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## The Days Pass Quickly

by Sandra Banks

“The days pass quickly, and yet one is so bored here.” The woman smiled brightly, her face carefully made up. “Isn’t that strange?” We often pass each other in the corridor. She walks slowly pulling a little trolley to which a bag is attached. A tube runs from the bag to her side, the blue garment parting to allow it to enter. She looks well enough though she is thin and pale and I wonder what her problem is.

My problem is obvious as I carefully move one crutch, one leg, then the other crutch, then the same leg. There is only one. I lost the other last week and despite the pain am practising scrupulously getting around.

“It doesn’t help that the weather is so good” I responded. We had both stopped. Not opposite each but just far enough apart to leave a proper distance.

“I never notice the weather outside. The most important things are in here: lunch and how many visitors there will be in the afternoon. My family live a long way away, you know but there are always noisy children and you can hear how uncomfortable people are.

“I don’t want visitors. I hope to be going home soon anyway.”

“That’s nice.” She immediately moved slowly away.

I knew I had said the wrong thing. It must be like this in prison. Some people are just passing through but others will stay for a long time. The lifers have a special status there too.