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## Mother's Little Legacy

by Sue Hitchcock

When Sherry's stepfather died, she finally inherited her mother's legacy, at least what was left of it after paying the nursing home fees for her stepfather's care in the last few weeks. She and her brother, Barry, were to have half each and at last she was able to pay off her mortgage, buy a new bathroom suite and take a short cruise. Sherry was herself a widow though her husband had left even before her two sons and she had been alone for a good while.

Sherry's actual father had been a Canadian airman from Newfoundland, and she had never been able to trace him. He would, no doubt, be dead by now anyway. Sherry had never been much loved by her stepfather, who favoured his own son, Barry. He had married Sherry's mother when Sherry was seven years old, which had caused some consternation at school, when Sherry had announced that she had been at her mother's wedding. It was hardly a secret since there had had to be a change of name.

The money had been welcome, but more interesting was a cardboard box of papers and memorabilia. There were photographs – black and white – of her mother, dainty in a tutu. Sherry's mother had hoped to be a ballet dancer, but her career was cut short by the disaster, which was polio, leaving her with a limp. There were programmes and leaflets about Canada, but amongst the legal documents were birth, death and marriage certificates, which were intriguing.

Gradually Sherry identified all, but one. It was the birth certificate of a boy, born to her mother, but it was not Barry. And the date was after her own, but before her parents marriage. Had she had another brother? She had no memory of it.

She telephoned Barry to tell him about it and was surprised to find that he already knew. Apparently her stepfather had refused to take on two children and had insisted the boy be adopted. Mother's little legacy was untracable, family she would never know.