Crush

It had been a rough week. I thought as I looked out at the bright sunshine piercing through my unprotected box.

I rubbed my eyes and crawled outside into the grim alleyway and inspected my surroundings.

I was alone and that was strange, there were usually at least two other people sleeping rough in the alleyways.

But looking at the space in the light gave me the impression that a lot of rough sleepers would have known to avoid this place.

It was littered with more waste than a usual alleyway, specifically broken glass that was sprawled all around the path. They shimmered in the light, it gave them a dangerous appearance.

I sighed and went back into my box to see if I had anything to put on my feet as my feet were bare.

Unfortunately, there was nothing appropriate to put on my feet unless I tried to put tubes of toilet paper on my feet, but my feet were size 10’s. So that seemed unlikely.

Crestfallen, I returned to the outside and inspected my surroundings to see if there was a suitable path I could take that would avoid the glass.

But unless I was the best long jumper in the world, I would have to get at least a little bit of glass stuck to me.

What was the point in trying, I’d get glass on me regardless of what I did and I really wanted to leave the alleyway.

So, I just walked straight through, ignoring the sharp bites of the sharp glass as I moved. Towards the end of the path I stepped on a particularly sharp piece of glass, I winced and had to stop for a few seconds but then I pushed on.

I eventually made it out of the alleyway and into the open.

I inspected my feet and saw that unsurprisingly there was a cavalcade of glass stuck in my feet I quickly and painfully pulled out the glass one piece at a time, completely ignoring the pain. I was so used to it by that point that I was almost numb.

I walked around the city not really knowing what to do.

What are you supposed to do to get money when you’re homeless? I kept asking myself.

A week before I had lived with my parents, but my dad had kicked me out. He might believe he was justified but he wasn’t. You should never kick your own son out of your home just for being gay and wanting you to know. Especially when that son is only sixteen years old.

I fished into my dirty jeans pocket for my wallet and inspected how much money I had left. I had managed to get £50 out of my account before my dad closed the account, there had been £4000 worth of savings in there but it now belonged to him, as far as he was concerned he had no son.

“Fuck!” I exclaimed, I only had £4 left. I sighed I guessed that I’d have to start begging after my next meal.

I didn’t relish that thought, especially since I had seen how people treated the homeless that begged. As far as the general public was concerned they were a barrier that needed to be avoided.

I walked into a local grocery shop. The minute I stepped in the head cashier gave me the dirtiest look I had ever seen. And everyone else in the shop looked at me at the exact same time.

I knew exactly why I hadn’t bathed in a week and my clothes were stained with meals long past and the dirt of rough nights.

I looked like a mess. But I chose to ignore their stares and walked over to the crisps and picked up a packet and a bottle of coke.

I placed the items on the counter. The cashier smiled at me, “you have a rough night?” He was short and had kindly sympathetic eyes.

“More like a rough week.”

I paid for the items and was about to leave but he tapped my shoulder. “There’s a shelter less than a mile away, they have warm beds and clean clothes.

I nodded in thanks and exited the shop. I couldn’t go to a shelter, I didn’t want to surround myself with other people like me, it would have been too depressing to bear.

I walked around the city but it hadn’t even been ten minutes when it started to pour with rain.

I tried to enter buildings but I couldn’t, nobody would let me in. They probably thought that I was a thief out to steal their belongings.

So, I decided to try to enter nearby cars for shelter.

I tried a few cars but none of them would open.

Then I saw a badly aged and damaged rusty truck. I pulled the handle, yes it opened. I scrambled into the truck and held my body for warmth.

I instantly drifted off to sleep.

I was awakened a few hours later by the hum of an engine and the feeling of being lifted.

I opened my eyes and saw to my horror that the truck was about to be crushed in a scrapyard. I slammed against the door and tried to exit the vehicle but I couldn’t the door was bolted shut.

I tried to exit through the rear window, punching against the glass but it was no use.

I lay back down onto the seats breathing heavily, there was no point in trying to get out I had very little to live for anyway, even if I managed to get out what would I do? I couldn’t go back to my parents they wouldn’t take me back.

So I gave in, I closed my eyes again. I ignored the giant pit in my stomach and tried to stop my body from shivering and waited to be squeezed like a grape.

But before I felt that I felt the tires land gently on the ground and the door opened and I heard yelling and felt someone pick me up and carry me away.

I woke up on a bed and looked around, there was a bald bearded man looking down on me.

He smiled and said, “It’s lucky we found you when we did.”

I smiled back but I didn’t think that I had been lucky because I had a very important unanswered question.

What now?