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## Lucinda

by Sho Botham

A lengthy trip was planned. Lucinda didn't like the travel itself but she loved arriving in new places, full of anticipation. She never knew quite what to expect but that was of no concern. Life, in her experience, had a kind of velvet lustre. You looked at yourself from one perspective and all you saw was weirdness. Move your head a little bit, though, and everything looked reasonably normal. She had a habit of standing, staring at her new, temporary world with a quizzical tilt to her head and a childlike expression of wonderment. Her fellow passengers were too busy rushing off the aircraft, bustling through immigration and passport control before standing, shifting from foot to foot, as if desperate to go to the loo, waiting for their cases full of holiday clothes to land unceremoniously on the baggage carousel, jostling to be seen by their fidgeting owners.

Lucinda was much more laid back. She would remain seated and watch the aircraft empty of passengers. She couldn't see the point of hurrying to get off first only to have to wait either for a bus to take everyone to the terminal or the lengthy wait at baggage claim for those who arrived long before their cases were even off the aircraft. Lucinda preferred that her holiday got underway the minute the aircraft doors opened and the heat of her destination clashed with the controlled air of the aircraft. The purpose of her holidays was always the same. Rest and relaxation in hot and sunny, appealing places.

Standing on the deserted beach in her yellow and orange swimsuit with a large soft, squashy bag full of rest and relaxation essentials, Lucinda did the quizzical tilt of her head thing. She was unaware that this was something that others watching her wouldn't understand. Having her first inhalation of sea air was a big part of the beginning of her holiday. It excited her in a way that only Lucinda comprehended.

In her own relaxed way, she got herself organised. Moving the white sunbed a couple of feet to the right out of the shade of the large blue umbrella, she shook out sea green beach towels. Tucking the edges under the blue and white full-length cushion, she was almost ready to stretch out and relax. By this time, she was talking excitedly to no one in particular.

“Come along, books, which of you shall I read first? It won’t matter because I will read all of you by the time I go home. Oh, look at you, nearly full after all that time sitting in the cupboard. You’re about to come into your own now. I don’t want to get sunburnt so you’ll have to protect me good and proper. And you, my lovely, keep my drinks cool, bottle will sit here by my side so I won’t need to move once I’m settled and comfortable. Right, here we are, ready for all this rest and relaxation. But first, you all sit here for five minutes while I get this body of mine into that beautiful blue sea. Then we can enjoy our time together on this wonderfully, quiet beach.”

Lucinda stood at the water’s edge looking out to sea with her head tilt in action once more - instantly transforming any perceived weirdness into reasonably normal.