

What Green Leaves You Have, Grandma

By

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FADE IN ON:

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

As homey as it gets. A dog bed in one corner. Cute Hummels blush from shelves. A grandfather clock TICKS...

And a rocking chair squeaks nearby. Along with that, an old woman (HANNAH'S) voice croons:

HANNAH

Once upon a time, there was a sweet little girl. As sweet a child as ever there was...

LISA

Was that little girl *me*, Grandma?

HANNAH

Hush, child. Scrumptious as you are, the story must unfold in its own time. Where was I? Oh yes - the beginning of the tale, of course!

(beat)

Everyone who saw the girl liked her. But most of all her grandmother, who gave her a little cap made of red velvet.

LISA

Like the hat you made me?

HANNAH

Yes, Lisa. Though yours is yarn. I crocheted it special for you.

Hannah (75) cuddles LISA (6) in the rocking chair, both enveloped in a handmade quilt.

Laughing, she pulls the girl's RED KNIT HAT over her eyes. A bundle of blonde innocence, Lisa peeks out.

Removing the hat, she drops it in Grandma's lap.

HANNAH

Your parents said you *must* be in bed by eight. No fussing, that's the rules! Even though little girls and grandmas need their time alone. Do you want me to continue the story, or should we make this one two-part?

HANNAH

No! I'll be quiet. Tell me more!

HANNAH

Well, the little girl chose to wear her cap so often, she became known as Little Red Riding Hood. One day, her mother said: Here is some cake and a bottle of wine. Take them to your grandmother, using the path an hour out from the village. She is sick and weak. They will do her well.

The story continues on....

SOON

Hannah reads, rocks. Even though Lisa's eyes droop.

HANNAH

...Little Red Riding Hood stopped to pick some flowers. That's when she came across the Big Bad Wolf!

Lisa's eyes shoot open. She gasps, alarmed.

LISA

A Wolf? Like Rufus?

HANNAH

No, sweetie. Rufus is a Wolfhound. This type of wolf was a very different, evil type. When he heard where Grandma lived, he ran ahead of Little Red Riding Hood. Pretending to be the girl, he knocked on Grandma's door with his claws. When she answered "Who in heaven is scratching at my door at this hour?" he replied: 'Little Red Riding Hood - open the latch for me.' But when she did, he ate her up!

Lisa squirms, really scared now.

LISA

He killed Grandma?

HANNAH

Not exactly. You know how superheroes sometimes die, then come back? Well, that happened to Grandmas in Mr. Grimm's day, too.

LISA

But what happens to the little girl?

Hannah smiles fondly at her granddaughter. She glances at the clock: 7:45 PM.

HANNAH

Oops. Honey, could you skedaddle into the kitchen, and bring Grandma back a glass of water and her meds? You know where they are on the counter. Then we'll wrap this story up. Even though it gets scary in bits, there's a happy ending. Grandma Scout's Honor - cross my heart, swear to... well, I promise!

Eager to please, Lisa hugs Hannah and slides off her lamp. The girl beelines to the kitchen, disappears.

Hannah watches her hustle. Love glows in her eyes.

HANNAH

They get so big. So fast.

The clock TICKS.

Hannah stiffens. Clutching her chest, she falls limp. The red cap tumbles to the floor.

A proud Lisa appears in the doorway seconds later - glass and prescription bottle in hand.

LISA

Here's your heart- Grandma?!?

Lisa runs over, but it's too late. Hannah's gone.

Lisa screams for her parents. Eerily, the Hummels on the shelves continue to smile.

LISA

Dad! Mom! Help!

SUPER: One week later.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The same space, same decorations. But all the cozy feelings gone.

Lisa stands like a statue between her parents: bundled in to a puffy winter jacket, topped off by her red hat.

She glares up in defiance.

LISA

I won't go. Like Grandma says, that's that.

Dressed for a funeral, SARAH and DAVID (40s) exchange concerned looks over Lisa's head.

SARAH

Lisa, Grandma would want you there.

LISA

No. She said she'd be back!

DAVID

We've been through this, honey. Fairy tales are kinda different than real life.

LISA

So, Grandma's gone - forever?

SARAH

See, that's what's so *special* about this ceremony. She will be coming back. Just... in a different form.

Sarah pulls a tissue from her purse, wipes Lisa's tears.

SARAH

Grandma's not going to the cemetery. You know, where we visit Uncle Frank. The neighbors next door told us about a better way, one that keeps her in all our hearts.

DAVID

Baby, it's called a Bio-Urn.

He holds his hands apart to demonstrate.

DAVID

They put Grandma in it-

LISA

(gasps)

She'll be scared. That'll hurt!

SARAH

No, honey. Just the important part of Grandma. They mix that with a seed. From that, a tree grows. In many ways, it'll be Grandma. And we can visit her when we're sad.

DAVID

The plot is real close by. Just a half hour walk along a path...

SARAH

It'll kind of be like camping. Right past our own backyard! A lot of people in town are using it now. So even when we aren't there, Grandma won't be alone.

Lisa sniffles. David smooths her hair, cracks a smile.

DAVID

C'mon, time to... Uh, Skedaddle. Don't you want to tell Grandma goodbye?

Sarah clears her throat. Mouths: "For now."

DAVID

I mean, for now.

LISA

No!!!!

Lisa runs to the rocking chair. Hopping up, she buries herself in the quilt and peeks out with angry eyes.

LISA

Grandma's not a tree. I won't!

MOMENTS LATER

David and Sarah kiss Lisa, head for the back door.

SARAH

I've called Aunt Rachel. You stay put.

DAVID

When she knocks, missy - make sure you answer the door.

Lisa grumbles to herself.

LISA

Not if she's the Big Bad Wolf, I won't!

The little girl waits until the door closes... then runs to a big picture window, overlooking their backyard.

Through the pane, her parents walk away. Past the fence to the forest, just beyond. Onto a tiny PATH.

Lisa puts a hand to the glass, blinks back tears.

SUPER: One year later

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Lisa huddles on the couch with a TABLET, the red hat on her head. Sullen, she scrolls through family pictures.

Focusing on those featuring Hannah and Lisa, of course.

David sits down next to her. Throwing an arm over her shoulder, he hugs Lisa tight.

DAVID

Honey, I know it's hard. She was my mom.
I miss her tons, too.

Lisa squirms away, keeps scrolling. Sarah sits down on her other side, forces a cheery voice.

SARAH

It's grandma's special tree-anniversary.
Don't you want to see how much she's
grown?

No response. Sarah tries to hide the strain in her voice.

SARAH

It doesn't *have* to be today, of course.
Tell us when you're ready - we'll visit
anytime.

LISA

I want my grandma. Who wants to visit
some stupid tree?

David and Sarah lock eyes. Simultaneously, they stand up.

DAVID

Well then, guess it's time for dinner.
Want to visit the dining room instead?

Lisa pouts. Zooms in on a pic of Hannah holding flowers.

David and Sarah head for the kitchen. Whisper, concerned.

SARAH

You think our daughter's getting...
morbid?

DAVID

I *think* we should've planted Mom in the
front yard. That would've made this so
much easier.

SARAH
You know zoning regulations ruled that
out!

Lisa watches her parents depart; defiance in her eyes.
Which then slip to the picture window.

And the vast forest beyond.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The grandfather clock shows the time: 7:30.

Lisa reads *Little Red Riding Hood* on her tablet, mumbles
words to herself:

LISA
'Oh, what big eyes you have! All the
better to see you with. Oh, what big
hands you have! All the better to grab
you with, my dear!'

David and Sarah stick their heads inside. Sarah cradles a
glass of wine. David holds out - CAKE.

DAVID
Sweet-pea, last call for dessert!
(laughs)
Get the pun? "Sweet"?

Lisa stubbornly shakes her head 'no'. Both parents shrug;
they've lost this round.

DAVID
Suit yourself. I've got room for more!

Patting his stomach, he takes a bite. Sarah grins, shoots
him the evil eye.

SARAH
Tomorrow, let's talk about that diet of
yours.

She turns a stern finger to Lisa.

SARAH
And about incorporating more family time,
too! But for now, your Dad and I are
going to be good kids, and go to bed.

Grabbing his arm, Sarah pulls David towards their
bedroom. David submits happily. He waves goodbye to Lisa,
too.

DAVID

You. Get in bed by eight. And you can bet
your bippy - sweet or not - that we'll
make sure you do!

Parents gone, Lisa glances towards the picture window.
The sun is setting now.

LISA

Anytime? But tomorrow won't be special...

Taking off the red hat, Lisa holds it; contemplates.

Inspired, she runs to the closet and pulls out her puffy
coat. Lisa shrugs it on, and heads for the back door.

Alone.

EXT. BACKYARD - EVENING

Lisa creeps along the fence, towards the forest. She
spots the PATH she saw her parents take before.

Hesitating, she chews her lip - unsure. It's so scary.
Until her father's voice interrupts.

DAVID (V.O.)

The plot is real close by: just a half
hour walk along a path...

Lisa brightens, and trots to the narrow opening.

Branches rip off a scrap of her puffy coat.

EXT. FOREST PATH

Oh-so claustrophobic. Tall, dense trees on each side. The
path's overgrown. Even worse, it's getting dark.

Lisa pulls the red hat over her ears and nervously forges
on. But stops when she sees:

FLOWERS along the roadside: just like the ones in
Hannah's picture! Lisa smiles.

LISA

Grandma's favorite!

She follows the path, picking flowers. As she skips, the
bouquet grows.

LATER

The sun sets. But the path continues...

Lisa peeks at her cartoon superhero watch. 7:45 now.

Dark trees loom over her, on both sides. Her mother's voice intrudes this time.

SARAH (V.O.)

A lot of people in town are using it now.
So even when we aren't there, Grandma
won't be alone.

Voices *seem* to whisper in the trees. Evil eyes stare down.

Clutching her flowers, Lisa speed walks. So she doesn't see a SQUIRREL scamper off.

The wind whips branches. Which seem to reach for her. Truly spooked now, Lisa cowers.

A dog (or Wolf?) HOWLS nearby. Lisa jumps. Then runs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Slippers shuffle in the hallway. A messy-haired Sarah sticks her head in.

SARAH

It's 8 o'clock pumpkin, time to go to bed!

(giggles)

If you don't, you'll turn into a stage coach!

She stops and stares at the empty room. The abandoned tablet. And the open door to the backyard.

SARAH

David - Lisa's gone. Get in here!!!

EXT. FOREST PATH

Lisa runs, heart pounding. The trees look more sinister with each step. Until she reaches a....

EXT. CLEARING

The trees stop abruptly. Leading to: a small, clean patch of green beyond.

A handwritten sign reads: BIO URN SEMETARY.

Lisa relaxes, trots in.

And finds herself immersed in a completely different world. It's a tiny circle, fenced in by forest trees.

In the clearing, a host of SAPLINGS grow. Lisa tries to count - at least thirty. None more than three feet tall.

Lisa stares from tree to tree.

LISA
(whispers)
Grandma? Which one?

She begins to panic. A man's voice interrupts!

DARK MAN (O.S.)
It's not as hard as it looks. They all
get name plaques. You'll soon see.

Lisa whirls around. She gawks at a strange DARK MAN.

DARK MAN
You're visiting your Grandma?

LISA
Um, yeah? How'd you know?

DARK MAN
You just said so, my dear. I'm here, too -
visiting... a friend. Come with me, I'll
help you look.

Lisa shies away.

LISA
Who... who are you?

He smiles, holds out his hand.

DARK MAN
Call me "Vuk".

EXT. BACKYARD

Sarah and David scour the backyard. No sign of Lisa.
Beside herself with worry, Sarah crumples to the ground.

SARAH
This is all my fault.

DAVID
Hell no, it's not!

SARAH
Then we're *both* to blame. We guilted her!

Something flutters, catches David's eye. Glancing towards the forest path, he sees...

The SCRAP of Lisa's jacket a branch tore off.

DAVID
Look!

EXT. CLEARING

Keeping her distance from the dark man, Lisa eeny-meeny-mo picks out a tree.

She trots to it, spots a NAME PLAQUE buried in the grass. Brushing away leaves, she reads: "SUSI."

LISA
(frowns)
That's not her.

Feet away, the dark man pretends to search for names.

DARK MAN
(reads)
Hmmm - "Larry Talbot". What a pity. Looks like Grandma isn't here, either.

LISA
It's getting late. Maybe I should go home?

DARK MAN
You don't wanna leave without saying 'hi' to Grandma, do you?

LISA
But there are sooo many. There's no time!

EXT. FOREST PATH

Sarah and David race through the forest. Inadvertently trample flowers as they go.

Out of breath, Sarah screams at the top of her lungs.

SARAH

Lisa!

DAVID

Baby, come home!

EXT. CLEARING

The dark man stops before another sapling. Peeks at the name plaque and crows.

DARK MAN

I found her. Come quick!

Lisa scampers over. Brushing away grass, she reads:
"Hannah Carter, Loving Mother. Grandma, too!"

The little girl side-eyes the sapling. A grin spreads across her face.

LISA

Grandma, how you've grown! You're almost
as tall as I am now!

Bending down, she lays the wildflowers on the name stone.
The soil around it - smooth. The roots planted deep.

The man looks down at the little girl. His eyes seem to
glint in the night.

DARK MAN

Peculiar, isn't it? Celebrating the life
of one - while *ending* so many more.

Lisa glances up, confused.

LISA

What?

DARK MAN

I mean, those flowers you picked. Of
course.

Inching closer, he fiddles with SOMETHING in his pocket.
A strange, dreamy smile on his face.

DARK MAN

What big eyes you have, my dear.

Frozen in sudden fear, Lisa looks up. Thinks.

LISA

How did you know which tree was Grandma?

DARK MAN
Silly girl, I told you. There are names
on every plaque.

LISA
I never told you her name.

DARK MAN
(shrugs)
Well, I know you from the neighborhood.
Even though you don't know me. And I knew
you needed company, when I saw you leave
alone.

Keeping one hand in his pocket, the dark man grabs Lisa!

LISA
Let me go!

DARK MAN
Don't try, little girl. My hands are big
enough to grab you with. You can't outrun
the Wolf, love...

Lisa BITES his hand. The dark man howls.

DARK MAN
Ow!

Lisa darts around the tree. The man lunges for her.
Trips. Falls.

The little girl freezes, terrified he'll get up.

But he doesn't. Instead, the dark man gurgles - on his
stomach. Under him, a red POOL grows.

David and Sarah burst from the forest. Sarah runs to
Lisa, scoops her up.

SARAH
Oh, dear god!

DAVID
Who the fu - what is that?!?

The dark man stops moving. David kneels down, and rolls
him over. Revealing...

The KNIFE that was in his pocket - now embedded to the
hilt in his heart.

The initials on the handle read: BBW.

David stares at the corpse. Then Lisa.

DAVID

Who is he?

LISA

(whimpers)

He said his name is Vuk?

SARAH

Don't EVER run away from us again like
that, baby!

Tears glimmer in Lisa's eyes.

LISA

I just wanted to visit Grandma.

She peers down at the sapling. And the ROOT the dark man
tripped on. The one that DEFINITELY wasn't there before.

Lisa shivers in her mother's arms, but smiles.

LISA

(whispers)

Thank you, Grandma. I promise, I'll visit
you lots more now.

FINAL FADE OUT: