

# Finders Keepers



KIMBERLY EDWINA CAMPBELL

Annabelle lifted her heavy backpack off the sidewalk. A shiny, sparkly object caught her eye. Every other kid waiting for the school bus was still laughing and talking. No one noticed the shimmering trinket, not even her best friend, Laina.

Annabelle picked up the trinket and shoved it into her jeans pocket. When the bus finally came, she and Laina hopped on and sat down together, just like always.

Laina said, "Why are you so quiet?"

Annabelle looked around to make sure no one was listening or watching. She whispered, "Well, I found something really pretty today. Want to see it?"

"Yes!" Laina said.

Annabelle and Laina huddled, as Annabelle carefully pulled the object from her pocket. She held it up gently. It shimmered in the afternoon sunlight. Both girls smiled in awe.

"What a beautiful necklace," said Laina.

"Actually, it's a locket, see?" Annabelle carefully opened the oval shaped locket. She saw a picture of a woman with red hair, wearing a sweater. "I found it," Annabelle said, not taking her eyes off the necklace. "On the ground, near the bus stop."

"Wonder whose it is, though? Are you going to turn it in to the Lost and Found at school tomorrow?" Laina said.

"Finders keepers, right?" said Annabelle defensively.

"I suppose. It is very pretty. But, what if you had lost a necklace? Wouldn't you want someone to turn it in?" Laina asked.

Mr. Jules, the husky bus driver, suddenly stood up and waved his hands high in the air. "Quiet down boys and girls! I have an important question to ask all of you."

The kids' roars turned into mild mumbles. "This young lady lost a piece of jewelry. Kaitlin, please stand up and give us the details." The bus driver pointed at a thin, freckle-faced girl. Her hair was ruby red.

In a trembling voice she said, "Did anyone find a necklace? I brought a necklace to school today for Show and Tell, but now I can't find it anywhere. It belongs to my mother and before that, it belonged to my grandmother."

Laina ribbed Annabelle. "Look! That girl looks sort of like the woman in the picture of the locket you found. Show her the necklace and find out if it's hers. She looks so sad."

"But I found this necklace. Finders keepers. Besides, maybe it's not hers," Annabelle whispered, holding the necklace tightly between her fingers.

"Well?" The bus driver asked loudly as he panned the kids' faces. "Have any of you seen this young lady's necklace?"

Annabelle dropped down in her seat.

Laina said through clenched teeth, "I think you should say something."

Annabelle thought about the necklace and imagined it around her own neck. She held it in the palm of her hand, wondering what to do.

The bus driver and Kaitlin sat down and eventually they left the school parking lot and headed for home. Annabelle noticed Kaitlin staring out the window of the bus. She was sitting in the front seat all alone. She did look sad. Annabelle thought about the necklace and imagined it around her own neck. She held it in the palm of her hand, wondering what to do.

"Laina, how can I ever wear this necklace knowing it probably belongs to someone else? If I keep this locket, I'll feel awful. I'm already starting to wish I'd never found it. At first I thought it was my lucky day. Now I'm not so sure."

Laina nodded. Before they could say anything more about it, the bus screeched to a stop and Kaitlin stepped off.

"Oh, no!" Annabelle said. "Wait! Stop! Don't close the doors, Mr. Jules!" Annabelle grabbed her backpack and lugged it behind her. She clomped down the steps and off the bus.


Huffing and puffing and out of breath, she said, "Kaitlin, please wait! Is this the necklace you lost?" Annabelle opened her hand.

Kaitlin's eyes showed surprise and relief. "Yes! Yes it is! Oh, my goodness! Where did you find it?"

"At school, on the sidewalk. I should have said something sooner, but . . ."

The kids on the bus were hanging out the bus windows, listening and watching everything.

Kaitlin didn't let Annabelle finish explaining. She was too happy. "My mom has kept this necklace in a wooden chest for years, ever since my grandmother died. Mom said it's going to be mine one day, too. I'm so glad you found it!"

The girls hugged and said goodbye. When Annabelle got back on the school bus, everyone clapped, even Mr. Jules. 

*Editor's Note:*

Doing the right thing feels SO good!