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The Hard Task and a Glass of Tea

Casey Bloomer

I had driven over 150 miles already, and still the infinite pile of work orders seemed to plague my clipboard. As I sluggishly dropped my feet to the ground to start yet another job, I let out a disheartened sigh. My body cried out for rest as my stomach grumbled loudly, only to remind me I hadn't eaten anything since early morning.

I stiffened my back and lightened my gait as I walked to the bright red door that stood before me. I managed to crack a slight smile as the small and feeble elderly woman opened the door, welcoming me into her home. "So you're needing some help with your house cleaning?" I asked politely.

"Sure am," she replied. "Ever since my husband passed, I just can't seem to find the energy to stay caught up!"

I assured her I would be more than happy to help her out with the overwhelming task. This brought nothing but a smile to her wrinkled face. She asked if I would like a glass of sweet tea, but I declined, as I thought about the plethora of work still to be done.

I started with the basic stuff first, picking up the few dishes scattered on the table and on the counter tops. I grabbed the broom and stiffened mop as I braced my back for the task at hand. I could tell she had tried to keep up the floor, but there was quite a stock pile of crumbs that littered the contour of the kitchen cabinets. She repeatedly apologized for the despicable mess, but each time I assured her, I was here to help and that it was no problem.

From there I moved on to the bathroom and bedrooms. Scattered through the house were pictures and the magnet collection that belonged to her husband. I couldn't help but smile as my mind wandered, and my heart warmed as I noticed an old pair of boots that were tucked in the corner. My grandpa always wore boots as well, and I just seemed to take flight back in time, reminiscing in the memories of my childhood. My grandfather always smelled of dairy cows a hard worker he was. I finally plunged myself back to the present moment of time, realizing I still had more work to finish before the day's end.

I made my way to the final room. It was a beautiful sight, with dark brown leather furniture, a massive elk skin rug on the floor, and a fireplace that just called out to warm the heart. There was something different about this room, though. I noticed a cup with dried coffee in the bottom next to the burly recliner that faced the small television in the corner. The mantle, end tables, and hutch had more dust than any other room in the house. As I wiped and sprayed, I heard a snuffle from behind.

"I haven't been able to come in here yet." She spoke feebly with tears in her eyes. My heart pounded in my chest, as I struggled to fight back the tears that flooded my eyes. Before thinking I rushed to her side, and hugged her neck, offering any comfort that I could. As I released her from my embrace, I gazed into her reddened eyes and asked, "How about that glass of sweet tea?"