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Life's a Bitch

by Sue Thompson

I folded the letter then put it carefully back into the envelope. I poured myself a large gin and tonic. Sitting back in my chair I reflected over the contents of the letter and wiped a solitary tear from my eye.

My cousin had died, and I was the beneficiary of her will, the only living relative apparently. I had not seen her in over 15 years.

You see my cousin was perfect, she was absolutely beautiful. She was the golden girl, the one who won every race at school, the one who could eat anything and never get fat. She didn't have to revise for exams she just waltz right in there and got As. She dated the best-looking boys and went to the best university in the country. She walked straight out of uni and right into a job where she earned a fortune and didn't really have to lift a finger. Hers was the perfect life. She bought an amazing house by the river Thames and married a man who adored her and worshipped her. She wore cashmere and real pearls effortlessly.

And I was so jealous of her. I was the opposite, short, not fat but not thin either, I had my mother's hips and my grandmothers back side. If I looked at a donut I put on weight, if I smelled it, I put on double. I couldn't wear cashmere it made me sweat, I tried, god did I try, I wanted so much to be like her. After a week of wearing bloody cashmere jumpers and dresses I hurled them all in the bin. If I wore pearls they got lost in the folds of skin around my neck, making me choke. She became my obsession. I was not living my life I was trying to emulate hers. If she bought a BMW, I bought a

Porsche; except hers was cash and mine was on credit. I got further and further into debt all because I was trying to keep up.

To be honest I ran out of fuel, not in my Porsche, but in my mind. I just could not keep up this double life. I was sinking deeper into a murky mire of mud and debt.

I lived in a one bedroom flat, I was too embarrassed to have anyone round especially her and so as time went on, I became reclusive, I wasn't washing my hair or my dishes. My cat even got fed up with me and left home. The newspapers piled up inside the house and before long I was living in one room.

Then one day I met Bob, Bob who lived in the flat below me, he wandered up one day and knocked on my door. I thought he was trying to sell something and so told him to bugger off. His foot came down firmly in front of the door stopping me from closing it. He took one look at me and said "Christ your hair needs washing" I saw the twinkle in his eyes and let him in. It took us two weeks of cleaning to get the flat back into a liveable state. He took me out to celebrate and I told him about my life and my perfect cousin.

Bob was a computer genius and he googled my beautiful perfect cousin and boy was there lots to find. Apparently, her husband had walked out on her and was living in Tibet as a monk. Her BMW was paid for by her extra work as an escort. Her well paid job was actually all a lie and as for her university degree that had been forged. Oh, the reason she only wore cashmere was because she was allergic to all other fabrics. Who knew!

Well I was flabbergasted the amount you could find out on the internet. I pulled myself together and got a job, apparently, I am pretty good at investments and am now an adviser in the City. Bob and I have a wonderful house, yes on the Thames as it happens.

So, it was pretty sad to find that my perfect cousin had died in suspicious circumstances, whilst accompanying a well-known MP to a charity event; rumour has it she was found dressed in leathers and tied up. The MP who cannot be named is holidaying in the Bahamas until things calm down.

As for the will, well my perfect cousin had actually been quite astute and had put all of her money in offshore accounts and I had inherited a huge amount. She was perfect after all.