



'WELCOME HOME!' by S. Bee.

[This text is read aloud at the beginning of this video:]
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'Welcome Home! by S. Bee.

As Bill unlocked the front door, Meg wrinkled her nose. They had just arrived home from holiday. She turned to Bill.

'Can you smell something?'

'No,' he said, bringing the luggage into the hall.

The smell was even stronger in the kitchen. She soon tracked down the culprit. It was half an onion, festering in the food recycling caddy.

'I thought we'd emptied the bins before we set off,' she called, as she swiftly unlocked the back door and deposited the bag outside.

'How about a cup of tea?' Bill ambled in, clutching a pile of mail.

'There's some long-life milk in the cupboard,' she said.

He pulled a face.

'Well, it's better than no milk at all,' she said.

It was always the same whenever they arrived home from holiday, she thought. Tired after the long flight, they were greeted by a bare fridge and a musty feeling in the house. As Bill went through the post, Meg wondered what she could dream up for their evening meal. Neither of them wanted to drive to the supermarket. It would have to be a takeaway.

Later that week, Meg discovered that her neighbour, Connie, was heading to the Lake District for a break. Meg was happy to keep an eye on things for them.

'Well, I'm retired,' Meg said. 'I've plenty of time on my hands.'

'The fish need feeding once a day,' Connie said, as she handed Meg a key. 'Could you water the plants, too?'

The next morning, Meg let herself into next-door and got cracking. It's nice to feel useful again, she thought, as she carefully sprinkled food in the fish tank. After she'd watered the plants, Meg thought she might as well empty the bins. How about doing a bit of dusting and hoovering too? She hesitated. Would Connie think she was over-stepping the mark? She did it, anyway!



The day before her neighbours were due home, Meg popped some fresh food and a few essentials into Connie's fridge.

'Meg, thank you so much!' Connie enthused the next day on the doorstep. 'It was marvellous to arrive home to a wonderfully clean house and food in the fridge.'

'Do you think I was interfering?' Meg asked.

'No, not at all! It was so kind of you to go to all that trouble.'

'It was no trouble. I'm glad you're pleased.'

'Here's the money I owe you for the groceries.' Connie handed Meg a stuffed envelope.

'Look at this!' Meg exclaimed to Bill later. 'Connie's paid me for the groceries - but she's added more to it.'

Meg tried to give the extra amount back - but Connie politely refused.

'Don't be silly! You made arriving home from holiday so much nicer!'

Meg gulped. 'Are you sure?'

'I'm sure. Talking of holidays, my daughter Laura's going to Menorca soon...'

As Meg listened, a new, daring idea sprang up. This was a golden opportunity.

'Connie, do you think Laura would be interested in a 'Welcome Home' service? It would involve what I did with your house – cleaning and some shopping for groceries.'

Connie looked thoughtful. 'Yes, she might.'

'Would you be happy to pass my number on to Laura?'

Connie beamed. 'Of course!'

With help from her two 'clients', word spread quickly about Meg's unique 'Welcome Home' service. She was especially busy in the spring and summer, so she and Bill took their holidays in autumn and winter. Yet before they leave, Meg likes to check that there are no stale onions lurking in the food recycling caddy!