



Grandad and the Search for Robin

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(The Third of the Trilogy)

CHAPTER 1

Newspaper

It was that special time that every child looks forward to, after a long school year; finally it was the last weekend in June! Both Ryan and Mikey were down early for breakfast, they were both excited and ready to find out more about Robin. Grandma had just put the toast on the table when the phone started to ring.

"That will be for you dear, it's Lady Baggins calling."

"How do you know that Henry, you are not allowed to answer the phone!"

"No dear but I can tell when it's her by the ringing, it's a very upper-class ring."

"Don't be ridiculous Henry."

"Yes dear, I mean no dear."

"Hello, oh good morning Lady Baggins, how very nice of you to call me, oh no, oh no, that's terrible, yakety, yak, yakety, yak....."

Ryan and Mikey whispered to Grandad:

"Can we go up into the loft again to see if we can find any more clues about Robin?"

"Yes of course we can boys; as soon as Grandma gets off the phone I will get her to suggest it. That way she won't think that we are enjoying going up there and she won't get suspicious."

"Yakety, yak, yes of course Lady Baggins, I will be there as soon as possible, yes Lady Baggins but you have got the last laugh."

"Who was that dear?"

"It's none of your business Henry but I shall have to go out there has been a serious problem."

"Oh what's the problem dear?"

"Henry you would not understand."

"Alright dear but you do seem so busy these days; is there anything that we can do to help you?"

"Well yes as you asked you could clear some more of that junk out of the loft."

Grandad winked at Ryan and Mikey, they both smiled. As soon as Grandma had gone out they got the tall steps from the garage and disappeared into the dusty loft.

"Where shall we start to look Grandad?"

"Oh you boys look in the far corner I shall look in that old wooden box under the little window."

Grandad took the hand brush and swept a layer of dust off the top of the box and then he creaked open the lid.

"Oh boys there is something inside this box."

"What have you found Grandad?"

"It's not much just a pile of old newspapers, shall I throw them away?"

"Not yet Grandad let me have a look at them first."

Ryan picked up the top one, the paper was a strange pinky colour, he read the title out loud.

"*Mirth Weekly News*, and the main headline says, **Earthling Lavenderwater Disappears Again** and the date is; wait a minute, wait a minute, it can't be, this must be some sort of mistake."

"Why what's the matter Ryan?"

"I can't believe this, it's impossible, this can't be right!"

“What, what’s the problem Ryan?”

“It’s the date on this newspaper; it’s 50 years into the future. No it must be a misprint.”

“Look boys we need to get this box of newspapers out of the loft and into the secret shed before Grandma gets back.”

So that’s what they did. There were several copies of the *Mirth Weekly News* and all dated in the future. Underneath these was a bundle of dusty copies of the local newspaper: *The Daily Bugle*, all tied together with string. These were all dated in the past.

Grandad and the boys spent most of the morning in the secret shed reading through them. Then just before lunch Mikey let out a loud excited:

“Yes, yes, look at what I have just read!”

The Daily Bugle

Mr. Robin Smith an inventor from Victoria Street who was also believed to have dabbled in magic has mysteriously vanished. It is reported that Mr. Smith was addressing a meeting of the local inventors’ society on the strange and little understood phenomenon of human transparency, when he mysteriously became invisible to the packed audience. It is believed that the only remaining evidence of Mr. Smith was his unusual wrist watch which after a few minutes was seen leaving by the back door. The Police were informed but couldn’t find any trace of either Mr. Smith or his wrist watch. They have appealed to the general public for any information.

“Well boys this really is fascinating, we need to think seriously about this report. Let’s hide the newspapers and go back to the house for some lunch.”

“Grandad I am really confused about these newspapers I know that the *Daily Bugle* is your local newspaper but the *Mirth Weekly News*, where is that from and how can they possibly be from the future, and where is Mirth anyway?”

“Well Mikey I am confused as well. I have no idea where it is I have never heard of Mirth, maybe it’s a joke.”

When they got back to the house Grandma was already there.

“Hello Henry, hello boys what have you been doing?”

“Oh not much Grandma just sorting out some boring old newspapers.”

“How was the Lady Baggins disaster?”

“Well you would not believe this but someone ordered a load of farmyard manure to be delivered to Lady Baggin’s penthouse flat. It made a terrible mess on the hall carpet. We think that it may have been done as an April fool’s joke. But we know that the laugh is on whoever did it.”

“Oh yes dear and why is that?”

“Don’t be stupid Henry even you must know that today is June 28th.”

“Yes dear, I forgot!”

CHAPTER 2

The Filmshow

“Henry, I think that the boys need something more exciting to do than sorting out old newspapers they must be getting bored with that.”

If only Grandma knew the truth!

“As part of the towns Summer Festival our committee have organised some special entertainment for this evening and then tomorrow there will be a street party, the boys will be very welcome to come to that.”

“What about me dear?”

“Well Henry if you promise to behave yourself and keep out of trouble you can come as well.”

“Thank you dear.”

As soon as Grandma had gone out Grandad said:

“Do you know boys I have got an idea.”

“What’s that Grandad?”

“Well if we had a film camera we could film tomorrows street party that would be a nice surprise for Grandma.”

“Yes Grandad that sounds great but aren’t they expensive?” “Well Ryan that depends on where you buy them from.”

The bell tinkled on the door to *Honest John’s Second Hand Shop*. The dust floated down through the sunlight and formed a little rainbow around John’s bald head.

“Henry my old friend, boys how are you and what can I get for you today?”

"Well John it's like this, Ethel's committee has organised a street party and we thought that it would be a nice surprise if we filmed it for them but we don't have a film camera. I have seen some which are so small and compact that you can fit them into your pocket."

"Henry my friend you don't want one of those they get lost too easily but this is your lucky day. I have exactly what you need and I guarantee that you won't lose it."

John shuffled into the store room and came out dragging a dusty old trunk.

"Now Henry you will need more than just a camera. This is a complete film maker's kit. Inside this specially designed trunk you have one of the best film cameras ever made."

He brushed off the thick dust and levered open the lid.

"You see the operating handle is clipped inside the top. Yes this kit is an essential tool in the film makers' art. Not only is this a wonderful camera, there is a film projector and several reels of film with it. I know that they are not all brand new but they are top quality and in perfect working order. And Henry as it's you; the whole lot will be at a special price."

"Err well John it's not exactly what I had in mind."

"Look Henry, this is the best film kit ever made, I will even deliver it when Ethel is out."

Grandad couldn't refuse such a bargain, so he shook hands on the deal and reached for his wallet.

Later that afternoon John delivered the trunk marked *Film Makers Kit* and helped Grandad to hide it in his garage.

"Well Henry, I have to say that this garage will be an ideal place to have film shows."

"Oh yes you're right John I hadn't thought of that."

Grandad and the boys spent all afternoon playing with the equipment. The camera was a lot bigger and much heavier than they had expected, so they mounted it on the wheelbarrow. Then they painted a sign; *Grandad's Mobile Film Unit* and hung it on the front.

Then to test it they fixed the film projector onto an old kitchen table and started to load one of the big reels of film into it.

"Grandad it looks like these old reels of film have been used, look there are labels on them, this one says Christmas 1953. Let's put it on."

"OK boys can you figure out how to feed the film through the projector?"

"Yes, sure we can."

Ryan and Mikey fed the film into the projector while Grandad unrolled the screen from the trunk and fixed it to the garage wall. The boys plugged in the projector and flicked a few switches. It started to whirl, and a black and white picture flickered onto the screen. Ryan adjusted the crackly sound and they all watched and listened as someone with a posh voice said;

For the first time ever, this year the town's Christmas tree has electric lights on it and they will be switched on by the owner of the town's dolls hospital.

"Do you know Grandad that man switching on the lights reminds me of someone but I can't think who?" Suddenly they heard Grandma shouting from the kitchen.

"Henry, boys where are you and what are you doing?"

They were having such a good time that he hadn't realised how late it was and that Grandma was back from her meeting.

"Us dear, doing dear? Oh nothing much dear just making some porridge for the cat."

"Henry the cat doesn't eat porridge."

"Oh no sorry dear I forgot." Grandad waited for the long pause and then Grandma's sigh.

"Henry we don't have a cat!"

"Oh really dear I'll get one. Sorry I must have been doing something else."

"Shut up Henry, come out of there and get cleaned up, it's almost time for tea and then tonight I have organised some special entertainment."

Grandma had made a special fruit cake and some more of her delicious strawberry jam.

"Right boys, tomorrow morning I shall be very busy organising the street party but Grandad will keep you amused. What have you got planned for them for tomorrow morning Henry?"

"Well dear I thought that we might go to the park and spend all day playing on the swings."

Both boys looked a bit glum until Grandad winked at them. Then they understood.

"Oh yes Grandad, great that sounds really exciting."

Just then the phone started to ring.

"That's for you dear it will be Mrs. Parker-Carr."

"Do shut up Henry."

"Yes dear."

"Oh hello Mrs. Parker-Carr, No! No! No! I don't believe it what will Lady Baggins think? Yes! Yes! Yes! Oh excuses, excuses. I shall call you back as soon as I think of something."

"Henry boys this is another disaster."

"What's happened dear?"

"Well I had organised a special film show for tonight but the man who was going to do it says that he has had his camera stolen. I can't believe it."

"Well don't worry dear the boys and I can help you there. We have some very nice film equipment and we would be happy to put on a show for your ladies, isn't that right boys?"

"Oh yes Grandad," they both said together but Grandad got the impression that they didn't really mean it.

Grandma picked up the phone and called Mrs. Parker-Carr.

"Right yes! Yes! Yes! It's not a problem the show can go ahead as planned I have fixed it,well let's just say that I mix with some very important people, goodbye see you tonight Mrs. Parker-Carr."

"Important people, thank you dear."

"I didn't mean you Henry!"

"Right this film show had better be good; there will be some very influential people there including Lucinda Rising-Trott and Lady Baggins herself. Make sure that you are at the hall on time for a prompt 7.30 start."

Grandad and the boys loaded *Grandad's Mobile Film Unit*, onto the wheelbarrow, and then pushed it up to the meeting hall.

"What film shall we show them Grandad?"

"I shall chose this one; the label says; *Special Street Party 1953*."

After their tea and cakes the ladies settled down. Mikey dimmed the lights, Ryan flicked the switches and adjusted the sound and the show began. The narrator said in one of those old-fashioned voices:

It was a lovely June day for the 1953 Victoria Street Party which was opened by Mr. Robin Smith. Here we can see several children in fancy dress riding on the milk float, which was kindly lent by our local milkman Jack Baggins. We can see his little daughter Amelia following behind the horse with a shovel and a bucket, just in case it does anything inappropriate.

With that statement there was a deadly silence as everyone turned and stared at a furious Lady Amelia Baggins. She jumped out of her seat and attacked the film projector with her umbrella.

At the same moment the door burst open and the lights were turned on as Inspector Sherbert and Constable Dobbins ran in, Inspector Sherbert shouted:

"We have reason to believe that this antique film making equipment may have been stolen. Alright Lady Baggins I am afraid that I shall have to arrest you for attempting to destroy the evidence with a rolled umbrella."

There was uproar in the hall, but by that time Grandad, Ryan, Mikey and Spotty were half way across the Park and heading for home.

CHAPTER 3

The Future

"Henry, wonderful news I have just had a call from Peter. Dawn has had twin girls, everything is fine so now we have two beautiful granddaughters, I can't wait to tell the boys where are they?"

"I think they may be in the garden dear, I'll get them for you."

Grandad knew that the boys were in the secret shed reading the newspapers and playing with Charger, so he went to get them.

"Alright boys Grandma has some wonderful news and she wants to tell you herself."

"Oh no Grandad, I hope that it doesn't involve any committees or any of her snooty friends." "No, no boys this is proper news, run up to the house and see her." So they did.

"Ryan, Mikey we have some special news, you have 2 new sisters, twin girls called Isabella and Rosie!"

"Wow 2 sisters that's great, thanks for the news Grandma."

"Your Mum and Dad will be coming here with them next week. Tonight I shall make a special cake to celebrate, now off you go and play and don't let Grandad get you into any trouble."

"Alright Grandma we won't."

"I am going into town to get a congratulations card."

When Grandad came back into the house the phone was ringing and he went to answer it.

"Grandad you know that you are not allowed to answer the phone."

"Oh that's alright Mikey it's only Lady Baggins."

"Hello this is Victoria Street home for the mentally deranged."

"Right I have been released by the Police after the mix up with the film equipment and I want to speak to that horrid Henry Smith."

Grandad replied in his best voice.

"I am dreadfully sorry but Lord Henry is on a crocodile wrestling expedition up the Limpopo River, he prefers that to having to see you again, goodbye."

Ryan and Mikey were having a great time staying with Grandad, they played with Charger and studied the old newspaper, every day was magical and as always when you are having a good time it passes very quickly. Soon the day came when they would see their new twin sisters.

"Hey Grandad it will be several hours before Mum and Dad get here with Lizzie and Rosie may we do some more time travel please?"

"Well yes I suppose so but we do need to be careful."

The equipment that they needed to turn the secret shed into a pirate ship time machine was still under the broken bench from their last trip. So Grandad put on the white suit, the thinking gloves, the strange helmet and magic glasses. Ryan put the keys into the perpetual motion machine and turned the dials on the time camera.

Suddenly the whole shed began to shake violently and Spotty dived under the bench. Lights began flashing and blue smoke started to rise. There was a loud whooshing noise as the shed turned into a pirate ship again.

Grandad struggled to control the wheel. They were travelling again but this time there was something different, something strange was happening and they all felt it. Then the camera clicked and the noise stopped. After a few minutes everything went quiet, the blue smoke cleared and the ship settled down somewhere. Ryan slowly and carefully opened the creaky door and peeped out.

"Err Grandad where are we, what's happened?"

Mikey and Grandad looked out at a very strange place. It looked like some sort of town but there were no houses, no shops, no roads, no cars, just strange looking glass bubbles everywhere. Well with the exception of one little old-fashioned sweet shop which looked rather familiar.

"Come on let's explore."

At first Grandad wasn't so keen. Spotty didn't want to go at all, so he stayed to guard the ship from under the broken bench.

"Well Mikey we need to be careful we could easily get lost here, all those strange bubbles look exactly the same."

"I know," he said, "let's tie the end of a ball of string to the pirate ship, and then we can easily find our way back."

So that's what they did. As they approached the nearest glass bubble a big door opened automatically with a swishing sound. They looked at each other:

"Should we or shouldn't we go in?"

Mikey was the youngest and the bravest and he was the first to venture inside this very unusual building. The whole place was filled with an eerie green haze; there was a strange humming sound and a familiar smell.

"What's that funny smell Grandad?"

"Oh it smells like oil to me."

Suddenly another big door opened and a rather creaky old robot glided out towards them.

"Hey Grandad, I know what's happened, we have travelled into the future."

"Hello my name is Robot Henry, and who are you?"

"Err hello I am Grandad this is Mikey and this is Ryan. Can you tell us what year we are in?"

"Well this year is 2512 but what kind of creatures are you?"

"We are Earth people. Do you know that you have a squeaky wheel?"

"Yes I have tried to oil it but it just leaves a trail of oil everywhere and it still squeaks. Anyway if you are people you are in the wrong place, Peoples Town is several miles away."

"What shall we do Ryan?"

"Well I read a book once where someone met a strange tribe and he said; *take me to your leader.*"

Robot Henry replied in his best mechanical voice.

"I am very sorry but robot Ethel Dear is swimming the Channel backwards and after that she has a very important committee meeting and then she will be making a special cake." "She is swimming the Channel backwards? That sounds very difficult for a robot are you telling us the truth?"

"Oh yes some robots believe that Ethel Dear is a robowitch."

"A robowitch? Does she leave an old-fashioned broom-stick outside the back door?"

"Yes how did you know that?"

"Oh it was just a wild guess."

"She is a very important robot with some very snooty friends, including Robobaggins."

This scared Grandad.

"Ah right thank you for telling us, we are very sorry to have bothered you it really is time that we went back to our ship."

They turned and followed the string back to the ship and then firmly bolted the door.

"Wow Grandad we have actually travelled into the future and how strange was that?" "Yes that was great but I think that we should get back now to see your new sisters."

Inside the pirate ship Ryan activated the perpetual motion machine, and the time camera. Grandad put on the helmet, the thinking gloves, and the magic glasses. Ryan set up the time camera dials and put the keys into the perpetual motion machine.

Suddenly the whole ship began to shake violently; lights started flashing and blue smoke began to rise. There was a loud whooshing noise; Grandad struggled to control the wheel. Spotty emerged shaking from under the broken bench, he wagged his tail and was obviously happy to see them. They were time travelling again. Then the camera clicked and the ship settled down. Mikey slowly opened the door.

"Alright we are back at number 15 Victoria Street. Let's go up to the house for some tea." "Henry, boys, where have you been?"

"Not sure dear."

"Boys look who is here; Mum and

Dad have arrived with your new sisters. Look come and say hello to Isabella and Rosie, aren't they beautiful. Goo, goo, goo."

Grandad started making coochy, coo noises but what he was really saying was:

"Hello girls I am your Grandad and I am very excited to meet you, you both look a lot like your Mum."

"Hello Grandad," they both said at the same time. "How come that we can understand you perfectly when all the other grown-ups just gaa, gaa and goo, goo at us?"

Then Grandad realised that he was still wearing the magic glasses.

"Oh well girls let's just say that when I am wearing these glasses I am still a child at heart."

"Henry what are you saying to them?"

"Oh nothing much dear."

"Look I have a fantastic idea, there is a baby show this afternoon and Lady Baggins will be the judge, we must enter Isabella and Rosie in the twins' competition."

"What's Grandma talking about Grandad?"

"Well she wants to enter you into a baby show."

"What's a baby show?"

"Well it's a show with lots of babies and it's just an excuse for grown-ups to goo, goo and gaa, gaa at them."

"Oh no that sounds really boring, do we have to go?"

"Well sorry girls but around here Grandma's word is the law."

The baby show was in a big marquee on the Common and it was open to babies of up to 6 months old and there must have been at least 50 of them entered. Grandma soon spotted the show judge, Lady Baggins.

"Now Lady Baggins these are my granddaughters Lizzie and Rosie."

"Oh Mrs. Smith they are so pretty. *Ga, ga, tickle, tickle*, who's a pretty girl then?"

"Grandad who is that old lady with the odd nose, who is pulling faces and tickling me?"

"Well Lizzie that's Lady Baggins, she is the chief judge." "Well I don't like the look of her."

"Neither do I Grandad."

"Don't worry girls nobody does."

"If she tries to pick me up I shall be sick."

"Well Lizzie if you are sick, you will make me sick too."

"Why isn't Lizzie smiling Mrs. Smith?"

"Well Lady Baggins I think that your hat is frightening her." "Very well then I shall take it off. She is still not smiling. Perhaps she wants me to pick her up."

That's when Lizzie was sick all over Lady Baggins who was quite shocked. She put Lizzie down and put her hat back on.

"That was your fault Lizzie."

"What do you mean Rosie?"

"Well I told you that if you were sick you would make me sick as well, but I was sick in Lady Baggins hat!"

Grandad said nothing, but he did smile rather loudly!