

# A Morning That Should Have Passed Unnoticed

## A Social Drama

**T**he morning is damp and gray, the air heavy with the smell of wet leaves and cold stone. The jogger slows her pace, just for a moment to catch her breath. Then she sees the girl.

Too small for what she carries. Too quiet for a child.

The girl walks barefoot across the cracked concrete, as if she no longer feels the cold. In one hand she drags the bag behind her, plastic scraping softly against the ground, an endless, hollow sound. Empty bottles. Carefully collected to return at the supermarket for deposit. A quiet attempt to contribute something to the family's survival. In the other, she holds the baby resting in the worn cloth sling against her body. It sleeps without moving.

The jogger stops. Her body does not know what to do next. Her pulse still races from the run, yet everything inside her falls still.

She thinks of her apartment. Warm. Ordered. The coffee waiting for her. The news she planned to read. Things that suddenly have no place.

The girl pauses briefly. Not because she notices anyone, but because the bag catches on the ground. She pulls. Once. Twice. Then it loosens. She keeps walking. Without looking up.

The jogger feels something shift inside her. Not a thought. More a pressure. A question without words.

Who is waiting for this child?

Or is no one waiting at all?

She takes a step forward. Hesitates. Her gaze drifts over empty windows, crumbling facades, doors that promise nothing. Everything looks as if it has long stopped seeing.

The baby stirs slightly. A faint sound. The girl reacts at once, tightening the sling carefully, almost gently. A gesture that does not belong to someone her age.

The jogger swallows.

There is no defiance. No anger. Only a quiet resolve. As if there is nothing else but this path. One step after another. Keep going.

“Hey...”

The word is soft. Out of place in the air.

The girl stops. Turns slowly. Her eyes meet the jogger's. Gray. Alert. Far too old.

For a moment, neither speaks.

Then the jogger raises her hand. Not fully. Just a little. As if she first has to learn how to do it.

“Are you... hungry?”

The girl does not answer immediately. She only looks. As if testing whether the question is real.

Then she nods, almost imperceptibly.

And in that small nod lies more hope than the whole morning had held.

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Explore the accompanying photograph for this piece, along with many more striking, evocative, and artistically distinctive images from this and other series, in the web album at [www.BioMechMaidens.com](http://www.BioMechMaidens.com).

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