

# A Bolt of Gratitude

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Summary: An unlikely character has a moment of gratitude that catches even himself by surprise.

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A/N: In honor of Thanksgiving, I thought I'd do a little play on a quick introspective from the most unthankful guest on the series.

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William Wallace Webster Waldecker let out a heavy sigh as he watched the last of his online store's funds disappear from his bank account. After last week's fiasco with Wandamae's kidnapper, he had been plagued with guilt over his actions when he had been blessed with the rare gift of Superman's powers. He had seen it as a chance to better himself rather than those around him. Despite all the opportunity in the world he had to make a difference, he had chosen the selfish route – again.

That was how he had gotten into this mess, to begin with.

He looked around the expansive home that had once belonged to his parents. Much of the exquisite furniture and fine things his parents had acquired over the years were either sold off or packed away to deter himself from the temptation of selling any further heirlooms. What was left of them anyway.

Risk after risk had left him with nothing.

There was nothing left for him to do but sell the house and hope something would come along. His impulsive move to quit his job at the tax office had left him high and dry. Why, oh why, had he not taken a second to think things through before quitting? Now here he was faced with a very somber future. If he didn't figure out something soon, he might find himself sharing a room with Wandamae at the Shady Brooke.

Wandamae.

He hadn't even thought about her when he had bet everything he had on a venture that took him to the cleaners. He hadn't thought about her when he had up and quit upon finding out he had superpowers. He hated to think about what his parents would think of him if they knew how he had behaved.

Saving a life – for a fee. He was a joke. A laughable footnote that would barely be remembered. Superman had come down on him hard – tried to get him to understand how wrong his behavior was, but it had fallen on deaf ears. Now, looking back, he would do anything to have a chance to make amends.

"Mister...Waldecker?" a man in a long trench coat walked up to him, holding up a clipboard. "Everything appears to be accounted for." He tapped the clipboard, "I'll just need your signature."

"Yes, of course," William reached out for the clipboard and scribbled his signature. "Just ... take care of the place. It's got a lot of great memories."

The man nodded and handed him an envelope.

Waldecker took a shaky breath, praying to the heavens there would be enough to get him through the holidays. After his expenses for Wandamae's permanent stay at Shady Brooke and the mountain of debt he'd accumulated, he knew it would take more than a small miracle. He frowned when he tore the envelope open and saw the number listed in the amount of the check was much more than he expected.

Waldecker reached his hand out to stop the man before he could leave. "Wait, this isn't right," he pointed at the number.

"You were supposed to set aside Wandamae's Shady Brooke expenses and pay them directly from the proceeds of the estate sale."

The man shrugged his shoulders and looked at him with an amused expression. "I tried." He pointed to the envelope in Waldecker's hands. "Everything's in there. Wandamae's expenses have been taken care of, Mr. Waldecker."

William looked down at the envelope in his hands and pulled out a small notecard accompanied by his check. The card had a familiar 'S' emblem on the cover. Curious, he flipped the card open and read it.

'William,

*I know we didn't see eye-to-eye on your short stint as Resplendent Man, but you did the right thing in the end. I know things have been challenging this past year for you and your family, so I'd like to help put your mind at ease with regards to your sister. The Superman Foundation sponsors one family each year around the holidays. This year we've chosen you. Your sister's medical bills will be taken care of for a year, and I hope next time we meet, it won't be under such complicated circumstances.*

*Best of luck to you, Resplendent Man.*

*Thank You,*

*Superman'*

A tear trickled in the corner of William's eyes as he stared at the card and then turned his attention to the number on the check. Despite the questionable choices in the past, it seemed even he was able to earn redemption. Relief washed over him as he stood in the doorway of his childhood home and then made the final step out the door.

Life continued to throw him curveballs, but this was one he could handle.

THE END