



# HERE COMES THE SUN

Empathy  
Shorts

By Sarah Hagger-Holt

Mum squeezed my hand as we walked towards where the hearse had stopped.

"You okay?" she whispered. "You can still change your mind."

"Course I'm okay," I said. But I wasn't.

Everyone wanted to talk to us, but no one knew what to say. They scuttled over, mumbled a few words and then scuttled away again. None of what they said made sense.

"So sorry for your loss. At least she had a good innings," said one tall man to Mum. That made me cross. Gran never liked cricket. She used to say it was boring – not like football. When the Lionesses won the Euros, I thought she'd explode with excitement.

"She's no longer in pain," added the woman with him. Like there were only two choices – in pain or dead. What about a third option – Gran alive and well and still with us?

"She's with God now," said Gran's neighbour. "He's taken her into His bosom." But God must have millions of dead people to spend time with, why did He need my Gran too? The idea of her being taken into anyone's bosom sounded well weird. I could imagine her giggling about it.

But I didn't say anything. Just stared at my shoes.

At last we went in, but I couldn't focus on the service. Ever since Gran had died, everything seemed dimmer, like the sun had gone behind a cloud, or like someone had turned down the lights on life.

At the end, they played her favourite song, 'Here Comes The Sun'. When I closed my eyes, it felt like I was back with her in her kitchen.

When everyone started leaving, I whispered to Mum that I wanted to stay. She seemed to understand. I kept my eyes shut, listening to the music. I missed Gran so much that it felt like someone had scooped out my insides and left me empty.

"Adam?" said a woman's voice. "I'm Di, Mags told me all about you." I tensed. Who was she? Why couldn't everyone just leave me alone?

"We shared a flat at university, me and your Gran, a long time ago. After graduation, I moved away, but every Sunday she'd call me, without fail. She always made me laugh, but more than that, she always listened. I can't believe that this weekend the phone won't ring."

I didn't open my eyes, but I did the maths in my head. That must be half a century of phonecalls. I thought I had some idea of how Di might be feeling.

I opened my eyes. "You must really miss her," I said.

"Yes, I do."

And neither of us said anything about innings or relief or Jesus. We didn't try to make it okay when it wasn't okay. We just sat there until the music stopped. Wishing Gran was there too.

"Thank you," Di said finally. "You're a good listener, just like she was."

And, just then, just a little, it felt like the sun was coming out again.

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