



The Gold of Hanbury

Mount Olivet



Canute adjusted his backpack straps as he navigated the red-dirt paths of Hanbury on his way to McIntosh Memorial Primary. The morning sun warmed his shoulders, and the distant sound of the school bell echoed through the lush green valley.

THE SAPLING'S PROMISE



While passing under the shade of a massive, ancient mango tree, Canute spotted something unusual nestled deep within the roots. He knelt down and brushed away the dry leaves to reveal a thick, weathered brown leather wallet.



Inside the wallet sat a stack of folded bills and a worn identification card featuring an elderly man with kind eyes and silver hair. The name on the card read Vincent Marshall, and the address was listed right there in the heart of Hanbury village.



Canute stared at the money, thinking of the shiny new football sitting in the shop window downtown that he had been dreaming of for months. For a moment, he imagined how easy it would be to keep the cash, but the thought made his stomach twist into a tight, uncomfortable knot.



Instead of heading to the playground to join his friends after school, Canute walked toward the village center with the wallet tucked safely in his pocket. He stopped by the local post office to ask the clerk if she knew exactly where he could find Mr. Marshall.



The clerk directed him to a small, tidy cottage at the end of a quiet lane where colorful hibiscus flowers lined the stone walkway. She told Canute that Mr. Marshall was a retired clockmaker who had lived in Hanbury his entire life and was known for his kindness.



When Canute arrived at the cottage, he saw Mr. Marshall hunched over in his front garden, desperately searching through the grass with trembling hands. The elderly man looked exhausted and deeply worried, his brow furrowed as he searched the same spots over and over again.



Canute walked up to the garden gate and softly called out Mr. Marshall's name to get his attention. When the boy held out the lost wallet, the old man's face transformed from a mask of deep sadness to a look of pure, overwhelming joy.



Mr. Marshall explained that the money was his monthly pension intended for his heart medicine and thanked Canute for his incredible kindness. He tried to press a few bills into Canute's hand as a reward, but Canute politely declined, feeling a warmth in his chest that money could never buy.



At the McIntosh Memorial Primary assembly the next day, the principal shared the story of Canute's honesty with the entire school. As his classmates cheered, Canute stood tall and proud, realizing that his integrity was the most valuable thing he would ever own.