

## ***Leaving and Arriving.***

When I was six, my family relocated from a tiny cottage into a roomy house with a sumptuous garden. On the morning of that final exciting day, our parents and baby Michael departed for the new home. Meanwhile, my four-year-old brother John and I reluctantly remained in the temporary care of a favourite neighbour, Mrs Jim.

We played hide and seek and waited. We ate raspberry jam sandwiches and waited. We read picture books and waited.

Eventually, I anxiously whispered to John,  
“They’re not coming back for us. Let’s go and find them.”

John protested; I firmly took his hand and walked him down our cobbled street onto the noisy main road. The summer sun shone as we scurried by the red-faced butcher’s window, the whirring Laundrette, and the corner Chemist. I cajoled John past the tempting sweet shop and across the unnerving crossroads. We smiled sweetly at the inquiring faces in the bus queue as though our walk was an everyday occurrence.

Finally, we arrived at the base of that lengthy hill to Cherry Tree Drive. The uneven gritstone pavement rose like a mountain path. John began to wail; he was hot and tired. I coaxed him along with repeated assurances; that we were almost there. Just as my certainty dissolved and stinging tears began to well up, remarkably, our lovely Mum appeared in the distance, waving and calling from the back garden of number three.

Strangely, she wasn’t at all surprised to see us!