

## The Coin

"That's thirteen dollars please," said the cashier.

He reached into his wallet and handed over a ten dollar note, and a five dollar note.

It was a surprise for him when she handed him a coin. It was one of those new two-dollar coins. The notes were being phased out now, and these new coins were in circulation. He held it up admiring the shiny gold, with a traditional Aboriginal tribal elder depicted on one side, and the Queen's head on the other. The year was 1988. He dropped the coin in his pocket and thought no more of it.

Brisbane had come alive this year with the World Exposition currently hosted by the city. He was on his way there now, meeting some friends at the Britannia Inn. It was a merry night with many beers heartily consumed.

This fellow with the coin was calling it a night, and making his way, somewhat unsteadily, out of the place. He had a pocketful of coins and absentmindedly reached into his pocket to glance at them, while he stumbled along. Fumbling fingers let some spring free, and that particular new two-dollar coin hit the pavement, rolling free down the pathway beyond his care and attention. It rolled onto some soft grass amidst a small patch of clover.

The clover sensed its weight and stems and leaves parted allowing it to nestle closer to the ground, and under the shade of the clover leaves. When the sun rose in the morning, the coin was under the four delicate leaves of a clover. Perhaps if the coin had a soul, it would have remarked about it being a lucky day.

Months went by. Of course, the grass grew, and was cut, and it grew again. The coin lay there, close to the earth, but always under cover of a clover, and strangely, always a clover of the four-leaf variety.

Then the Southbank redevelopment was underway with chaos, workmen and machinery setting the scene of every day. The little bit of grass with its clover patch was no more. It seemed likely that the coin would be lost forever perhaps under concrete foundations.

I guess it had other plans because on one hot sunny day, there happened to be a worker, destined to be involved. He was on a break, having a smoke, pondering his weekend plans. With a sigh, and a last drag on his cigarette, he dropped the butt between his feet, watching it smoulder its last. It was the curved edge that caught his eye, just next to the butt. He reached for it, and with a jiggle, he pulled a two-dollar coin free from the rubble.

"Oh, nice!" He exclaimed and dropped the coin in his pocket.

The worker finished for the day and got himself ready to go out. He was meeting a couple of mates in the city. The plan was to have a few beers and try their luck with some raffle tickets. Their pub was doing some meat trays and the like, which was a bit of fun. Not that he had won anything in the preceding weeks. One of his mates had won before, but he was known as a lucky bastard.

The coin had been placed in his wallet and sat quietly there. It didn't glow or anything, no vibration or hum. Just a coin.

The worker bought a round of beers, and he and his mates talked and had a laugh. Raffle tickets were purchased, and in short time, the first meat tray was ready to find its winner.

"D12, who has D12?" said the raffle dude.

"Crikey," the worker exclaimed, "That's me!"

A subtle change in fortune seemed to have come to the worker, and he thought that was brilliant.

Another raffle, why not he reasoned, and reached for his wallet to buy some tickets. He had a few coins, so used those for pay. The coin was now with the raffle dude. The worker did not win again.

Raffle Dude finished his duties that night, paid the cut to the pub and took off for the night. The coin lay quietly amongst many other coins within a white cloth bag lying on the seat next to Raffle Dude as he drove home. He didn't have far to go, and traffic was light.

About half the way home, he stopped at a red light, waiting patiently for the change. The lights changed green, and he engaged the clutch beginning to move off. Suddenly the car shuddered heavily, red lights flashed on the dash. Then screaming across his vision was a dark blur on wheels speeding right through a red light and the intersection.

He gulped in astonishment, and the cars behind him blasted their horns. The car started evenly, and he moved off, silently wondering what just happened.

The next morning, he got up and went for a run. He liked to run to the local council pool, do some laps, and then run home again. There is a small entry fee to the pool, and yes, he did reach into that bag and grab a few coins. Raffle Dude went off for his swim, and the coin was now resting with the other change at the office of the council pool.

It didn't last long in the tray. A young girl arrived at the pool with a few of her friends, and it was now in the pocket of her shorts.

The girls enjoyed their time at the pool and agreed to meet after lunch at the school fete. When the young girl arrived at the fete, she met up with her friends and headed over to the rides, enjoying them with the usual screams and white knuckles.

After that, they had a look around the various stalls and came across the Dunk the Teacher game. It was the P.E. teacher, sitting proudly awaiting the drop into the tub of water, so the girls decided they would definitely give this a try. One by one they lined up and tried to hit the target, until it was her turn.

She aimed like a softball pitch and sent it up a bit too high where it hit the metal frame on the edge ricocheting down hitting the target. The P.E. teacher dropped abruptly into the water, and rose spluttering, somewhat surprised.

Everyone was laughing, and they told the young girl that she could have a free go, given her success. The P.E. teacher settled back on the springboard, wiping the dripping water from his eyes. The young girl took aim and launched another drive, but this time it was off to the right of the target, until it was again deflected, straight onto the bullseye. In he went again, and the crowd roared with laughter.

There was quite an audience now, and shouts of "Hat-trick!" were in the air. The P.E. teacher clambered out again, calling out to the young girl that he expected to see her at softball practice on Monday. He sat in the position again, and the crowd began chanting. The young girl felt amazed at her luck but wanted to do better.

She was cool, calm, and confident, when she pitched, and this time, with total certainty, slammed into the bullseye. There was massive applause from the crowd and the P.E. teacher joined in, when he resurfaced.

The girls moved on, exclaiming wonder at her prowess, and her luck, leaving the applause behind them. A lucky dip stall was next on offer, and the young girl handed over our coin, in exchange for a small treasure.

An older lady was there with her two grandchildren, and they also tried their luck there. They received something nice which made them smile, forgetting their troubles for just a few moments. The Grandmother was fortunate to receive our coin in her exchange at the Lucky Dip stall.

Later in the day, she met her daughter at the local coffee shop, where the kids excitedly showed their mother the trinkets they had. Grandmother was always insistent on paying her way and slid some coins over to her daughter in payment for the coffee. The daughter knew better than to argue with her, and resignedly shuffled the coins, including our coin, into her purse.

The conversation was guarded because neither of them wanted to discuss the issue of her estranged husband in front of the children. It was a very difficult situation for them all. Her husband had become abusive and violent in recent years, culminating in his arrest for assaulting her. This made him even more angry, and now with orders in place for him to keep away, there remained a lot of concern in case he was to show up unexpectedly.

Grandmother took the kids back to her place for the remainder of the afternoon, while the daughter did her groceries and headed home. The woman was burdened with stress and worry. She scanned the streets as she drove, terrified she would see his car.

Arriving at home and driving into the garage gave her some comfort as the garage door closed behind her. Our coin listened quietly to her beating heart.

She carried her groceries into the house and began putting them away. No sooner had she started this and there was a loud thumping on her front door.

She froze, then heard him call out, again bashing on the door. Hands shaking, she immediately called the emergency number, asking for the Police.

"What's your emergency?" inquired the call-taker.

"My husband is here, he shouldn't be here, there's a court order, please come. Please help me."

She heard him walking up the back stairs, and suddenly he was at the back door, right there at the kitchen where she was standing. He saw her through the glass panels, and with menace, he began to kick the door. The phone slide from her hands and fell to the floor.

The door was thumped again, and there was an almighty crash, and silence.

She didn't understand what had happened. The door was still closed and locked, and there was nothing. No noise, just silence. She approached the door, and looking down, could not see where he had gone.

She picked up the phone, and the call-taker informed her that they were sending someone there, arriving within minutes. She still could not hear any more noise, and continued to talk on the phone, bursting into tears and sobbing as she crouched to the floor and huddled in a corner of the kitchen.

After what seemed an eternity, there was a knock on the door. The call-taker assured her it was the police, so she headed to the front door to let them in.

They found him below the back stairs. It seems the stairs were aged and in need of repair. The weight and frenzy had caused a tread to dislodge. He fell heavily and knocked himself unconscious. An ambulance took him away.

Some days later, the woman was back at home with her children. Still suffering from frayed nerves and very fragile, she continued with her life and its daily chores. The husband was still in hospital, having undergone surgery, but honestly, she really did not care.

There was a clatter behind her, which made her jump, but it was only her daughter playing with her purse, scattering some coins. The little girl had been painting and produced some lovely yellow smiley faces.

She decided to apply her talents to one of the coins, our coin in fact, and gave it a bright yellow face with a big smile.

The woman came over to admire her artwork, and seeing the coin, and its smile, she said to her daughter, "That is just beautiful; Let me tell you now, I will treasure this always." She placed our coin on the shelf giving its smiley face pride of place in the room.

She tidied up the other coins back into her purse, spying her lotto ticket in there and sighing, "I could do with a bit of luck."