled in the cheerful dining room. He took off his warm coat and sat down to wait for dinner. But he could not forget the old woman on the snowy roadside.

Suddenly he stood up, put on his coat, and said to the innkeeper, "Set the table for two. I'll be back shortly."

He hurried back to the spot where he had seen her. She was still on her knees in the snow, searching for the mayor's gold piece.

"Good woman, what are you looking for?"

"A piece of money, sir. The gentleman who gave it to me dropped it in the snow."

"Don't search any longer," said the traveler.
"Come with me to the village inn. You can warm yourself by the great fire, and we'll have a good dinner. You shall be my Thanksgiving guest."



He helped her to her feet, and only then did he realize she was blind. Carefully he took her arm and led her along the road to the inn.

"Sit here and warm yourself," he said, settling her in a comfortable chair. Soon he led her to the table and gave her a good dinner.

That Thanksgiving Day, an angel took up her pen and struck out all record of the gold piece from the book where the mayor kept his good deeds. Another angel wrote in the traveler's book the story of an old beggar woman's Thanksgiving dinner at the village inn.

Stories help us explore cultures, learn moral lessons, connect with nature — or simply have fun. That's why ririro.com offers 3,000+ free stories — fairy tales, fables, bedtime stories, myths and more — for every age, in 13 languages, with free printable PDFs and often audio. Reading should be a right, not a privilege. Share ririro.com and spread the joy of reading.

Instagram: @ririro_reading · Pinterest: pinterest.com/ririrocom