

## “For Sale: baby shoes, never worn”

-by Vanya Arikutharam

I was on my way to a lunch date when I noticed a sign in the charity shop’s window.

*“For Sale: baby shoes, never worn”*

My heart clenched. I knew the shop’s owner, a sweet young lady called Marissa. She was expecting a baby in about 5 months. As I walked up-to the display I noticed that there were two pairs of identical shoes. I felt another tug at my heart.

I looked at my watch. I could spare a few minutes to talk to Marissa without being late for my date.

A bell jingled as I pushed open the door.

“Tara! It’s been quite a while!” Marissa exclaimed as she made her way towards me.

I hugged her a little extra hard today.

“How are you?” I asked her.

“Well things have been going splendidly,” Marissa said jovially. “I received so many donations last week since quite a few people bought too much during Black Friday and decided to donate.”

“Ah that’s wonderful,” I said, slightly perplexed.

“I know right!” She said happily. “How are things at work?”

“They’re good,” I said, holding back on the news of my recent promotion since I feared it would make her feel bad considering her current situation.

“Nice! Anything items in the display interest you?”

“Um those baby shoes are quite cute. Although I have little use for them,” I said, testing the waters. Immediately Marissa’s face turned solemn.

“Yes they are quite cute. My favourite colour too.” She said sadly.

I felt a bit bad for dampening her happy mood but I was curious.

“Whose are they?”

“Oh my aunt bought them,” she said, her face still solemn.

“Ah I see. Why are you donating them then?”

“Didn’t really work out,” she said, visibly trying not to cry.

I felt terribly guilty for prying so much.

"I'm sorry," I apologised. "I must have overstepped. I'll come visit you later."

"Oh wait please don't go. Did I look sad? These blasted pregnancy mood swings have been driving me crazy! Don't worry it's nothing you said." She said.

"Pregnancy mood swings?" I asked with an extremely confused look on my face.

"Yes I told you didn't I?" She said, now also confused.

"But-but the baby shoes? They're for sale if you're pregnant? Aren't they for the baby?"

Realisation dawned on her face and she burst out laughing.

"Oh silly they're not for the baby! My aunt bought a new puppy recently and the shoes were for him. Turns out they're far too big for a 2 month old puppy."

"Ohhh!" I said relieved. "Good grief I was so worried about you!"

Marissa was still laughing. "Oh my goodness. No wonder you looked so apprehensive. Stay for a bit. I'll fix you a cup of tea."

"I'd love to stay but I'm already quite late for my date. Maybe next time" I said as I realised I'd spent over 15 minutes at the store.

"Alright then. Come over next week. I'll show you the baby's pictures from my last doctor's visit!"

"I would love to see them! I'll see you next week," I said happily as I exited the store in much better spirits than I'd entered in.