



Stories of Stuff

The Red Socks
by P. T. McAllister
From a tale told by Kate



Kerry has her Dad's leg held high in the air. 'Oh bollocks. Ere, Cate, pass me his socks, will you?'

'Kerry, I really think we should-'

'Will you just pass me them?'' She grits her teeth.

Jesus. I never should have agreed to this.

'Cate!' she snaps.

'Alright,' I hiss.

I bend down to the overflowing duffel bag. The socks are bright red, so easy enough to find. I walk over, drop them into Kerry's spare hand without looking at her and clomp back to the other side of the room. I can't believe we're actually doing this.

Once his socks are sorted, Kerry picks up his wellies and pushes them onto his feet.

I hadn't thought the next bit through. Actually thought about what it would entail. Oh God. Is this really happening?

'You need to help me lift him,' Kerry says. She's looking at me like she thinks I'm simple. 'Pull this hand towards you, hard.' Has she done this before?

I yank his arm, she levers him up. He's looking right at me. We tug his jacket off him and replace it with his Guinness fleece.

As we lower him back down into the velvet, Kerry slides his flat cap onto his head.

'There,' she says. Looks like himself again now, doesn't he?

'He does,' I say. And he does.

'Never wore a suit a day in his life. No idea why my brother wanted him in one.'

'I think it's kind of tradition, Kerry.' I say.

'Well, we're starting a new tradition.'

'I really hope that's not the case,' I say, and we both laugh.

Kerry's chuckle fades as a tear escapes and we stand silent.

'Kerry-'

'Come on,' she interrupts, wiping her cheek. 'Help me lift the lid back on him.'