



The Little Thank-You Tree

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In the heart of a cheerful village square stood a little tree that hardly ever grew. It was thin and small, with only a few pale leaves. The villagers walked past it every day without a glance. But seven-year-old Anna often stopped to look at it. She wore a mustard-yellow dress with white daisies and red canvas shoes. Her hazel eyes sparkled with curiosity.



Every morning, a tall gardener with a straw hat and olive-green overalls watered the flowers and the little tree. His name was Mr. Tomas, and he worked quietly, expecting no thanks. Anna watched him from her green satchel as she walked to school. He had kind dark eyes behind round glasses and a bushy grey moustache. He hummed while he worked.



One bright morning, Anna skipped over to the gardener. 'Thank you for taking care of the flowers,' she said with a smile. 'They make the square so pretty.' Mr. Tomas looked surprised, then his wrinkled face broke into a warm smile. 'Well, thank you, little one,' he said. Just then, a tiny bright green leaf popped out on the little tree.



Anna gasped. 'Did you see that?' she asked. Mr. Tomas pushed his glasses up his nose and stared. 'I've never seen it grow so fast,' he whispered. Anna touched the new leaf gently. It felt soft and warm. 'Maybe saying thank you made it grow,' she said. Mr. Tomas chuckled. 'Perhaps it did,' he said. 'Perhaps it did.'



Anna decided to test her idea. She began noticing how often people forgot to say thank you. The baker gave warm bread to everyone, but nobody thanked her. The mayor organized the square, but no one said a word. Anna saw that people were kind, but their kindness went unnoticed. She wanted to change that.



The next day, Anna visited the baker. The baker was short and round, with red hair in a tight bun and a flour-dusted apron. 'Thank you for the delicious bread,' Anna said. 'You feed the whole village!' The baker's blue eyes twinkled. 'Why, thank you, dear!' she said, her dimpled smile growing wide. Outside, a second leaf appeared on the tree.



The baker was so pleased that she started thanking her customers. 'Thank you for your kindness,' she told an old man. 'Thank you for waiting patiently,' she told a mother. The villagers looked surprised, then happy. And with each thank-you, the little tree grew a little more. Its branches stretched taller, and its leaves turned a deeper green.



Anna told Mr. Tomas about the baker. 'It's working!' she said. 'Every time someone says thank you, the tree grows.' Mr. Tomas nodded. 'Gratitude is a powerful thing,' he said. 'It makes people feel seen.' They decided to spread the word. Anna thanked the mayor for keeping the square tidy, and Mr. Tomas thanked the children for playing gently near the flowers.



But the mayor didn't notice the tree at first. He was tall and broad, with a navy-blue coat and brass buttons. He was always busy and proud. 'That little tree?' he said when Anna told him. 'It's just a curiosity.' Anna frowned. 'But it's growing because of thank-yous,' she said. The mayor just shrugged and walked away.



Still, Anna and Mr. Tomas kept thanking people. The baker thanked the farmer for his wheat. The farmer thanked the sun and the rain. The children thanked their teacher. The village was filled with thank-yous. The tree grew taller and wider, its branches spreading over the square like a green umbrella. People began to gather under it.



One day, the mayor stood under the tree, watching the villagers laugh and talk together. He saw how happy everyone was. He remembered how Anna had thanked him for organizing the square, and how he had ignored her. He felt a pang of guilt. He had never thanked the villagers for their hard work. He decided to change that.



The mayor climbed onto a bench under the tree. 'Friends!' he called. Everyone turned. 'I want to thank you all. Thank you for making our village beautiful. Thank you for your kindness and your hard work.' The villagers cheered. And at that moment, the tree burst into a hundred new leaves. It grew so tall and wide that it became the grandest tree in the village.



Anna hugged Mr. Tomas. 'We did it!' she said. The mayor came over and shook their hands. 'Thank you, Anna, for reminding us what really matters,' he said. 'And thank you, Mr. Tomas, for your quiet care.' The whole village clapped. The little thank-you tree swayed in the breeze, its leaves rustling like soft applause.



From that day on, the people of the village never forgot to say thank you. They thanked each other for big things and small things. The tree stayed magnificent, a landmark of kindness. Children played under its branches, and older folks rested in its shade. It was a reminder that gratitude and kindness help friendships grow, just like the little thank-you tree.



Anna often sat under the tree with Mr. Tomas. 'You know,' she said, 'the tree grew because of thank-yous, but the real magic was in the people.' Mr. Tomas smiled. 'Yes,' he said. 'Gratitude strengthens friendships and communities. It makes everyone feel valued.' They watched the villagers share smiles and thanks, and the tree's leaves shimmered in the sun.



So if you ever visit that village square, look for the great thank-you tree. Its branches reach high, and its leaves whisper with every thank-you. And if you listen closely, you might hear Anna's voice: 'Thank you for reading this story.' Remember, a simple thank-you can make a big difference—just like it did for the little thank-you tree.