

Hand in Hand

When Heather was a little girl, her mother would never let her hold her hand. Heather would see other families, hand in hand, but she would scurry along in her mother's wake as they walked down the street.

The day that her mother was to be admitted to the dementia ward, a brisk nurse met Heather at the locked entrance. Without any fuss, the nurse outlined the steps that had to happen and the order they had to happen in. First, a mountain of paperwork to get through. Then, Heather would need to assemble ten days' worth of clothes and toiletries for her mother. Precisely at 3pm, she would need to arrive with her mother, and she was not to return for ten days.

'Ten days?' Heather asked. No one had told her about that.

'So she can adjust,' The nurse's face softened. 'You can call anytime and we'll let you know how she is.'

While her mother watched television, Heather had to hunt through the house to find where she had hidden her shoes, tucking them into a shopping bag she'd found in her car.

'Let's go for a coffee, Mum?' Heather said.

Her mother jumped up and walked straight to the door. Cafes were her favourite thing.

As they walked to the cafe, Heather's mother ambled along without a care in the world. She put her small, dry hand into Heather's. Heather gave her hand a little squeeze, just as she had with her own daughters.

(Word count: 248)