

Almost four years ago Ellen and Andrew became the grandparents of a beautiful granddaughter, Shannon. They were very fond of her, because she was a lovely little girl with a lot of imagination.

Two and a half days every week Shannon was at her Granny's place. Her mother had to work, so Granny looked after her. They always did fun things, just like all grandparents do with their grandchildren - you know, going to the playground, dressing up, or watching DVDs.

One sunny day Shannon was dressed up as Sleeping Beauty, and Granny Ellen was playing along. But she was getting tired of having to fulfill the role of Sleeping Beauty's prince. She wanted to do something cool, but what? She thought of her own childhood, when she played at her grandparents' place. Her Granny always told exciting stories - not about princesses and fairies, but about tough pirates, dragons and sea monsters that had to be slain. Granny stared dreamily ahead.

'What are you thinking of, Granny?' Shannon asked.

Granny sighed. 'I'll tell you, Sweetie. I was thinking of the past, when I used to stay at my grandmother's. She always told me great stories, and she didn't even need a book for it.'

'Do you still remember a few of those stories?' Shannon asked.

'My grandmother had as much imagination as you and I together,' Granny Ellen said. 'I think I can tell you one or two...'

‘Could you tell me one *now*?’ Shannon asked.

‘Yes, I could, but her stories were not about princesses in gorgeous dresses or fairies - no, they were about buccaneers and pirates.’

‘Cool!’ Shannon exclaimed. ‘Please, Granny, please, *do* tell them to me!’ she almost begged.

‘Of course, dear’, Granny said, ‘but first I have to go and find something.’

‘What is it?’ Shannon asked.

‘I have to find a book, a very old book my grandmother gave to me. She used to call it her magic book.’

‘Her *what*? She called it her *magic* book? Granny, you can't honestly believe that! Magic books do not exist. They can only exist in fairy-tales!’

Granny said, ‘If you want something bad enough, my dearest, it will really happen. We both have a huge imagination, and that is what we need if we want to be able to believe in fairy-tales. Because fairy-tales can sometimes become true.’

‘Well, *where* is this book?’ Shannon asked in disbelief.

Granny stood looking thoughtfully and scratched her head. ‘It must be lying around, but where? It is such a long time ago that she gave it to me. You know what, Shannon? Let’s have a look in my bedroom: there are lots of things lying around there, things of your mother and your aunt when they were little. Maybe we’ll find the book among those.’

Granny and Shannon went upstairs and looked into the closet, where they found lots of boxes. Shannon was really curious and could hardly wait till they were all unpacked, so they immediately began. They found all

sorts of things, and almost everything belonged to Shannon's mother and aunt: doll's clothes and stuff for a doll's house, old drawings and notebooks of their nursery school. But the magic book was nowhere to be found.

Granny sighed and thought aloud, 'Where on earth did I put it?'



Downstairs a door was opened: it was Grandpa coming home. 'Ellen? Shannon? Where are you?' he called.

'We're upstairs!' Granny called back.

Grandpa came up and saw Granny and Shannon sitting on the bed. It was completely covered with all kinds of things – drawings, notebooks, rhymes and toys.

Grandpa shook his head. ‘What are you two doing? It’s a complete mess!’

‘No, it isn’t! We are looking for something,’ Granny answered angrily.

‘Maybe I can help,’ Grandpa said. ‘What are you looking for?’

‘If I tell you, you’ll laugh!’ Granny said.

‘No, I won’t, I would not dare. Or is it such a strange thing you are looking for?’ Grandpa asked.

‘I’ll tell you, if you promise not to laugh,’ Granny said.

Grandpa promised, but because Granny often said strange things that made him laugh he kept his fingers crossed behind his back.



So Granny told him they were looking for her grandmother's magic book. Grandpa began to snort with laughter.

'I'm sorry,' he said, 'but just listen to yourself: a *magic* book ... you can have exciting books, funny books, boring books, but *magic* books? They do not exist! The only thing I find magical is you!' Grandpa tried to flatter.

Granny said 'There you are! You never take me seriously.'

'I really can't help it,' Grandpa said, 'but this is the weirdest thing I've ever heard from you. Whose might this magic book be?'

'My grandmother's!' Granny replied.

Grandpa laughed. ‘Oh, and of course she wrote it herself.’

‘No, you fool!’ Granny said, ‘she used to read it to me, and she always told me that it was a magic book.’

‘Well, I do not have to wonder where the two of you got your imagination! But if you don’t mind, I would like to have some dinner, because I am quite hungry after a long day’s hard work.’

Granny looked at her watch and saw that it was indeed rather late. Both she and Shannon had completely forgotten the time.

‘Oh Granny, are we really going to stop already?’ Shannon asked. ‘I would like to look for it somewhat longer.’

‘I can imagine, but the book is not here.’

‘Shall I give you some sound advice?’ Grandpa asked.

Granny and Shannon started chuckling – Grandpa giving advice! But as Granny wanted to hear what he had to say, she said ‘Well, let’s have it, your sound advice!’ and she winked at Shannon.

‘Have you looked in the attic? There’s lots of old stuff up there!’

Perhaps Grandpa was right, Granny thought, the book could be there. It was more than thirty years ago that she had been in the attic. It was not one of her favourite spots; it was cold and chilly, there were cobwebs and it smelled stuffy and funny. But maybe they should go and look up there.

Shannon grew enthusiastic at once. ‘Are we going up to the attic, Granny? I want to see it, too!’