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**I hope you enjoy my story.**

**Freddie**

**And the Perfect Gift**

**By TJ Fritz**

**Freddie loved going to the park. He enjoyed the flowers, the fresh air, the shade and the sunshine. Sometimes he'd meet nice people who weren't afraid to talk to him.**

**He was a happy guy. He liked a lot of things like ice cream, candy and puppies. Today he was going to visit the park and enjoy its beauty. The trees, the flowers, the people.**

**Freddie found a bench under a tree and sat down. The air was wonderful and made him take deep breaths. The birds were singing, and the beautiful flowers smelled so sweet. Nature is so beautiful, he thought.**



**Across the park he could see a lady entering, walking beside a little girl. They walked slowly, enjoyed the same sights and sounds that he was enjoying, and then they sat on a bench on the other side of the flower patch. They looked like a grandmother and her granddaughter. They looked happy together.**

**Freddie didn't want to seem rude by watching them, so he turned and looked at the pond not far away. The ducks were gliding**

smoothly across the water. A mother duck was being followed by five little baby ducks.

**“Hello?”**

Freddie heard a tiny voice and turned and saw the little girl standing about ten feet away. She was trying to get his attention.

**“Hello, mister?” she said.**

Freddie smiled at her. He knew it took a lot of courage for a child to speak to an adult, especially a stranger. So, he didn't do anything that might scare her. It was unusual for anyone to talk to him, especially kids. He'd never hurt anyone, but nobody knew that.



**“Hi, Little Lady,” Freddie greeted. “Isn't it a beautiful day?”**

The little girl seemed surprised that the man would talk to her and be friendly.

**“Yep,” she said quickly.**

**“Is that your grandmother over there?” Freddie pointed to the pretty lady sitting on the bench across the way.**

**“That's my Nana,” said the little girl. “She brings me here.”**

For a few minutes Freddie looked away to the ducks in the pond. He didn't want to scare the little girl. And he was sure she'd return to her grandmother. But she didn't.

"Hey, Mister?" the little girl spoke again.

Freddie smiled at her. "Yes, Little One."

"I want to give my Nana a present, but I don't have any money."

Freddie smiled at her. She was so precious, innocent and humble.

"I don't know what to do," the little girl continued.

Freddie smiled. He thought of his children who lived many miles away. He thought of his wife, who now lived in heaven. He thought of the perfect gift that no money could buy.

"I know the perfect gift that you can give her, and you don't need a penny." Freddie could see that the little girl was curious. "The best gift you can give to anyone is love," Freddie told her. "Look them in the eyes, say 'I love you,' then give them your best hug."

"But I do that already," the little girl said."

"Believe me, Little One," he said. "You can never do it too much."

The little girl seemed to think about what he said, and she stood in silence. Then she looked at Freddie.



**“Hey, Mister? What’s your name?” she asked.**

**“My name is ‘Freddie,’” he answered. “What’s yours?”**

**“My name is Sky,” she said. “Bye.” Then she turned and hustled back to her grandmother. Freddie smiled as she left. He admired her courage. He knew that the little girl was deeply loved by her Mom and Dad and grandparents, and that the little girl loved them too.**

**Though Sky was too far away for him to hear her speak, Freddie watched her spread her arms wide. He knew that she was saying, “I love you, Nana.” For a few seconds the grandmother stared at her granddaughter, then leaned forward and scooped up the little one. Freddie smiled and enjoyed the sight.**

**The lady and the little girl stood and began to leave the park, walking hand-in-hand. Then the little girl stopped, turned toward Freddie and yelled.**

**“Bye, Freddie!”**

**Freddie stood, smiled, and gave a huge wave. He knew that the grandmother and little girl were glowing with love, just as he was.**

**The End**

