



The Helping Hand

by Sandra Banks

The bus was crowded. The boy was tired but patient. Are we there yet?

The people on the bus were silent, immersed in their own worlds.

A moving package of people, together but alone.

Only he and his father travelled together. They knew their destination but not where they were going.

It was a long journey. He had lost count of the number of stops, how many people had got on and off.

He was not cold, but the air was damp with wet clothes. The bus seemed to crowd in on him, leaving him little room for himself.

Before they left to catch the bus, he knew his home, he knew his mother and he knew his place.

The bus had changed all that. He and his father were all there was.

They had spoken to each other and were still speaking to each other, without breaking the silence.

It was a sad but comfortable conversation, all the better for not being tied down with words.

They had all had to leave, each going their own way. They were going stay with a cousin he had never met.

He did not understand what had happened but he read the emotions clearly. He and his father had failed, like tramps in the street they would now depend on other people. Everyone would despise them. There was no room in his head for thoughts, emotions were all he had.

The whirling emotions were calmed by a quiet confidence. Together they would make it. Nothing else mattered.