



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Helen's Great-Grandmother

Abbie Phillips Walker

Helen had a great-grandmother who lived with her grandmother, and when Helen went to see her grandmother, she spent an hour each day in Grandma Great's room. One day, while Helen was sitting with her, she asked, "How old are you, Grandma Great?"

"I am eighty years young, my dear," was the reply.

"Young?" said Helen. "I thought eighty was very old."

"No," answered Grandma Great, "not if your heart is young."

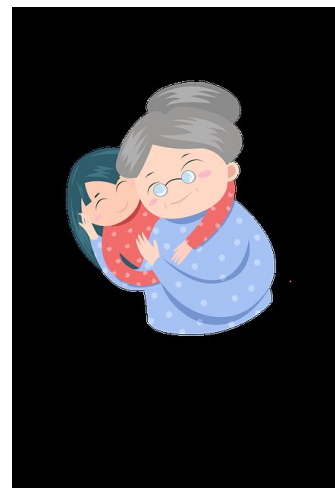
"And is your heart young?" inquired Helen.

"Yes, my heart is young; all these things keep it so," said Grandma Great, pointing to the old-fashioned furniture around the room.

Helen looked at her thoughts very plainly. She did not understand how all that old furniture could make anyone feel young. "Then I have many other things," Grandma Great continued, "which you do not see, and when I feel a bit like growing old, I look at them and I am young again. Would you like to see them?"

Helen's curiosity was really aroused, and she was eager to see what wonderful things could make Grandma Great feel young.

Grandma opened the drawer of an old-fashioned bureau. There were wonderful boxes. One was called a handkerchief-box; it opened in the middle, and two little tapes held it together; then the covers opened on either side. Grandma Great took out a little lace collar. It was fine as a spider's web.



"This was one of my wedding-collars," she told Helen. Then there was a fine linen handkerchief, yellow with age, with the tiniest flowers embroidered in one corner. There was a chain made of hair, with a gold clasp, and also a ring made of hair, with a little gold buckle, which made it look like a tiny belt.

Grandma Great handed her a picture.

"See if you can tell who this is," she said. Helen looked and saw a very pretty girl, with black curls and pink cheeks. Her eyes were black, like her own, and she had on a dress made of flowered material.

"I was eighteen when that was taken," said Grandma Great. Helen thought she looked like a beautiful wax doll, and wondered if Grandma Great was as young and pretty as that, and then she wondered if someday she would be old like Grandma Great. She had never thought of it before.

"Here is a picture of your great-grandfather, taken when we were married." Helen saw a handsome young man, with blue eyes and brown, curling hair. He looked very straight, and he had on a high collar, and it looked to Helen as though he had yards of black satin wound around it. Then there was a fan with pearl sticks, and on one of the outside sticks was a tiny mirror. She was told that it would be hers someday.

Then there was a funny pair of kid gloves—pale pink, with little brass hooks. "These were my wedding-gloves," said Grandma Great, "and these were my traveling-gloves." Helen thought she had never seen anything so funny as the second pair, which were bright green.

Then there were queer little ties with tassels and a pair of stockings the color of the pink gloves. "They were my wedding-stockings, and your grandmother wore them when she was married," said Grandma Great, "and I hope they will be yours someday."

Helen thought that very odd. She did not want to wear old stockings when she was married. There were locks of hair tied with ribbon, and pictures of people in queer-looking clothes.

"Here is a breastpin your great-grandfather gave me, with his hair in it." Helen took it in her hand and looked at it. She thought it very odd that anyone would want to wear a pin like that. There was a watch with a gold face, and on the back of the case was a house and trees. "That will be yours also," Grandma Great told her, but Helen did not think she would ever wear such a big watch.

"My wedding-dress is in that trunk. Would you like to see it?" Helen told her she would, for she often wondered what was in the trunk covered with hair.

"Oh, my! that is beautiful!" exclaimed Helen, as Grandma Great held up a dress of pale pink silk with little sprays of green on it. The skirt was very full and long, and the waist looked as though it might fit Helen.

"Your grandmother wore this dress at her silver wedding," said Grandma Great. "I wish you might, but I'm afraid it will not hold together until then. Here is the shawl I wore also, that you will have, and can wear, I think." It was the palest pearl color, with fringe around it and embroidered with big flowers. "And these

were my wedding-slippers; your grandmother wore these also, when she was married, and I hope you may be able to." But Helen thought the same as she did about the stockings—she would want new ones.

"Here is something you will like," said Grandma Great as she handed Helen a box. Helen took off the cover, and there were valentines, yellow with age, but the prettiest she had ever seen. "You can amuse yourself looking at them," Grandma Great told her. There were valentines with lace and pretty colored papers, and one was of satin and perfumed, but the one that pleased Helen the most was a lace one which had a little mirror in the center, with blue paper around it, and under it, in gilt letters, she read "My Sweetheart."

"Where is the sweetheart?" she asked.

Grandma Great laughed. "Look in the mirror," she told her.

"Oh! that is so funny," said Helen. And in one corner were little cupids with a banner which read "With fondest love"; and in another a pair of turtle-doves with a banner in their bills which read, "Remember me."

"Here is a package of letters," said Helen, when she came to the bottom of the box, and she handed them to Grandma Great. They had strange-looking stamps on them and were tied with a blue ribbon.

"Those were written to me by your great-grandfather," said Grandma Great, "when he was my lover, or I should say before we were married, for he was always my lover," and she pressed the letters to her lips. Helen went on looking at the valentines. When she had finished she saw that Grandma Great had fallen asleep. The letters were in her lap and she had her sweetheart's picture in one hand. Helen looked at her. There was a smile upon her face, and somehow Helen understood what she had meant by keeping young, and after that day's visit, Helen always felt that Grandma Great was much younger than she had ever thought her.

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