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The Letter

by Sue Thompson

Things are never as bad as they seem.

Really, who the hell said that, I want to kill them. Of course they are. I grab at the clumps of earth as I slip further down the precipice. I could feel my arms weakening, please god don't let me die, not this way.

The day had started off badly; you know when you wake up with a blinding migraine that it is going to be one of those days. I walked out of the door and hurried down the street, walking with a limp I suddenly realised things were not quite right, I peered down and sure enough I had odd walking boots on. After a few expletives I decided I really should turn back and change them, one, before anyone saw and two, because going for a 10 mile hike is not good in odd boots.

Rushing back home I found an identical boot to the one on my right foot and quickly slipped into it. Returning to the front door, I discovered that the postman had been, picking the letters up I flicked through them and come across a rather official looking letter, curiously I popped it into my pocket hoping that I would get a chance to read it later.

On reaching the group of ramblers I apologised for being late. They are a funny lot, I got the feeling that they were rather annoyed at me for holding them up. We set off on our hike climbing higher and higher. This would not have been my usual or favourite route but I had promised myself that I would start to face my fear of heights head on and overcome this ridiculous disability.

As we walked on I found myself lagging further and further behind, obviously this was the extreme rambling group and my level of fitness was way below theirs.

At one point a few of them did attempt to slow down so that I could catch up. After several hours I could barely see them in the distance. 'Bastards' I thought to myself. I nearly gave up but I had got more than half way so I thought I should carry on and at least reach the top.

I hurried on up and up my heart beating faster and faster; the trouble with the fear of heights is it is actually not the height itself but the fear of the unknown. My breathing was becoming shallower and I began to hyperventilate. I looked up and could see the cliff edge. My hands become clammy and my head began to pound with fear.

I was on the edge now looking down, the path was only about 4 feet wide and the drop was sheer. I could only go on.

They say if you think something is going to happen then generally it does. And there it was just a wrong foot that was all it took and I was hanging over the edge feet dangling. My life flashed in front of me.

Then I remembered the letter, trying to take my mind off of my current situation I reached in and grabbed the letter from my pocket. Tearing it open with my teeth I managed to take it out and read it.

It was from my late aunt's solicitor telling me that I had been left 1 million pounds in her will.

'Yes' I scream.

And then it happened, my hands gave way and I slipped falling into oblivion. The letter fluttering after me