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Future Uncertain

by Sue Hitchcock

On Monday I panicked. It's not my style. I'm often depressed, but I have fortitude. We were taking our daily constitutional stroll down Love Lane, when tears started to trickle down my cheeks.

The I.P.C.C. report that morning was devastating, stating that some aspects of climate change were now irreversible, in particular the melting of the ice caps and the consequent rise in sea level. I've been acutely aware of the threat of climate change for thirty years and it only confirmed what I had expected with all the promises made and broken by governments around the world.

So I was gloomy. But it was more personal. Our granddaughter is an orphan. As Lady Bracknell commented, "To lose one parent may be regarded as a misfortune ... but to lose both seems like carelessness." We had always been childminders since she was six months old, but at two and a half years her mother was diagnosed with melanoma and her father died suddenly. In her distress her mother neglected her own treatment. So her parents made their exits, one fast and one slow. From then our granddaughter became the centre of our life, until she moved in with her aunt three years ago. We saw her often until Covid 19 intruded.

Like most people we thought that if we isolated, it would soon be over, but it drags on. We see our darling girl occasionally, but she is truly in the care of her aunt now. We love them both, our only descendants, but we no longer have any responsibility.

This week they went away on holiday, but not together and at the last moment I realised we did not know where they would be. Should we not be the contact for our granddaughter's holiday venue, if our daughter was out of the country? But no, it was her uncle, her father's brother who would be on hand. It was this which had provoked my tears. I was no longer the person on whom she relied. In a time of crisis, we must all decide again and again whom we love.