

## The Day I Traded my Bathtub for a Better World

There's a lizard in my bathtub, staring up at me. I have no bad feelings towards these fascinating, prehistoric creatures, but they are better appreciated in their natural habitat, not occupying my porcelain tub. Choosing to skip my planned morning soak, I quickly rinse myself from the sink, trading glances with my unexpected guest. I pull the shower curtain to a close to give us both some privacy, imagining him having a little lizard day spa brings a smile to my face.

The scent of breakfast, a mix of savory aromas, waft up the stairs as I descend. The tempting smell, as always, is courtesy of Mum's cooking. Settling onto the worn-out breakfast stool, my heart thumping with anticipation, I announce into the still morning air, "Today, I am going to change the world!" I'd like to think that my Mum hears me, but she appears lost in her own thoughts. It's fine, maybe she'll catch on later. A dusty bush trail is my morning school route, I hear the Kookaburra's singing their morning chorus as I walk with purpose along the path. I pass Jim, our local postman, trudging down my neighbours' sprawling driveway, I wave, calling out, "Hi Jimmy, today, I'm going to change the world!"

His hearty response, "Good for you kiddo," echoes in the morning air.

In class, my excitement spills over. My hand shoots up, catching the slightly exasperated gaze of Ms Scarlett. "Today, I'm going to change the world, Ms!" I announce, my eyes alight with determination. Predictably, the classroom erupts in restrained laughter. I know they all think of me as the weird kid. But isn't strange, good? Mum always told me it is, I try to take pride in my peculiarities, but it's not always easy. Ms. Scarlett, seemingly distracted, gives an unemotional, "Well, that's wonderful, Matilda." I cling to this remark like a lifeline amidst the sea of giggles.

The school day unfolds much like any other. The repetitiveness of maths, followed by geography class seems to stretch on for eternity. The end of day school bell finally rings, marking the passing hours. Each tick of the clock - a precious moment slipping away, a minute less for my grand quest to change the world. My notebook remains empty, I have come up with zero world-changing schemes, its blank pages staring accusingly back at me. As the sun casts long shadows in the playground, I feel disappointment. The morning's bright optimism has disappeared. Despite my bold declaration, I have no grand plans, no ideas. whispering to myself: How am I going to change the world?

On the walk home I drag my feet along the dusty ground, scuffing my shoes, mumbling to myself when suddenly something catches my eye in the bush. We're trained to watch for venomous snakes, but this is a different creature altogether. Its grey fur, round ears, and heart-wrenchingly adorable expression leave no room for doubt—it's a koala! She looks like she's having a very bad day, just like me. Without a second thought, I decide to help her.

Gently, I pour some water into my lunch box and offer it to the parched marsupial. The koala regards me cautiously, but ultimately, accepts my kindness. Holding her gently in my arms, I feel a unique bond forming, an unspoken pact of mutual survival. I carry her to the local vet, Christy, just around the corner. Christy, the friendly veterinarian, reassures me the koala just needs time and care. She suggests leaving her at the clinic for a few days. I leave, my heart filled with gratitude for Christy and new hope for my mission. Later that evening, while enjoying my favourite pasta bake dinner, the noise of the TV blaring in the background, the daily news captures my attention. The headline reads about an Australian bush girl who rescues a koala. Suddenly, it hits me—I'm the girl they're talking about! Someone must have filmed our encounter, and now the video has gone viral, reaching people all over the world.

The news broadcasters speak of my bravery and kindness, hailing me as a hero. Millions of donations flood in to save the koalas and their habitats. It's overwhelming but I feel incredibly proud. As I head upstairs to clean my teeth before bed, I catch a glimpse of my lizard friend still staring at me from the tub.

I can't help but smile at him and announce "Today, Mr. Lizard, I changed the world. Well, a koala is a good way to start." With a feeling of accomplishment, I drift off to sleep, dreaming of a world where kindness and compassion triumph—a world I believe we can create, one quirky act of kindness at a time.

