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The Helping Hand

by Sho Botham

The village shops were usually quiet on a Tuesday morning and today was no different. Friends Maddy and Sue had already finished their shopping and were heading back to Sue's bright orange, open topped, MGB. Maddy secretly thought it was a bit much for a 70 year old women to drive around in a sports car with chrome bumpers but Sue loved to feel the wind in her hair and the freedom it gave her. It suited her creative personality. She was always teasing her friend for the ungainly way that she got in and out of the low, slung MGB.

Just as Maddy opened the door to begin her torturous journey into the passenger seat she stopped, ducked her head down looking at Maddy and said, "I just need to speak to that lady over the road. Back in a mo."

Sue watched through the windscreen as her friend approached the woman. She couldn't hear what they were saying but she could see that it wasn't a happy conversation. Maddy's shoulders were tilting forward towards the grey haired woman who seemed to be shrinking with her head dropping forward as if it was too much effort to hold it up any longer. It was obvious she was trying to hold back a flood of tears.

Sue was just about to turn her head away from the scene so as not to intrude when Maddy stretched her right hand forward, placing it on the woman's arm. This was a gentle gesture but one of strength, a gesture of support, of understanding, of fully being there for someone in that moment in time. It was a helping hand given freely to someone in need.

With a squeeze of her arm, Maddy let go. The woman grew slightly taller. Her chin lifted and she looked stronger as she went on her way.