

Out There Somewhere

a short story by

Colin Owen

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Chas, that's me. Been here living on my own for 5 years now, and I'm getting sick of it. There must be someone out there somewhere... It took a while to get to a point of forgiveness. After all, we were a team, and there's nothing worse than a broken team. Whatever might have been now wont be, but that doesn't mean there's no hope. No, with God around there's always hope.

So, what to do about it is the problem at hand. How to break the cycle/rut I'm in. It would be nice to earn my living as a writer. I say this, because writing is very new for me. I'll tell you how it came about sometime. Anyway, my stories are not Booker quality, praise God, but those who have read them seem to like them. Actually, they are much more enthusiastic than that which surprises me. I should really make an effort to get them published, but I'm just not good at marketing. I really need someone to come along and take me in hand, in more ways than one preferably. Must be a Christian though, no unequal yoking thank you. Anyway, what to write? I know...

It was one of those days, when all was not right with the world, and staring at the four walls was driving him crazy. "If I don't get out of the house for a spell I'll go nuts." Chas headed for the front door stopping only to put his shoes on and check his keys were in his coat pocket. It was not a warm day, and Chas new it would be even cooler on top. On top was Chas' term for up the hills. He was lucky enough to live in a small market town that was famous for the local hills. It was famous for its water too, which some American conglomerate bottled and sold for an exorbitant price. The locals never bought it though, they could get it straight from the rock, and very good it was too, especially on a hot day, but today was not a hot day, so the water was safe for now.

Chas closed and locked the front door and offered up a quick prayer for God to keep the house safe whilst he was out. This had become a tradition over the years, and Chas always asked God's protection over the house and car now, every time he left them.

The day was gray, as many days are in this neck of the woods. Well, it was autumn. The car started first time, as always, and Chas pulled off the drive and headed for the hills. As usual, it took some time to turn out of the end of his road thanks to all the through traffic, but eventually, a kind lady let him out with a smile. "Pity I'm not twenty years younger!" Chas smiled back as she fell in behind him. Chas could remember a time when he was always the youngest in the bunch, but not now. Mid fifties saw to that.

The road through the little town was steep in places, which meant that your hill starts had to be up to scratch. Chas' car was automatic, so not really a problem for him. He glanced back through his rear view mirror to see how she was getting on. No problem there either. "Good." He found himself saying. "Well, she did let me out." The road twisted its way up through the main town and came out the other side with a variety of ways to go up the hills. Chas chose the steeper one and made the somewhat precarious right turn to do so. The road was now very steep, and the automatic kicked down a gear to cope with it. A quick glance confirmed that she was still with him, and still smiling too. "Must have caught me looking." Chas muttered to himself returning his attention to the front.

In a short while, the view to the left was breathtaking. The whole of the river valley was laid out in all its glory. This was one stretch of road where thirty miles per hour seemed way too fast. Sadly, the occasional parked car forced him to take his eyes off the view. Reluctantly, he did so, but compensated for it by sneaking a quick look behind him. She was still there.

At the top of the hill the road bent to the right through a cutting. This was a well known spot with a cafe and small church. Now there was a choice to be made. Turn right and park, this would take him to the very top, the beacon, or turn left and go the scenic route to the house, his other favourite parking place. This would mean a more gentle walk. He chose gentle. The grayness of the day was energy sapping, so the gentle stroll won out over the somewhat heavy slog up to the beacon. "Will she or wont she?" Chas asked himself as he made the turn to the left. "Yes!" He exclaimed loudly as she followed him. The sudden outburst made Chas laugh, suddenly he felt like a kid again playing chase, and he was the one being chased. A wave of excitement came over him. "Is that You Lord?" He asked as he drove on. A tingle crept down his spine slowly causing him to almost miss the sharp bend. The fright snapped him back to reality, and Chas smiled to himself with the thought, "grow up son," running through his mind.

About a mile further on, the left fork appeared for the parking place by the house. Chas dutifully signaled left and pulled off the road onto the track that led up to the parking area. There was nearly always an ice cream van parked there, and, as always, Chas looked for it. It wasn't there. "Must be too cold." He thought and pulled in. The engine died and all was quiet. Chas relaxed for a few moments just looking through the windscreen at the hill before him. He often did this as it was a truly magnificent site. A deep breath and the door opened. The sound of birds singing filled the car, with the occasional engine sound on the road below, but that would soon fade as he climbed higher. Chas got out of the car and locked the door.

"Please keep it safe Lord," he said as he turned towards the path that led up the hill. There were several other cars there as usual. This was a popular spot. Then he saw her. She was over by the machine buying a ticket. Chas stopped and looked. She turned and saw him. "Got any change?" She asked in a strong but nice voice. Instinctively, Chas slapped all his pockets. "N...." He started to answer, but then remembered he had some change in the ash tray in the car. Well, he didn't smoke, so what else was the ash tray for? "I have some in the car," he called back and turned to go and retrieve it.

A few seconds later he was at the machine inserting coins for her ticket. "I didn't know you had to pay," she said a little embarrassed. "Yes, but it's worth it." Chas replied gesturing to the glory that surrounded them. "I have a residents sticker." Chas said to keep the conversation going. "Not only do you get all this, but you get it for £5 per year!" She smiled and took the ticket from the machine. Together they walked to her car where the ticket was installed on the dash.

"It must be wonderful to live so close to all this." She said with a sweet smile. "It is," Chas replied, "and I should come up here more often." She set off for the path, and it seemed right for Chas to follow, so he did. "That's usually the way," she said after a few paces, "you always take for granted what's on your doorstep." Silence fell, and Chas' brain went into overdrive to find something to say. Nothing was coming, and the seconds were ticking away. He knew he had to say something and it came out, "would you like some company as you walk?" She stopped and looked at him in silence, and then said, "yes, I'd like that." Inwardly, Chas breathed a huge sigh of relief, and they set off together on the gentle path leading away from the car park. A little way along the path they passed one of the many benches placed there by relatives of those who have passed away. As always, there was a little message carved into the top of the bench, this one read, "I lift mine eyes to the hills." And Chas finished off the verse, "from whence comes my help." Suddenly, the day didn't seem so gray.