

Hopes

“Without compassion, what do we become? Without hope, how can we face our future?”

They were th’ first words she said t’ me. Well, th’ first words I really remember. That was five years ago. I didn’t think about it ‘til t’day, I guess it’s been lurkin’ in th’ back o’ my mind all these years.

It ain’t ‘til today I realised what she was sayin’. Without compassion - ha, now that’s a joke. When I first came t’ this place I was, totally, without compassion. I was cold, empty, without feeling fer anythin’ or anyone around me. Nothing mattered; live o’ die, it made no difference to me. I’d seen more death, seen more pain inflicted, to last a lifetime. The compassion fer man had all gone, or so I thought. ‘Til there was this place. It’s strange how ya don’t know ya’ve changed ‘til ya look back. But where there was nothing but a black void of hate an’ deceit, now I see ‘em. The team - they stand in th’ space, blockin’ out th’ blackness. I still see it, but only through th’ cracks; blocked out now by my friends, this group o’ mutants standin’ shoulder to shoulder. I never wonder where they are, cuz they’re always beside me, whenever I need ‘em. Sure we have our moments, what teams don’t. But I see now that them hours o’ debate an’ argument, them moments o’ laughter, were all part o’ reclaimin’ what I’d lost. They gave me back m’ compassion, and, I can now admit, my love o’ life. Where once I would’ve lashed out, fought without thought, now I fight to protect. Protect them who can’t protect ‘emselves; to free ‘em from th’ hate that I’d known.

‘N hope? Well there weren’t hope, not fer me. Livin’ from day to day, all m’ needs, m’ wants washed clean from m’ mind. Life had dealt me a hand I couldn’t get rid of. I didn’t know how. But when I look at th’ faces of th’ kids that fill these halls, I see it now. I see th’ possibilities. I see th’ desire for a better tomorrow an’ th’ enthusiasm fer th’ path unknown. I can face it now, hope fer a future I never thought I’d have.

An’ as I stand here, I see th’ essence o’ that hope an’ compassion in that face. Th’ bright silver an’ white o’ purity that floats around it, bringin’ with it th’ hopes o’ everyone who sees it. An’ that deep chocolate brown that radiates compassion melts even th’ hardest heart.

She, above all others, has given me th’ chance t’ become more than I could ever have thought. She’s allowed me t’ see th’ future an’ know not t’ fear it. That’s why I’m here, now. Givin’ myself t’ th’ one thing that fills me with an earth shakin’ peace that no man could ever experience, not th’ way I’ve experienced it.

She is th’ constant, th’ centre, an’ I love her with everythin’ that I am. I love her. Those three little words used t’ put th’ fear o’ god int’ me. But just thinkin’ it now makes me smile. I love her.

She asked me once, ‘without compassion what do we become?, without hope how do we face th’ future?’ You **are** my hope, my future. That’s why I got this one li’le thing in m’ pocket an’ I’m shakin’ like a teen on a first date. I never thought gettin’ down on one knee would be so hard.

“Ororo, will you marry me?.”