

Aug 23, 1979

My dear Grandchildren,

Today I want to tell you about my Grandma Jex. She was a little taller than I am, but not very much, and I guess she was about as heavy as I am. She loved to eat good food, just like I do. She loved people. She had lots of friends, and she thought her children and her grandchildren were her very best friends. She even liked to write poetry, and do you know what? She only went to school as far as the third grade. Then she had to quit school and go to work, to help her family. She would work in other people's houses, helping the mother with the children, setting the table, making beds, and doing all the things that the mother didn't have time to do.

When Grandma got older, I used to go and help her sometimes and she would tell me these things. She said when she put food in a dish, she had to be sure she had the right dish for the food so it would look pretty. If you put yellow peaches in a yellow bowl, the food wouldn't look very special, but if you put yellow peaches in a blue bowl or even a white bowl they would look very nice.

One day I was sweeping the floor for her. I had a lot of dirt in the dust pan and was just going to dump it but she stopped me.

"Have you looked through that dirt?" she asked.

"There's nothing in it but an old pin." I said.

"Bring it here," she said. She took out the pin. It was a straight pin.

I said, "Grandma, that is just an ordinary straight pin. You can buy a whole lot of them for a nickel."

Grandma just looked at me. She said, "Could you make a pin?"

I said "No".

She said "Don't ever throw away something that some one else made that is good. Maybe the day will come when you can't buy pins. Then you'd be glad you saved the one you had."

I never forgot how she valued the workmanship, how she made me look at that pin. Grandma didn't want me to take anything for granted. She wanted me to recognize something good when I saw it.

Grandma had an old fashioned parlor. This was a very special room where children couldn't go unless their parent or some other grown-up was with them. It was a room saved for special visitors, like Bishops, or Home Teachers. The reason children could not go in this room was because there were many things they could break or ruin. I remember a little table with glass balls on the bottom of its legs. It had a pretty cover on it that some one had crocheted. It was all lacy. The table was just big enough to hold two books, a big family album with pictures in it, and a big bible that had pages in it to put the families names, when the children were born, and when some one died. Grandma let me look at her books but I had to be very careful. They were old.

Grandma had a couch, just a little one, and it had velvet cloth all over it. I think it was green velvet, but maybe it was blue. It had wooden arms and legs, all carved. She had many pictures and ornaments around, and the floor felt good because there was a soft carpet to walk on. But the thing I liked best about Grandma's parlor, was the old fashioned pump organ. You had to pump with your feet on some funny steps that went up and down. It was hard for me to pump it and still play the organ, because my legs were still short. I learned to read music in fourth grade and Grandma told me she wanted to hear music on her organ. So I tried. One song was really easy I liked to play that one and Grandma loved to hear it. She would sing the words while I played the tune with one hand. It was called, "God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform, He plants his footsteps on the sea, and rides upon the storm." Then Grandma told me how it was when she was on a boat coming across the ocean, and how scared she would be when it would storm, because everywhere she looked, all she could see was water, and if the storm made the boat go down, they would all drown. But she said they finally arrived safe in America. She told me my mother was born after they came to America, and the night she was born it snowed. Their house had leaks in the roof and snow came all over the bed and almost got on her little new baby. Grandma told me so many things about those early days.

Did you know our Grandma (your great grandma) had a green house? That is a

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house made of glass, little square pieces of glass fastened together, all over the walls and ceiling and everywhere. I guess the reason they call it a green house is because it is full of green plants, and many beautiful flowers. People would come to her when they needed flowers for a wedding or a funeral, or just if they wanted to make some one happy by giving them flowers. Grandma liked it when they young men came. She would pin a carnation on their coat so they could look nice when they went to see their girl friends.

Grandma always wanted me to go to look in the mailbox to see if she had a letter. When Grandma joined the Mormon church her family disowned her. That means they told her they would never talk to her again. They would act like they didn't even know her. She felt so bad about that. She always wrote letters to them, even if she didn't get any answers. Then one day I found a folded up newspaper in the mail. Grandma looked at it and she started to cry. It was a newspaper some one had sent her from England. She was so happy. She said, "At last, news from home."

I said, "But Grandma, it is only a paper."

Grandma said, "It proves some one was thinking about me. They haven't forgotten me."

Another time I brought Grandma the newspaper. I was staying with her all night. Grandma had lost her husband. All her children were grown and she sometimes got lonely. Grandma showed me a picture in the paper, of a man named Lindberg. They called him the lone eagle, because he was going to try to go across the ocean in a little plane. No one had ever done that before. They didn't have many planes then. They were just learning how to build them. So they called him the Lone Eagle, because his plane was so little, just big enough for one person, and he was going to fly many miles over the water, just like an eagle. I don't think even an eagle could fly that far. His wings would get too tired.

It was Grandma's turn to say the prayer. She asked Heavenly Father to please take care of this brave boy who was flying across all that water, to please help him to land safely. She even cried in her prayer because she wanted to see him make a safe trip. I felt so sure Heavenly Father would watch over that plane, even if he had to reach down from heaven to hold the plane up in case the pilot got sleepy.

That night Grandma made me a little nest on my side of the feather bed. She always made a little round place just for me, so I wouldn't fall off the bed and so I would not roll onto her side. We talked awhile about how hard it would be to guide a plane when it was dark, with no lights, and all that water under him. If he went to sleep the plane would fall in the water. He had to stay awake many hours and there was no one there to help him, or to wake him if he got sleepy. "He's such a boy" Grandma said.

Nobody could have been happier than we were when we got the news that Lindy had landed safely. I brought in the paper that showed him getting out of his plane. All the people were crowded around so glad to see him. That night when it was my turn to say the prayer, Grandma said, "Remember, dear, to thank Heavenly Father for taking that boy safely across the ocean." I remembered. I knew Grandma's prayer helped him.

Oh, there are so many things I could tell you about Grandma Jex, how she helped sick people to get well. Sometimes she helped the ladies when they were going to have babies, because they didn't have enough doctors back then. They all loved her so much.

Grandma was always a little lonely for her home in England. She said everything was planted so well there, and it was full of green grass and flowers and sidewalks to walk in...but when she came to America, all she saw around her home was sage brush and weeds and dry dirt and not enough water and not much rain. In England it rained more and made everything look green.

Grandma's children all put their money together and gave Grandma enough money to go back to England for a visit. She went to see her family. She talked to them and they were sorry they said they disowned her. In fact her sister, and some of the others decided they wanted to join her church and come to America too. So that made her happy.

When Grandma Jex came back to Utah she said, "This is my home now. I like it better here than there. It is too crowded over there, and besides my children live here, and this is my home. She worked hard with her flowers. Her boys planted her a garden & she was happy in her American home."