

## On the Street

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Under the dim streetlight, a dingy man walked tipsily. In his right hand was a cigarette butt picked up from the ground. In his left hand, strangely, was a wrinkled lottery. He was so stinky that even dogs did not want to approach him. None of the people on the street was willing to give him a hand. People saw him as if they saw nothing. In people's eyes, he was just a vagrant to whom once you showed your kindness, he would cling to you all the time. Everyone, therefore, was used to ignoring this kind of people. But none of you could imagine that this man—Albert Barry—was once a member of the middle class and led a rosy life with a lovely wife and two clever children.

Albert Barry was a manager of a famous electronic company. He had a steady income, a car of famous brand and a huge house with a great and colorful garden. His wife, Clare, was lovely and they had two little kids. Albert had a life which everyone would consider to be wonderful. He also had some friends and one of his best friends was David Madson. David was not only Albert's close friend but also Albert's best associate in the company. Under their cooperation, the company had signed many successful contracts with other corporations. David, however, had a bad personality. He was so greedy that he had never given up any chance to make big money. David had once got an opportunity to make insider trading. Insider trading was illegal but one could really get a lot of interests by making it. David, therefore, took the chance to make insider trading without any hesitation. Albert knew his friend's bad characteristic but he had never tried to stop David from taking the risk of earning big money. It was his indifference to David's bad personality that made himself down-and-out.



Several years ago there was a great mass fervor of cotton business. The cotton business was a way to earn big money in a very short period but behind the huge number of money was an unbelievable high risk. Catching the fever, David abetted Albert to join with him to invest the cotton business. At first, they put some money into the cotton business and they really got some benefit beyond their expectation. Gradually, they put more and more money into the cotton business and they hoped to become a millionaire in one day. However, there came a hurricane and all countries which produced cotton trees were in a very bad situation. The cotton business suddenly lost the source of the most important material—the cotton. The cotton company which Albert and David put lots of money in collapsed. Both of them were in terrible debt.

In order to pay the huge debt, at first Albert sold his famed car but it was not enough. There were still lots of liabilities waiting for him to pay. He had no

choice but selling his lovely house with a great colorful garden. It was still far from paying all debt. At the end of his rope, he even borrowed money from juice dealers. He now had a new trouble to deal with in his daily life; that was, to evade the pressure from those covert money dealers. He had no home to return to. The only thing he could do everyday was lingering in parks, the streets underground or abandoned buildings. Clare divorced Albert and took away their two little kids when she knew he borrowed money from juice dealers. Everything in Albert's life had changed since the failure of investing the cotton business. The steady and warm family suddenly broke down.

Being tired of evading the pressure from those covert money dealers, Albert decided to face the music. He wanted to do something to change his miserable life. Walking slowly, he saw a lottery store at the corner of the street. "I believe God still loves me. He has not yet abandoned me. He gives me the last chance to alter my life. I will seize it," Albert whispered ecstatically. He spent the last money in his pocket buying a lottery. The highest bonus of this lottery was US\$10,000,000. Albert hoped he could win the prize and use this money to pay his debt. The probability to win a lottery, however, was incredibly low. He did not win any prize. What his last money brought was nothing but endless despair. He understood that even God had deserted him.

Under the dim streetlight, a man walked tipsily. In his right hand was a cigarette butt picked up from the ground. In his left hand was the wrinkled lottery, which deprived him of the meaning of breathing.