**So, here are your FEBRUARY story challenge prompts:**

* **Your story must feature SEVEN of something.**
* **Your story must include a character who opens a box.**
* **Your story must include the words LADDER, BLANK and CHILL** *(Longer “s”, “ed” or “ing” variations are acceptable.)*

‘No peeking Liam!’ Chris held firmly onto Liam’s shoulders as she guided her blindfolded son through the garden.

All the other children at the party were jostling around him, giggling, watching him being led by his mother.

‘Ta da!’ Chris pulled the blindfold off with a flourish. Releasing the curls that were always bouncing around Liam’s face.

The momentary blast of sunlight seemed to blind Liam, and he looked at his mother **blankly**.

Chris smiled at his upturned face, then took his hand, gently squeezing the smaller fingers in her own.

‘Your Uncle Pete made it for you, go climb the **ladder**, there’s something special up the top.’

Liam looked at his Mum then looked at the tree behind her, there were steps up the side of the tree leading all the way up to a treehouse on one of the branches. This seemed to explain why his Uncle Pete had been here so often.

Liam climbed the ladder, humming and counting softly, ‘1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.’ He stopped climbing to ask, ‘Mum, does the platform count as a step?’

Looking up at him nearing the top, Chris called ‘Liam keep going, the other children are following you.’

Peering over the edge of the tree house Liam looked down. His Mum waved up at him as she spoke to him. His friends had started climbing the ladder as well. There was a lot of laughing and chatter as they climbed.

Chris called again, ‘Have a look Liam, there’s a box up there with a birthday game. You can bring it down on the flying fox.’

With much excitement Liam and his friends put the box in the flying fox and sent it down to his mum, then one by one they followed, squealing with joy and pretend terror.

His friends crowded around Liam as he **opened the box**, a donkey face grinned up at them. Chris helped them set up the pin the tail on the donkey game. Using the blindfold she had used for Liam they had fun trying to pin the tail in the right spot.

With a wonky donkey looking on Liam and his friends ate a picnic of birthday food and babbled, sang, and laughed their way through the afternoon.

Just like that the party was over. All the birthday presents opened, the candles blown out, and Liam officially a year older.

As Chris was preparing dinner she looked for Liam, no where to be seen inside, she looked in the garden. There he was high in the treehouse.

‘Liam, it’s dinner time and it’s getting **chilly,** time to come inside.’