

# SIMPLE ACTS

## Paddington Bear's Simple Act

My name is Paddington Bear and as you may know last year I celebrated 50 years of living in England. Bears years are different; they have two birthdays a year for a start. But even so, having travelled all the way from Darkest Peru as a stowaway in a lifeboat, I can still picture it all as it were yesterday.

I am not quite sure how it happened, but I ended up on Paddington station and it was so full of people, dashing here, there and everywhere, I began to wish I had landed somewhere else.

Nobody had time for a small bear, and I had no idea what to do next, or even where to go, so I found a dark corner near the Lost Property Office and sat on my suitcase waiting for something to happen.

It was my first time in a foreign country, and I had never felt quite so lonely, or so lost, so I couldn't believe my good fortune when Mr. and Mrs. Brown spotted me and decided to do something about it.

I think that the label round my neck must have helped. It said: PLEASE LOOK AFTER THIS BEAR. THANK YOU. I have my aunt Lucy to thank for that. She lives in s Home for Retired Bears in Lima and is very wise. Because I lost both of my parents in an earthquake, I was missing her most of all.

Since that day I have often woken up in the night wondering what would have happened if the Browns hadn't taken me back home with them.

My best friend, Mr. Gruber, who keeps an antique shop in the Portobello Road, says there are so many homeless people in the world nowadays, I would have probably ended in up in a camp along with lots of others.

He was a refugee himself once, and he says that although the people who run the camps try to do their best, it isn't easy, and it's particularly hard for children who are alone in the world and have no else to turn to. They, more than anyone else, need all the help they can get.

That's why REFUGEE WEEK is so important.

The most precious thing you can give a child is your time. Every little helps and it's the thought that counts.

The Refugee Week website is full of ideas; what they call "Simple Acts", but they will be grateful for any others you can think of.

My "Simple Act" is making some marmalade sandwiches. Mind you, although it sounds simple, it can be a bit complicated at times – especially if you get your paw stuck in the jar and can't get it out again. It makes shaking hands very difficult although I've found it does break the ice and people remember you years later.

It's awful to feel unwanted. I should know! Thanks goodness, it didn't last very long at the time – I was one of the lucky ones, but I have never forgotten it.

**Michael Bond**

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