

Grandma Goes Up

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good-byes and spent a happy morning together. It wasn't until afternoon that Grandma noticed the little fellow coughing. He had always been fairly robust except for a propensity to take cold easily, but in the back of the old lady's mind the dread specter of pneumonia constantly hovered. Grace Westover dropped in about four o'clock and Grandma Miles imparted some of her anxiety to the girl.

"He's some fevered, too, I think," she concluded. "An' 'tain't nothin' I've fed him, for he's only had bread an' milk an' a mite of apple sass. So it must be he's comin' down with a heavy cold. Mebbe bronchitis. Deary me! I wouldn't had it happen for a farm!"

Grace felt the child's head. He lay on a lounge, tossing restlessly, coughing, and complaining of a pain in his chest.

"Don't worry, Granny," she said, calmly. "He does seem out of sorts, but between us we'll see what we can do. I'm going to stay with you in case you need help in the night."

Grandma thereupon became less worried for a time. She fixed up an onion-and-meal poultice and put Jack's feet in mustard water and himself in bed, giving him a drink of hot lemonade. His temperature continued to rise, however, and at ten o'clock Grandma suggested a doctor.

"'Tain't that I can't do as well as any doctor, dearie, but his ma would blame me if I neglected callin' one in. I guess yew'd best run down an' fetch Doctor Brown."

But Grace returned in twenty minutes with the news that Doctor Brown was at Greenville and not expected back till next day. The other doctor had left that very morning to attend a medical convention in the city.

"Deary me!" cried Grandma, in some dismay. "An' so we must wait till mornin' after all! I don't expect his ma an' pa much afore noon. Ain't there no doctor now over to Plummer's Corners?"

"No, he left some time ago. But wait! Come to think of it, there's a splendid doctor at Kay's Crossing. That's about seven miles down the valley. If only we could get him!"

"Now, that's a first rate idea, honey! Yew're all out o' breath so I'll jest slip on my bonnet an' cape an' run acrost to Clinton's myself en' 'phone that there doctor. We ain't got our 'phone in yet."

In five minutes she was ready, her placid old face framed in a black tie-bonnet that was trimmed with a little wreath of purple pansies, and a heavy dark cape covering her stooped shoulders. "I was a-goin' t' take a little lantern but I see it's nice bright moonlight to-night," she said, drawing on her lace half-mitts. "Jest yew sit by him dearie an' keep changin' the poultices. I ain't a-goin' t' be long, but if them Clinton folks are all away t' the fair mebbe I'll have to go on to Sandover's."

Then she went out. She crossed a large field and took a footpath leading through a pasture to Clinton's, the nearest house with a telephone. But it was just as she had half-expected. The Clintons were away. Bravely and resolutely she plodded on out to the road and up a few hundred yards further to a cross-road. From this point she could see the Sandover house standing on a hill, stark in the moonlight. But no gleam of lamplight came from its windows.

"Deary me! S'posin they're all away, too!" muttered the old lady, in dismay and perplexity.

But she reflected that perhaps they might have left a door unlocked somewhere. She might make an effort to get in to the 'phone, at all costs. So trembling now a little, in her eagerness, she set forth to climb the somewhat steep hill, first traversing a low, flat field and crawling through a wire fence. Just as she reached the top of the slope however, she heard a peculiar noise. It didn't come from the house, but from a field off to her left. She stopped and listened. One of those pesky autos! But what was it doing in the middle of Sandover's oat field? She strained her eyes but could see nothing. Ah! Now she had it. The Sandovers were just back from the fair. She knew they had a car. So on she went, not to the house

but in the direction from which the throbbing, purring sound came. She'd get Billy, whose legs were younger than hers by sixty years, to run and do the 'phoning.

But when she finally sighted the machine it wasn't an auto at all! She stopped short and blinked. There in the moonlight on the field rested a kind of giant bluebottle. She knew what it was though, for sh'd seen pictures of them.

"Well, I declare to goodness! If 'tain't one o' them there airypplanes!" she exclaimed, aloud.

A young man in a short belted jacket, and with a helmet and cuffed gloves was stooping over the fuselage, tinkering with something. He was smoking. But at her sudden exclamation he looked up, equally surprised.

"Why, hello Grandma!" he sang out in a friendly voice. "Where on earth did you spring from? I thought the people round here were all dead and buried!"

"Good-evenin'," said the old lady, politely. "But I reckon I ain't acquainted with yew, young man."

"My name's Derby," said the young man, removing his pipe. "I came down for a smoke. Not supposed to smoke in the machine you see, and I was dying for one. Just wasting away, so to speak. Hadn't had one all day."

"Derby? Ain't no folks round here by that name," said Grandma, reflectively. "Happen yew live over to Greenville?"

"No, I come from the city. But I've been over Greenville all day more or less. I'm on my way home now."

"Derby—Derby," Grandma continued to murmur and then in a flash she remembered where she had heard the name. "Why yew must be that Daredevil Derby I been hearin' them tell 'bout!"

"That's me," said the young man, knocking the ashes from his pipe.

"Do tell, now! Well, I swan!"

Then she told him what had brought her there at this hour.

"Kay's Crossing! Why, that's just down the valley a bit," said Captain Derby. "I could fly there in seven minutes—less, in fact. Want to come?"

Grandma thought she hadn't heard aright.

"What's that, young man?" she demanded, sharply.

"I say, do you want to fly down with me and get that doctor? I could bring you both back, too, and lose less than fifteen minutes all told."

Grandma's mouth opened and then closed. She began to stiffen.

"Yew ain't a-tryin' t' git smart with an old woman like me, now, young man!" she protested.

"Never, Grandma! I mean what I say. And you'll be as safe as the Bank of England. Why, this little old bird is fairly human. I talk to it sometimes and it understands every word I say. And we won't fly high if you don't want to. We'll just clear the tree-tops, the barns and windmills, and you'll have the doc at the wee chap's bedside before half-an-hour. Every minute counts if—well if it should happen to be pneumonia."

Grandma had commenced to shake her head in a very emphatic manner and to back away but at the last sentence she paused. A picture of little Jack on his fevered couch came to her with a stab of compunction. Even if she did manage to 'phone to Kay's Crossing it would be an hour and more before the doctor could be up because the roads were very bad down the valley. And to think she could have him here in a few minutes, just—well just by being a little courageous! Fly! Poor Grandma found herself "all of a tremble."

"I—I ain't never rid in an auty young man, much less one o' these contraptions," she quavered.

"Well, you've missed the fun of your life then, the intrepid young man observed with a laugh. "Come! I've an extra helmet and jacket here. Let me help you on with them."

Grandma still held back uncertainly. But the young man was masterful. He brought the articles out, and whistling softly to himself began to assist the old lady off with her bonnet and wrap and into the aviator's clothes. Before she knew it she was in the machine. She started to speak but found that she couldn't hear her own voice.

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