



# THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

You're cold and alone. You're afraid. You're lost. You can't speak the local language. You've lost your money and passport. You could experience any of these situations in another country. Who would you turn to<sup>1</sup> for help?

My name is Philippe, and my wife's name is Sophie. We're from France. Recently we were faced  
5 with a difficult situation while traveling by car in the Alps with our hired driver. It was going to be a long ride, and we were tired. Just as we began to doze, the engine made an odd, loud noise and then stopped working.

The sun was just setting, and the air was getting cooler. We tried communicating with the driver, but with little success. He acted out the act of going to get help, and then he left.

10 We were in a remote location, with no houses in sight. We started to hear the cries of wild animals. Sophie was scared. We didn't have much food, and it was getting colder and darker. I began to lose confidence. Should we leave the car and start walking? Would our driver ever return? Was he a trustworthy man? We were very worried.

A couple of hours passed. Suddenly, the headlights from another car appeared in the dark. An  
15 unfamiliar man got out of the car. He looked unfriendly at first, until his mouth opened with a big, friendly grin. He told us that he would help us. He had such a kind face, and we knew we could count on him. We got into his car.

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Before we left, he put a note on the windshield of the car with his phone number on it. Then he drove us to a nearby village, and we met his family. His cousin spoke basic French and offered us  
20 tea and local foods. Everything was delicious. Everyone asked us questions and were thrilled to have unexpected guests.

Later that evening, the phone rang. It was our driver. He had kept his word and fixed the car. We prepared to leave and thanked our new friends. I couldn't believe the response from the cousin: "No, we thank *you* for coming into our home."

25 I will never forget the warmth and hospitality we received on that day because we relied on a complete stranger for help.

<sup>1</sup>If you *turn to* someone for help, you ask for the person's help.