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The Golden Ticket

by Sue Thompson

The year is... Well it doesn't really matter what the year is anymore. No one cares.

I pull myself up off the hard-cold ground, brushing off the snow as best I can. I sit for a minute taking in the sounds of the morning; but there is silence, of course no more birds to fill the air; they are all gone, extinct. When did that happen? I seem to remember their sounds, beautiful tunes drifting overhead. We took them for granted, don't we take everything for granted. The silence is almost deafening. Is that an animal I hear in the distance? A wolf or a dog maybe, the once domesticated dogs that we loved and pampered, now hunt in packs, their owners abandoned them years ago.

My fire is out, I must move on. It is best to move during daylight best to be able to see in front of you. The darkness is far too dangerous. You have no idea who is out there, who is watching you. I travel alone nowadays, using my senses to help me survive. Now is not the time to let down your guard, you must have your wits about you. I have travelled many hundreds of miles I do not know how many more I have to go.

My hand goes instinctively to my jacket pocket, touching the paper that's inside, making sure it is still there, yes, this is my passport to a new life, I dare not lose it.

The sun rises in the west, when did that start to happen. It seems to have been like that for so long, you adjust to the gradual changes. The snow that falls in august, the burning hot days of Winter. I try to not think of how it used to be. I am an old man now, but I remember it so well.

I hear footsteps, coming from behind me, I hide behind an old oak tree, its branches gather me up embracing me, I stand as still as I can, barely breathing. They get closer and closer until I can feel their breath on my face, so close.

I open my eyes and there in front of me is another human being, I have not seen one for so many years I stare into her eyes. She smiles and takes my hand. "It's ok" she says "We have been waiting for you." I take her hand and she leads me forward. "Do you have your golden ticket?" she asks. I reach into my pocket and take out the slip of paper, handing it to her. She looks at it for a moment then looks me in the face. "You are the last one, we can move on now we have all the golden tickets."

I have reached my destination at last, mine was the last ticket, the human race needed all the golden tickets to complete the jigsaw puzzle that would allow us to continue to the new world. We can now build a new era. The children will be our future, but we will give them the knowledge they need to survive.

The woman places my golden ticket onto what appears to be a faded map, the last one in position, the map becomes visible. It shows us the next stage in our journey, onto the promised land. A land of hope and dreams. We will not make the same mistakes as our ancestors made, we will not destroy this new world, we will live in peace and harmony...

The nurse takes the tubes from Geoff's arms and turns off the machine, time of death is given as 1400 hours. The nurse can't help but feel there is someone else in the room, the feeling is so strong, a shiver runs down her back. She starts to lay the body out, as she does so she sees a piece of paper in the patient's pocket, she takes it out and looks at it, a golden ticket, there is nothing else on it just the date 2050.

Sighing she carries on with her work and throws the ticket into the bin.
