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Mother's Little Legacy

by Sho Botham

The family sat around the table in the conference room of Trundle, Troust and Temple in Main Street. They were awaiting the reading of mother's will. Apart from her large collection of designer handbags and the house of course, there wasn't anything of any great value to be shared.

Mr Baramander, mother's solicitor, looked around the family as he took his place at the head of the table. As expected there was nothing in the will that surprised the family. Mother had shared her designer bags equally so that everyone had a luxury bag or two that they could treasure, use or sell. Marge was happy to receive the Saint Laurent shoulder bag that she had loved since mother bought it in London and Martha was touched that it hadn't been missed that she loved the Gucci bag with the gold clasp. Even the men were left designer bags. Everyone seemed content with their inheritance.

When Mr Baramander announced that there was one more thing that he had to read out the family looked at each other with puzzled expressions as they thought he had finished reading the will.

This is not part of the will, he said. It's a letter that your mother left behind to be opened and read to the family only after she had died. It is entitled, Mother's Little Legacy.'

The family settled down once again to listen to what mother's solicitor had to tell them. Using a silver letter opener, he opened the envelope, pulled out the folder paper and began to read.

'Dear John, James, Marge, Martha, Elly and Ali, I wanted to tell you all about my secret life when I was alive but somehow I never quite managed to.'

'A secret life,' gasped Ali, slapping her hand across her mouth as if embarrassed.

'What do you think mother had, a man friend hidden in the closet?' said John looking directly at Ali.

'Let him finish the letter,' said Marge and Martha together.

'Sorry, sorry,' said Ali and John.

Mr Baramander continued.

'It was never my intention to do what I did and certainly not to do it three times. It is all so long ago now I can't remember what triggered that first feeling that made me turn into someone else. Even now, as I write this I cannot find the words to explain. Oh I can tell you what I did but not really why. I have lived for 40 years since your father died waiting for someone to ask me about it. When Uncle Pete died again I thought, this is when I will be found out but no, I wasn't. For 20 years I kept my secrets and my temper until Uncle Leonard asked me some difficult questions about why your father died so young. He seemed to know something and I couldn't let him ruin it for us so that is what led to secret number three. It wasn't easy covering up three deaths (I still find it difficult to say, murders) and living with them in my head. I don't expect you will understand but maybe you can forgive me for not having the courage to tell you before. Your loving mother.'