

A Journey to Remember

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I arrived at the house early in the morning- eight o'clock to be precise. As I stepped out of the car, the pure white snow on the drive crunched as I set my feet down, the pressure flattening it. The cool, sharp winter's air took me by surprise. I breathed to focus my head. I attempted to warm up my dry, cracked hands but it didn't work. Closing the chilled door with a little thud I made my way inside the house, leftover snow continuing to crunch underneath the soles of my boots.

A sauna-like heat hit me as I came into the house. The contrast between the two temperatures was nauseating. I closed the door and it echoed through the silent home.

A croaking "Hello?" came from the front room just after the door closed. I went and looked and in there, sitting on the faded, peach coloured chair that might as well be incinerated, was my grandad. What a sight! He had his clothes on all funny, only one shoe, a pair of shorts, his jacket and a hat. That was it. The small white tufts of hair that crown his head were sticking up at all angles. He had a big grin on, oblivious as always.

I leaned against the frame of the door in the back room and said in a voice that would be loud enough for him to hear me, "Hello grandad, how are you?"

He seemed very surprised that I was standing there. "Oh! Hello," he said. He looked at his watch. It was old and battered and had some squiggly writing which I could never read on it. "Is it already two?", He looked at his watch again. He had it on the wrong way around and so the eight was upside down in place of the two.

"No grandad, its eight in the morning. Your watch is just the wrong way around," I said.

"Oh, how silly of me," he said with a chuckle while changing it to the right way.

I took him through to the kitchen to get his breakfast. There was a cup of tea there already. It was stone cold with the tea bag still in it. The deep brown of the tea bag seeped into the pale milk. It reminded me of a buoy sitting lifelessly on a dead calm sea.

"I thought we would go down to the beach today," I said.

He let out an excited gasp, "That would be good!"

"Is May coming?", he asked. I never knew how to tell him she's not been here for eight years.

"Not today," I replied.

Before we left I went and found everything we would need for going out: His hat, gloves, shoes and his walking stick. I left him in the back room while I went and put his bag in the car. Once again, when I came back into the room, he was asleep.

"Grandad," I said gently shaking him, startling him "Are you ready to go?" I asked.

"Where?" he replied.

"To the beach," I said.

"Oh yes! Ok. I think so," he said, but did not seem entirely sure.

Finally, after everything was sorted we made it out to the car.

"Ooh," grandad said with a deep breath as he first felt the cool air.

He got inside the car as fast as he could to get out of the cold and we drove down to the beach. We went past a big, old school building looking down towards the beach.

"I went to school there!", He said.

He described how everything we went past was when he was young. At the beach, we sat in the car just watching the peaceful waves.

"I played down here with my brother John nearly every day after school," he said. After a while of sitting in the car and watching the waves I took him back up the road. "Can we go see the school?" He said.

"Of course," I said turning into the drive.

We got out of the car and walked up to the front door.

"Lovers Loan Care Home," grandad read off the sign on the door.

"Do you want to go in?" I asked.

"Well, we might as well since we're here," grandad said cheerfully.

We got inside and standing waiting was a small woman.

"Hi Harry, I'm Julie" she said.

"Hello" he replied.

"Would you like to come with me to your room?" Julie said.

"My room?" he said looking at me for some sort of guidance.

We walked into the large room. There were pictures of our family, his favourite books -he was especially pleased to see Great Expectations- cushions from his back room, puzzles and the bed cover he had on his bed at home and the woollen blanket Granny May knitted him so many years ago.

"Well," I asked, "what do you think?"

Grandad looked at Julie and smiled. "I think I'd like to stay here" He replied, "It's just like home".

And with that Julie returned with a cup of tea and a ginger biscuit and we sat down to rest after our long journey.