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## The Parcel

by Lorraine Gailey

She had a bad feeling about the contents of this parcel, as she always did when she saw parcels like this. She knew who it was from by the handwriting: her sister, whom she rarely saw but who kept in regular contact through these parcels. Each time, her feelings were the same. She felt guilty that she hadn't yet responded to the last parcel; resentful that she felt guilty; and dread at the contents, which were always the same – bars of chocolate, bags of chocolates, boxes of chocolates, little individual chocolates...

Many of them would be out of date and whitened with age while some would be in peak condition. She'd intend to throw them out but she'd usually end up eating them in sporadic chocolate binges, anticipating with every mouthful the nausea and sugar crash that followed each time but unable to stop herself once she'd started.

She almost didn't even open this parcel in a weak attempt to avoid the inevitable cycle, fighting with the knots of anger already building inside her. But as she thought of the care her sister would have gone to in selecting its contents, she couldn't bring herself to do that. She struggled to cut through the double and triple layers of Sellotape that always entombed the contents. Inside was the expected 35,000 or so calories she didn't want to eat... but would. But there was also something else this time – a beautiful, delicate necklace with matching earrings and bracelet in her colours, with a little note saying simply: 'Saw this and thought of you'.

In that moment her heart melted. She knew she'd wear these frequently and each time they would bring her closer to her sister. And somehow, this freed her from the need to actually eat any of the chocolate in this or any future parcels. She could simply appreciate the thought that lay behind them, knowing that selecting and sending these parcels was her sister's way of staying close and that she could reciprocate best just by dropping her a little note of thanks each time while disposing of the chocolate in the bin if it was out of date, or give it away if it was good. No more guilt, no more resentment, just a simple acceptance of affection that came in the shape of a parcel all wrapped up with Sellotape.