

The Warm Jacket

It was a snowy evening in 1963. Jack McKenzie was strolling in downtown Manhattan alone. The snow was unexpected and he was not wearing enough clothes. The snowflakes fallen on his jacket melted and soaked the jacket. He wished he had had a warm jacket.

“Good God,” he thought. “As if I were not unlucky enough.” A cold wind swept his face as a Mercedes Benz swished past. Jack stared at the car, or more specifically, the driver, until the million-dollar vehicle disappeared around the corner. “I wish I could be him,” he thought. “No, actually,” his inner voice raised again. “Being employed is good enough for me.” What happened in the morning flashed back to Jack’s head.

“McKenzie!” Jack’s boss yelled. “The last thing I need in this office is the little problem of yours!”

“I’m sorry, Mr. Scallon,” Jack apologized.

“Don’t,” Scallon paused for a second. “Don’t pull that little stunt again, Mckenzie!”

Jack wanted to explain but he stuttered.

“Mr. Jack McKenzie, you are fired!”

Jack knew nothing could help him from being fired, so he packed his stuff silently.

His jacket was almost freezing how badly did he regret not putting one more coat on. He’d thought about buying a jacket on the way home, but the thought disappeared after about a second when he was reminded that he lost his job. To his surprise, he felt a hard thing in his chest pocket. It was a gas lighter. “Finally, a good thing,” he said to himself. With a light in hand, he walked towards the newspaper stand, hoping to buy himself a cigarette, “Three dollars?” he exclaimed. “When has it become so expensive?”

He left with nothing but a sigh.

He walked away slowly towards the direction of his home. He thought of his family. His wife, Suzie, and their two kids, Jeffery and Morgan, came to his mind. He felt guilty for not being

able to support his family, especially Suzie, as she had supported him, despite his misfortune.

Jack walked into a park. He saw children playing with snow and rich couples kissing. They made him more desperate. The thought of "I am nobody" chanted in his head. He wondered if there was any good thing left for him in this city.

Suddenly, he heard some very frequent panting behind him. It was a guy whose physique was very similar to Jack's. The stranger had been running, but stopped in front of him. Jack was trembling in the snow when they met. "Are you cold?" the stranger asked, with a very strong Italian-American accent. Jack nodded. "Good," the stranger said. "You'll need this, it is new."

The stranger gave him the leather jacket he took off during the short encounter. "Ciao," the stranger dashed off as Jack was putting the jacket on. It was a new jacket indeed. It would be a pity to ruin it, he thought. The jacket was made of Italian leather and it suited Jack perfectly. He was surprised. He thought there was at least one good thing in New York.

"Benito!" someone cried behind him, with an equally strong accent as the stranger. "Face your doom you snitch! Don Marioni would like to see this!" the next thing he heard was a series of gunshots. "The Mafia. What a surprise, New York," Jack thought.

He felt warmth coming out from his chest. It was blood. His blood. He fell onto the cold concrete floor. The Mafia shooters ran up to him. They looked at his whitened face and yelled, "This is not Benito!"

"Where did you get this jacket?" another man interrogated. Jack choked on his own blood and could not utter a word.

"It all makes sense now," he thought. His eyes became blurry as blood flowed over his body. He was warm now. The leather jacket was warm too.