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A Knock at the Door x 2

by Sue Thompson

Bob sat in the same armchair he had been sitting in for 35 years, it was old now and threadbare, but he loved it. It suited him. Old and falling apart; yes just like him. His life since Peggy had died was pretty miserable, he didn't have the heart to do anything. He just wanted to die himself. No one came to visit, his children lived miles away and never really bothered with him. He walked to the shops once a week and got a few bits for dinner and that was it. No he would be better off dead.

Marge sat in the same armchair she had been sitting in for 40 years, it was like an old comfortable cardigan. It fitted her beautifully and she loved it. Her arthritis was a constant burden. No one visited, no one cared. Years ago she had had a cousin who visited her but not now. No, why couldn't she just pass on to the next world she mused. Her life had ended a long time ago.

Burt sat in the same armchair he had sat in for 50 years, he was a skinflint and couldn't understand why he should buy another one, if it ain't broke don't fix it was his moto. A grumpy old man he didn't have a good word to say to anyone. No one spoke to him; they had felt the sharp end of his tongue too often. No one came round, no one cared. He was waiting to die.

Derek sat in the same armchair he had sat in since he was a teenager. He had lived at home with his parents until they had passed away 35 years ago, he didn't see the point in moving out. He never married, he had looked after his parents and once they had gone he had nothing. He wasn't unhappy he was just lonely. No one to visit him, no one even knew who lived at the house with the yellow door.

He rarely went out.

And so the lives of these lonely old folk went on with no one caring enough to do anything about it.

And then came a knock at the door, it wasn't a loud knock, more of a gentle tapping. But they knew who it was, they slowly rose from their chairs and followed the noise. Each one of them experienced a feeling of euphoria just before opening the door, each one saw the light getting brighter. As they opened the door and stepped out into the light they all knew that death had come. Their once decaying bodies felt lighter. They were not afraid, this was their time.

The door closed behind each one of them and the knocking ceased.

A Knock at the Door

Maud was preparing the dinner, well what there was of it anyway. The rationing had started some time ago, but she had managed to pick up some potatoes and even some Lambs Hearts which were so difficult to come by. Louis would be so pleased. He had found it the hardest, what with his physical job at the factory and then coming home to a small meal barely filling him up. Sometimes Maud had gone without just so he could get an ample amount.

Life was difficult but she couldn't complain, her three sons were in the Army and she was so proud of them. They had all signed up on the same day and then the war had come and they had been posted overseas, she had no idea where they were. A letter had come last week but the post mark had been blacked out and it was over 3 months old so she had no inkling of where her three sons might be.

The war had been going on for years now, not a day went by that you were not reminded of it. Aeroplanes filling the sky above, she dreaded the low droning noise of their engines, those poor boys flying into the unknown.

Then there were the nights they spent in the air raid shelters. All huddled together trying to sleep. The singing got on your nerves after a while, Maud had always been one to keep herself to herself, she wasn't one for chit chat and gossip. No the less she saw of people the better.

But the war seemed to bring people together, people she had never spoken to before now came up to her in the street and actually spoke to her. She supposed she would just have to get used to it.

They had heard such awful stories about the war, but you never knew whether to believe them or not. Only the other day she was in the Butchers and she overheard them talking about the Nazis killing Jews in the street. Of course she had not believed it, it couldn't possibly have been true. She didn't mention it to Louis he would have been appalled. Maud was sure there could not be any truth in it.

Maud had decided she should at least do something for the war effort and so had taken up knitting as part of the Sew and Safe scheme, this meant she didn't have to talk to anyone.

So life went on until that day when she got the telegram, lost in action, not one but all of her boys. Maud didn't do much after that day, she couldn't. She felt bitter and angry. The government had taken her boys. This bloody war, how could she go on. Louis changed too he was quieter than usual.

The knock on the door came 5 months after their news, life had gone on, it had to didn't it.

Maud got up ambled to the front door, sure that this would be the telegram to tell her that all three of her boys were confirmed dead.

There standing on the doorstep was her boy, and then from nowhere all three were standing in front of her. She couldn't speak, couldn't take it in her boys all of them returned to them.